Introduction

Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His second novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981 and was deemed to be “the best novel of all winners” on two separate occasions. Much of Rushdie’s fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent. He combines magical realism with historical fiction; his work is concerned with the many connections, disruptions, and migrations between Eastern and Western civilizations. Rushdie’s third novel *Shame* appeared in 1983.

Rushdie’s epic fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988), was the subject of a major controversy, provoking protests from Muslims in several countries. Death threats were made against him, including a fatwā calling for his assassination issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran in 1989. The British government put Rushdie under police protection.

In 1983 Rushdie was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the UK’s senior literary organisation. He was appointed Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999. In June 2007, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him 13th on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.

Since 2000, Rushdie has lived in America. He was named Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute of New York University in 2015. Earlier, he taught at Emory University. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2012, he published *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, an account of his life in the wake of the controversy over *The Satanic Verses*.

Salman Rushdie is a great writer because of his absorbing of various influences from the world of art, literature, culture, drama and theatre, film, religion, philosophy and metaphysics. The Indian English literature, particularly the novel genre has influenced him a lot. A brief review of Indian English novel is made in the first chapter of the present thesis.

Rushdie’s first novel, *Grimus* (1975), a part-science fiction tale, was generally ignored by the public and literary critics. His next novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1981), catapulted him to literary
notability. This work won the 1981 Booker Prize and, in 1993 and 2008, was awarded the Best of the Bookers as the best novel to have received the prize during its first 25 and 40 years. *Midnight’s Children* follows the life of a child, born at the stroke of midnight as India gained its independence, who is endowed with special powers and a connection to other children born at the dawn of a new and tumultuous age in the history of the Indian sub-continent and the birth of the modern nation of India. The character of Saleem Sinai has been compared to Rushdie. However, the author has refuted the idea of having written any of his characters as autobiographical, stating, “People assume that because certain things in the character are drawn from your own experience, it just becomes you. In that sense, I’ve never felt that I’ve written an autobiographical character” (Rushdie, qt Wikipadia 3).

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is a 1981 novel that deals with India’s transition from British colonialism to independence and the partition of British India. It is considered an example of postcolonial literature and magical realism. The story is told by its chief protagonist, Saleem Sinai, and is set in the context of actual historical events as with historical fiction. But his style of preserving the history with fictional accounts was self-reflexive which he himself explained with a term chutnification. The frequent intertextuality between his story-line and bollywood films gives it a flavor of a pastiche. Therefore, this novel is an example of postmodern literature.

*Midnight’s Children* is a loose allegory for events in India both before and, primarily, after the independence and partition of India. The protagonist and narrator of the story is Saleem Sinai, born at the exact moment when India became an independent country. He was born with telepathic powers, as well as an enormous and constantly dripping nose with an extremely sensitive sense of smell. The novel is divided into three books.

Andrew Sanders adds, “Quite the most striking and inventive single novel to discuss India’s transition from Raj to Rushdie is Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*” (Sanders 659).

Various influences are there in Rushdie’s writing of *Midnight’s Children*. These influences include India’s freedom movement, India’s partition, Vedic literature (texts like Kathasaritsagar), magic realism, Kashmiri diaspora, fantasy, modernism, telepathy, history and folklore, and several other postcolonial trends in themes and techniques. All this is analyzed in the second chapter.
After *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie wrote *Shame* (1983), in which he depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan, basing his characters on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. *Shame* won France’s Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (for the Best Foreign Book) and was a close runner-up for the Booker Prize. Both these works of postcolonial literature are characterised by a style of magic realism and the immigrant outlook that Rushdie is very conscious of as a member of the Kashmiri diaspora.

Rushdie is not just a writer, but he is a writer with socio-political comments. In the 1980s in England, Rushdie was a supporter of the Labour Party and championed measures to end racial discrimination and alienation of immigrant youth and racial minorities. This was a critique of religion. Rushdie supported the 1999 NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, leading the leftist Tariq Ali to label Rushdie and other warrior writers as the belligerati. He was supportive of America-led campaign to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan, which began in 2001, but was a vocal critic of the 2003 war in Iraq. He has stated that while there was a case to be made for the removal of Saddam Hussein, American unilateral military intervention was unjustifiable.

In the wake of the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in March 2006—which many considered an echo of the death threats and fatwā that followed publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1989—Rushdie signed the manifesto Together Facing the New Totalitarianism, a statement warning of the dangers of religious extremism. The manifesto was published in the left-leaning French weekly *Charlie Hebdo* in March 2006. The novel *Shame* reminds all this criticism indirectly.

*Shame* like most of Rushdie’s work, was written in the style of magic realism mixing up politics and religion. It portrays the lives of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Iskander Harappa) and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq (General Raza Hyder) and their relationship. The central theme of the novel is that violence is born out of (religious) shame. The concepts of ‘shame’ and ‘shamelessness’ are explored through all of the characters, with the main focus on Sufiya Zinobia and Omar Khayyám.

This ‘shame’ story takes place in a town called “Q” which is actually a fictitious version of Quetta, Pakistan. In Q, the three sisters (Chunni, Munnee, and Bunny Shakil) simultaneously pretend to give birth to Omar Khayyám Shakil. Therefore, it is impossible to know who Omar’s true mother is. In addition, they are unsure of who Omar’s father is as the three sisters got pregnant at a house party. While growing up, Omar becomes mischievous and learns hypnosis. As a birthday present, Omar Khayyám Shakil’s ‘mothers’ allow him to leave Q. He enrolls in a school and is convinced by his tutor
(Eduardo Rodriguez) to become a doctor. Over the years, he comes in contact with both Iskander Harappa and General Raza Hyder.

*Shame* in which the fabulist traditions of *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Rubayat* of Omara Khayam figure in a highly political allegory about Pakistan (*Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* 969).

There are various influences on Rushdie in writing *Shame* such as Islam as a radical religion, dream vision, Pak government, goonda mafia and the like. All this is analyzed in the third chapter.

Rushdie’s most controversial work *The Satanic Verses*, was published in 1988.

The publication of *The Satanic Verses* caused immediate controversy in the Islamic world because of what was seen by some to be an irreverent depiction of Muhammad. The title refers to a disputed Muslim tradition that is related in the book. According to this tradition, Muhammad (Mahound in the book) added verses (Ayah) to the Qur’an accepting three goddesses who used to be worshipped in Mecca as divine beings. According to the legend, Muhammad later revoked the verses, saying the devil tempted him to utter these lines to appease the Meccans (hence the ‘Satanic’ verses). However, the narrator reveals to the reader that these disputed verses were actually from the mouth of the Archangel Gibreel. The book was banned in many countries with large Muslim communities (13 in total: Iran, India, Bangladesh, Sudan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Thailand, Tanzania, Indonesia, Singapore, Venezuela, and Pakistan).

In response to the protests, on 22 January 1989 Rushdie published a column in *The Observer* that called Muhammad “one of the great geniuses of world history,” but noted that Islamic doctrine holds Muhammad to be human, and in no way perfect. He held that the novel is not “an anti-religious novel. It is, however, an attempt to write about migration, its stresses and transformations.” (Salman Rushdie, Wikipedia 4)

On 14 February 1989—Valentine’s Day, and also the day of his close friend Bruce Chatwin’s funeral—a fatwā ordering Rushdie’s execution was proclaimed on Radio Tehran by Ayatollah Khomeini, the spiritual leader of Iran at the time, calling the book blasphemous against Islam. (Chapter IV of the book depicts the character of an Imam in exile who returns to incite revolt from the people of his country with no regard for their safety.) A bounty was offered for Rushdie’s death, and he was thus
forced to live under police protection for several years. On 7 March 1989, the United Kingdom and Iran broke diplomatic relations over the Rushdie controversy.

Rushdie came from a liberal Muslim family although he now identifies as an atheist. In 1989, in an interview following the fatwa, Rushdie said that he was in a sense a lapsed Muslim, though shaped by Muslim culture more than any other, and a student of Islam. In another interview the same year, he said, “My point of view is that of a secular human being. I do not believe in supernatural entities, whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim or Hindu” (Salman Rushdie, Wikipedia 8).

In 1990, in the hope that it would reduce the threat of Muslims acting on the fatwa to kill him, he issued a statement claiming he had renewed his Muslim faith, had repudiated the attacks on Islam made by characters in his novel and was committed to working for better understanding of the religion across the world. However, Rushdie later said that he was only pretending. His books often focus on the role of religion in society and conflicts between faiths and between the religion and those of no faith.

*The Satanic Verses* is inspired in part by the life of Muhammad. As with his previous books, Rushdie used magical realism and relied on contemporary events and people to create his characters. The part of the story that deals with the ‘satanic verses’ was based on accounts from the historians al-Waqidi and al-Tabari.

*The Satanic Verses* consists of a frame narrative as Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, using elements of magical realism, interlaced with a series of sub-plots that are narrated as dream visions experienced by one of the protagonists. The frame narrative, like many other stories by Rushdie, involves Indian expatriates in contemporary England. The two protagonists, Gibreel Farishta and Saladin Chamcha, are both actors of Indian Muslim background. Farishta is a Bollywood superstar who specialises in playing Hindu deities. (The character is partly based on Indian film stars Amitabh Bachchan and N. T. Rama Rao.) Chamcha is an emigrant who has broken with his Indian identity and works as a voiceover artist in England.

At the beginning of the novel, both are trapped in a hijacked plane flying from India to Britain. The plane explodes over the English Channel, but the two are magically saved. In a miraculous transformation, Farishta takes on the personality of the archangel Gabriel and Chamcha that of a devil. Chamcha is arrested and passes through an ordeal of police abuse as a suspected illegal immigrant. Farishta’s transformation can partly be read on a realistic level as the symptom of the protagonist’s developing schizophrenia.
Both characters Farishta and Chamcha struggle to piece their lives back together. Farishta seeks and finds his lost love, the English mountaineer Allie Cone, but their relationship is overshadowed by his mental illness. Chamcha, having miraculously regained his human shape, wants to take revenge on Farishta for having forsaken him after their common fall from the hijacked plane. He does so by fostering Farishta’s pathological jealousy and thus destroying his relationship with Allie. In another moment of crisis, Farishta realises what Chamcha has done, but forgives him and even saves his life.

Both return to India. Farishta kills Allie in another outbreak of jealousy and then commits suicide. Chamcha, who has found not only forgiveness from Farishta but also reconciliation with his estranged father and his own Indian identity, decides to remain in India.

Embedded in this story is a series of half-magic dream vision narratives, ascribed to the mind of Farishta. They are linked together by many thematic details as well as by the common motifs of divine revelation, religious faith and fanaticism and doubt.

Overall, the book *Satanic Verses* received favourable reviews from literary critics. In a 2003 volume of criticism of Rushdie’s career, the influential critic Harold Bloom named *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie’s largest aesthetic achievement. Timothy Brennan called the work the most ambitious novel yet published to deal with the immigrant experience in Britain that captures the immigrants’ dream-like disorientation and their process of union-by-hybridization. The book is seen as fundamentally a study in alienation.

Muhammd Mashuq Ibn Ally thinks that *The Satanic Verses* is about identity, alienation, rootlessness, brutality, compromise, and conformity. These concepts confront all migrants, disillusioned with both cultures: the one they are in and the one they join. Yet knowing they cannot live a life of anonymity, they mediate between them both. *The Satanic Verses* is a reflection of the author’s dilemmas. The work is an albeit surreal, record of its own author’s continuing identity crisis. Ally said that the book reveals the author ultimately as the victim of 19th-century British colonialism. Rushdie himself spoke confirming this interpretation of his book, saying that it was not about Islam, but about migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death, London and Bombay. He has said that it is a novel which happened to contain a castigation of Western materialism. The tone is comic.

Anuradha Dingwaney writes,
At the same time, in a scathing critique of the Raj revival in a spate of films and novels about India—Gandhi, The Far Pavilions, The Jewel in the Crown, A Passage to India—Rushdie, in ‘Outside the Whale,’ wrote vociferously against the revival of the imperial mindset in Britain. He also denounced British racism by writing eloquently about the ‘new empire in Britain’ (Dingwaney 310).

Various influences like Islam, Mohammad, vision and voices, Eliot’s Waste Land are apparent here too. All this is analyzed in the fourth chapter of the thesis.

The Moor’s Last Sigh, a family epic ranging over some 100 years of India’s history was published in 1995. The Moor’s Last Sigh is the fifth novel by Salman Rushdie. It is set in the Indian cities of Bombay and Cochin.

The Moor’s Last Sigh traces four generations of the narrator’s family and the ultimate effects upon the narrator. The narrator, Moraes Zogoiby, traces his family’s beginnings down through time to his own lifetime. Moraes, who is called ‘Moor’ throughout the book, is an exceptional character, whose physical body ages twice as fast as a normal person’s does and also has a deformed hand. The book also focusses heavily on the Moor’s relationships with the women in his life, including his mother Aurora, who is a famous national artist; his first female tutor; and his first love, a charismatic, demented sculptor named Uma.

The present thesis analyses only four of Rushdie’s novels namely Midnight’s Children, Shame, Satanic Verses and The Moor’s Last Sigh.

Rushdie’s other novels are as follows:

The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999)

Fury (2001)


The Enchantress of Florence (2008)

Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights (2015)
The Golden House (2017)

Collections of short fiction are as follows,

Homeless by Choice (1992, with R. Jhabvala and V.S. Naipaul)

East, West (1994)

The Best American Short Stories (2008, as Guest Editor)

Rushdie has had a string of commercially successful and critically acclaimed novels. His 2005 novel *Shalimar the Clown* received, in India, the prestigious Hutch Crossword Book Award, and was, in England a finalist for the Whitbread Book Award. It was shortlisted for the 2007 International Dublin Literary Award.

In his 2002 non-fiction collection *Step Across This Line*, Rushdie professes his admiration for the Italian writer Italo Calvino and the American writer Thomas Pynchon, among others. His early influences included Jorge Luis Borges, Mikhail Bulgakov, Lewis Carroll, Gunter Grass, and James Joyce. Rushdie was a personal friend of Angela Carter’s and praised her highly in the foreword of her collection *Burning Your Boats*.

Rushdie’s novel *Luka and the Fire of Life* was published in November 2010. Earlier that year, he announced that he was writing his memoirs, entitled *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, which was published in 2012.

In 2012, Salman Rushdie became one of the first major authors to embrace Booktrack (a company that synchronizes ebooks with customized soundtracks), when he published his short story “In the South” on the platform.

There is Conclusion to the thesis that sums up the arguments of all the chapters.

There is a select bibliography at the end.
Works Cited:

Chapter 1

Indian English Fiction: An Overview

The English came to India as part of Renaissance and its project of colonial rule. The British East India Company established its rule first in Madras, and then in the rest of India. The company with its Governor – Generals ruled India upto 1857 – the Sepoy Mutiny. Thereafter Queen Victoria took over. The Viceroy ruled India upto 1947- India’s independence.

Indian English literature is an interesting by-product of this colonial encounter, the literature proper being started in the 18th century. As a result of this encounter, as F.W. Bain puts it, ‘India, a withered trunk suddenly shot out with foreign foliage.’ One form this foliage took was that of original writing in English by Indians, thus partially fulfilling Samuel Daniel’s sixteenth century prophecy concerning the English language:

Who (in time) knows whither we may vent
The treasures of our tongue? To what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent
T’enrich unknowing nations with our stores.
What worlds in th’yet unformed orient
May come refined with th’accents that are ours.

(Daniel 1)

Indian English literature was defined variously as Anglo-Indian literature, Indo-Anglian literature, and finally as Indian writing in English. K.R.S. Iyengar called it ‘Indian Writing in English’. But M.K. Naiks calls his definitive history of this as Indian English literature.

The second problem is what can be considered as Indian English literature should it be Indian’s writing in English, or any writing about India in English, or even the translated literature.

In his A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908), E.F. Oaten considers the poetry of Henry Derozio as part of ‘Anglo-Indian literature’. The same critic, in his essay on Anglo-Indian literature in The Cambridge History of English Literature (Vol. XIV, Ch. 10) includes Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and ‘Aravindo [sic] Ghose’ among ‘Anglo-Indian’ writers along with F.W. Bain and
F.A. Steel. Similarly, Bhupal Singh’s Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction (1934) deals with both British and Indian writers on Indian subjects. V.K. Gokak, in his book, English in India: Its Present and Future (1964), interprets the term ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’ as comprising ‘the work of Indian writers in English’ and ‘Indo-English literature’ as consisting of ‘translations by Indians from Indian literature into English’.


M.K. Naik observes:

Strictly speaking, Indian English literature may be defined; as literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is clear that neither ‘Anglo-Indian Literature’, nor literal translations by others (as distinguished from creative translations by the authors themselves) can legitimately form part of this literature. The former comprises the writings of British or Western authors concerning India. Kipling, Forster, F.W. Bain, Sir Edwin Arnold, F.A. Steel, John Masters, Paul Scott, M.M. Kaye and many others have all written about India, but their work obviously belongs to British literature. Similarly, translations from the Indian languages into English cannot also form part of Indian English literature, except when they are creative translations by the authors themselves. If Homer and Virgil, Dante and Dostoevsky translated into English do not become British authors by any stretch of the imagination, there is little reason why Tagore’s novels, most of his short stories and some of his plays translated into English by others should form part of Indian English literature. On the other hand, a work like Gitanjali which is a creative translation by the author himself should qualify for inclusion. (Naik 2)

M.K. Naik classifies the Indian English literature into the following ages/periods legitimately:

1. The Pagoda Tree: From the Beginnings to 1857
2. The Winds of Change: 1857 to 1920
4. The Ashok Pillar: Independence and After
The Pagoda Tree: From the Beginnings to 1857:

The first Englishman to visit India was SigelM sent by King Alfred of England in 883 AD. The discovery of the sea-route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 brought the Portuguese and the Dutch to India long before the British. In early and mid-sixteenth century, British interest in India mostly remained in the formative stage. A petition addressed to King Henry VIII in 1511 reads: ‘The Indies are discovered and vast treasures brought from thence every day. Let us therefore bend our endeavours thitherwards.’

Finally, the East India Company which was to link India’s destiny firmly with Britain for almost two centuries was granted its first charter by Queen Elizabeth I on the last day of the last month of the last year of the sixteenth century, as if to usher in a new era in the East-West relationship with the dawn of the new century. The East India Company, whose original aim was primarily commerce and not conquest, however, soon discovered its manifest destiny of filling the vacuum created in the eighteenth century India by the gradual disintegration of the Mughal empire. In Kipling’s words,

Once, two hundred years ago, the trader came/Meek and tame./Where his timid foot halted, there he stayed,/Till mere trade/Grew to Empire,/And he sent his armies forth/South and North/Till the country from Peshawur to Ceylon/was his own.

After the Battle of Plassey (1757) which made the Company virtually master of Bengal, the British who had come to India to sell, decided also to rule. The business of ruling naturally involved the shaking of the Indian ‘Pagoda tree’ of its treasures.

While these Englishmen were rediscovering India’s past, the gradual spread of English education and Western ideas brought forth a band of earnest Indians who drank deep at the fountain of European learning.

It was, therefore, decided to revive the study of Sanskrit and Persian among the Indians. This led to the establishment by Hastings of the Calcutta Madarasa for teaching Persian and Arabic in 1781 and that of the Sanskrit College at Benaras by Jonathan Duncan in 1792. The Orientalists among the Company officials naturally supported this policy enthusiastically. By the turn of the century, however, second thoughts began to prevail. First, there was an equally pressing need for Indian clerks, translators and lower officials in administration and a knowledge of English was essential for these jobs. Furthermore,
with the rise of the Evangelical movement in Britain, the ideal of spreading the word of Christ among the natives assumed vital importance for some Englishmen. Even before the close of the eighteenth century, Mission schools which taught English besides the vernacular had already been functioning in the South, while the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of similar schools in Bengal and Bombay.

The Orientalists were seriously alarmed at this growing support to English. Their stand was forcefully expressed by H.H. Wilson, who observed: ‘It is not by the English language that we can enlighten the people of India. It can be effected only through forms of speech which they already understand and use. The project of importing English literature along with English cotton into India and bringing it into universal use must at once be felt by every reasonable mind as chimerical and ridiculous.’ It was, however, obvious that the Orientalists were fighting a losing battle. As K.K. Chatterjee notes, ‘The Home Office despatches from 1824 onwards went on being increasingly insistent on re-orienting Indian education to teach the useful science and literature of Europe. All the presidencies in the 1820s were headed by Governors who were generally inclined to English education, though with varying emphases (Elphinstone in Bombay, Thomas Munro in Madras, and above all, the reformist Bentinck in Bengal).

The cause of English education found its ablest Indian champion in Raja Rammohun Roy. In his persuasive Letter on English Education addressed to the Governor-General, Lord Amherst in 1823, he argued most forcefully against the establishment of a Sanskrit School in preference to one imparting English education:

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing... useful sciences, which may be accomplished by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.

Even before this letter was written, Rammohun Roy had already been active in the cause of Western education. Together with David Hume, the British watch-maker turned educationist and Edward Hyde-East, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal, he established in 1816 an Association to promote European learning and science. This was the first step towards the founding of
the Hindu College at Calcutta on 20 January 1817. Rammohun Roy also founded at his own expense a school in Suripara (near Calcutta) to teach English to boys (1816-17). ... Rammohun invited the best among them to his house for advanced coaching by English instructors. He also founded another school in Calcutta called the Anglo-Hindu School (1822).

With the tide running so strongly in favour of English, the coup de grace was delivered by Macaulay's famous Minute on Education of 2 February 1835.

Macaulay did not rest content with championing the cause of English so strongly; he even threatened to resign from his position as President of the Governor-General's Council, if his recommendations were not accepted by the Government. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, immediately yielded and the Government resolution of 7 March 1835 (a red-letter day in the history of Modern India) unequivocally declared that 'the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.'

The extremism of this policy was sought to be corrected some time later by Sir Charles Wood, a member of the Select Committee of the British Parliament in 1852-53. In his well-known Despatch of 19 July 1854, while reiterating the necessity to 'extend European knowledge throughout all classes of the people', he observed that 'this object must be effected by means of the English language in the higher branches of instruction, and by that of the vernacular languages of India to the great mass of the people.'

Thus Indian English writings started. The early prose writers were Cavelly Venkata Boriah ("Account of the Jains") and others. Raja Rammohun Roy was the pioneer in this regard. He wrote many works related to India's art, culture, tradition, society, polity, economy and metaphysics. He had known Bengali, Urdu, English, Hindi, Persian and Samskrit. He ran journals. *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy* is now available in six volumes.

Rammohun Roy’s writings obviously belong to the category of 'Literature of Knowledge', rather than 'Literature of Power', yet, he is a master of a distinguished English prose style. In a personal letter, Jeremy Bentham complimented Rammohun Roy on 'a style, which but for the name of a Hindoo, I should certainly have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly educated and instructed Englishman.'
In Bengal, Krishna Mohan Banerji (1813-85), a pupil of Henry Derozio, the poet, and one of the prominent Christian converts of the day, wrote strong articles exposing the errors and inconsistencies of Hinduism in *The Enquirer* in 1831. His *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy* (1861) is a potted handbook for missionaries and his *Aryan Witness* (1875) seeks to prove that the Prajapati of the Vedas is Jesus Christ. Another pupil of Derozio, Ram Gopal Ghose (1815-68) was actively associated with many literary, cultural and political organisations in Calcutta.

Hurish Chunder Mukerji (1824-60) edited *The Hindoo Patriot* from 1854 to 1860 with a passionate sense of mission, championing widow-remarriage, counselling reconciliation after the Mutiny and exposing the iniquities of the British planters. Rajendra Lai Mitra (1824-91), Assistant Secretary and Librarian, Bengal Asiatic Society, and hailed by Tagore as ‘Sabyasachi’ (i.e., ambidextrous) was one of the earliest Indian antiquarians, Indologists and historians. His numerous studies, including *Antiquities of Orissa* (1875, 1880) and *Buddha Gaya* (1878) earned him Max Muller’s praise in *Chips from a Gernjan Workshop*.

The Bombay province writers were Bal Shastri Jambekar (1812-46), Dadabai Naoroji, Bhau Daji, K.L. Chattre, and others.

In the Madras presidency, apart from Boriah’s ‘Account of the Jains’, another noteworthy early document is Vannelakanti Soobrow’s (He was, significantly enough known as ‘English Soobrow’) report on the ‘State of Education in 1820,’ submitted to the Madras School Book Society of which he was a nominated member. Written on 22 November, 1820, it was published in the *First Report of the Madras School Book Society for the year 1823*. Soobrow’s report contains interesting bits of information such as that *The Arabian Nights* was one of the prescribed school texts then and that ‘Among the Natives. English school masters at Madras, there are... very few who have a knowledge of grammar.’ In 1844, Gazulu Lakshmi Narsu Chetty (1806-68), a public-spirited businessman and founder of the Madras Native Association, started *The Crescent* — a newspaper dedicated to ‘the amelioration of the condition of the Hindoos.’

The early poetry writers were Henry Derozio (1809-31) M.M Dutta (1824-73) and others.

**The Winds of Change: 1857-1920:**

The 1857 Sepoy Mutiny changed the course of British Raj in India. With the end of the Great Revolt and the proclamation of peace on 8 July 1858 came the end of the East India Company rule also,
though the Company itself lingered on for a few years more, until its formal dissolution on 1 January 1874. The Queen’s proclamation of 1 November 1858 heralded the birth of a new age. The Revolt and its aftermath led to several radical changes in the Indo-British relationship. Unfortunately, they were all in the direction of widening the cleavage between the two peoples.

The Evangelical revival in England, the social and educational reforms of the 1830s, the advent of the steamships during the 1840s, and the changes made in the system of recruitment to Company service in the 1850s ushered in totally changed attitudes. From 1853, admissions to the Company’s training college at Haileybury began to be made by competitive examinations.

The many horrors of 1857–58 and the cruelties perpetrated by both the sides during the Revolt left inveterate scars which were never to heal completely. As G.T. Garrat pointedly put fifty years ago, ‘The English have never attempted to remove the irritation caused by their behaviour after the Mutiny, and from that time we must date the long and bitter estrangement between the two races.

If the British attitude to the Indian thus underwent a radical transformation, the Indian too was changing, and changing very fast. When the first products of higher education in India started coming out of the portals of the earliest Indian universities (established ironically enough in the year of the Revolt itself), the seeds of the ideas sown by Raja Rammohun Roy a generation earlier began to sprout vigorously. The gradual spread of the vast railway network, the growth of the native press in the bigger cities and the acquisition of a common language—viz., English—soon brought the new Indian intelligentsia close together.

This spirit soon began to express itself through movements of religious, social and political reform. As already noted, a beginning in this direction had been made by Raja Rammohun Roy as early as 1828, when he founded the Brahmo Samaj, an attempt to reorganize Hinduism along the lines of monotheism and repudiation of idol-worship and superstition. After Rammohun Roy’s death, the movement was strengthened by Dwarakanath Tagore. With Keshub Chunder Sen (1838–84) came a period of expansion, when the movement assumed an all-India character, leading to the establishment of similar organizations like the Prarthana Samaj by M.G. Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar in Bombay in 1867. In spite of a schism in the Brahmo Samaj in 1866, brought about by the growing differences between the conservatives and the reformers, the movement continued to be vigorous, especially in Bengal, and influenced, in some measure, the thought of men like Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore.

A similar movement was Arya Samaj, established in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824–83). This was an attempt to revive Hinduism.
This was the Theosophical Society founded in New York by Madame H.P. Blavatsky, Col. H.S. Olcott, W.O. Judge and others. Unlike the Arya Samaj this was a western movement but the society shifted to Adyar in India in 1878. With its blend of the teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism, Pythagoras and Plato, ancient Egyptian thought and early Christianity, Theosophy was an eclectic creed, but like the Arya Samaj it also helped the prevailing climate of the Indian resurgence.

While all these movements aiming at religious reform flourished, the appearance of a genuine Hindu saint and mystic at this juncture showed how the ancient Hindu tradition, far from being fossilized, was still vigorous enough to produce new living manifestations. Swami Ramakrishna (1836-86), who made his entire life an ecstatic pilgrimage of spirituality, cast a spell on the youth of modern Bengal.

Even before the inception of the college of Aligarh, the Mohammedan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta had been founded by Abdul Latif in 1863. In 1878, Ameer AH started the National Mohammedan Association, the policy of which was loyalty to the crown and assimilation of the progressive tendencies of the age. By 1888, the Association had more than fifty branches, mostly in the northern and eastern regions of India.

The poetry writers in this period 1857-1920 included M.M. Dutt, Toru Dutt, Aru Dutt, Govind Chunder Dutt, Hur and Grace Chundar Dutt, the Dutt family album – this is all interesting.

It was with Toru Dutt (1856-77) that Indian English poetry really graduated from imitation to authenticity. The third and youngest child of Govin Chunder Dutt, Torulata, born a Hindu, was baptized along with the other members of the family in 1862. She learnt English at a very early age and reading and music were her chief hobbies. Sailing for Europe in 1869, she spent a year in France, studying French, and was thereafter in England for three years. Returning to India in 1873, she died of consumption four years later, at the age of twenty-one. One of her father’s sonnets contains a remarkable pen-portrait of her: ‘Puny and elf-like, with dishevelled tresses/Self-willed and shy. .../ Intent to pay her tenderest addresses/ To bird or cat,—but most intelligent.’ The fifty odd letters, she wrote to her English friend, Miss Martin, reveal an interesting personality.

Toru Dutt’s works include *A Sheaf Gleened in French Fields* (1876), *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882) and the novel *Bianca*.

Apart from Malabari, the then Bombay presidency also heard contemporary minor voices like a fellow-Parsi, Cowasji Nowrosi Vesuvala (*Courting the Muse*, 1879); the poet who wrote under the ‘spicy’
name ‘Chili Chutnee’ (*Social Scraps and Satires*, 1878), M.M. Kunte (*The Risi*, 1879), and Nagesh Wishwanath Pai (1860-1920) who, like Malabari, makes a better showing as a prose writer.

It was, however, not Bombay, but Bengal—the first home of Indian English literature—that was to continue to dominate the poetic scene for many more years.

Among the younger contemporaries of R.C. Dutt was Manmohan Ghose (1869-1924), whose poetic career is a classic example of how the lack of roots stunts the growth of an artist cursed with ‘an exile’s heart’ in his bosom.

Manmohan Ghose’s poems in *Primavera* (1890), which also included the work of Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Cripps, are typical of the mood of world-weariness and yearning and the colourful aestheticism of the Eighteen Nineties. *Love Songs and Elegies* (1898), while expressing the same strain more effectively, adds to it a celebration of Nature, and a surer command of image and phrase. *Songs of Love and Death* (1926), published posthumously, shows the poet still lost in the *Jin de siecle* world, as a lyric like ‘London’ (This is London. I lie and twine in the root of things’) shows. *Orphic Mysteries* (‘Songs of Pain, Passion and the Mystery of Death’) and *Immortal Eve* (‘Songs of the Triumph and Mystery of Beauty’) were the products of a lyric upsurge following the death of the poet’s wife in 1918, though they were published as late as in 1974, in the collected edition.

A younger brother of Manmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950) provides a striking contrast. Though he had very much the same kind of upbringing as his elder brother, whom he accompanied to England at the age of seven, Sri Aurobindo found his roots in Indian culture and thought immediately on his return” to India from Cambridge in 1893. Manmohan’s career is a sad story of arrested artistic development; Sri Aurobindo’s, a glorious chronicle of progress from patriot to poet, yogi and seer. After a brief, quiet spell in Baroda State Service (1893-1906) and a much shorter but far more hectic one as a political radical (1906-10), which landed him in jail for one year, Sri Aurobindo escaped to Pondicherry (then a French possession) in 1910, and made it his permanent home thereafter.

Sri Aurobindo’s great works include *Savitri* and several plays and collection of poetry and criticism.

‘Savitri’ is a retelling of the well-known legend of prince Satyavan and Savitri, his devoted wife, who rescues him from Death, narrated in about 700 lines in the *Mahabharata*, and is a story of pure love conquering death.
Sri Aurobindo invites comparison with another prominent contemporary, who was actually his senior in age, but whose work in English began much later. Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), hailed by Mahatma Gandhi as ‘The Great Sentinel’, was one of those versatile men of his Age, who touched and enriched modern Indian life at several points. Poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, composer, painter, thinker, educationist, nationalist and internationalist—such were the various roles that Tagore played with uniform distinction during his long and fruitful career.

Tagore’s career as an Indian English poet began by sheer accident. In 1912, on the eve of his departure to England for medical treatment, he tried his hand at translating some of his Bengali poems into English. The manuscript, taken to England, was lost in the Tube Railway, retrieved by Tagore’s son Rathindranath, and came later to be rapturously hailed by William Rothenstein and W.B. Yeats. The rest is history. *Gitanjali* (1912) took the literary world of London by storm and was followed in quick succession by *The Gardener* (1913) and *The Crescent Moon* (1913). The award of the Nobel Prize came in the same year. More collections followed *Fruit-Gathering* (1916), *Stray Birds* (1916), *Lover’s Gift and Crossing* (1918) and *The Fugitive* (1921). By this time Tagore’s reputation in the English-speaking world had already suffered a disastrous decline. Only two more volumes in English appeared: *Fireflies* (1928) and the posthumously published *Poems* (1942) of which all but the last nine were translated by Tagore himself.

The central theme of *Gitanjali*, Tagore’s finest achievement in English verse, is devotion and its motto is, ‘I am here to sing thee songs.’ (Poem No. XV).

Younger than both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), however, won recognition in England much earlier. Daughter of a Bengali educationist settled in the former princely State of Hyderabad, Sarojini Naidu, nee Chattopadhyaya, was a precocious child and started writing poetry at a very early age.

Her first volume of poetry, *The Golden Threshold* (1905) was followed by *The Bird of Time* (1912) and *The Broken Wing* (1917). Meanwhile, social reform and the freedom struggle had begun increasingly claiming her energies, and thereafter she wrote poetry only sporadically. Her collected poems appeared in *The Sceptred Flute* (1946). *Feather of the Dawn*, a small collection of lyrics written in 1927, was published posthumously in 1961.

Sarojini Naidu’s younger brother, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya (1898— ) is a poet also cast, though somewhat less rigidly, in the romantic mould. Far more prolific than his better-known sister, he
has, during the half-century between 1918 when his first collection of lyrics—The Feast of Youth—appeared and Virgins and Vineyards (1967), published numerous volumes of verse, the more significant of which are The Magic Tree (1922), Poems and Plays (1927) and Spring in Winter (1955).

The prose writers of the age were too many, and many of them wrote political prose.

Two of Dadabhai Naoroji’s most illustrious pupils at the Elphinstone Institute, where he taught early in his career, were V.N. Mandlik and R.G. Bhandarkar.

Hailed as ‘Rishi Ranade’ by Srinivasa Sastri, Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) was a gentle colossus of the late nineteenth century.

In his brief career, Kashinath Trimbuck Telang (1850-93) crowded much hectic activity in diverse fields such as law, journalism, politics, social reform, education, orientology and the development of vernacular literature.

Two prominent Parsi contemporaries of Ranade were Sir Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta (1845-1915) and Sir Dinsha Edulji Wacha (1844-1936).

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Tilak’s younger contemporary, was the ablest disciple of Ranade and was acknowledged by Gandhi as his political guru. His Speeches (1908; 1916) and Speeches and Writings: 3 Vols, (1962) are characteristic of an earnest and upright, and gentle and cultured soul, wholly dedicated to his country’s cause.

In Bengal, the editorship of the Hindoo Patriot came after the death of Hurish Chunder Mukherji in 1860 to Kristo Das Pal (1834-84), who headed the paper with great distinction for almost a quarter century.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), renowned Bengali novelist and author of one of the earliest Indian English novels, wrote several essays in English, including ‘On the origin of Hindu Festivals’ (1870), ‘Bengali Literature’ (1871), ‘The Study of Hindu Philosophy’ (1873) and ‘Vedic Literature’ (1894). His spirited defence of Hinduism in Letters on Hinduism appeared in print in 1940, long after his death. Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee (1844-1906), first president of the Indian National Congress (1885), established the London India Society in 1865, which later merged into the East Indian Association. His speeches are collected in Life, Letters and Speeches of W.C. Bonnerjee (1923) edited by K.L. Bandopadhaya. Of the three notable Ghoshes of the period (apart from Manmohan Ghose and Sri
Aurobindo) Rashbihari Ghosh (1845-1921) and Lalmohan Ghosh (1849-1909) were Moderate Congress leaders. In his Welcome Address at the Calcutta Congress of 1908, Rashbihari declared that England ‘came not as a conqueror but as a deliverer with the ready acquiescence of the people to heal and settle, to substitute order and good government for disorder and anarchy.’ His Speeches were published in 1919 and Lalmohan’s (2 Vols.) in 1883-84. Motilal Ghosh (1847-1902) founded the well-known newspaper, *Amrita Bazar Palrika* in 1868. His *Speeches and Writings* appeared in 1935. Another Moderate Bengali leader, Ambica Charan Mazumdar (1850-1922) wrote *Indian National Evolution—a Brief Survey of the Origin and Progress of the Indian National Congress* (1915).

Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), whose poetry has already been considered, was an administrator with wide experience. Keenly aware of the political and economic problems of India, he brought his vast knowledge and experience to bear upon them in scholarly studies like *The Peasantry of Bengal* (1875), *A History of Civilization in Ancient India* (3 Vols: 1589), *Famine and Land Assessment in India* (1900) and *The Economic History of India* (2 Vols, 1902 and 1904), which has been hailed as ‘the first history of a colonial regime written from the point of view of the subject of a colonial empire.

Dutt’s friend, Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) was acclaimed by his age as perhaps its most powerful orator in English.

It was another trio—this time a purely Bengali one—which produced the most noteworthy prose of the period. It comprises Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.

Most of Vivekananda’s speeches were delivered extempore, and not a little of their appeal was derived from his dominant personality which exuded a sense of both tranquility and power.

In the South, the first noteworthy name is that of Maharaja Sir Rama Varma of Travancore (1837-84), one of the earliest of enlightened Indian princes. Interested in the study of science, history and literature, he wrote both in Malayalam and English. A frequent contributor to the *Madras Athenaeum* in which he published a ‘Political Sketch of Travancore’ (1856), Rama Varma wrote in the *Indian Statesman* open letters with the heading ‘Topics For Mr. F.N. Maltby’ (The British Resident of Travancore) in 1858-59.

The most renowned of the Southern Moderate leaders was V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946). A disciple of G.K. Gokhale, he was known as ‘the silver-tongued orator of the Empire’.

Coomaraswamy began as a critic of oriental art, but he soon came to believe that ‘Art history is the history of the spirit’. This led him to a deep study of Hindu religion and metaphysics and the entire oriental culture and tradition which he then related effectively to modern eastern civilization and its problems.

This age – ‘the winds of change’ (1857-1920) – saw a lot of writers who wrote biography, autobiography, essay, history, stories and other books. Drama began its innings.

Since this thesis relates to Salman Rushdie – the novelist, much of our concentration is on Indian English fiction, and its innovation and experiments.

Indian English fiction began early and it began triumphantly. The early fragments of fiction were by Kylash Chunder Dutt and Shoshee Chunder Dutt.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s (1838-94) first and only novel in English, *Rajmohan ’s Wife* was serialized in the Calcutta Weekly, *The Indian Field* in 1864, though it appeared in book form only in 1935. (In this version, the first three chapters are translated from the author’s later Bengali version by B.N. Banerji, since the English original could not be traced; the rest constitutes the author’s serialized English text). This is a rather melodramatic tale of the trials of a typical, long-suffering Hindu wife, Matangini, at the hands of her husband, Rajmohan, who is a bully, the setting being an East Bengal village in the late nineteenth century. Sketchy and lacking in adequate character-motivation, the novel compares most unfavourably with this author’s later masterpieces in Bengali. An interesting feature of style is the liberal use of Indian words, creating local colour. A fifteen-page fragment comprising the English translation, in Bankim Chandra’s own handwriting, of his Bengali novel, *Devi Chaudhurani* (1869) has also survived.
From the sixties up to the end of the nineteenth century, stray novels continued to appear mostly by writers from the Bengal and Madras presidencies, with Bombay, strangely enough, lagging far behind.

Toru Dutt’s unfinished novel, *Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden*, a romantic love story set in England (Calcutta, 1878); Krupabai Satthianadhan’s *Kamala, A Story of Hindu Life* (Madras and Bombay, 1895), and *Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life* (Madras and Bombay, 1895)—both thinly veiled exercises in autobiography; and Shevantibai M. Nikambe’s *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife* (London, 1895).

Among the novels to be published between 1864 and 1900 were Ram Krishna Punt’s *The Boy of Bengal* (London, Philadelphia, 1866); Tarachand Mookerjea’s *The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts* (Allahabad, 1868); Lai Behari Day’s *Govinda Samanta, or The History of a Bengali Raiyat* (London, 1874)—revised and enlarged version published under the title, *Bengal Peasant Life* (London, 1908); Gowry, *an Indian Village Girl* by an anonymous author (Madras, 1876); Ananda Prosad Dutt’s *The Indolence* (Calcutta, 1878); Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s *The Young Zamindar* (London, 1883): Trailokya Nath Das’s *Hirimba’s Wedding* (Midnapore, 1884); Mirza Moorad Alec Beg’s *Lalun, the Beragun, or, The Battle of Panipat* (Bombay, 1884); Sanjihi Mull’s *The Interesting Story of Prince Poorun* (Delhi, 1886); M. Dutt’s *Bijoy Chand: An Indian Tale* (Calcutta, 1888), and Lt. Suresh Biswas: *His Life and Adventures* (Calcutta, 1900); *Kamarupa and Kamalatha* (Calcutta, 1889) by an anonymous author; Yogendranath Chattopadhyaya’s *The Girl and Her Tutor* (Bhagalpur, 1891); and B.R. Rajam Iyer’s fragment of a religious novel, *True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastri* (serialized in *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1896-98; published in book form, London, 1925).

Two prominent Madras contemporaries of these novelists from Bengal were A. Madhaviah and T. Ramakrishna Pillai. After an early effort—*Satyananda* (1909)—a slight work, Madhaviah wrote *Thillai Govindan* [London, 1916; first published pseudonymously as *A Posthumous Autobiography edited by Pamba* (1908)].

The story of the early Indian English short story is even shorter.

At the beginning of the twentieth century we have the first Indian English short story writer with a considerable literary output. Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi lady educated in Britain, became the first woman advocate in Calcutta in 1924. All her four collections were published in London: *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901); *Sunbabies: Studies in the Child Life of India* (1904); *Between the Twilights: Being Studies*
of Indian Women by one of Themselves (1908); and Indian Tales of the Great Ones among Men, Women and Bird-People (1916). These studies of mostly Hindu and occasionally Parsi life in both princely and plebeian circles are a mixed collection of stories, anecdotes and character-sketches.

This survey of the period between the Great Revolt of 1857 and the first countrywide Non-cooperation movement of 1920 has shown how these sixty-odd years produced a number of mature works in verse and prose, though drama was yet to establish a tradition and fiction still remained in swaddling clothes. The Indian resurgence, which had already borne considerable fruit by now, was to receive an unprecedented momentum in the 1920s, when the star of Tilak set and the sun of Gandhi rose on the Indian horizon.

**The Gandhian Whirlwind: 1920-1947:**

The Indian English literature flourished one may say with the Gandhian whirlwind from 1920 to 1947 – India’s independence. The tempo of political agitation was admirably kept up after the War by Tilak, who emerged from temporary retirement after his release from prison in 1914, rejoined the Congress, and founded the Home Rule League in 1916; and also by Mrs. Anne Besant, whose own All India Home Rule League was established in 1917. Meanwhile, Gandhi, fresh from his Satyagraha triumph in South Africa, had returned to India in 1915. After undergoing a year’s probation prescribed by his guru, Gokhale, Gandhi tested successfully his new weapon of non-violence in the Champaran campaign against the exploitation of the tenants of the Indigo-planters in 1917, the Kaira Satyagraha against unjust land assessment demands during the famine of 1918 and the Ahmedabad Labour dispute in the same year. In 1919, agitation against the Rowlatt bills led to the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter which remains as black a blot on the British escutcheon as the notorious Bibighar massacre of 1857 is on the Indian. Ten years later, Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930, which differed substantially from the earlier Non-co-operation Movement, though the goal remained the same.

The entire period of near three decades of the Gandhian age was one of far-reaching changes not only in the political scene but in practically all areas of Indian life also.

The prose writers of the period were Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the other freedom fighters. Gandhi’s writings are a mine of stimulating thought on political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual issues. We need to mention his *Hind Swaraj, Autobiography* and speech as works with literary elements. Even Nehru’s *Autobiography*, though bulky is significant. The prose by these two is remarkably standard, and the West appreciated them.
Journalism developed in this period. People wrote on history, religious and philosophical prose, biography, autobiography, literature and travelogues, and art criticism.

The poetry of the age includes such writers as Neo-Aurobindos of Romantic strain. Kailasam, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, and others authored drama. The Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. The fiction of K.S. Venkataramani (1891-1951), chronologically one of the earliest novelists of the period, is a copy-book example of this. His first novel, *Murugan, The Tiller* (1927), contrasts the careers of two young south Indian friends—Kedari, a flashy materialist finally ruined by his own chicanery and Ramu, an introvert, whose spirit of public service brings him spectacular rewards after an unpromising beginning. The novel ends with Ramu’s founding of an ideal rural colony on Gandhian principles to which he retires with his repentant friend. Artless in technique, *Murugan, The Tiller* with its one-dimensional characters is more of a tract than a novel. The impress of Gandhism is even stronger on Venkataramani’s second novel, *Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932). Set against the background of the Civil Disobedience movement of the nineteen thirties, the novel tells the story of Kandan, an Oxford-educated Indian youth, who resigns from the Indian Civil Service to plunge into the freedom struggle and finally succumbs to a police-bullet.

A.S.P. Ayyar, the dramatist, was a member of the Indian Civil Service and could hardly write a Gandhian novel with impunity. His clever solution was to go back to ancient Indian history (he was a historian by training) and that this was a deliberate strategy is indicated by a remark in his introduction to his second novel, *Three Men of Destiny* (p. vii). ‘Nothing is more appropriate in the present glorious renaissance period of India, when Eastern and Western ideas are stirring the people into various kinds of political, artistic and religious expression peculiarly their own than depicting the story of the time when India first came into violent contact with the greatest and most civilized nation in Europe then, the Greeks.’ Ayyar’s first novel, *Baladitya* (1930) is set in fifth century India and narrates the story of the defeat of the invading Huns by Baladitya, the King of Magadha and Yasodharman, the King of Mahakosala.

Krishnaswamy Nagarajan (1893—) wrote two novels which stand head and shoulders above the work of both Venkataramani and Ayyar. *Athavar House* (1937) is a Galsworthian family chronicle dealing with an old Maharashtrian Vaishnava Brahmin family settled in the south for generations. In a later novel, *Chronicles of Kedaram* (1961), Nagarajan seasons his realism with a sharp sense of irony.
The trio Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao are the founding fathers of Indian English novel. Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, whose first novels were published in 1935, 1935 and 1938 respectively; and it is a mark of their stature that they revealed, each in his own characteristic way, the various possibilities of Indian English fiction. Mulk Raj Anand (1905—), the eldest of the three, has also been the most prolific. Born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan), in a Hindu coppersmith family, Anand has narrated the story of his upbringing in the autobiographical Apology for Heroism (1946). ‘I grew up,’ he says, ‘like most of my contemporaries, a very superficial, ill-educated young man, without any bearings,’ since the education of those days glorified western culture at the expense of the Indian tradition.

Both these themes receive perhaps their best fictional treatment in Anand’s first novel, Untouchable (1935), which describes an eventful day in the life of Bakha, a young sweeper from the outcastes’ colony of a north Indian cantonment town. This particular day brings him his daily torments and more but in the end it also suggests three alternative solutions to his problem: A missionary tries to persuade him to embrace Christianity; he listens to Gandhiji, who advocates social reform; and he also hears of mechanized sanitation as the only answer possible. The novel ends with Bakha ‘thinking of everything he had heard, though he could not understand it all.’ Anand’s treatment of his theme here is remarkably objective and restrained, which saves the book from the lush sentimentality which mars some of his later novels. Unspiring in its realism, Untouchable is also structurally the least flawed of all Anand’s novels. Apart from the long harangue on modern sanitation at the end, the entire narrative is a thing of perfect unity and finish.

In his two chronicles of coolies—Coolie (1936) and Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), Anand turns to the lot of another class of the under-privileged. The range and scope of his fiction have now widened and his canvas expanded, and there is also an orchestration of themes which are barely hinted at in Untouchable—themes such as the contrast between rural and urban India and race-relations. Coolie is the pathetic odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from the Kangra hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood.

Anand’s other novels are Two Leaves and a Bud, The Village (1939) and Across the Black Waters (1941) – all these three are treated as a trilogy. His later works include The Big Haert (1945), The Private Life 91953), The Old Woman and the Cow (1960), The Road (1963), The Death of a Hero (1964), Seven Summers (1970), Confession of a Lover (1976) and several collections of short stories.
The art of Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan (1906—) offers an interesting contrast to that of Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan’s delicate blend of gentle irony and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy stands poles apart from Anand’s militant humanism with its sledge-hammer blows and his robust earthiness. A Tamil who has spent the major part of his life in the quiet city of Mysore, Narayan is the son of a school master. Except for brief stints of working as a school master and a newspaper correspondent, he has devoted himself exclusively to writing—a rare phenomenon in modern Indian literature. Narayan’s little dramas of middle class life are enacted in Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India which comes to be felt as a living ambience in his fiction. His first novel, *Swami and Friends* (1935), is a delightful account of a school boy, Swaminathan, whose name, abridged as ‘Swami’ gives a characteristically Narayanesque, ironic flavour to the title, raising expectations which the actual narrative neatly demolishes.


Raja Rao has not been a prolific novelist, having written just four novels beginning with *Kanthapura* (1938), which is perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English fiction. It is the story of a small South Indian village caught in the maelstrom of the freedom struggle of the nineteen thirties and transformed so completely in the end that ‘there’s neither man nor mosquito’ left in it. In this little village situated high on the Ghats up the Malabar coast, the most important event has traditionally been the ploughing of the fields at the first rains. In 1930, the harvest reaped is the Gandhian whirlwind. Raja Rao offers no dreamland vision of the freedom struggle. In fact, the initial reaction of Kanthapura to Gandhian thought is one of bored apathy. But young Moorthy, the Gandhian, who knows that the master-key to the Indian mind is religion, puts the new Gandhian wine into the age-old bottle of traditional *Harikatha* (legendary narrative of God) and thus indoctrinates the Kanthapurans. There is also no runaway victory for Gandhism in the village, for the forces of orthodoxy and conservatism are strong. The struggle is even harder for the simple, illiterate village women who don’t understand the why and the wherefore of it all, and only know that the Mahatma is right in the tradition of the Hindu avatars. They have their moments of temptation, cowardice and
backsliding but still hold out to the bitter end, until Kanthapura is a deserted village. *Kanthapura* is thus a brilliant attempt to probe the depths to which the nationalistic urge penetrated, showing how, even in the remote villages, the new upsurge fused completely with traditional religious faith, thus rediscovering the Indian soul. Like its sensibility, the form and style of *Kanthapura* also belong to the living Indian tradition.

Raja Rao’s other novels are *The Serpent and the Rope*, *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965), and *Comrade Kirillow* (1976).

Raja Rao’s fiction obviously lacks the social dimension of his two major contemporaries. Not for him the burning humanitarian zeal of Anand, nor Narayan’s sure grasp of the living minutiae of the daily business of living.

Mulk Raj Anand’s contemporaries included some prominent Muslim novelists. In Aamir Ali’s *Conflict* (1947), the entire action concerns a Hindu family, showing how Shankar, a village boy, comes to Bombay for higher education and gets caught in the agitation of 1942. Unfortunately, Ali’s picture of rustic life, his hero’s adjustment to urban surroundings and his initiation into the freedom struggle remains largely superficial. His two later novels *Via Geneva* (1967) and *Assignment in Kashmir* (1973) move on the international plane and are products of his experience of working as a diplomat. K.A. Abbas’s numerous novels include popular film-scripts also. Among his less insubstantial books, *Tomorrow is ours: A Novel of the India of Today* (1943) espouses several causes, including nationalism, Leftism and denunciation of fascism and untouchability.

Among the remaining novelists, special mention must be made of Dhan Gopal Mukherji (1890-1936). His novels of jungle and rustic life which won great popularity in the West, going through several editions, include *Kari, the Elephant* (1922), *Hari, the Jungle Lad* (1924), *Gay-Neck, the Story of a Pigeon* (1927), *The Chief of the Herd* (1929) and *Ghond the Hunter* (1929).

Other novels of the period include C.S. Rau’s *The Confessions of a Bogus Patriot* (1923). J. Chinnadurai’s *Sugirtha* (1929); Ram Narain’s *Tigress of the Harem* (1930); H. Kaveribai’s *Meenakshi’s Memoirs—A Novel of Christian Life in South India* (1937); V.V. Chintamani’s *Vedantam or the Clash of Traditions* (1938); Shankar Ram’s *The Love of Dust* (1938); D.F. Karaka’s *Just Flesh* (1941)—perhaps the only novel by an Indian set wholly in the West and containing only British characters); *There Lay the City* (1942—a love story set in Bombay during World War II), and *We Never Die* (1944): C.N. Zutshi’s *Motherland* (1944); Purushottamdas Tricumdas’s *Living Mask* (1947) and N.S. Phadke’s own
translations from his Marathi originals—*Leaves in the August Wind* (1947) and *The Whirlwind* (1956)—both set against the background of the Quit India Movement of 1942.

**The Asoka Pillar: Independence and After:**

India achieved independence in 1947. With the attainment of Independence on 15 August 1947 began a new era of challenges and changes in Indian life. During the first twenty-five years of its independence the nation underwent experiences which would have all but shattered a country with less inner strength and latent resilience. But not only did India face her challenges with at least some degree of adequacy, she was also able to register not a little progress in many areas of national life.

Thus India began its reforms like five-year plans for its strengthening. Reforms in polity, economy, society, arts and international relations began.

Commenting on what he calls ‘the relative stagnation of all the arts in India’, in the mid-sixties, George Woodcock wrote:

‘India is going through a vast and lengthy social revolution and periods of revolution are usually accompanied by a retreat towards conservatism in the arts (e.g. Neo-classicism in the French revolution and the Empire; the dull realism in Russia in the early nineteen twenties, the sterility of the Cromwellian interregnum). Even intellectuals at such times become preoccupied with action and life, in its perilous flux, seems more fascinating than art, its transmutation. The artist dwindles into a recorder, or, at best, an embellisher, rather than a creator.... We may well have to wait until a less socially conscious generation, for India to produce writers who will do justice to the absorbing variety of her land and life.’

M.K. Naik observes:

It is possible to argue that the rightful assumption of a recognized national identity after 1947 has proved a great gain for the Indian English writer. (Naik 200)

Poetry writers after 1947 are a new tribe altogether, who followed modernism. The ‘new poetry’ had already made its appearance. In 1958, P. Lal and his associates founded the Writers Workshop in Calcutta which soon became an effective forum for modernist poetry. The Workshop manifesto described the school as consisting of ‘a group’ of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in Indian literature, through original writings and transcreation.’ The Workshop ‘Miscellany’ was to be ‘devoted to creative writing’, giving ‘preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers’. The first modernist anthology was *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry* (1958) edited by P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao. In a somewhat brash
Introduction the editors condemned greasy, weak-spined and purple-adjective “spiritual poetry”, and ‘the blurred and rubbery sentiments of... Sri Aurobindo’ and declared that ‘the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu.’ They affirmed their faith in ‘a vital language’ which ‘must not be a total travesty of the current pattern of speech,’ commended ‘the effort to experiment,’ advocated a poetry that dealt ‘in concrete terms with concrete experience,’ and emphasized ‘the need for the private voice,’ especially because ‘we live in an age that tends so easily to demonstrations of mass-approval and hysteria.’

The prominent new poets are Nissim Ezekiel (1924-), P. Lal, (1929-), Adil Jussawalla (1940-), A.K. Ramanujan (1929-), R. Parthasarathy (1934-), Gieve Patel (1940-), A.K. Mehrotra (1947-), Shiv K. Kumar, Keki Daruwalla, Jayanta Mahapatra and Arun Kolatkar. Kamala Das is a late entrant but the best entrant.

The most popular genre of literature in the post-independence times is the novel. Post-Independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by novelists like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh, who made their appearance during the nineteen fifties and the early sixties.

The earliest of the social realists of the period is Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906—), a novelist strongly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi, while both his fictional theory and practice show his affinity with Anand. Bhattacharya’s first novel, So Many Hungers (1947), published within a few months of Independence, is one of his better efforts, though not totally free from his characteristic weaknesses. Bhattacharya’s other novels are Music for Mohini (1952), He Who Rides a Tiger (1952-), A Goddess Named Gold (1960), Shadow from Ladakh (1966), and A Dream in Hawaii (1978).

Manohar Malgonkar (1913—) is a realist who believes that art has no purpose to serve except pure entertainment. ‘I do strive deliberately and hard to tell a story well,’ he declares; ‘I revel in incident... I feel a special allegiance to the particular sub-caste among those whose caste mark I have affected, the entertainers, the tellers of stories.’ While in Bhattacharya’s fiction, women characters, on the whole, come to life better than the men, Malgonkar’s is a male dominated world in which women seem to be little more than instruments of masculine pleasure. A retired Indian army officer, Malgonkar began his novelistic career with Distant Drum (1960), a story of army life with a wealth of engaging detail—an area in which apart from Anand’s Across the Black Waters, Indian English fiction is singularly poor. The title and the epigraph of Combat of Shadows (1962) are from the Bhagavad Gita: ‘Desire and
aversion are opposite shadows. *The Princes* (1963) is indubitably Malgonkar’s best novel, since here, for once, he goes beyond his self-avowed role as a story-teller. This same lack of a larger vision makes Malgonkar rest content with working on the superficial level of telling an exciting romantic tale in *The Devil’s Wind* (1972), while his material clamoured in vain for the shaping power of the historical imagination.

Khushwant Singh (1918—) is of an earthier variety. He has declared that his ‘roots are in the dunghill of a tiny Indian village’ and his fiction reeks with the odour of his roots. One of his characters says, ‘It was not possible to keep Indians off the subject of sex for long. It obsessed their minds.’ Whatever the measure of truth in this generalization, it is certainly valid in the case of this novelist. Khushwant Singh also appears to take a markedly irreverent view of Indian life and character. His style, hard and vigorous, employs colourful Punjabi expletives and terms of abuse *a la* Anand while his irony is honed like a Sikh sword. Khushwant Singh’s first novel, *Train to Pakistan* (1956) (*Mano Majra* in the American edition, 1956) illustrates all these features of his art.

The realism of S. Menon Marath (1906—) is as securely rooted in the soil of his native Kerala, as Khushwant Singh’s is in that of the Punjab; but it is manifestly far more refined in presentation. His *Wound of Spring* (1960) describes the disintegration of a traditional matriarchal Nayar family in Kerala during the second decade of the twentieth century.

Balachandra Rajan (1920—) illustrates both the strains prominent in Indian English fiction of the fifties and the sixties— viz., realism and fantasy. Unlike his contemporaries, however, his realism is less social than psychological in his first novel, *The Dark Dancer* (1959). Rajan’s second novel, *Too Long in the West* (1961) is in a totally different key altogether. This is a comic extravaganza in which the central figure is Nalini, a South Indian girl, who returns from an American University to face the problem of choosing a suitable husband.

The novels of Sudhindra Nath Ghose (1899-1965) are an exciting experiment in the expression of the Indian ethos in a form firmly grounded in the ancient native tradition of storytelling.

G.V. Desani’s *All About H. Hatterr* (1948; revised edition 1972) is easily one of the most daringly experimental novels in Indian English literature. Govindas Vishnoodas [sic] Desani (1909—) ran away from home at the age of eighteen and spent the next twenty-five years in England, working as a newspaper correspondent, popular lecturer and broadcaster. Returning to India in 1952, he spent several years in seclusion, practising yoga and studying Buddhism. Since 1968, he has been teaching
philosophy in an American University. *All About H. Hatterr* is a novel extremely complex both in theme and technique. It is at once a diverting autobiography (‘autobiographical’ as Hatterr calls it in his own peculiar brand of English) of a Eurasian, who is as avid for experience as he is incapable of learning from it; the story of the hero’s spiritual quest for understanding the meaning of life; a social chronicle revealing aspects of White, Eurasian and Indian character; an uproariously funny comedy— a ‘human horseplay’, brimful of various kinds of humour ranging from sheer farce to subtle wit; a triumphant experiment in blending Western and Indian narrative forms, and an astonishing exhibition of a seemingly unlimited stylistic virtuosity. *All about H. Hatterr* is a difficult novel, which has been much admired and highly praised but still awaits full and intensive critical analysis. Its place, however, is evidently unique in Indian English fiction; it is a *tour-de-force* which its author himself has not been and perhaps may not be able to repeat.

Both Sudhin Ghose and G.V. Desani tried to blend western and oriental modes of narration in telling tales with a modern setting. In his *The Silver Pilgrimage* (1961), M. Anantanarayanan (1907—) adopts a purely oriental form while narrating a story set in sixteenth century Geylon and India. It tells how Prince Jayasurya of Ceylon, sent on a pilgrimage of Kashi (which is technically a ‘Silver Pilgrimage’ as opposed to the journey to Kailasa—a ‘pilgrimage of Gold’) with his friend Tilaka, undergoes several adventures, meeting robbers and scholars, tyrants and sages and even a tree-dwelling demon on the way.

Arun Joshi’s recurrent theme is alienation in its different aspects, and his heroes are intensely self-centred persons prone to self-pity and escapism. In spite of their weaknesses, they are, however, genuine seekers who strive to grope towards a purpose in life and self-fulfillment. In his three novels, Joshi attempts to deal with three facets of the theme of alienation, in relation to self, the society around and humanity at large, respectively. Sindi Oberoi in *The Foreigner* (1968) is a born ‘foreigner’—a man alienated from all humanity. *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971) presents a protagonist alienated from the higher middle-class society in which he is born and brought up and in which he is compelled to live, though he finds in himself an over-powering urge to march to a different drum altogether.

Chaman Nahal is a novelist of painful odysseys presented in different contexts. In his first novel, *My True Faces* (1973), Kamal Kant, whose wife Malati has left him, goes in search of her throughout Delhi and its outskirts, but having found her in the end, realizes that their marriage is broken beyond repair. *Azadi* (1975), which won the Sahitya Akademi award for the year 1977, is a much more
ambitious undertaking. This account of the migration of Lala Kanshi Ram, a Sialkot grain merchant and his family to India at the time of the dismemberment of colonial India into two nations in 1947, is easily one of the most comprehensive fictional accounts of the Partition holocaust in Indian English literature.

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala (1927—) raises, as suggested in Chapter 1, a knotty problem for the historian of Indian English literature—viz., whether she can legitimately be called an Indian English writer. Born of Polish parents in Germany and educated in England, “Ruth Prawer married an Indian and has lived in India for more than twenty-four years. Jhabvala’s eight novels fall into two distinct and evenly matched groups—viz., comedies of urban middle class Indian life, especially in undivided Hindu families and ironic studies of the East-West encounter. The first group comprises To Whom She Will (1955), The Nature of Passion (1956), The Householder (1960) and Get Ready For Battle (1962); to the second belong Esmond in India (1958), A Backward Place (1965), A New Dominion (1973) and Heat and Dust (1975).

Kamala Markandaya (Purnaiah Taylor, 1924—) is an insider-outsider in that she is an expatriate, who has been living in England for a number of years. Surely, no traditional Indian village will allow so permissive a code of sexual morality. Some Inner Fury (1955) and Possession (1963) concentrate on Indo-British personal relationships. In the former, the love of Mira for Richard is denied fruition by the fury of the freedom movement which tears the lovers apart.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927—) is usually regarded as an exponent of the political novel, but politics is only one of her two major concerns. She herself has declared that each of her novels ‘more or less reflects the political era we are passing through’ and daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, Nayantara naturally had an upbringing in which politics was inevitably a strong ambience; but along with the obvious political theme, her fiction is also preoccupied with the modern Indian woman’s search for sexual freedom and self-realization. Of Sahgal’s five novels, the first, A Time To be Happy (1958) is a loose chronicle dealing with two north Indian families during the last stages of the freedom-struggle and the arrival of Independence.

Anita Desai (1937—), youngest of the major Indian English women novelists, is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind than in political and social realities. Maya in Cry, the Peacock (1963) is obsessed with death and haunted by an astrological prediction that her marriage is going to end in its fourth year, with the death of either wife or husband. Anita Desai unravels the tortuous involutions of sensibility with subtlety and finesse and her ability to evoke the changing aspects of Nature matched
with human moods is another of her assets, though her easy mastery of the language and her penchant for image and symbol occasionally result in preciosity and overwriting.

Minor fiction by women offers some authentic chronicles of social life in Hindu, Muslim and Pars households. Venu Chitale’s (Mrs Leela Khare) *In Transit* (1950) is an evocative picture of three generations of a Poona Brahmin joint family between the two World Wars. Two novels provide revealing glimpses into the lives of Muslim families: Zeenuth Futehally’s *Zohra* (1951), with Hyderabad in the Gandhian age as its setting, and Attiah Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column* (1961), a nostalgic account of aristocratic life in pre-Partition Lucknow. And Perin Bharucha’s *The Fire Worshippers* (1968) deals with Parsi life.

The post 1947 Indian English literature is rich in short story, biography, autobiography, history, religion, philosophy and criticism.

The 1970s and after saw a rich crop of Indian writers both in India and abroad. They are Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Kiran Nagarkar, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Aravind Adig, Farrukh Dhondy, and many more. The Indian diasporic writers are Bharati Mukherjee, C.B. Divakaruni, Jumpa Lahiri, Meena Alexander, and others. This body of writing is very rich in language, plot, characterization and experimentation.

**After Midnight:**

The 1980s witnessed a second coming for the Indian novel in English. Its messiah seems to have been Salman Rushdie. The appearance of *Midnight’s Children* in 1981 brought about a renaissance in Indian writing in English which has outdone that of the 1930s. Its influence, acknowledged by critics and novelists alike, has been apparent in numerous ways: the appearance of a certain post-modern playfulness, the turn to history, a new exuberance of language, the reinvention of allegory, the sexual frankness, even the prominent references to Bollywood, all seem to owe something to Rushdie’s novel. Nevertheless, to attribute everything to a single, personal intervention would be naive. The pretensions of the messianic critic are irrevocably deflated if he or she reads I. Allan Sealy’s account of the origins of his own first novel, *The Trotter-Nama*. Written but not published before *Midnights Children*, Sealy’s novel, like Rushdie’s, originally had a narrator born on the midnight hour of Indian independence. Although Sealy felt that he had to drop this specific idea when he read Rushdie’s novel, in the published versions of both stories the fate of the narrator still mirrors the fate of the nation. Sealy’s view of the convergence is that it represents ‘two writers responding to the same historical
moment. They have read the same book, but the book is India. India is dictating, the country is doing the “thinking. We do not write but are written.” The question which follows from Sealy’s statement is what is the India that is writing these texts? Various economic and social pressures have led to the end of the so-called Nehruvite consensus in India. The idea of unity within—so central to the years of nationalist struggle and the building of the new nation state—has been displaced by an urgent need to question the nature of that unity. The issue imagining the nation, the issue of the fate of the children of the midnight hour of independence, has become a pressing one throughout India. It is an issue which has been debated in all languages. The better novels in English of the past twenty years participate in this larger debate. If Rushdie ushered in a new era of Indian writing in English, it has to be acknowledged that he was more a sign of the times than their creator.

Contemporary novelists rarely attempt street-wise realism. More often they bring different languages into comic collision, testing the limits of communication between them, celebrating India’s linguistic diversity, and taking over the English language to meet the requirements of an Indian context, a perspective which receives perhaps its most explicit statement on the often-quoted opening page of Upamanyu Chaterjee’s English, August (1988): ‘Amazing mix . . . Hazaar fucked. Urdu and American . . . I’m sure nowhere else could language be mixed and spoken with such ease.’ Nevertheless, this kind of reshaping of the language is not entirely without its anxieties. In English, August, for instance, the promise of a novel written in a new kind of desi English rather fizzles out in favour of a continual self-conscious questioning of its own linguistic boundaries.

There is a suggestion that Nehru’s inclusive rhetoric was always a mask for an exclusive reality. In Futehally’s Tara Lane, for instance, Nehru’s promise that ‘all of us will stand as one’ is haunted by bad faith from the moment it is made.

Much more in tune, perhaps, with Rushdie’s comic sense of the lived complexities of Bombay’s hybrid culture is Ravan & Eddie (1995) by Kiran Nagarkar (b. 1949), one of the few novels which is set totally outside the middle classes. Nagarkar, like Rushdie before him, has worked in the advertising industry, but he has also had a career writing in an Indian language, Marathi, his novel Saat Sakkam Trechalis (1974) — subsequently published in translation as Seven Sixes are Forty-three — having enjoyed great critical acclaim. Itself originally begun in Marathi, Ravan & Eddie is set in a Bombay chawl and follows the growth of the two boys of the title whose relationship symbolises the tensions and divisions of India. Ravan is a Marathi-speaking Hindu.

Perhaps the most sustained response to the opportunities created by Rushdie’s preceded has come in Amitav Ghosh’s fiction. Originally from Calcutta, Ghosh (b. 1956) was the first of the band of
Stephanians to respond with gusto to the challenge of *Midnights Children*. Having completed postgraduate training at Oxford in Social Anthropology and currently living in New York, where he teaches, it comes as no surprise to find that Ghosh is a writer concerned with India’s place in larger international cultural networks.

The most impressive of Ghosh’s novels remains his second book, *The Shadow Lines* (1988), which with relations between the different arms of a prospering bhadralok family, the Datta-Chaudhuris, displaced from Dhaka to Calcutta by the Partition. Allan Sealy (b. 1951), another Stephanian, who turned from writing a doctoral thesis in Canada on Wilson Harris to produce *The Trotter-Nama* (1988). Sealy has since written several more books: *Hero* (1991); *From Yukon to Yucatan* (1994), a travelogue in which he returns to North America and turns the western gaze back on itself; and *The Everest Hotel* (1998). But his most striking achievement remains his epic chronicle of a family of Anglo-Indians, a community whose presence troubles the imagining of the nation in terms of the expression of some homogeneous cultural authenticity, an idea which the novel suggests is derived from a colonial mentality. As with Saleem in Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, the reader is always aware of the struggle of Eugene, the narrator, to include everything in his family chronicle. Indeed, Eugene explicitly contrasts his inclusive narrative method, the method of the ‘nam’ or chronicle, with that of European historiography.

A similar idea of using traditional Indian literary forms for the purposes of historical narration underpins Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* (1989). Tharoor (b. 1956) is another international Indian who went on from St. Stephen’s to a career with the United Nations. Perhaps rather too relentlessly, his novel adapts the story of the *Mahabharata* to an allegory of modern Indian history. As the tongue-in-check title suggests, *The Great Indian Novel* takes an irreverent view of the development of modern India which is in tune with the scepticism of many recent historical novels.

1995 saw two new novelists address the issue of translating Indian history into the novel: Mukul Kesavan (b. 1957) and Vikram Chandra (b. 1961). For Kesavan, an academic historian by profession, the question of how to write a national history without reproducing the categories of colonialism is an explicitly pressing problem. Drawing on his own research into the relationship between the Muslim population and the nationalist movement, *Looking through Glass* (1995) looks at a community which is often erased from nationalist histories and in the process offers a different, less heroic perspective on the closing years of the struggle for independence.

Chandra is certainly another writer who, like his novel, floats between continents, dividing his time between the United States, where he attended graduate school, and Bombay. The story of *Red Earth*
and Pouring Rain revolves around the fate of Sanjay, reincarnate as a monkey that Abhay shoots for stealing his new jeans from the washing line.

In imposing contrast to the ways in which so many of the recent novels draw attention to history as itself a story stands the classic realism of Vikram Seth’s mammoth A Suitable Boy (1993). This is set in the early 1950s, formative years of the Nehru period, with the passing of the zamindari abolition legislation and the first election of the post-independence era looming.

Be that as it may, women writers have recently been having their own say about who constitutes the nation. A series of novels, including The Dark Holds no Terrors (1980), Roots and Shadow (1983), That Long Silence (1988), and Small Remedies (2000) have established Shashi Deshpande (b. 1938) as perhaps the leading writer who deals in a direct way with the situation of women in urban, middle-class life. Educated in Bombay and Bangalore, where she lives, Deshpande turned to writing relatively late after bringing up her children and training as a journalist in the early 1970s. Her novel The Binding Vine (1992) is filtered through the fears, hopes and uncertainties of an urban middle-class consciousness.

Gita Hariharan (b. 1954) has not adopted Deshpande’s realist mode, though there are thematic similarities in their fiction. Hariharan came to writing after a career as an editor and journalist and shows an interest in literary experimentation in a less epic mode than many of her male counterparts. Whereas nearly all of those novelists who have toyed with the epic tradition have laid some kind of claim to the cultural authority of the Mahabharata, Hariharan’s A Thousand Faces of Nights (1992) and The Ghosts of Vasu Master (1994) are concerned with rewriting folk tales and children’s stories.

A similar struggle to fashion female autonomy in the context of received narratives faces Ammu, the heroine of Arundhati Roy’s 1997 Booker-Prize-winning novel, The God of Small Things. Roy (b. 1960), who trained as an architect and has also written film scripts, is on her mother’s side from a Syrian Christian family and was brought up in South India. Jon Mee adds,

If it has sometimes acted as the instrument of a globalising culture, moving over the surface of Indian culture without acknowledging its privileged position; or; alternatively, rethematising India as an endless narrative possibility, an infinitely open market, then equally it has been used to situate modernity in relation to India. It has been deployed to call the globalisation of culture to local account, to foreground the difficulties of translation and the possibilities of dialogue. Indian English fiction of the 1980s and 1990s, in short, force us to more fully think through the consequences of regarding English as one of India’s languages. (Mee 336)
Salman Rushdie’s Life and Works:

Salman Rushdie (born 19th June 1947) is a British subject now. He may be described as Indian-British writer, more so, a controversial novelist. His first novel was *Grimus* (1975). His second novel, *Midnight’s Children* (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981 and was deemed to be "the best novel of all winners" on two separate occasions, marking the 25th and the 40th anniversary of the prize.

Salman Rushdie’s third novel *Shame* (1983) is based on *The Thousand and One Nights*, and *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayam*. It is an allegory about Pakistan.

Salman Rushdie’s fourth novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988) is a critique of Islam, and it provoked controversy in Muslim countries.

Death threats were made against Rushdie, including a fatwā calling for his assassination issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, on 14 February 1989. The British government put Rushdie under police protection.


In 1983 Rushdie was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the UK’s senior literary organisation. He was appointed Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France in January 1999. In June 2007, Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature. In 2008, The Times ranked him thirteenth on its list of the 50 greatest British writers since 1945.


Rushdie was born in Bombay, then British India, into a Muslim family of Kashmiri descent. He is the son of Anis Ahmed Rushdie, a Cambridge-educated lawyer-turned-businessman, and Negin Bhatt, a teacher. Rushdie has three sisters. He wrote in his 2012 memoir that his father adopted the name Rushdie in honour of Averroes (Ibn Rushd). Rushdie was educated at Cathedral and John Connon School in Bombay, Rugby School in Warwickshire, and King's College, University of Cambridge, where he read
Rushdie briefly worked as a television writer while living in Pakistan with his family before returning to England to work as a copywriter for the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, where he came up with "irresistibubble" for Aero and "Naughty but Nice" for cream cakes, and for the agency Ayer Barker, for whom he wrote the memorable line "That'll do nicely" for American Express. Collaborating with the musician Ronnie Bond, Rushdie wrote the words for an advertising record on behalf of the now defunct Burnley Building Society which was recorded at Good Earth Studios, London. The song was called "The Best Dreams" and was sung by George Chandler. It was while he was at Ogilvy that he wrote Midnight's Children, before becoming a full-time writer.

Writing Career:

Salman Rushdie’s first novel Grimus (1975) is a science fiction work, and it was neglected.

Rushdie’s next novel, Midnight's Children (1981), catapulted him to literary notability. This work won the 1981 Booker Prize and, in 1993 and 2008, was awarded the Best of the Bookers as the best novel to have received the prize during its first 25 and 40 years. Midnight's Children follows the life of a child, born at the stroke of midnight as India gained its independence, who is endowed with special powers and a connection to other children born at the dawn of a new and tumultuous age in the history of the Indian sub-continent and the birth of the modern nation of India. The character of Saleem Sinai has been compared to Rushdie. However, the author has refuted the idea of having written any of his characters as autobiographical, stating, “People assume that because certain things in the character are drawn from your own experience, it just becomes you. In that sense, I’ve never felt that I’ve written an autobiographical novel.”

Rushdie wrote Shame (1983), in which he depicts the political turmoil in Pakistan, basing his characters on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq. Shame won France’s Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (Best Foreign Book) and was a close runner-up for the Booker Prize. Both these works of postcolonial literature are characterised by a style of magic realism and the immigrant outlook that Rushdie is very conscious of as a member of the Kashmiri diaspora.

Kashmiri Diaspora:
Heavy taxes under the Sikh rule, coupled with famine and starvation, caused many Kashmiri peasants to migrate to the plains of Punjab. These claims, made in Kashmiri histories, were corroborated by European travelers. When one such European traveler, Moorcroft, left the Valley in 1823, about 500 emigrants accompanied him across the Pir Panjal Pass. The 1833 famine resulted in many people leaving the Kashmir Valley and migrating to the Punjab, with the majority of weavers leaving Kashmir. Weavers settled down for generations in the cities of Punjab such as Jammu and Nurpur. The 1833 famine led to a large influx of Kashmiris into Amritsar. Kashmir’s Muslims in particular suffered and had to leave Kashmir in large numbers, while Hindus were not much affected. Sikh rule in Kashmir ended in 1846 and was followed by the rule of Dogra Hindu maharajahs who ruled Kashmir as part of their princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Muslims faced severe oppression under Hindu rule.

A large number of Muslim Kashmiris migrated from the Kashmir Valley to the Punjab due to conditions in the princely state such as famine, extreme poverty and harsh treatment of Kashmiri Muslims by the Dogra Hindu regime. According to the 1911 Census there were 177,549 Kashmiri Muslims in the Punjab. With the inclusion of Kashmiri settlements in NWFP this figure rose to 206,180.

Scholar Ayesha Jalal states that Kashmiris faced discrimination in the Punjab as well. Kashmiris settled for generations in the Punjab were unable to own land, including the family of Muhammad Iqbal. Scholar Chitralekha Zutshi states that Kashmiri Muslims settled in the Punjab retained emotional and familial links to Kashmir and felt obliged to struggle for the freedom of their brethren in the Valley.

According to the 1921 Census the total Kashmiri population in Punjab was 169,761. However, the Census report stated that only 3% of Kashmiris settled in Punjab retained their Kashmiri language. The number of people speaking Kashmiri in 1901 was 8,523 but had decreased to 7,190 in 1911. By 1921 the number of people speaking Kashmiri in Punjab had fallen to 4,690. The 1921 Census report stated that this fact showed that the Kashmiris who had settled in Punjab had adopted the Punjabi language of their neighbours. In contrast, the 1881 Census of Punjab had shown that there were 49,534 speakers of the Kashmiri language in the Punjab. The 1881 Census had recorded the number of Kashmiris in the Punjab as 179,020[19] while the 1891 Census recorded the Kashmiri population as 225,307 but the number of Kashmiri speakers recorded in the 1891 Census was 28,415.

Common krams (surnames) found amongst the Kashmiri Muslims who migrated from the Valley to the Punjab include Bat (Butt), Dar, Lun (Lone), Wain (Wani), Mir and Shaikh. The 1881 Census of the Punjab recorded these major Kashmiri sub-divisions in the Punjab along with their
population. The Bat (Butt) tribe numbered 24,463, the Dar tribe numbered 16,215, the Lun (Lone) tribe numbered 4,848, the Wain (Wani) tribe numbered 7,419, the Mir sub-division numbered 19,855 and the Sheikhs numbered 14,902. Watorfield also noted the presence of the Bat (Butt) and Dar castes amongst the Kashmiris of the town of Gujrat in Punjab.

The Buts/ Butts of Punjab were originally Brahmin migrants from Kashmir during 1878 famine.

Azad Kashmir: During the 1990s around 35,000 Kashmiris fled from Indian administered Kashmir to Pakistan, which as of 2010 had not granted citizenship to up to 40 percent of the refugees. Ms. Lucas suggests that the Pakistani government has been slow in providing citizenship to the refugees because doing so might nullify their right to self-determination.

Rushdie’s most controversial work, *The Satanic Verses*, was published in 1988.

In addition to books, Rushdie has published many short stories, including those collected in *East, West* (1994). *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, a family epic ranging over some 100 years of India’s history was published in 1995. *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) presents an alternative history of modern rock music. The song of the same name by U2 is one of many song lyrics included in the book; hence Rushdie is credited as the lyricist. He also wrote *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* in 1990.

Rushdie has had a string of commercially successful and critically acclaimed novels. His 2005 novel *Shalimar the Clown* received, in India, the prestigious Hutch Crossword Book Award, and was, in the UK, a finalist for the Whitbread Book Awards. It was shortlisted for the 2007 International Dublin Literary Award.

In his 2002 non-fiction collection *Step Across This Line*, he professes his admiration for the Italian writer Italo Calvino and the American writer Thomas Pynchon, among others. His early influences included Jorge Luis Borges, Mikhail Bulgakov, Lewis Carroll, Günter Grass, and James Joyce. Rushdie was a personal friend of Angela Carter’s and praised her highly in the foreword of her collection *Burning your Boats*.

Rushdie’s novel *Luka and the Fire of Life* was published in November 2010. Earlier that year, he announced that he was writing his memoirs, entitled *Joseph Anton: A Memoir*, which was published in September 2012.
In 2012, Salman Rushdie became one of the first major authors to embrace Booktrack (a company that synchronises ebooks with customised soundtracks), when he published his short story "In the South" on the platform.

Rushdie has quietly mentored younger Indian (and ethnic-Indian) writers, influenced an entire generation of Indo-Anglian writers, and is an influential writer in postcolonial literature. He has received many plaudits for his writings, including the European Union's Aristeion Prize for Literature, the Premio Grinzane Cavour (Italy), and the Writer of the Year Award in Germany and many of literature's highest honours. Rushdie was the President of PEN American Center from 2004 to 2006 and founder of the PEN World Voices Festival.


Rushdie in 2007 was a writer in residence at Emory University in Atlanta Georgia; he was elected a Foreign Hon Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He joined the New York University Journalism Faculty as a distinguished writer in residence in 2015.

Rushdie likes movie world. He had a cameo appearance in the film Bridget Jone’s Diary. He appeared in the film based on Elinor Lipman’s novel Then She Found Me. Thus Rushdie’s activities are many and diverse.

Rushdie collaborated on the screenplay for the cinematic adaptation of his novel Midnight's Children with director Deepa Mehta. The film was also called Midnight's Children. Seema Biswas, Shabana Azmi, Nandita Das, and Irrfan Khan participated in the film. The film was released in 2012.

Rushdie announced in June 2011 that he had written the first draft of a script for a new television series for the US cable network Showtime. The new series, to be called The Next People, will be, according to Rushdie, “a sort of paranoid science-fiction series, people disappearing and being replaced by other people." The idea of a television series was suggested by his US agents who felt that television would allow him more creative control than feature film.”

Rushdie is a member of advisory boards in several places.

The Satanic Verses and the fatwa:
The publication of *The Satanic Verses* in September 1988 caused immediate controversy in the Islamic world because of what was seen by some to be an irreverent depiction of Muhammad. The title refers to a disputed Muslim tradition that is related in the book. According to this tradition, Muhammad (Mahound in the book) added verses (Ayah) to the Qur'an accepting three goddesses who used to be worshipped in Mecca as divine beings. According to the legend, Muhammad later revoked the verses, saying the devil tempted him to utter these lines to appease the Meccans (hence the "Satanic" verses). However, the narrator reveals to the reader that these disputed verses were actually from the mouth of the Archangel Gibreel. The book was banned in many countries with large Muslim communities (13 in total: Iran, India, Bangladesh, Sudan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Thailand, Tanzania, Indonesia, Singapore, Venezuela, and Pakistan).

In January 1989 Rushdie wrote an article in *The Observer*, respecting Mohammed. He told that his novel speaks of the stress on his migration. Iran’s leader Ayatollah Khomeini in February 1989 declared a fatwa on Rushdie. He said that the book is ‘blasphemous against Islam’. Soon the UK Government provided him protection.

Rushdie said, "I wish I had written a more critical book." Later, he wrote that he was "proud, then and always", of that statement; while he did not feel his book was especially critical of Islam.

The publication of the book and the fatwā sparked violence around the world, with bookstores firebombed. Muslim communities in several nations in the West held public rallies, burning copies of the book. Several people associated with translating or publishing the book were attacked, seriously injured, and even killed. Many more people died in riots. Despite the danger posed by the fatwā, Rushdie made a public appearance at London’s Wembley Stadium on 11 August 1993 during a concert by U2.

A former bodyguard to Rushdie, Ron Evans, planned to publish a book recounting the behaviour of the author during the time he was in hiding. Evans claimed that Rushdie tried to profit financially from the fatwa and was suicidal, but Rushdie dismissed the book as a "bunch of lies." A memoir of his years of hiding, *Joseph Anton*, was released on 18 September 2012. Joseph Anton was Rushdie’s secret alias.

The fatwa is still in effect. On 3 August 1989, while Mustafa Mahmoud Mazeh was priming a book bomb loaded with RDX explosive in a hotel in Paddington, Central London, the bomb exploded prematurely, destroying two floors of the hotel and killing Mazeh. A previously unknown Lebanese
group, the Organization of the Mujahidin of Islam, said he died preparing an attack "on the apostate Rushdie".

Now this Mazeh is made a popular martyr.

In 1990, soon after the publication of The Satanic Verses, a Pakistani film entitled International Gorillay (International Guerillas) was released that depicted Rushdie as a villain plotting to cause the downfall of Pakistan by opening a chain of casinos and discos in the country; he is ultimately killed at the end of the movie. The film was popular with Pakistani audiences, and it "presents Rushdie as a Rambo-like figure pursued by four Pakistani guerrillas".

Rushdie was due to appear at the Jaipur Literature Festival in January 2012. However, he later cancelled his event appearance, and a further tour of India at the time citing a possible threat to his life as the primary reason. Meanwhile, Indian authors Ruchir Joshi, Jeet Thayil, Hari Kunzru and Amitava Kumar abruptly left the festival, and Jaipur, after reading excerpts from Rushdie's banned novel at the festival. The four were urged to leave by organizers as there was a real possibility they would be arrested.

A proposed video link session between Rushdie and the Jaipur Literature Festival was cancelled at the last minute after the government pressured the festival to stop it. Rushdie returned to India to address a conference in Delhi on 16 March 2012.

In 2010 Anwar al-Awlaki published an Al-Qaeda hit list in Inspire magazine, including Rushdie along with other figures claimed to have insulted Islam, including Ayaan Hirsi Ali, cartoonist Lars Vilks and three Jyllands-Posten staff members: Kurt Westergaard, Carsten Juste, and Flemming Rose. The list was later expanded to include Stéphane "Charb" Charbonnier, who was murdered in a terror attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris, along with 11 other people. After the attack, Al-Qaeda called for more killings.

Rushdie expressed his support for Charlie Hebdo. He said, "I stand with Charlie Hebdo, as we all must, to defend the art of satire, which has always been a force for liberty and against tyranny, dishonesty and stupidity ... religious totalitarianism has caused a deadly mutation in the heart of Islam and we see the tragic consequences in Paris today."

Rushdie was knighted for services to literature in the Queen's Birthday Honours on 16 June 2007. He remarked, "I am thrilled and humbled to receive this great honour, and am very grateful that my work has been recognised in this way." In response to his knighthood, many nations with Muslim
majorities protested. Parliamentarians of several of these countries condemned the action, and Iran and Pakistan called in their British envoys to protest formally.

Rushdie came from a liberal Muslim family although he now identifies as an atheist. In 1989, in an interview following the fatwa, Rushdie said that he was in a sense a lapsed Muslim, though "shaped by Muslim culture more than any other." In another interview the same year, he said, "My point of view is that of a secular human being. I do not believe in supernatural entities, whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim or Hindu."

Rushdie’s books often focus on the role of religion in society and conflicts between faiths and between the religious and those of no faith.

Rushdie advocates the application of higher criticism, pioneered during the late 19th century. Rushdie called for a reform in Islam in a guest opinion piece printed in *The Washington Post* and *The Times* in mid-August 2005:

> What is needed is a move beyond tradition, nothing less than a reform movement to bring the core concepts of Islam into the modern age, a Muslim Reformation to combat not only the jihadist ideologues but also the dusty, stifling seminaries of the traditionalists, throwing open the windows to let in much-needed fresh air. (...) It is high time, for starters, that Muslims were able to study the revelation of their religion as an event inside history, not supernaturally above it. (...) Broad-mindedness is related to tolerance; open-mindedness is the sibling of peace.

> We need all of us, whatever our background, to constantly examine the stories inside which and with which we live. We all live in stories, so called grand narratives. Nation is a story. Family is a story. Religion is a story. Community is a story. We all live within and with these narratives. And it seems to me that a definition of any living vibrant society is that you constantly question those stories. That you constantly argue about the stories. In fact the arguing never stops. The argument itself is freedom. It’s not that you come to a conclusion about it. And through that argument you change your mind sometimes. ... And that’s how societies grow. When you can’t retell for yourself the stories of your life then you live in a prison. ... Somebody else controls the story. ... Now it seems to me that we have to say that a problem in contemporary Islam is the inability to re-examine the ground narrative of the religion. ... The fact that in Islam it is very difficult to do this, makes it difficult to think new thoughts. (Wikipedia 8-9)
In the 1980s in the United Kingdom, he was a supporter of the Labour Party and championed measures to end racial discrimination and alienation of immigrant youth and racial minorities.

Rushdie supported the 1999 NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, leading the leftist Tariq Ali to label Rushdie and other "warrior writers" as "the belligerati". He was supportive of the US-led campaign to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan, which began in 2001, but was a vocal critic of the 2003 war in Iraq. He has stated that while there was a "case to be made for the removal of Saddam Hussein", US unilateral military intervention was unjustifiable.

In the wake of the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in March 2006—which many considered an echo of the death threats and fatwā that followed publication of The Satanic Verses in 1989—Rushdie signed the manifesto Together Facing the New Totalitarianism, a statement warning of the dangers of religious extremism.

In 2006, Rushdie stated that he supported comments by the then-Leader of the House of Commons Jack Straw, who criticised the wearing of the niqab (a veil that covers all of the face except the eyes). Rushdie stated that his three sisters would never wear the veil. He said, "I think the battle against the veil has been a long and continuing battle against the limitation of women, so in that sense I'm completely on Straw's side."

Marxist critic Terry Eagleton, a former admirer of Rushdie's work, attacked him, saying he "cheered on the Pentagon's criminal ventures in Iraq and Afghanistan". At an appearance at 92nd Street Y, Rushdie expressed his view on copyright when answering a question whether he had considered copyright law a barrier to free speech.

Rushdie supported the election of Democrat Barack Obama for the U.S. presidency and has often criticized the Republican party. In Indian politics, Rushdie has criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party and its Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rushdie has been married four times. He was married to his first wife Clarissa Luard from 1976 to 1987 and fathered a son, Zafar (born 1979). He left her in the mid-'80s for the Australian writer Robyn Davidson, to whom he was introduced by their mutual friend Bruce Chatwin. His second wife was the American novelist Marianne Wiggins; they were married in 1988 and divorced in 1993. His third wife, from 1997 to 2004, was Elizabeth West; they have a son, Milan (born 1997). In 2004, he married the
Indian American Padma Lakshmi, an actress, model, and host of the American reality-television show Top Chef. The marriage ended on 2 July 2007. In 2008, Rushdie was linked to Indian actress Riya Sen.

Now Rushdie lives in New York.
References:


