NATIVISATION OF ENGLISH IN INDIAN ENGLISH
FICTION OF THE '80s & '90s

ABSTRACT
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BY
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Abstract

ABSTRACT

The present work analyzes the nativization process of English in India and in Indian English fiction, in particular, in the post colonial phase. Nativization expanded the language, moulded and refashioned it so much so that after all this time it has its own identity and place in the linguistic world. The resistance against imperialistic attitudes and the need to establish personal as well as communal identities in postcolonial India resulted in a series of transformations to the English language. As a result, Indian English novelists developed their own sociological, linguistic and literary expressions.

The linguistic variations, in the novels of post-colonial Indian English novelists, are products of the interaction between the language and the society in which it is used, the different social requirements it serves, the new cultural and ideological load it carries, and the features of the contact languages it assimilates. English, in post-colonial India seems to have served two purposes: language of imperialism and language of resistance. The process of domesticating English for localized purposes demands that the non-native bilingual postcolonial writer is able to express his thought patterns in a culture-specific language within the context of situation.

The process of nativization in India would not have been complete had there been no linguistic explorations. These have contributed immensely in giving
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English a local colour. Linguistic innovations, no doubt, play a vital role in bringing out the Indianness in Indian English fiction. Some of the important linguistic devices which have been used by the post-colonial Indian English novelist include code mixing, code switching, literal translation of Hindi-Urdu expressions into English, hybridization, the use of collocations and compounds, transfer of context, the adaptation of stylistic and discoursal strategies available to the bilingual and many others. These distinctive features of linguistic exploration may be seen as limiting or extending the text, depending on how one looks at it and what one considers as linguistic innovations. We can see nativization occurring across all levels of social discourse.

When we talk of Indian English literature we find that fiction has remained to be the most popular of the literary genres. Indian novelists of the post-colonial phase were successful in making their own distinct identity by nativizing the language and giving it an authentic Indian colour. We may call it the Indianness of Indian English fiction. Indianness, is the depiction of India in its entirety, the unraveling of the mysteries of the Indian consciousness, feeling the Indian sensibility in the novelist’s thought and expression, writing in an idiom which is striking for the Indian as well as global readers.

The historians of Indian English fiction might date its rise to the late 19th century when writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Rajmohan’s Wife), Toru Dutt (Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden), Lal Behari Day (Bengal
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Peasant Life) etc. emerged on the Indian literary scene but it was only in the 20th century that it started gaining prominence. The 1930s saw the rise of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan as major Indian English novelists. The novels which they have written during the pre-independence period reflect the social, economic and political condition of that time. They were the novelists who discarded the diction used by the earlier writers and used language to evoke an Indian sensibility. R. K. Narayan wrote in the language of ordinary Indian folks. His style is simple and the intricacies of Indian life are described in his novels. Raja Rao’s contribution to Indian English fiction can never be forgotten. His novel Kanthapura has remained to be the most discussed novel of the pre-independence India. It is a novel remarkable for its treatment of Indianness in terms of its story telling qualities.

The new generation of novelists like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry and many others have made successful thematic and linguistic experiments in their novels. Their diction and style are different from the diction and style of the novelists of the early part of the 20th century. The epoch making entry of Salman Rushdie with his Booker prize winner The Midnight’s Children made the Indian writers more confident. The novel was seen as the foundational text for a new kind of post-colonial novel, one in which a migrant, diasporic, cosmopolitan consciousness dominates. It brought Indian English fiction onto
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the international literary scene and opened new worlds of possibility for re-imagining and representing enabling relationships between individual and nation. Indian English novel, which was finding itself in stagnant water in both form and content got a new lease of life with the publication of *Midnight's Children*. We can easily notice that the novels written during the 1980s and the 1990s had a regenerated focus on Indian history. The novelists interpreted official versions of history to serve their own purposes. It was the time when the voices of Indian writers were being heard much more loudly than they were heard during the colonial period.

Rushdie set the tone for the hybridization of English with Indian vernacular languages. Rushdie was followed by novelists such as Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry and many others, who were successful in decolonizing the English language by giving it an authentic Indian voice. They found that Rushdie's pattern of narration allowed them a new freedom of both form and content. The novels which got published during the eighties and nineties were clearly influenced by *Midnight's Children* in terms of language, style and structure. The social and political events and their impact on the individual lives and families provided the thematic lineament for the post colonial Indian English novelists. With Rushdie, we find Indian English fiction making a bold departure from the
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Amitav Ghosh is one of the major novelists of the post-Rushdie era. He is a novelist of immense repute. His novels deal with the dissonance in the human psyche, with good and evil, with such primal things as love, hate, animosity, vengeance, violence, age old family feud, the desire for union, the need for separation, the quest for normalcy, the need for renunciation, with something incalculable in each one of us which may at any moment rise to the surface and disturb our normal balance, with mysteries, uncertainties, complexities of human existence and relationship. Nationalism, political freedom and international relations are the major themes of Amitav Ghosh’s first two novels, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*. In *The Circle of Reason* (1986), Amitav Ghosh talks about unity and diversity, in weaving which brought welcome changes all over the world, in history which “is hope as well as despair”—in a living belief that the world of greed and destruction may be transformed by Reason, that Reason may make it one and bless it with diversity. *The Shadow Lines* (1990) is a moving monumental novel in which Amitav Ghosh appears to have put his very soul. The novel emanates from memories, intricate relationships. We see Ghosh pointing out at the absurdity of drawing lines between peoples and nations and at the same time also mentioning that the habit of drawing lines however, futile and fatuous it may
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be, is, consistent with human nature. Perhaps, it is difficult, well nigh impossible for human beings to get rid of it. The Shadow Line we draw between people and nations has been a source of terrifying violence. It is one of the great themes of our times. Upamanyu Chatterjee, another gifted novelist of the post-colonial phase, in his first novel, *English August: An Indian Story* (1988), throws adequate light on the plight of the urban educated youth and the predicaments of those people who are highly influenced by the western ways of life. Shashi Tharoor, in *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), allegorizes the story of modern India in terms of the epic *Mahabharata* and question the very notion of using the authority of tradition to offer certitudes in the apparent chaos and disorder of the present times. Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* moves around the social condition of India during the fifties. The novel is an epic account of India at its early stage of growth after independence. Seth writes about nation building from India’s middle class point of view. Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey* (1991) is set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pak war of 1971. The novel delves into the human predicament of an individual. Mistry’s second novel, *A Fine Balance*, gives a realistic portrayal of the period of Emergency and its impact on the common people. The novel can also be read for its treatment of the layers of socio-political irregularities and caste aberrations that generate a society of anarchy.
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In the light of the above observations on the nativisation of English in Indian English fiction, this study will make an attempt to assess and analyze the liberating effect of nativisation of English in Indian English fiction of the post-colonial phase, especially the fiction of the ‘80s and ‘90s. The therapeutic effect, nativization had on English fiction can be understood by having a close and careful reading of Rushdie and his followers.

Chapter One will be the Introduction. The chapter will reflect on the important issues related to nativization which will be discussed in the later chapters. It will act as a foreword to the thesis. It will also show that by nativizing the English language, Indian English novelists have created their own language to affirm their own distinct identity. How nativisation expanded the English language in India, moulded and refashioned it and got it accepted all over the world are issues which will be discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Two will give an overall idea on the term nativization. How nativization expanded, moulded and re-defined English language are some of the major points to be discussed in the chapter at length. The debate between Standard English and native English, understanding of the post-colonial English, the Indianness in Indian English fiction, the important pre-independence Indian English novelists and their contributions, the rise of the new generation of novelists, thematic and linguistic exfoliation are the other relevant issues to be discussed in the chapter.
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Chapter Three will look into the linguistic exploration in Indian English fiction. True, Rushdie changed the image of Indian English literature with his *Midnight’s Children* but there were and there are novelists who have contributed in keeping Indian English literature’s head high. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, G.V.Desani are the novelists of the pre-independence era whose contributions cannot be forgotten. The chapter will discuss on the important novels of the major novelists of the colonial times and post-colonial phase.

Chapter Four will have a look at the narrative techniques and thematic exfoliation of the Indian English novelists of the post colonial phase. The major novelists of the ‘80s and ‘90s, who have made valuable contributions in the field of post colonial English fiction and their novels, will be analyzed. We have noticed that there is a change in the narrative techniques of the post-colonial phase. How Rushdie and his formidable heirs are different from the earlier novelists, how their narration shows a shift from colonial mindset are some of the key features to be discussed in this chapter by analyzing some of the major novels of the 80s and 90s.

Chapter Five, the concluding chapter will aspire to summarize the thought content of the earlier chapters. It will focus at the work in its entirety. It will also concentrate on summarizing and analyzing some of the major novels of the pre-independence era and the post-colonial period to show the narrative and linguistic competence of the Indian English novelists.
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For
Rayyan
Certificate

This is to certify that the Ph.D thesis entitled "Nativisation of English in Indian English Fiction of the 80s & 90s." submitted by Mr. Sohail Ahmed research scholar in the Department of Linguistics is his original research work and have been written under my direct supervision.

(Prof. A.R. Fatihi)
Supervisor
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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

The soil of art and literature in India has never been barren like its natural earth. When the British brought English language to this nation, they were least aware of the fact that they were opening up a new field for the Indian literary artists to venture into and show their skill in a totally new turf that was previously unknown to them. They learnt it, embraced it and finally owned it to the extent that they could compare to the natives in their sheer mastery of the literary art.

1.2.1 World Englishes

It is a matter of everyone’s knowledge that just a few centuries ago, English was spoken by just five to seven million people on one, relatively small island, and the language consisted of dialects spoken by monolinguals. Today there are more non-native than native users of English, and English has become the linguistic key used for opening borders: it is a global medium with local identities and messages (Kachru 1997: 11, 14). English has become a world language, spoken by at least 750 million people. It is more widely spoken and written than any other language, even Latin, has ever been. It can, indeed, be said to be the first truly global language. English is nowadays the dominant or official language in over 60 countries.
Kachru, for instance (1997:68-69), states the increase in the use of English in Asia as "overwhelming": at present, the estimated population using English in Asia adds up to 350 million. India is the third largest English-using population in the world, after the USA and the UK. Literatures in English are nowadays recognized as part of the national literatures, and English is also recognized in the over-all language policy of the nation.

The language has penetrated deeply in the society, which has, in its turn, resulted in several varieties of English in India. The development of those new varieties is connected with historical and social factors. The new Englishes have all their own contexts of function and usage, and they have also, in their turn, affected the native varieties of English.

Indian English is used mainly by Indians whose native language it is not. It is a minority language, but yet a language of national affairs, and its status is often called into question by, as Bailey puts it, "not only by foreigners with their ideas of proper English, but also by Indians who remain ambivalent about its distinctive features and uncertain about its future" (Bailey 1991: 145). In fact, many of transplanted kinds of English are so attuned to the idea of a foreign standard of propriety that their independence remains partial.

The emergence of these new varieties has raised questions concerning the power of English language, questions of identity and new pragmatics of the
language in new, foreign surroundings. The spread of English across different cultures and languages has meant the diversification of English, which, in turn, raises questions about the standardization of English.

Braj Kachru has visualized the spread of English around the world as three concentric circles representing different ways in which the language has been acquired and is currently used.

The Inner Circle refers to the traditional historical and sociolinguistic bases of English in the areas where it is the primary language (native or first language; UK, Ireland, Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand). The Outer Circle comprises regions colonized by Britain; the spread of English in non-native settings, where the language has become part of the country's chief institutions, and plays an important "second language" role in a multilingual setting (India, Singapore, Malawi). The Expanding Circle involves nations which recognize the importance of English as an international language, but they do not have the history of colonization, nor does English have any special status in their language policy. In these areas, English is primarily a foreign language.

The term "new Englishes" is used for the varieties which have developed in the Outer Circle, have been transplanted and, therefore, can also be called "diaspora varieties". In a historical and linguistic sense, these varieties are not new. They are called "new" because it is only recently that they have been linguistically,
and literature wise, recognized and institutionalized, although they have a long history of acculturation in geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts different from the English of the Inner Circle. There is a decline of competence from educated English to "broken" English (which is considerably mixed with local languages).

1.2.2 The Power of English

Kachru has discussed the power of English in many of his writings (e.g. Kachru 1986c). According to Kachru, questions about language and power go beyond linguistics into history, sociology, attitude studies, politics and economic considerations. The power of language is intimately connected with societal power. It can be manifested by using persuasion, regulation, inducement or force to add a code to a speech community or by the suppression of a particular language variety and the elevation of another.

There are two hypotheses concerning language power: the intrinsic-power hypothesis and the acquired-power hypothesis. The first one claims that English would intrinsically possess certain linguistic characteristics which would make it a preferred language for international purposes (e.g. Jespersen 1905, quoted in Kachru 1986c). This position can, according to Kachru, to some seem similar to claims of racial superiority. The second hypothesis emphasizes the ways in which a language acquires power, and thus it is also easier to understand.
This is a fact that English has spread as a result of exploitation and colonisation. It is notable that, especially in many ex-colonies of Britain, English is still the language of exclusive social elite.

Kachru (1986c: 128-129) has given various reasons for which languages are used in a society. They can be used to expand the speech community, as a vehicle of cultural or religious enlightenment to deculturize people from their own tradition (to the "civilizing process" also belonged distancing from native cultures: the colonizers wanted to introduce European literature to the natives, at the same time remaining ignorant of their indigenous literatures), to gain economic advantage, to control domains of knowledge and information, and for deception. The following statement by Charles Grant clearly demonstrates the attitudes of the British Raj in India (1831-1832; quoted in Kachru 1986c: 128):

The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them would prove the best remedy for their disorders.

The most important reason for the success of English is, according to Kachru (1986c:129-132), naturally the historical role of England as a colonial power. In India, for example, the political power naturally attributed a power to the language of the Raj (called the linguistic elitism strategy), and it also became a symbol of political power. English came to be the language of the legal system,
higher education, pan-regional administrative network, science and technology, trade and commerce - either because the indigenous languages were not equipped for these roles and English provided for a convenient vocabulary, or because the use of English was considered prestigious and powerful. English became gradually a major tool for acquiring knowledge in the sciences and the humanities. It has come to represent modernization and development, and, as a link language, it has acquired intranational roles over the years.

Linguistic power can be manifested by using one of the following power strategies: persuasion, regulation, inducement and force. Kachru (1986c:123-127) has listed as examples of linguistic power suppression of a particular language (variety) and the elevation of another. Strategies can include crude linguistic power (e.g. the imposition of Japanese on the Koreans and the Malays during World War II), indirect psychological pressure (e.g. claims of "Other-World" power) and pragmatic power.

Kachru (1987:222) lists also some other reasons for the dominance of English around the world: its propensity for acquiring new identities, its power of assimilation, its adaptability to "decolonization" as a language, its manifestation in a range of lects, and its provision of a flexible medium for literary and other types of creativity across languages and cultures.
1.2.3 THE PARAMETERS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE POWER OF ENGLISH

At present, English dominates functional domains in the widest possible register range. Kachru (1986c: 130) has presented some parameters of the power of English (which can also be understood as individual motivations for learning the language): Demographic and numerical Unprecedented spread across cultures and languages; on practically every continent Functional Provides access to most important scientific, technological, and cross-cultural domains of knowledge and interaction Attitudinal Symbolizes - certainly to a large group across cultures - one or more of the following: neutrality, liberalism, status and progressivism Accessibility Provides intranational accessibility in the Outer Circle and international mobility across regions (cf. "link language" and "complementary language") Pluricentricity has resulted in the nativisation and acculturation of the language. These two are, then, responsible for the "assimilation" of English across cultures Material a tool for mobility, economic gains, and social status.

In India, the English language can be characterized by different terms representing the power of the language: Positive/Negative, National identity, Anti-nationalism, Literary renaissance, Anti-native culture, Cultural mirror (for native cultures), Materialism, Modernization, Westernization, Liberalism,
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Rootlessness, Universalism, Ethnocentrism, Technology, Permissiveness, Science, Divisiveness, Mobility, Alienation, etc.

Often the same term may be used both in a positive and in a negative sense, depending on who uses it. The bad effects of the increasing power of English have been conscious and unconscious lingocide and dislocation of native cultural traditions by introducing Westernization. English is often seen as a tool of economic exploitation and domination. On the other hand, the Outer Circle sees English also as a tool of national identity and political awakening (as in the independence struggle in India), a window on the world, and a link language (Kachru 1986c: 136).

According to Bailey, too, English involves both positive and negative cultural values: economic development yet exploitation, political and cultural ideas and institutions, enrichment of English but possibly this at the cost of indigenous languages, opportunities to communicate with readers around the world yet at the expense of one's own language (Bailey 1991: 165).

Cheshire (1991:6) points out that although the spread of English has often been associated with the death of indigenous languages in those countries to which it has been transplanted, in India this was not the case. In Saghal's (1991:300) view, too, the role of English in India has not been replacive: it has not driven
out any of the indigenous languages. Rather, she claims, English has enriched Indian languages (as well as it has been enriched by them).

According to Kachru (1986c:137), the power bases of English have to be seen in both material terms and psychological terms. English is supported in the Outer Circle for cultural renaissance, spread of nationalism, pan-regional literary creativity and neutrality, and there is a strong emotional attachment to the language. The psychological factors are important also because they are vital for creating an identity.

Kachru (see e.g. Kachru 1986a:9) stresses the neutrality of English as one clear advantage of using it: English is free from any undesirable (e.g. ethnic or religious) connotations native languages may have. The pros of using English have wiped away the fact that it originally was the colonizer's language (Kachru 1986a: 9).

1.2.4: DOMAINS OF CONTROL

Kachru (1986c:132-133) mentions four basic areas in which the power of English manifests itself: linguistic, literary, attitudinal and pedagogical. Linguistic control is reflected, for example, in the codification of a language, the attitudes toward linguistic innovation and lexicographical research. The literary aspect refers to the ethnocentric attitude toward literary creativity in the
Outer Circle. The attitudinal aspect is involved in issues concerning the identities of individuals and speech communities.

Kachru, for instance, stresses the importance of attitudes when determining the power of a language: what one thinks the language will do for him or her and what others think of a person when he or she uses the language. The pedagogical aspect deals with teaching of English in global contexts (the concerns including the model and the methods for teaching of English, which are often commercially motivated and quite seldom consider the local needs of different countries).

1.3.1: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: ENGLISH TRAVELS TO INDIA

The section briefly goes through the story of British India. The information below is mainly from The New Encyclopedia Britannica (NEB; 1974), Kachru (1982 and 1983), Bailey (1991). It was Vasco da Gama who, in 1498, came ashore at Calicut, and restored a link between Europe and the East. India was "a land of spices and of marvels" to European people. Portugal's control of the Indian Ocean lasted throughout the 16th century. The turning point came in the 1580s: in 1580 Portugal was annexed to Spain. Spain was not too interested in former interests of Portugal, and gradually the control of the East fell through their hands. The route to the East was opened to the Dutch and English. The Dutch were first ones to arrive in 1595. The Dutch objective was, plain and
simply, the trade. They were not so interested in proselytizing people, or trying to expand their empire; they were monopolists rather than imperialists (NEB 392).

The document establishing the British contact with the Indian subcontinent was the Charter of December 31, 1600, granted by Queen Elizabeth I. It granted a monopoly on trade with India and the East to some merchants of London - the East India Company was formed (Kachru 1982:353). The company's objective was actually the spices of Indonesia, but because of Dutch opposition (e.g. massacre of Amboina in 1623), they decided to change plans and go to India instead. The English won victory over some Portuguese territories in India as well, and the Mughal court, which resented the Portuguese, granted the English the right to trade and to establish factories in return for becoming the virtual naval auxiliaries of the empire (NEB 393).

The English trade became more profitable than that of the Dutch, and the region gradually fell under British contact and domination. In 1818, the British Empire became the British Empire of India, instead of the British Empire in India. The diplomatic settlement remained in force until 1947 (NEB 401).

A question that has frequently been asked is: How was this sort of subjection of a whole subcontinent possible? Probably the answer lies in the innate divisiveness of Hindu society (class and caste divisions); for the Indians the
neighbours were more unwelcome than outsiders; and the outsiders could actually help in defeating the neighbour. The outsiders were, in the end, accepted as masters; the Indians would rather be mastered by them than dominated by a rivaling family inside India (NEB 402).

1.3.2: THE THREE PHASES OF THE INTRODUCTION OF BILINGUALISM IN ENGLISH IN INDIA

According to Kachru, there have been three phases in the introduction of bilingualism in English in India. The first one of them, the missionary phase, was initiated around 1614 by Christian missionaries. The second phase, the demand from the South Asian public (in the eighteenth century) was considered to come about through local demand, as some scholars were of the opinion that the spread of English was the result of the demand and willingness of local people to learn the language. There were prominent spokesmen for English. Kachru mentions two of them, Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) and Rajunath Hari Navalkar (fl.1770). Roy and Navalkar, among others, were persuading the officials of the East India Company to give instruction in English, rather than in Sanskrit or Arabic. They thought that English would open the way for people to find out about scientific developments of the West. Knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic or of Indian vernaculars would not contribute to this goal (Kachru 1983: 67-68).
A letter of Raja Rammohun Roy addressed to Lord Amherst (1773-1857) from the year 1823 is often presented as evidence of local demand for English. Roy embraced European learning, and in his opinion, English provided Indians with "the key to all knowledge -- all the really useful knowledge which the world contains" (quoted in Bailey 1991: 136). In the letter, Roy expresses his opinion that the available funds should be used for employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world (quoted in Kachru 1983: 68).

Roy's letter has been claimed to be responsible for starting the Oriental-Anglicist controversy, the controversy over which educational policy would be suitable for India. The third phase, the Government policy, begun in 1765, when the East India Company's authority was stabilized (Kachru 1983: 21-22). English was established firmly as the medium of instruction and administration. The English language became popular, because it opened paths to employment and influence (NEB 1974: 406). English of the subject Indians became gradually a widespread means of communication.

During the governor generalship Lord William Bentinck in the early nineteenth century, India saw many social reforms. English became the language of record of government and higher courts, and government support was given to the
cultivation of Western learning and science through the medium of English. In this he was supported by Lord Macaulay (NEB 403).

1.3.3: MACAULAY'S MINUTE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF BILINGUALISM IN ENGLISH IN INDIA

Lord Macaulay was a central figure in the language debate over which language(s) should be used as the medium of education in India. The Orientalists were in the favour of use of classical languages of Indian tradition, such as Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic, which were not spoken as native languages. The Anglicists, on the other hand, supported English. Neither of these groups wanted to suppress the local vernaculars, mother tongues of the people. Both the groups agreed that education would be conducted in the vernacular during the first years of education. The Anglicist group included Charles Grant (1746-1823), Lord Moira (1754-1826) and T.B. Macaulay (1800-59); H.T. Prinsep (1792-1878) acted as the spokesman for the Orientalists' group (Kachru 1986: 35).

The Anglicist group's views were expressed in the Minute of Macaulay, which is said to mark "the real beginnings of bilingualism in India" (McCrum et al. 1988: 325). According to the document, which had been prepared for the governor general William Bentinck, after listening to the argument of the two sides, a class should be formed in India, a group of people who would act as
interpreters between the British and Indians, "a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Bailey 1991: 138). Macaulay's proposal was a success; and the following year Lord Bentinck expressed his full support for the minute, declaring that the funds "administered on Public Instruction should be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language" (Bailey 1991: 139).

According to Bailey, in Macaulay's thinking Indian languages would be enriched by English, so that they could become vehicles for European scientific, historical and literary expression (Bailey 1991, 140). English gradually became the language of government, education, advancement, "a symbol of imperial rule and of self-improvement" (McCrum et al. 1988: 325).

Macaulay justified the imposition of British power on the country by simply arguing that although this policy in India might seem controversial and strange sometimes, it can be so, for the Empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies...that we should govern a territory ten thousand miles from us, a territory larger and more populous than France, Spain, Italy and Germany put together...a territory inhabited by men differing from us in race, colour, language, manners, morals, religion; these are prodigies to which the world has seen nothing similar. Reason is confounded...General rules are useless where the whole is one vast exception. The Company is anomaly, but it is part of a
system where everything is anomaly. It is strangest of all governments; but it is designed for the strangest of all Empires. (Bailey 1991:137).

According to Kachru, the far-reaching Minute was highly controversial because of disagreement about whether it was correct to impose an alien language on Indians. The Orientalists expressed their disagreement in a note dated 15 February 1835, but they could not stop it from passing and had to give way (Kachru 1983: 68-69). On 7 March 1835, the Minute received a Seal of Approval from Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839), and an official resolution on Macaulay's resolution was passed. This resolution "formed the cornerstone of the implementation of a language policy in India and ultimately resulted in the diffusion of bilingualism in English" (68).

There are many sharing the view of Alastair Pennycook that in fact both Anglicism and Orientalism really worked together towards the same direction. He rejects the view that Orientalism was somehow a "good and innocent project that only had the rights of the colonized people at heart". He claims that, in reality, Orientalism was as much part of colonialism as was Anglicism (Pennycook 1994: 103). Although Orientalism is usually considered more sympathetic towards the local languages and cultures than Anglicism, it acknowledged the superiority of Western literature and learning, and it was a means to exercise social control over the people, and imposing of western ideas (Pennycook 1994: 102).
Pennycook claims, too, that although Macaulay is credited the most influential individual in the language question, the issue is more complex than simply Macaulay arriving in India, writing the Minute on education and then heading off back to England with having English firmly transplanted in the colony. In his view, then, it is important to understand that Macaulay just articulated a position which had been discussed for a long time already (Pennycook 1994: 77). He goes on further to argue that the Indian bourgeoisie was demanding English-language education as much as the missionaries and educators (79), seeing knowledge of English as an essential tool in gaining social and economic prestige (76).

1.4 The question of Standard English:

A standard variety has undergone at least some degree of regularization or codification, it is recognized as a prestigious variety or code by a community, and it is used for high functions alongside a diversity of low varieties (Holmes 1992:83). It provides a means of communication across areas with various different dialects. According to Saghal, a rather nebulous educated Indian English variety close to the native standard is favoured as a model for Indian English by the general consensus (Saghal 1991: 303).

According to Kachru, the spread of English and its intercultural uses raise questions concerning diversification, codification, identities, cross-cultural intelligibility and power and ideology. The ultimate danger could be decay or
even loss of international intelligibility, some have argued (Kachru 1987:220-221). In the multilingual and culturally pluralistic context of India, the English language has developed its regional, social and occupational varieties: typically Indian registers of legal system, business, newspapers, creative writing (Kachru 1986: 110).

The fact that English has acquired multiple identities and a broad spectrum of cross-cultural interactional contexts of use is, according to Kachru, "a purists' and pedagogues' nightmare and a variationists' blessing". As a consequence of the spread of English, there are "various semiotic systems, several linguistic conventions and numerous cultural traditions: English absorbs and unfolds meanings and values from diverse cultures" (Kachru 1987: 207-211). Kachru points out that the contexts of diversification of English are not just deficiencies, but that there are deeper sociological, linguistic and cultural reasons. The diversification often, then, is symbolic of "subtle sociolinguistic messages" (ibid, 218).

Crystal points out that while, on one hand, English-speaking communities are striving to nativize the language to reflect their own experiences, on the other hand many are of the view that a universally intelligible, more or less standardized medium would be desirable (Crystal 1988: 261-262). Not the least because "British English is now, numerically speaking, a minority dialect, compared with American, or even Indian English" (ibid, 10).
Samuel Ahulu suggests that the concept of Standard English be redefined. According to his view, Standard English is usually associated with British and/or American English. English, however, as an international language, has developed, and continues to develop forms or features divergent from British and/or American English. As arguments that any divergence from British or American English is an error appear unrealistic, Standard English, in Ahulu's view, should accommodate to the developments of new Englishes. The variability of non-native Englishes should, ideally, be seen as styles of speech or expression which makes a part of the speakers' repertoire; they should not be thought of as errors. English lacks standard codification which would reflect its international character adequately. Thus, one of the major problems with new Englishes appears to be the issue of codification (Ahulu 1997: 17-19).

The variation manifested in the use of English as an international language should be subsumed within the concept of "Standard English", and the divergent forms should be recognised as standard practice or styles of Standard English; styles of speech or expression to which speakers of English as an international language will be exposed, and which will constitute their repertoire. Cheshire points out that sociolinguistic analyses can contribute to English language teaching issues by ensuring that descriptions of world varieties of English have a sounder empirical base. Current descriptions are all too often given as lists of assorted departures from southern British Standard
English or American Standard English with no attempt at determining the extent to which the local linguistic features function as part of an autonomous system (Saghal 1991:7).

The Indian English writers, giving expression to the Indian, experience in thought and imagery, are in the main stream of a tradition. A cultural activity does not grow all of a sudden it has an origin and a development. It is pertinent to consider the tradition that has been built up by this output and the impact of this tradition on the writers of today. P. Lal remarks that these writers are instrumental in rediscovering “values and techniques within one’s own tradition” which is a body of concepts and usages, ideas and feelings to be felt or thought, to win acceptance and currency or to provoke dissent or modification.

The debate among linguists is whether to safeguard Standard English, or to accept the various varieties of English as legitimate forms. Kachru asserts:

“native speakers of this (English) language seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization”.(Kachru, 1986:30)

The term Standard English can be interpreted in two different ways. First, it may suggest the target towards which a language may strive, but may not necessarily want to achieve. Second, it may be considered as a dichotomy that differentiates between correct and incorrect. The latter implies a standard that is
acceptable and superior compared to the type which is substandard and incorrect. The resistance against such imperialistic attitudes and the need to establish personal as well as communal identities in postcolonial India resulted in a series of transformations to the English language. As a result, Indian English novelists developed their own sociological, linguistic and literary expressions.

1.5.1 Indian English and its features:

Indian English is a term used for the varieties of English which is spoken in India. Over the years, English in India has been redefined and used in typical Indian context. It is a way of expressing Indian thoughts and ideas, Indian ethos to the English speaking world. The image which emerges from Indian English is that of a multicoloured Indian socio-cultural environment.

One of the exceptional features of Indian English is that, it has been influenced by the Indian languages in terms of style and diction. Literal translations of local idioms can be easily seen in the works of many Indian English novelists. Indian English novelists have not only nativised the English language, they have also acculturated English in an Indian context. Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* received accolades all over the world because of its innovative use of the English language and a brilliant portrayal of Indian history. Rushdie made serious efforts to capture the spirit of the Indian culture with all its multiplicity.
and diversity. He imaginatively Indianises, revitalises and decolonises the English language.

English language has been nativised by the Indian English novelists to affirm their own distinct identity. In doing so, they have redefined the language in their own linguistic and cultural framework. It is a process of accumulation of new words and meanings to suit the social and cultural requirements. It is a known fact that language change over time and place. English used in environments different from its origin, would adjust and change to suit its new environment. The growth of English in India, in all the genres of language and literature acknowledge the fact that it has changed and adjusted to suit its Indian environment.

Nativization expanded the language, moulded and refashioned it so much so that after all this time it has its own identity and place in the linguistic world. It’s very interesting to note that this new variety of English that has passed through the phases of imitation, adaptation and innovation is not only confined to and being used by Indians, it has also entered the lexicon of the so-called native speakers. Indians contributed to the evolution and expansion of this malleable and user-friendly language. The transplantation of English in the fertile soil of India yielded fruits of fresh flavour and taste. The Indian rich soil lent to the language what it had in it as a result of witnessing passage of an ancient civilization and its exploits since the pre-historic times.
Salman Rushdie, a major Indian English novelist of the post colonial phase, strongly feels that English should be treated as a naturalised Indian language. He has voiced this on more than one occasion. In an essay entitled, "Commonwealth Literature" does not exist', published in 1983, Rushdie wrote:

The Children of independent India seem not to think of English as being irredeemably tainted by its colonial provenance. They use it as an Indian language, as one of the tools they have to hand...In South India...the resentment of Hindi is far greater than of English...English is an essential language in India, not only because of its technical vocabularies and the international communication which it makes possible, but also simply to permit two Indians to talk together in a tongue which neither party hates. (Rushdie, "Commonwealth Literature" does not exist)

English has been and is being used by Indians in creative and dynamic ways. The writers of English have recreated it to suit their purpose. Rushdie goes on to say in the same essay,

those peoples who were once colonised by the language are now rapidly remaking it...assisted by the English language's enormous
flexibility and size, they are carving out large territories for themselves within its frontiers.

The process of nativisation is due both to transfer from local language as well as to the new cultural environment and communicative needs (Saghal 1991: 300). Because of deep social penetration and the extended range of functions of English in diverse sociolinguistic contexts there are several varieties, localized registers and genres for articulating local social, cultural and religious identities (Kachru 1997:69). Also, factors such as the absence of a native group, inadequate teaching and acquisitional limitations (e.g. lack of exposure and facilities, learning under compulsion) contribute to the process (Saghal 1991: 300).

Scholars (such as Kachru, Halverson, Verma, Mehrotra and Sridhar) have all concluded that the South Asian varieties of English are being nativised by acquiring new identities in new socio-cultural contexts. They have emerged as autonomous local varieties with their own set of rules that make it impossible to treat them simply as mistakes of deficient Englishes (Kandiah 1991: 275).

South Asian English has developed to a more distinctive level than in other countries where English is used as a second language (Crystal 1988: 258). English in India has evolved characteristic features at the phonological, lexical, syntactic and even at discourse level. Initially, these innovations were rejected
by purists, but they are becoming increasingly accepted: English is not anymore treated as a foreign language; it is part of the cultural identity of India. These innovations have led to some problems related to pedagogical standards, national and international intelligibility and typology (Saghal 1991: 303).

1.5.2 Indian English literature

The history of Indian literature in English dates back to the early nineteenth century. Kashiprasad Ghosh is considered the first Indian poet writing in English. Sochee Chunder Dutt was the first writer of fiction. In the beginning, however, political writing was dominant (Kachru 1994: 530-531) (e.g. Rammohan Roy wrote about social reform and religion in the medium of English (Sanyal 1987:19). Later on, Indian English writers focused their interest on history, society, political domain, economic status, tradition of Indian subcontinent and many other issues in a language and style that was captivating and engaging. There was much to speak about India, its rich culture, its history, it’s trying and testing times under the rule of merciless British Empire, its independence movement, it’s social life after independence, the progress it made after independence, the social strife during the period of Emergency – Indian English novelists were able to give artistic and innovative description of the events in a fine and lucid way.
The thematic range of literatures has been extended in India: in fact, Kachru points out that English has functioned "as the main agent for releasing the South Asian languages from the rigorous constraints of the classical literary traditions". English has created new experimentation in the field of Indian writing (Kachru 1994: 535-536). Kachru points out that the linguistic centre of English has shifted. This means that English no longer only represents the Judeo-Christian traditions and Western concepts of literary creativity. The ranges of English have expanded, as the varieties within a variety have been formed (Kachru 1986: 130-131)

Stylistic influence from the local languages seems to be a particular feature of much Indian literature in English; the local language structure is reflected as e.g. the literal translation of local idioms (Platt et. al: 1984: 181). According to Kachru, however, South Asian novelists have not only nativised the language in terms of stylistic features; they have also acculturated English in terms of the South Asian context (Kachru 1994: 530).

A view of the mother tongue being the primary medium of literary creativity is still generally held across cultures. Creativity in another tongue is often considered as a deviation from the norm. The native language is considered pure; it is treated as a norm. This causes difficulties for non-native writers of English: it is rarely that they have to defend themselves writing in English (Kachru 1997:66-87).
The prominent novelists of the pre-independence era like, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan wrote many great novels in English, depicting the conventional and informal Indian life styles and traditions. With the passage of time, Indian English novel broke away from the colonial literary overshadowing and evolved a subaltern consciousness.

The post-colonial phase of Indian English fiction, especially the period between the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a kind of prominence and fame in the diaspora of international novels. This was because of the fact that the novels had an uncanny dissimilar shades, varied dialects and traditional flavour. The novelists became successful in reaching a notable status. Giving the English language an Indian sensibility by the use of certain linguistic devices constitutes an essential part of the linguistic experiments of the post-colonial Indian English novelists. They were highly successful in the nativization of the English language.

1.5.3. The Rise of Indian English Fiction:

There has been perceptible change in Indian English fiction since it exercised its impact on the Indian literary scene. The historians of this particular genre of literature might date its rise to the late 19th century when writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Rajmohan’s Wife), Toru Dutt (Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden), Lal Behari Day (Bengal Peasant Life) etc. emerged on the Indian literary scene but it was only in the 20th century that it started gaining
prominence. Fiction providing a more flexible medium was first experimented with more or less on the model set by the old English icons, especially of the Victorian era when novel writing had been the most popular genre among the writers and the masses alike.

In the beginning, subjects like socialism, communism and Gandhism were the substance of Indian English novelists. These were the issues which were stirring people’s mind in the earlier part of the century. The 1930s saw the rise of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan as major Indian English novelists. Undoubtedly, they are legendary figures in Indian English fiction. They showed to the world that they could master the language and develop their own literary style. The novels which they wrote during the pre independence period reflected the social, economic and political condition of that time. Their writings give the readers of the present times an opportunity to steal a look into the historical and social background of the period. The impact of social and political events on the individual lives and families was so great, that they became the subject of the colonial and earlier post-colonial period. We may call the novels of the period as novels of Social Realism. We also see that the novelists of the pre-independence period and the early period after independence were nationalist in their approach towards narration. They also talked about Indian mysticism and spiritualism in their novels. We find that the main concern of almost all the novelists was one: to free India from the alien
rule. The novels written during the period of the nationalist movement for independence, aptly called the Gandhian period of Indian literature, tended to identify themselves and their protagonists idealistically with the struggle. In order to unite the country in a shared vision, they portrayed the aspirations of the rural masses and the poor, and showed middle class or educated characters either throwing in their lot with these masses or betraying them as enemies of the people. This period lasted into the first decade after independence, and then from the early sixties, tended to give way to a period in which writers expressed disenchantment with the corruption and failures of the government and its bureaucracy and often turned away from the public sphere altogether, in angry, desolate, existentialists novels that charted estrangement, interiority and insanity. This period was not very productive as the novelists mainly focused on social realism which was completely devoid of creative imagination. The novels were mechanical and formulaic.

1.5.4. Anand, Rao and Narayan: The three outstanding novelists of the era.

The present work, though, focus on the post colonial Indian English fiction, especially the fiction of the 1980s and 1990s, it, however, cannot ignore to mention the credentials of the three stalwarts of Indian English fiction i.e., Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan who started their literary careers in colonial India. They’ve remained to be the inspiring figures for the modern
Indian English novelists. While going through their novels we feel that they write about the things which appeal to their hearts and minds. They were the novelists who discarded the diction used by the earlier writers and used language to evoke an Indian sensibility. How successful they were in seeking the attention of India and the entire literary world is a known fact.

Mulk Raj Anand with his novels, ‘Untouchable’ (1935), ‘Coolie’ (1936), ‘Two Leaves and a Bud’ (1937), ‘The Village’ (1939), ‘Across the Black Waters’ (1940) showed his full understanding of the Indian soil. He was a humanitarian and was deeply concerned with the social evils of the country. All his novels are deeply rooted in Indian culture. The language Anand and his contemporaries used in their novels clearly show that they were determined to set their own linguistic standard.

R. K. Narayan wrote in the language of ordinary Indian folks. Language came to him in natural spontaneity. He never made any conscious effort to experiment with the English language. He uses muted English with an easy flow. He shows great skill in creating consistency of character and speech by using the method of straightforward translation of Indian expressions in English in his dialogues. His style is simple and the intricacies of Indian life are described in his novels – The Guide, The English Teacher and The Man Eater of Malgudi in a vivid and lucid way. Narayan’s novels seem to go round the complex Indian metaphysical traditions. Narayan also makes explicit references
to Hindu mythology in his novels. He satirizes all kinds of charlatans, quacks and tricksters in his novels. In fact, his celebrated novel, *The Guide* is a fine illustration of such phenomena. But he also concedes that they fulfil a social need, and the Indian people are dependent on them, whether he is a sanyasi or an astrologer. Their presence conforms to age-old traditions and beliefs. Narayan didn’t believe in a society which is divided on the lines of caste and class. He strongly feels that the nation can progress only when people can rise above caste, class and religion.

Raja Rao’s contribution to Indian English fiction can never be forgotten. His novel *Kanthapura* has remained to be the most discussed novel of the pre-independence India. It is a novel remarkable for its treatment of Indianness in terms of its story telling qualities. *Kanthapura* is indeed, a landmark in the history of Indian English fiction. The importance of this book cannot be ignored when we talk about Indianness in Indian English fiction. The novel is absolutely Indian in its character, language and style. It has been written in an idiom which adequately conveys the theme and sensibility of the Indian soil. The English, Rao has used in his novel is very much adapted to Indian conditions and has a domestic value. It is a kind of force which melts social and cultural differences in the country.
Raja Rao appears to be an intelligent novelist. He was quite aware of the fact that English is an alien language and if at all it has to be brought closer to the hearts and minds of readers it should contain the flavour of the soil.

In his foreword to the novel *Kanthapura*, he says,

One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own, the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word ‘alien’, yet English is not an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make up. We are all instinctively bi-lingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify.

Time has, of course, justified the initiatives taken by Anand, Rao and Narayan when it comes to the experiments with the language. The new generation of novelists like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee,
Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry and many others went on to experiment with language successfully in their novels.

1.5.5. Rise of New Generation:

What Raja Rao said in the 1930s appears to have turned true today. Indian English novelists have developed their own distinct literary style. It is probably their creativity in the use of the language and the depiction of events which draws the attention of the world. English is ‘often struck with the liveliness with which the younger generation handled a foreign tongue. They altered the idiom but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were none of the babuisms ascribed to them.’(Forster, 1985: 55)

Today, we find the younger generation of novelists trying to write experimental novels which are quite different in form and language, theme and technique. Their diction and style are different from the diction and style of the novelists of the early part of the 20th century. The novelists of the new generation appear to be smart enough to reject the language of the colonizer and to develop a kind of writing which reflects Indian ethos and sensibility.

The 80s and 90s are considered to be successful decades in the history of Indian English fiction. During the 1980s and 1990s Indian English novelists thrived in world literature. Their contribution in making India a major literary nation is of immense value. The renowned success of Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children,*
Vikram Seth’s *The Golden Gate* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* made these novelists of international repute. The fortune of Indian English fiction changed with the publication of these novels. It became a force to count with. The novelists who followed Rushdie and Seth - Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Shashi Tharoor etc. were equally successful in receiving world’s attention. This was the time when these literary artists instilled life into their contrived fictional world and aired their arresting aura of creativity. There were new explorations in themes and techniques of the novel.

Rushdie brought a revolution in the field of Indian English fiction. His *Midnight’s Children* was a roaring success all over the world. The attention Rushdie received for his novel was mainly because of its distinct narrative technique. The exuberance of language and style in the novel came as fresh air in Indian fiction. We see in the novel, Rushdie, portraying his personal experiences and situations in an unbiased approach. His exalted diction, grand word usage and felicitous word phrases leave a strong impact on the readers. We see the use of bold linguistic innovations and disarrangement, such as unconventional words in the novel. Since the narrative is written and told in front of an audience, rhetoric is paramount. His style of narration can be compared to the oral tradition of Indian story –telling. We also find several digressions in the novel. It can account for all the arguments between Saleem
and Padma, who is only interested in "what-happens-next" and the logical order of the causes and their effects.

Amitav Ghosh is a gifted novelist of the post-Rushdie era. He has demonstrated his literary and linguistic skills in novels like, *The Circle of Reason*, *Calcutta Chromosome*, *The Shadow Lines*, *The Glass Palace*, *The Hungry Tide* and his latest *The Sea of Poppies*. Each of his novels explores a new world. Ghosh, appeals to our instincts. He believes in building a new rational world. A thoughtful reading his novels is of immense value in the troubled world in which we find ourselves today, in the midst of cruelty and strife and hatred and madness that surround us on every hand. Nationalism, political freedom and international relations are the major themes of Amitav Ghosh’s first two novels, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*. His position appears to be that of a realist or sceptic and he takes this position chiefly because of the complexity of human nature or situation because of the inadequacy of human belief or conviction.

Vikram Seth is another major novelist of the post-colonial phase. He is well known for his novels, *The Golden Gate: A Novel in Verse* (1986), *A Suitable Boy* (1993) and *An Equal Music* (1999). Vikram Seth explores in his novel some of the most important political and social issues of the time. He depicts in his novels the interstices of social change. The issues concerning the lives of people in the post-independence India appeals to him and he narrates the events
in a realistic way. Seth is pragmatic in his depiction of the Indian society. His novel, *A Suitable Boy* which received international acclamation has been discussed and analysed in the present work.

Upamanyu Chatterjee established himself as a major Indian English novelist with his novel, *English August*. He too, like other prominent novelists of his time believes in the true and candid depiction of life. The kind of novels he has written shows his cognizance with the Indian culture. In his novels, we find that he stresses on understanding human nature, in building relationships. The trouble is that no human being tries to understand one another and that leads to the breakdown of human relations. His novel, *The Last Burden* gives a very true picture of the intricacies of relationships. It is a fascinating portrayal of life in an average Indian middle class family. The novel exhibits the inner friction of a middle class family where every individual appears to be thinking about his or her own self.

Rohinton Mistry with his novels like *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* showed to the literary world that he is a novelist who believes in depicting life as it really is. Both the novels exhibit his complete understanding of Indian social life. The portrayal of the Indian middle class is the high point in Mistry’s narratives. His bitterness, his anguish towards the government’s hostile attitude towards the poor is evident in his novels. His novels can be read for its realism. Mistry’s depiction of the Indian society at the time of Emergency is such that
one gets a feeling that the events are getting unfolded before one’s eyes – the smell of the street, the loud, blatant vendors screaming their slogans as the pedestrians walk by take the readers directly to the locale of the novel. His writes in such a manner that one can see the vulnerability of the common man. He also shows their mental strength at the same time. He makes it clear through his novels that a corrupt system or administration can have a damaging effect on man’s happiness. People cannot keep faith in a system that continually fails them. Mistry, like Amitav Ghosh appears to be against the divide in society on the basis of caste and religion.

Arundhati Roy entered the Indian literary scene with her award winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). The novel set in the southern Indian state of Kerala is an arresting novel for its exuberance of style. It is Roy’s innovative linguistic style and an excellent narration which fetched her prestigious Booker prize. Roy doesn’t seem to divulge her story in a traditional narrative order. Her story jumps through time, making its way through the memories of her character. She gives a picture of a society where social decorum is paramount and those who refuse to accept it are ruined by it. Roy’s depiction of a society which is divided on the lines of caste and religion leaves a bitter taste on the readers. She appears to be deeply concerned for the lower class people who become victims of the upper class. Exploitation, mutilation - physical as well as mental, of the oppressed class, gives a horrendous picture of the Indian society.
Roy is certainly at pains to depict a society where atrocities, violence, mayhem are to be found.

It is evident from the works of the talented post-colonial novelists that Indian English fiction has become a new form of Indian culture, and the voice in which India speaks. Be it the pre-independence era or the post-independence era, we have seen the contributions made by the Indian English novelists to world literature. The kind of critical appreciation and acclamation they have received from all quarters of the world testifies the fact that Indian English fiction has come to stay. Right from Mulk Raj Anand, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Anita Desai, Toru Dutt to Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy- the show of fine Indian novelists is long and much augmented. These novelists through their works have shown to the world that English language is flexible and that it can be redefined according to the cultural and linguistic demands.

1.6 Hypothesis

When we talk about Indian English novelists, we find ourselves in a world in which the response to Indian reality, the underlying sensibility, the use of imagery, diction, etc., are strikingly different, particularly in the contemporary leading novelists. The present study makes an attempt to explore the linguistic innovations and narrative techniques in Indian English fiction of the post-
Introduction

Chapter – I

colonial era, especially fiction of the 80s and 90s. The boom in Indian English fiction is clear. There have been a number of writers who have shown their mettle in their narration of Indian themes. Their way of expression, their use of the English language has received admiration and acclamation all over the world. To analyze the linguistic and narrative techniques of all the novelists of the period would be an uphill task. Hence, the present study will mainly focus on the major novelists of the 80s and 90s. The study, by no means is an all-inclusive narrative of the nativisation of the Indian English fiction of the 80s and 90s. It only reflects on the narrative techniques, linguistic innovations and other literary features of some of the important novels of the period. Novelists like, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Tharoor, Arundhati Roy have made their presence felt in world literature for their marked Indianness and distinct literary styles. Some of their major works will be analyzed for their thematic and linguistic innovations.

The study will also focus its attention on the contributions made by important novelists of the pre-independence era. Rao, Anand and Narayan will be discussed for their innovative styles. Desani, the novelist who first tried to decolonise the English language with his excellent linguistic innovations, the novelist who was the source of inspiration for Salman Rushdie has also been included in this study. It is important to mention here that these were the
novelists who first discarded the diction of the earlier writers and started a new beginning for Indian English fiction. The task was difficult for them but their novels show that they mastered the language and used it the way they liked. Their novels exhibit the beginning of innovative literary and linguistic skills.

The study will also focus on the differences in the creative sensibility of the novelists of the pre-independence era and the post-independence era.

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CHAPTER-II

NATIVIZATION OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

Introduction

The present chapter deals with the nativization process of English in India and in Indian English fiction, in particular, in the post colonial phase. By nativizing the English language, Indian English novelists have created their own language to affirm their own distinct identity. The term nativization of a language can be defined as re-defining the language in one’s own linguistic and cultural framework. It is a process of accumulation of new words and meanings to suit the social and cultural requirements. It is a known fact that language change over time and place. English used in environments different from its origin, would adjust and change to suit its new environment. The growth of English in India in all possible genres acknowledges the fact that it has changed and adjusted to suit its Indian environment.

Nativization expanded the language, moulded and refashioned it so much so that after all this time it has its own identity and place in the linguistic world. It’s very interesting to note that this new variety of English that has passed through the phases of imitation, adaptation and innovation is not only confined to and being used by Indians, it has also entered the lexicon of the so-called
native speakers. Indians contributed to the evolution and expansion of this malleable and user-friendly language. The transplantation of English in the fertile soil of India yielded fruits of fresh flavor and taste. The Indian rich soil lent to the language what it had in it as a result of witnessing passage of an ancient civilization and its exploits since the pre-historic times. English mingled with other Indian languages and resulted in a new and distinct variety.

2.1 Nativisation of English

Nativisation of English in India has remained to be a much discussed topic even after, several years of independence. Many critics and writers have expressed their views on the nativisation process in India which has resulted into a new variety of English—distinct in form and content. It has certainly helped in asserting Indian identity in world literature. English language has been redefined by the Indian English writers and used in typical Indian socio-cultural context.

The term nativisation has been described variously as acculturization (Stanlaw 1982) Indigenization (Richards 1982) or hybridization of a language in a non-native socio cultural context. The term is used to describe the divergence of varieties of language from a parent source (Kachru 1982). In the context of English, the term nativisation refers to the changes which English has undergone as a result of its contact with languages in diverse cultural and
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geographical setting in the peripheral circle of English. The process of
nativisation in English is responsible for deviations in the new varieties of
English raising various types of linguistic and sociolinguistic issues.
Nativization can be defined as a process whereby a language gains native
speakers. This happens necessarily where a second language used by adult
parents becomes the native language of their children. Nativisation has been of
particular interest to linguists. The process of nativisation is due to the transfer
from local language as well as to the new cultural environment and
communicative needs (Saghal 1991: 300). Because of deep social penetration
and the extended range of functions of English in diverse sociolinguistic
contexts there are several varieties, localized registers and genres for
articulating local social, cultural and religious identities (Kachru 1997:69).
Also, factors such as the absence of a native group, inadequate teaching and
acquisitional limitations (e.g. lack of exposure and facilities, learning under
compulsion) contribute to the process of nativisation. (Saghal 1991:300).
Scholars (such as Kachru, Halverson, Verma, Mehrotra and Sridhar) have all
concluded that the Indian varieties of English are being nativised by acquiring
new identities in new socio-cultural contexts. They have emerged as
autonomous local varieties with their own set of rules that make it impossible to
treat them simply as mistakes of deficient Englishes (Kandiah 1991: 275).
Indian English (IE) has developed to a more distinctive level than in other
countries where English is used as a second language (Crystal 1988: 258). English in India has evolved characteristic features at the phonological, lexical, syntactic and even at discourse level. Initially, these innovations were rejected by purists, but they are becoming increasingly accepted: English is not anymore treated as a foreign language; it is part of the cultural identity of India.

2.1.2. Understanding of Post-Colonial English:

Indian English displays a diversity of form and function, the result of linguistic variation and change occurring on a great scale around the world. The linguistic variations, in the novels of post-colonial Indian English novelists, are products of the interaction between the language and the society in which it is used, the different social requirements it serves, the new cultural and ideological load it carries, and the features of the contact languages it assimilates.

To understand the range of Indian English in postcolonial contexts, it is important to understand certain primary features of Indian English such as:

- what were the historical reasons for initiating bilingualism in English; what factors motivated the retention of English after the end of the colonial period; what is the sociolinguistic profile of each variety; and what parameters resulted in the nativisation of English (Kachru, 1992: 6).
English, in post-colonial India seems to have served two purposes: language of imperialism and language of resistance. As an instrument of resistance, English could then be seen not merely as a means to engage in struggle, but as a principal site of the struggle, and thus to take up a cultural political project must require a battle over the meanings of English (Pennycook:1994:264).

The practice of “writing back” in English as part of resistance against imperialism and colonialism involved “taking the language and reusing it, for shaping realities” (Pennycook, 1994:262) as seen and experienced by the Indian English novelists and the language community which is non-native. “Writing back” does not necessarily mean waging a war for freedom, but the taking up of “cultural battles and counter discursive positions, and thus involves the broader question of cultural politics” (Pennycook, 1994:270).

Chinua Achebe, a renowned African novelist of the modern times addresses this issue in following words:

the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full
Recreating the language to communicate different cultural experiences is neither an instantaneous process nor an easy one. It requires a lot of understanding and research.

Ashcroft and Tiffin (1989: 41) determine two stages in the postcolonial nativisation process: “abrogation”, a denial and refusal of the colonial and metropolitan categories, its standard, and of normative or “correct” usage, its claim to fixed meanings inscribed in words; and “appropriation”, whereby the language is seized and replaced in a specific cultural location.

Post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of English by using language to signify the difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood (Tiffin, 1983:51).

By inscribing meaning, writing releases it to a “dense proliferation” of possibilities, and the “myth of centrality” embodied in the concept of a standard language is forever overturned. It is at this moment that “English becomes English” (Tiffin: 1983: 87). In essence, the argument is that Indian English is linguistically systematic and culturally autonomous.
The above position may also be explained using a linguistic paradigm. Functional linguists led by Halliday (1985:7) have underlined two main operations of English; “pragmatic” and “mathetic”. The “pragmatic function” refers to the language used as “action” or “a resource for doing with”. The “mathetic function” refers to the language used as mode of “reflection”, “a resource for thinking with” and “the construction of reality”. The “pragmatic function” is vital in the context of global communication and the use of English as an interactive medium in information-transfer, material and economic marketing. The fulfillment of this function is connected to the use of internationally intelligible English, often more inclined to “standard English” or native-speaker variety of English. The tilt towards Standard English in the “pragmatic function” is subverted in the “mathetic function”. The “mathetic function” allows the speaker the freedom “to construct modern reality”, through “linguistic patterns and discursive practices which systematically construct reality for their users and the meaning associated with that reality” (Kandiah, 1995, p. xxii). The language that performs this function reflects the “users’ model of reality” (ibid.). The participation in this language function allows speakers of Indian English to take control of the language reshape its linguistic medium and advance new messages aligned with reality as they see, experience and believe it to be.
The process of domesticating English for localized purposes demands that the non-native bilingual postcolonial writer is able to express his thought patterns in a culture-specific language within the context of situation. Achebe (1969:45) says that this process is solely achieved based on instinct than formal judgement. Kachru (1987:128) in setting up some hypotheses concerning bilingual grammar, states that it has to be captured in terms of what sociolinguists call “verbal repertoire” or “code repertoire”, with specific reference to each speech community. These repertoires include characteristics of code mixing, code switching and the adaptation of stylistic and discoursal strategies available to the bilingual. These distinctive features may be seen as limiting or extending the text, depending on how one looks at it and what one considers as linguistic innovations. The interpretation of such creativity demands: an identification with the literary sensibility of the bilingual tune with ways of saying and levels of new meaning (Kachru op. cit.:130).

English in acquiring international identities also acquires “multiple ownership” (Kachru, 1986: 31) and the international identities that it has procured are manifested in the form of distinct features in each new variety. These features reside in linguistic choice exhibited by idiosyncrasies of lexis, syntax, or style arbitrated by culture, religion, race, nationality, history, politics and a whole range of other socio-economic conditions.
Nativization occurs across all levels of social discourse. Indian English social lectal continuum ranges between: acrolect, i.e. the variety that attempts to approximate standard English; mesolect, an intermediate English variety influenced by local languages at the level of lexis; and basilect, which is a colloquial variety of English greatly influenced by local language lexis, syntax, phonology and style (Kachru, 1982, 1992). For the postcolonial, these lectal ranges both present and reinforce social positions in relation to power, culture, ethnicity, education and socio-economics. More importantly the lectal categories may serve as tools to establish nationalism, nationism and national identity, by situating their users away from the users of the native speakers of English and the users of other varieties of new English. Nationalism is reflected in the sense of pride the speakers have for their nationally unique variety of English. Nationism, the group (national) consciousness of its speakers and national identity, as the result of each individual speaker’s sense of belonging to the group.

The international and world status of English does not allow it to be bound to any one culture. Smith states that:

"language and culture may be inextricably tied together but no one language is inextricably tied to any one culture and no one needs"
to become like native English speakers in order to use English well. (1983:10)

We do not see Indian English novelists attempting to imitate the culture of the west. This attitude is manifested in the literatures that emerge from the publication of their novels.

The pertinent question of whether English be fashioned to adapt and adjust to cultures whose necessities are and have been served by other languages. History has answered this question without a shred of doubt.

English has been shaped and moulded to whatever environment it has been transported to: as a first language in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa; as a second language in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, India, and in other Commonwealth countries; as a foreign language in almost every other country in the world. (Subramaniam, 1977:22).

A close examination of the structure and organisation of postcolonial English language varieties and literatures would reveal the extent of concessions and liberties taken in the process of nativizing the language. When considering the literatures enriched by the culture, history and experience of postcolonial
societies, one becomes aware of the exercise innovations in order to capture and exhibit the true meaning and reality of these societies. Hence, the process of nativisation includes not only "deviation" (Kachru, 1992: 305) in areas of vocabulary, collocation, idiomatic expressions, syntax, metaphors and rhetorical patterns, but also in the performance of adaptations and experimentations with western and traditional literary forms such as the drama, the novel, the short story and poetry. Kachru (1992:302) explains that "deviation" can be contextualized in the Indian English sociolinguistic context in which English functions; its meaning must therefore be derived with reference to the "use" and "usage" appropriate to the cultural context. The forces that dictate the move towards deviation require the writer to gain a position of freedom "where necessary, by adjusting the interior landscape of words in order to explore and mediate the permutations of another culture and environment" (Kachru, 1987:127).

2.2 Indianness in Indian English Fiction:

Now, talking about Indian English literature we find that fiction has remained to be the most popular of the literary genres to. Over the years, we find that Indian fiction writers have made a significant place in world literature. They are being acclaimed and appreciated all over the world for their nativization of the English language and creating their own distinct literary style. It’s a matter of
pride that ‘Indianness’ of Indian English fiction is being much discussed in the literary world. The most pertinent question which keeps cropping to our minds periodically is: where lies the Indianness? The nearest we can come to it is the depiction of India in its totality, to unravel the mysteries of the Indian consciousness, to feel the Indian sensibility in the novelist’s thought and expression, to write in an idiom which is striking for the Indian as well as global readers. The approach of the literary artist towards India and anything that is distinctive about it as a country like, culture, values, traditions, beliefs and customs help in determining Indianness. Jasbir Jain talks about Indian writing in English in her article on ‘The Plural Tradition: Indian English Fiction’. Her observations on Indian English Writing do help in understanding the term Indianness. She says,

‘Writing in the late fifties K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar referred to Indian writing as ‘Janus-faced’, others described it as hybrid, and still others viewed it in terms of the East-West encounter. Apparently on the face of it, it relates to two traditions, one on the basis of language, the other on the basis of culture. Hence, it has passed through several phases and different descriptions – Anglo-Indian, Indo-Anglian, Indo-English, Indian English, Indian Fiction written in English – descriptions which indicate the shifts
in emphasis. Today it has arrived at a point where the differences between language and culture have been bridged and rendered irrelevant. Indian writing in English constitutes a pluralistic world wherein, the colonial past, the Indian heritage, the indigenous forms, the inherited and internalized cultural values, the oral tradition, the diasporic presence abroad, the parallels with and differences from language literatures,—all theses jostle with each other. Partly it is representative of a multi-cultural situation; partly Indians are no longer apologetic, on the defensive or self conscious in their use of English.’ (Singh and Sheel, 1997:55)

The above observation makes it clear that Indianness in Indian English fiction lies in the depiction of India’s colonial past, in its rich cultural and traditional heritage to name a few, without being apologetic about their use of the language of the colonizers.

The fact cannot be denied that because of the long use of English in India for various purposes by the educated class and writers, a distinct variety of English developed. This variety got accepted locally as well as internationally and made its own national identity. Indian English functions in the Indian sociolinguistic context and it contributes to its Indianness. Jaydeep Sarangi observes:
'Indianness is essentially an important criteria for Indian writing in English because it gives the Indian writing an identity of its own.' (?:71)

2.2.1 The Beginning:

It has been quite a long time now since fiction exercised its impact on the Indian literary scene. The historians of this particular genre of literature might date its rise to the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century when writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Rajmohan’s Wife), Toru Dutt (Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden), Lal Behari Day (Bengal Peasant Life) etc. emerged on the Indian literary scene but it was only in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century that it started gaining prominence. Fiction providing a more flexible medium was first experimented with more or less on the model set by the old English icons, especially of the Victorian era when novel writing had been the most popular genre among the writers and the masses alike.

In the beginning, Indian fiction writers who wrote in English, dealt with the popular ideals and ‘isms’ (like, socialism, communism and Gandhism) that were stirring people’s mind in the earlier part of the century. The 1930s saw the rise of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan as major Indian English novelists. Without any doubt, they are legendary figures in Indian English fiction, novelists who first set the tone of Indianness in their works. They
showed to the world that they could master the language and develop their own literary style. The novels which they have written during the pre independence period reflect the social, economic and political condition of that time. Their writings commonly smack of what is termed as Gandhism, Communism, and Socialism etc, leaving for the coming generation a chance to peep into the historical and social background of the period. The social and political events and their impact on the individual lives and families provided the thematic lineament of the colonial and earlier post-colonial period. Rightly, the novels of the period are labeled as novels of ‘Social Realism’. We can also say that the novelists of the pre-independence period or those of the early period after independence were nationalist in orientation. Their themes were largely Indian mysticism and spiritualism. We find that the main concern of almost all the novelists was one: to free India from the alien rule. The novels written during the period of the nationalist movement for independence, aptly called the Gandhian period of Indian literature, tended to identify themselves and their protagonists idealistically with the struggle. In order to unite the country in a shared vision, they portrayed the aspirations of the rural masses and the poor, and showed middle class or educated characters either throwing in their lot with these masses or betraying them as enemies of the people. This period lasted into the first decade after independence, and then from the early sixties, tended to give way to a period in which writers expressed disenchantment with the
corruption and failures of the government and its bureaucracy and often turned away from the public sphere altogether, in angry, desolate, existentialists novels that charted estrangement, interiority and insanity. This period was not very productive as the novelists mainly focused on social realism which was completely devoid of creative imagination. The novels were mechanical and formulaic.

2.2.2. Contributions of Anand, Rao and Narayan in Indian English Fiction:

The present work, though, focus on the post colonial Indian English fiction, especially the fiction of the 1980s and 1990s, it, however, cannot ignore to mention the credentials of the three stalwarts of Indian English fiction i.e., Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan who started their literary careers in colonial India. They’ve remained to be the inspiring figures for the modern Indian English novelists. While going through their novels we feel that they write about the things which appeal to their hearts and minds. They were the novelists who discarded the diction used by the earlier writers and used language to evoke an Indian sensibility. How successful they were in seeking the attention of India and the entire literary world is a known fact.

showed his full understanding of the Indian soil. He was a humanitarian and was deeply concerned with the social evils of the country. All his novels are deeply rooted in Indian culture. The language Anand and his contemporaries used in their novels clearly show that they were determined to set their own linguistic standard.

R. K. Narayan wrote in the language of ordinary Indian folks. Language came to him in natural spontaneity. He never made any conscious effort to experiment with the English language. He uses muted English with an easy flow. He shows great skill in creating consistency of character and speech by using the method of straightforward translation of Indian expressions in English in his dialogues. His style is simple and the intricacies of Indian life are described in his novels – *The Guide*, *The English Teacher* and *The Man Eater of Malgudi* in a vivid and lucid way. Narayan’s novels seem to go round the complex Indian metaphysical traditions. Narayan also makes explicit references to Hindu mythology in his novels. He satirizes all kinds of charlatans, quacks and tricksters in his novels. In fact, his celebrated novel, *The Guide* is a fine illustration of such phenomena. But he also concedes that they fulfill a social need, and the Indian people are dependent on them, whether he is a sanyasi or an astrologer. Their presence conforms to age-old traditions and beliefs. Narayan didn’t believe in a society which is divided on the lines of caste and
class. He strongly feels that the nation can progress only when people can rise above caste, class and religion. He talks about a casteless society in his novel, *The Guide*. The following conversation between Rosie and Raju, the two main characters of the novel, reveal that caste and class has absolutely no place in man’s quest for attaining a life of prominence:

"‘You see’, she began, plucking my sleeve. ‘Can you guess to what class I belong?’ I looked her up and down and ventured, ‘The finest whatever it may be, and I don’t believe in class or caste. You are an honour to your caste, whatever it may be.’

‘I belong to a family traditionally dedicated to the temples as dancers; my mother, grandmother and before her, her mother. Even as a young girl I danced in our village temple. You know how our caste is viewed?’

‘It is the noblest caste on earth’, I said,

‘We are viewed as public women. We are not considered respectable; we are not considered civilized.’

‘All that narrow notion may be true of old days, but it’s different now. Things have changed. There is no caste or class today.”’

(Narayan, 1960: 74-75)
Raja Rao’s contribution to Indian English fiction can never be forgotten. His novel *Kanthapura* has remained to be the most discussed novel of the pre-independence India. It is a novel remarkable for its treatment of Indianness in terms of its story telling qualities. *Kanthapura* is indeed, a landmark in the history of Indian English fiction. The importance of this book cannot be ignored when we talk about Indianness in Indian English fiction. The novel is absolutely Indian in its character, language and style. It has been written in an idiom which adequately conveys the theme and sensibility of the Indian soil. The English, Rao has used in his novel is very much adapted to Indian conditions.

Jaydeep Sarangi remarks on Rao’s Indianness thus:

‘Raja Rao’s *Indianness* is a binding force, the result of many other forces – sense of tradition, culture, heritage, geography, life attitude, habits, deep-rooted philosophy and social life.’ (?: 49)

Sarangi makes it clear what Indianness illustrates in Indian English fiction. He considers it to be an internal and intangible value. It is a kind of state which melts social and cultural differences.

Raja Rao appears to be an intelligent novelist. He was quite aware of the fact that English is an alien language and if at all it has to be brought closer to the
hearts and minds of readers it should contain the flavor of the soil. In his essay on “In Search of – My Bride” (1978), Rao advocates his English in these words:

‘I will have to write my English, yet English after all – and how soon we forget it – is an Indo-Aryan tongue. Thus to stretch the English idiom to suit my needs seemed heroic enough for my urgent most demands. The Irish, remember, had done it (....) So why not Sanskritic (or if you will Indian) English?’

Further, in his foreword to the novel *Kanthapura*, he says,

‘One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own, the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word ‘alien’, yet English is not an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make up. We are all instinctively bi-lingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove
to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American.

Time alone will justify.’

Time has, of course, justified the initiatives taken by Anand, Rao and Narayan when it comes to the experiments with the language. The new generation of novelists like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry and many others went on to experiment with language successfully in their novels.

2.3.1. Rise of New Generation:

What Raja Rao said in the 1930s appears to have turned true today. Indian English novelists have developed their own distinct literary style. It is probably their creativity in the use of the language which draws attention of the world. Even the English, is

‘often struck with the liveliness with which the younger generation handled a foreign tongue. They altered the idiom but they could say whatever they wanted to say quickly; there were none of the babuisms ascribed to them.’(Forster, 1985:55)

Today, we find the younger generation of novelists trying to write experimental novels which are quite different in form and language, theme and technique. Their diction and style are different from the diction and style of the novelists
of the early part of the 20th century. Sarangi’s concluding thoughts of his book, *Indian Novel in English: A Sociolinguistic Study* is worth mentioning here:

‘In India, the English writers have gone back to their roots and yet, they have totally rejected the language of the colonizer; they opt for hybridization of the adopted language.’ (119)

2.3.2. Early Eighties: Rushdie and Post-Rushdie Novelists:

It was not until the arrival of the ‘80s that Indian English novelists more or less wrote under the influence of the English native models. The epoch making entry of Salman Rushdie with his Booker prize winner *The Midnight’s Children* made the Indian writers more confident. The novel was seen as the foundational text for a new kind of post-colonial novel, one in which a migrant, diasporic, cosmopolitan consciousness dominates. It brought Indian English fiction onto the international literary scene and opened new worlds of possibility for re-imagining and representing enabling relationships between individual and nation. Indian English novel, which was finding itself in stagnant water in both form and content got a new lease of life with the publication of *Midnight’s Children*. The novel re-conceptualized the dichotomy between personal and national identity in a way that made a new kind of social engagement possible. Rushdie comically and mock-heroically insists on creating Nation in the imaginative image of Self. He talks about History, too, in the same way. The
individual must come to terms with History’s grand narratives or be destroyed, shattered. Rushdie’s protagonist Saleem Sinai eventually yields to the unyielding march of History, but not before he tells his own story in his own words and on his own terms.

It would be right to say that the novels written during the 1980s and the 1990s had a regenerated focus on Indian history. The novelists interpreted official versions of history to serve their own purposes. It was the time when the voices of Indian writers were being heard much more loudly than they were heard during the colonial period. Rushdie set the tone for the hybridization of English with Indian vernacular languages. *Midnight’s Children* must be credited with taking the language of the Indian street and smuggling it into the novel, and also in talking to the colonizer in the language of the colonized. Rushdie was followed by novelists such as Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry and many others, who were successful in decolonizing the English language by giving it an authentic Indian voice both thematically and linguistically. They found that Rushdie’s pattern of narration allowed them a new freedom of both form and content. His acknowledgement of diversity and his hybridization of language were felt to be quite liberating for the new novelists. It enabled them to tell their personal stories and experiences in their own voices. The novels which got published during the eighties and
nineties were clearly influenced by *Midnight's Children* in terms of language, style and structure. The Indian flavor which was kept under the wraps by the Indian writers came out in a full fledge manner making the works of Indian English novelists more original and unique. What was largely a nationalistic writing in the nineteen thirties and in the following decades became a literature of immense aesthetic and socio-cultural significance of modern India. Now, Indianness was a stamp that was used more boldly creating an identity of itself among the other English writings. The novelists of the period had started to concern themselves with contemporary issues and reality. Their novels expressed their sense of commitment to the creed of progress, revolutionary change in the use of language and of course, the welfare of the common man.

We see the post colonial Indian novelists trying to make a synthesis between the ancient and the modern culture, between the western and the eastern views of life and between the urban and the rural society. We see them engaged in their task of exploring fictional modernity which is as much responsive to the millions in India as to the inherent challenges in the technique. Like the major novelists of The Great Tradition, the major Indo English novelists have not only changed the possibilities of art for practitioners and readers but have become “significant in terms of that human awareness they promote, awareness of the possibilities of life.” (Leavis, 1993:78)
The chief concern of the novelist during the post colonial phase is the realistic portrayal of life as it is lived by the Indians today. We also find in their novels the bitterness and the agony of the colonial past. Edward Said aptly puts the pain and anguish of the Indian English novelists in following words:

Many of the most interesting post colonial writers bear their past within them- as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending towards a new future, as urgently interpretable and redeploy able experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory taken back from the empire. (Said, 1993:31)

The social and political events and their impact on the individual lives and families provided the thematic lineament for the post colonial Indian English novelists. The novels of the post colonial phase showed educated Indian’s growing awareness of the country’s political situation and need for social changes. Their Indianness reflected in their treatment of the subject and the use of their language.
2.4. Linguistic and Thematic Exfoliation in post-colonial English fiction

Indian English novelists of the post-colonial period used a lot of linguistic devices to nativize the language and make it culture specific. The worth mentioning devices by which English is Indianized in Indian English fiction are code-mixing, code-switching, hybridization, translation of Indian idioms and expressions in English, the use of collocations and compounds, transfer of context etc. Linguistic innovations, no doubt, play a vital role in bringing out the Indianness in Indian English fiction. In the chapter on ‘Linguistic Exploration in post-colonial Indian English Fiction’, there is a discussion on the linguistic devices used by the Indian novelists in their novels.

Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* played a significant role in changing the course of Indian English Fiction. It paved the way for the new generation of novelists to tell their tale in their own distinct voice. The novel was successful because of its daring linguistic experiments and exploring the Indian sensibility in a creative manner. Rushdie asserts that the best prose writing in India since independence has been in English, which has by now become an Indian language. He argues that Indian English writing has not just a place for itself among other Indian literatures, but a pre-eminent place. Amitav Ghosh observes that, ‘this is one of the best things that could have happened in the 50th year of independence’.
There has been imperceptible change in the Indian society ever since India attained its freedom. This change in society has brought a change in Indo-English writings too. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* set the platform for other novelists of the period to exhibit their literary and linguistic skills. Rushdie’s experiment with the language gave a new direction to other novelists. The new narratives of the eighties and nineties displayed artistic fireworks with confidence in self, language and form. The editor of *The Hindustan Times* rightly says in his editorial, dated 17\textsuperscript{th} April, 2000.

\begin{quote}
As the progenitor of an entirely new approach to writing, Rushdie represents a generational change in the world of Indian literature. He is the confident voice of the midnight’s children, who no longer have any colonial inhibitions about presenting India in all its starkness and beauty.
\end{quote}

With Rushdie, we find Indian English fiction making a bold departure from the traditional kind of novel. However, it does not imply that the novelists of the eighties and the nineties do not have historical elements in their novels. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* throws adequate light on the plight of children who were born on the day when India got its independence. The book follows the life of Saleem Sinai, who is born at the very moment in 1947 when India gained its independence from British colonial rule. Critics credit it with making
the worldwide literary audience aware of the changes that India underwent throughout the twentieth century. With his masterful control of the English language and his ability to render even the minutest events in full, vivid details, Rushdie takes readers on an imaginative trip that makes them see his native country in a way that they never did before. His novel celebrates the creative tensions between personal and national identity, playing up and playing with both their contradictions and uniqueness, recognizing, like its protagonist Saleem Sinai, that if the individual is ‘handcuffed to history’ whether he likes it or not he can make a virtue out of that necessity.

Rushdie, indeed, was successful in creating a brood of formidable literary heirs in India. Novelists like Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth and many others have continued to explore and experiment the English language and have given new directions in themes and techniques of their novels. Indian English fiction had become stagnant before the publication of *Midnight’s Children* as there was little or no experimentation. The novels which were written after *Midnight’s Children* were multigenerational and depicted the story of the protagonist’s family as a national history. It is discernible that there was a rejection of the traditional, social, realist novel. The novelists had become confident in using various kinds of Indian English which was characterized by digressions and humor. The use of myth, oral tradition,
and different versions and ideas of history were also to be seen in the novels written during the eighties and nineties. Indian English novelists had come to realize that ‘literature must refresh memory.’ (Gunter Grass speaking in Bombay) India’s rich cultural heritage kept haunting and inspiring the Indian imagination.

Besides giving the new generation of novelists the valor to narrate their stories as Indian stories, Midnight’s Children also gave them the license to be ironic and equivocal about their relation to the nation. Upamanyu Chatterjee, in his first novel, English August: An Indian Story (1988), is able to portray a disaffected protagonist, Agastya Sen within the Indian Civil Service who suffers deep and prolonged alienation and indecision in his provincial posting. He is on one year training at a small town called Madna. He finds the place difficult and also gets disillusioned with the system. Power and authority turn out to be erroneous things for him. He suffers from isolation, rootlessness and cultural dislocation. The novel throws adequate light on the plight of the urban educated youth and the predicaments of those people who are highly influenced by the western ways of life. Bijay Kr. Das in his book on Postmodern Indian English Literature says,
The novel combines the consciousness of the novels of nineteen sixties and eighties—that is the farmers’ problems of uprooted self and the latter’s hybridity and intellectual idiom. (62)

Amitav Ghosh is one of the major novelists of the post-Rushdie era. He is a novelist of immense repute. His novels deal with the dissonance in the human psyche, with good and evil, with such primal things as love, hate, animosity, vengeance, violence, age old family feud, the desire for union, the need for separation, the quest for normalcy, the need for renunciation, with something incalculable in each one of us which may at any moment rise to the surface and disturb our normal balance, with mysteries, uncertainties, complexities of human existence and relationship. Nationalism, political freedom and international relations are the major themes of Amitav Ghosh’s first two novels, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*. In *The Circle of Reason* (1986), Amitav Ghosh talks about unity and diversity, in weaving which brought welcome changes all over the world, in history which “is hope as well as despair”—in a living belief that the world of greed and destruction may be transformed by Reason, that Reason may make it one and bless it with diversity. *The Shadow Lines* (1990) is a moving monumental novel in which Amitav Ghosh appears to have put his very soul. It emanates from memories, intricate relationships. Amitav Ghosh points out the absurdity of drawing lines
between peoples and nations. But at the same time he also mentions that the habit of drawing lines however, futile and fatuous it may be, is, consistent with human nature. And perhaps, it is difficult, well nigh impossible for us to get rid of it. The Shadow Line we draw between people and nations has been a source of terrifying violence. It is one of the great themes of our times. He neither defends separation or the habit of drawing lines nor defends it openly or completely. His position appears to be that of a realist or agnostic and he takes this position chiefly because of the complexity of human nature or situation because of the inadequacy of human belief or conviction. Human nature is a riddle, perhaps the greatest puzzle that God has created for man on this earth. In fact, no man can ever explain or justify any of his action. Amitav Ghosh states or describes human situations all around the globe – Dhaka and Calcutta as he sees them and instead of jumping to conclusion he leaves it to his readers to draw them.

Shashi Tharoor, in *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), allegorizes the story of modern India in terms of the epic *Mahabharata* and question the very notion of using the authority of tradition to offer certitudes in the apparent chaos and disorder of the present times. He feels that,
‘the issue the epic raises, as well as the values it seeks to promote, is central to an understanding of what makes India.’ (Tharoor, 1989: Introduction)

He goes on to say that,

‘the Mahabharata is an ideal vehicle for The Great Indian Novels’ efforts to affirm and enhance an Indian cultural identity, not as a closed or self-limiting construct, but as a reflection of the pluralism, diversity and openness of India’s kaleidoscopic culture. In the process it aims to broaden understanding of the Indian cultural and historical heritage while reclaiming for Indians the story of India’s experience with foreign rule and its nationalist reassertion, including the triumphs and disappointments of freedom.’ (Tharoor, 1989: Introduction)

The novel aims at presenting the contemporary political reality in terms of myths and legends of India’s remote past. The narrator in the novel says that,

“History……indeed the world, the universe, all human life and so too every institution under which we live- is in constant state of evolution.” (Tharoor, 1989:245)
The novel ends on a note of uncertainty with the narrator waking up from dream to “an India beset with uncertainties, muddling chaotically to the twenty-first century.” (p.418) The novel suggests that by accepting diversity alone India can escape from the mistakes of the past.

Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* moves around the social condition of India during the fifties. The novel is an epic account of India at its early stage of growth after independence. Seth writes about nation building from India’s middle class point of view. There are many events in the book which tells us about the nation building process and the social change which took place in India during the nineteen fifties.

Rohinton Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey* (1991) is set against the backdrop of the Indo-Pak war of 1971. The novel delves into the human predicament of an individual. Gustad Noble, the central character of the novel resembles an archetypal tragic hero who moves on from ‘happiness to misery.’ We see him trying to expose the social and political ills of the country. While going through Mistry’s novel we come to know about India’s past, its leaders, its corruption, its culture, its social life and its political relations. He is absolutely frank and direct in talking about the social and political tribulations of the Indian nation. He is a realist and his main concern is to depict the predicament of modern life. His awareness of the social and political situation in India, especially during the
period of 1970s makes him a genuine and authentic novelist. He uses the weapon of satire in his novels. He seems to be a devout critic of war. His attack on the Congress government, especially Indira Gandhi is unmatched. The novel appears to be in line with the realist tradition in which the narration moves forward. We find in the novel, a rich framework of beliefs, superstitions, magic, rites, nationalistic ideas, humanism, radicalism, secular views and so on, which suggests Mistry’s nativization of the English language.

Mistry’s second novel, *A Fine Balance*, takes place in India between partition in 1947, when Pakistan and India were arbitrarily divided and Kashmir left between them like a bone to be fought over forever. The period of Emergency and its impact on the common people is also realistically depicted in the novel. The novel can also be read for its treatment of the layers of socio-political irregularities and caste aberrations that generate a society of anarchy.

The modern Indian English fiction appears to be a blend of tradition and modernity. They are traditional in content and modern in form. It is, perhaps, the duality of Indian English fiction which has been attracting worldwide attention. The modern Indian English novelists are engaged in writing according to the needs of the readers. T.S.Eliot, in his essay on *Baudelaire* rightly says,
Each generation brings to the contemplation of art its own categories of appreciation, makes its own demand upon art and has its own uses of art. (1921:1)

True, until the 1930s, Indian English novelists unmistakably wrote for the nationalist readership for that was the period when the Indian nationalism generated social and radical movements. The younger generation of Indian English novelists however, seem to be using the English language creatively in the growing Indian situation. It can be said that the Indian English fiction in the post colonial period has assumed all types of kaleidoscopic traditions. It has liberated itself from the constraints of colonialism. There is, indeed, much more intellectual life in India at present than it was before independence during the hay day of the British rule in India. This is simply evident from the fact that more novels are being written now than ever before. The novels of the younger generation of novelists have been drawing world wide acclaim and appreciation primarily because of their innovative narration. Indianness, to most of the novelists of the present time is to present India as it really is. It would be right to say that nativization in post colonial Indian fiction is the identification of the self with the soil of India. Novelists have excelled in exhibiting their skills in portraying contemporary reality and common memories of the past. The
creativity of the novelists of the eighties and nineties lies in the fact that their writings reflect Indian ardor, flavor and nuances.

We find the post colonial novelists a little diverse from their predecessors in the subject matter, in using the language more creatively and innovatively, in unraveling the mysteries of the nation. It would be right to say that Indian English novelists of the post colonial phase have been successful in keeping the literature of the past alive as well as in exploring new directions in the literary field. Indianness remains to be momentous even for the new generation of novelists. In his essay, *Poetry and Poets*, T.S. Eliot says,

If we have no living literature we shall become more and more alienated from the literature of the past; unless we keep up continuity, our literature of the past will become more and more remote for us until it is as strange to us as the literature of the foreign people, for our language goes on changing, our way of life changes under the pressure of material changes in our environment, in all sorts of ways; and unless we have those few many who combine an exceptional sensibility with an exceptional power over words, our own ability, not merely to express, but even to feel any, but the crudest emotions will degenerate. (1961:78)
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CHAPTER-III

LINGUISTIC EXPERIMENTATION IN INDIAN ENGLISH

FICTION

The language I speak,

Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses

All mine, mine alone

It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest

It is as human as I am human, don’t

You see?

- Kamala Das (An Introduction

Introduction:

The above lines of Kamala Das prove the point that language being the greatest gift of human nature is not a monopoly of a particular land or people. It is something organic and irrefutably one’s own.

The fact, that English language has been used in India over a long period of time by the educated class and writers cannot be challenged. It has resulted in a distinct variety of English – in terms of idiom, imagery and collocation
deviations. It is intelligible all over the world and has a national identity of its own. Indian English novelists of the post independence era found the new variety a suitable medium for the expression of their thoughts and feelings.

3.1 Indianness in Indian English Fiction:

The Indianness in Indian English fiction is not merely to catch the eye of the world but to be accepted as one of the finest linguistic and cultural innovations of the modern times. R.K.Narayan speaking at the Commonwealth Literature Conference held at Leeds in 1964 said:

> English has proved that if a language has flexibility, any experience can be communicated through it, even if it has to be paraphrased sometimes, rather than conveyed, and even if the factual detail.....is partially understood. We are still experimentalists. We are not attempting to write Anglo Saxon English. The English language, through sheer resilience and mobility, is now undergoing a process of Indianisation, in the same manner as it adopted U.S citizenship over a century ago with the difference that it is the major language there, but here one of the fifteen.

Mulk Raj Anand, speaking at the same conference the other day said:
I hope that my experiments in writing the new language, Indian English, along with the works of many other colleagues, will come to be read by Indian students of the English language. This may help to show why Indian English, different from the sister languages of our country as well as from English, is yet an attempted fusion of both. It is a kind of metamorphosis, which is as significant as Irish English, or Welsh English or Australian English.

The above statements of Narayan and Anand makes it clear that English is a flexible language which can be adapted and adjusted to different socio-linguistic context. It is, in fact, the suppleness of English which has given shape to many varieties of English all over the world. Raja Rao’s observations on Indian English in his preface to *Kanthapura* (1938) have remained to be stimulating and inspirational words for many Indian writers. He observes:

We are instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English, we should not. We can write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as a part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will someday prove to be as
distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone
will justify it.

The above observation has been quoted by the critics, writers and researchers whenever there is a discussion on Indian English and its nativisation process. *Kanthapura* is of significance specifically for “the manner in which (its) experimental use of the English language is geared towards the definition of a cultural identity” (Sethi, 1999. 40-41) Rao’s proposal established hybridity and language mixture, and most significantly bilingualism, as key features of Indian English as a literary language.

Indian English has come a long way. It is no longer a term of derision or a substandard variety of English. It has been and is being handled by the Indian writers with adequate mastery and ease. People all over the world recognize it as a distinct, respectable variety. If we look at the last two decades of Indian English fiction we see that that the growth has been opulent. We have seen novelists like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor, etc writing in a new way, encountering, as it were, with everyday reality.

There were some challenges, there still are, so far as the use of English for creative purposes is concerned. It would be right to say that Indian English novelist’s sheer mastery of the English language made them prevail over those
difficulties. Raja Rao talks about the challenges of a novelist while experimenting with the language, in his Preface to *Kanthapura*:

> The telling has not been easy. One has to convey in a language that is not one’s own, the spirit that is one’s own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word ‘alien’, yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up, like Sanskrit or Persian was before – but not of our emotional make-up.

Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her essay on ‘The Anxiety of Indianness, Our Novels in English’ makes a special mention of Raja Rao for his contribution to Indian English Literature, for his experiments with the language. Rao she says was the first Indian English novelist who could sense the anxieties of an Indian writer writing in English. She observes:

> I single out Raja Rao for mention not only because he is the first to articulate the anxieties of Indian novelist in English in his prefatory remarks, but also because in the text he works out a strategy for negotiating the contesting claims of language and culture.
The challenges, however, have not been indomitable as we have seen Indian fiction writer's ability to use the English language to their own intendment for the imaginative and cogent expression of the different shades of their emotions and ideas, for the depiction of the Indian culture and the expression of Indian sensibility. This is apparent from the discrete imagery, diction and even syntactic patterns in their novels, and also in the collocation variations, semantic shifts and lexical extensions which characterize the composition and growth of Indian English. Indian English has been the product of an evolutionary, creative process, influenced by Indian languages. One of the important characteristic features of Indian English has been experimentation and innovation and using the language in typically Indian context.

3.2.1 Use of linguistic devices in pre-independence Indian English fiction.

The uses of linguistic devices play a significant role in the nativisation process of a language. Nativisation of a language occurs when a particular speech community makes an unfamiliar language its own. Nativisation is the adaptation of a language to a speech community’s particular needs. The more varied the needs, the greater the need to be intelligible to different speech communities. We have seen that English is adaptable and does not hesitate to borrow a word or particular usage when necessary. The necessity arises when the language of context is not culturally or lexically familiar to the ‘standard’
users of the language. If 'standard' English cannot provide a word or phrase with the appropriate meaning or emotional tie, then the 'native' language fills the gap.

We have seen Indian English novelists using some of the techniques to vary the English language in a specific cultural context. In the novels of Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and many others of the pre-independence era we do find the use of linguistic devices to evoke Indian sensibility. Some of the major linguistic devices used by the novelists of that era include: code-switching/code-mixing, hybridization, culturally specific phrases, proverbs, idioms and some grammatical variations. While code-mixing or code-switching can occur in instances where the user is not completely familiar with English, it also occurs when “shades of meaning” are important. While a word in the native language may have an emotional tie, that tie is lost to the reader unless he knows the meaning of the word. A method which would not lose the native English speaking readers is the direct translation of phrases from the native language to English.

Cecil Nelson in “Syntactic Creativity and Intelligibility” (JIWE, July, 1984) states that some of the devices an author may use are archaisms and original “coinages” which read like translated idioms. Raja Rao’s, Kanthapura abounds in these usages. They add flavor and texture to the work while “they are not the
‘focus’ of the text but…..part of its assumed postulates.” The archaisms—“four-and-twenty houses”—give another world air to *Kanthapura*. The meaning is clear to the monolingual English reader while at the same time different enough to disassociate the text from the readers’ usual usage of English. However different or strange archaisms may be in *Kanthapura*, it is those phrases which (to the monolingual English reader) seem to be translated idioms that are effective in creating a feeling of “Indianness”. ‘Honest as an elephant’ (p.9) and ‘as good as kitchen ashes’ (p.27) are just a few examples.

While Raja Rao uses English to communicate with a world-wide audience, he consciously uses it as a tool to convey his story. In *Kanthapura*, he communicates what life was like in a village at the beginning of Gandhi’s ‘popularity’. In his foreword to the novel, he states that,

“we (Indians) have neither punctuation nor the treacherous ‘ats’ and ‘ons’ to bother us—we tell one interminable tale.”

He goes on to state that punctuation is determined by when the speaker needs to take a pause or to take a breath. All of this is evident in *Kanthapura*. While Rao knows what is correct in Standard English, he adapts English to fit the Indian culture and way of life. English is as much part of the life of India as the different “mother” tongues. Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her essay on ‘The Anxiety of Indianness, Our Novels in English’ observes:
……Not only did he experiment with language in this novel, striving to make English take on the cadence of Kannada as spoken by woman in the Kara district of Karnataka, but also with narrative mode, challenging the generic expectations of the novel as prevalent in western Europe in the 1930. He used the form of a ‘sthalapurana’, the legendary history of a village caught up in the Gandhian movement as told by an old woman – thus trying to integrate myth with history, realism with fabulation, linearity with a cyclic notion of time long before post modernism made such enterprises trendy.

The most striking feature of the creative process is evident in the collocational deviations and compounding of words in Indian English. Collocation defines restrictions on how words can be used together, for example, which prepositions are used with particular verbs, or which verbs and nouns are typically used together. Compound, in Linguistics is a lexeme(less precisely, a word) that consists of more than one stem. Compound occurs when two or more words are attached together to make one word. The meanings of the word interrelate in such a way that a new meaning comes out which is very different from the meanings of the words in isolation. Collocations such as ‘high caste’, ‘low caste’, ‘sacred thread’, ‘depressed classes’, ‘communal riots’, ‘communal

Collocations and compounds have also been formed in Indian English through a process of hybridization, that is by the collocation of an Indian word with an English word such as ‘congress pandal’, ‘marriage pandal’, ‘kumkum mark’, ‘lathi charge’, ‘lathi ring’. Many words which have now become a part of Indian English have been formed by adding English suffixes to Indian words, such as ‘cooliedom’, ‘sadhuhood’, ‘chaprasihood’, ‘goondaism’, ‘upanishadic’, or by
adding Indian suffixes to English words such as ‘policewalah’. Hybrid formations in Indian English novels are conscious experimentations carried out with a view to imparting Indian colour to the narrative.


Another remarkable feature of Indian English fiction is the translation of Indian idioms and expressions into English which may be literal or metaphorical. These appear both in narrative passages and dialogue. Mulk Raj Anand makes
an abundant use of literal translations from Punjabi or Urdu into English in the dialogues of his characters, such as:

‘Aren’t you ashamed of showing me your teeth’ (Untouchable)

‘As if rats were running about his belly’ (Untouchable)

‘The edge of his tongue was like a pair of scissors’ (Untouchable)

‘Thief turning sheriff’ (Old Woman and the Cow)

‘Ram Raj- according to which the lion could lie for a prolonged siesta with the lamb.’ (Private Life of an Indian Prince)

‘Heart- squanderer’ (Private Life of an Indian Prince)

‘Hello, Mr. Late Latif’ (Private Life of an Indian Prince)

Most of these examples are translations of Indian idioms and proverbs, and not as obtrusive as the literal translations into English of the speech of Indian peasants and labourers which Anand uses for his dialogues.

In the works of Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan and Kamala Markandya, the translations appear rather unobtrusively. Here are some examples from Raja Rao’s Kanthapura:

‘(Moorthy) had gone through life like a noble cow’.
‘Otherwise Brahminism is as good as kitchen ashes’.

‘Does a boar stand before a lion or a jackal before an elephant?’

‘Why do you seek to make our stomachs burn?’

‘Had no fire in his stomach’.

‘Cock and sparrow story’.

‘He wanted me to be his dog’s tail’.

‘Go and ask the squirrel on the fence’.

Following are some examples from R.K.Narayan’s novels:

‘My Professor will eat me up’. (*Bachelor of Arts*)

‘His pen ceased’. (*Bachelor of Arts*)

‘To the dust pot with your silly customs’. (*Bachelor of Arts*)

‘I left her after food’. (*The Guide*)

‘The unbeaten brat will remain unlearned’. (*The Guide*)

‘How can we think philosophies, not our line, master’. (*The Guide*)

‘Ah! Like a bridegroom’, winked Gaffoor. (*The Guide*)
‘Like a monkey picking up a rose garland’. *(The Guide)*

‘Thin as a broomstick, but talks like a giant.’ *(The Guide)*

We find many such examples in Kamala Markandaya’s novels too:

‘He was as brittle as a bamboo, before he burst into flame.’ *(Nectar in a Sieve)*

‘There is no earth in my breeding.’ *(Nectar in a Sieve)*

‘Should have her mouth stitched.’ *(Nectar in a Sieve)*

‘You will be putting lines in your face.’ *(Nectar in a Sieve)*

‘A tongue as sour as turned milk.’ *(A Silence of Desire)*

‘One hand of rice and water.’ *(Possession)*

‘Stop thinking like stupid water buffaloes.’ *(A Handful of Rice)*

‘The hurt is of longer standing.’ *(Nectar in a Sieve)*

‘Place pale and chill like an unlit lamp.’ *(A Silence of Desire)*

The creativity of Indian English novelists can also be seen in the use of metaphor and imagery. A few examples taken from Nambiar’s study of Kamala Markandya’s style are amply illustrative:
‘Silence dragged on like barbed wire stretching between them.’ (*A Handful of Rice*)

‘Thoughts kept hurtling through my head like frenzied squirrels in a cage.’ (*Nectar in a Sieve*)

‘he had locked the coffers of his thought and stood vigilant beside them’ (*Some Inner Fury*)

‘the conversation would begin again, flowing smoothly around and away from her, leaving her stranded on the rocks of her shyness.’ (*Some Inner Fury*)

It was Mulk Raj Anand who made a bold experiment of literal translations and transliterations from the mother tongue into English in his novels. His use of the curses and swearwords is deliberate and purposeful. A few examples of such literal translations are as follows:

‘Uncle and I came to hand and feet at the well today, betrayer of my salt, spoiler of my salt, what kind of an owl are you?, where have you gone and died?, there is no talk, to be sure there is talk, he has been eating the bread of illegality, I hear that this girl has rolled many papads, you have cut my nose bitch (Old Woman and the Cow), you illegally begotten (Coolie), what are you barking? , How is you exalted temperament? , My temperament is not well,
Sweepers of somewhere, Son of don’t know (*The Private Life of an Indian Prince*).

Anand also uses a mixture of Indian and English words, such as ‘rolling papads’, ‘one does not do such ‘hat’”, and transliterations of English words used by uneducated class such as, ‘fashun’, ‘injun’, ‘daktar’. It is important to mention here that in these transliterations there is no well defined system or consistency. In most of his novels, transliterations of actual Indian words and phrases in English script co exist with literal translations, and this is true of swear words and curses too, such as, ‘Sali, she ass’, or ‘sala, monkey face’ or ‘rape-sister Memni’. The novelist does it deliberately to express the delicate shades and turns of speech of his characters, which according to him cannot be expressed through any straightforward translation in English. We do not find these in his narration of descriptive passages.

Experiment with the English language was first noticed in G.V.Desani’s *All About H.Hatter* (1948). Desani is considered to be one of the pioneers in experimentation in the sphere of Indian English fiction. He made daring linguistic innovations in this novel. He wrote the novel in Pidgin English, about a pidgin speaking hero. It was a revolution in the art of novel. It is a jumble of philosophy and myth, culture-collision, puns and word-play, bazaar-gossip and
irony. Salman Rushdie, in his editorial preface to the anthology 'Mirrorwork: 50 years of Indian Writing', introduces Desani in these words:

‘The writer I have placed alongside Narayan, G.V. Desani, has fallen so far from favour that the extraordinary All About Hatterr is presently out of print everywhere, even in India. Milan Kundera once said that all modern literature descends from either Richardson’s Clarissa or Sterne’s Tristram Shandy, and if Narayan [Desani’s literary contemporary, the author of the Malgudi novels: 'The Painter of Signs', 'The Vendor of Sweets', &c.] is India’s Richardson then Desani is his Shandean other. Hatterr’s dazzling, puzzling, leaping prose is the first genuine effort to go beyond the Englishness of the English language. His central figure, ‘fifty-fifty of the species’, the half-breed as unabashed anti-hero, leaps and capers behind [much subsequent Indian writing]....My own [Rushdie’s] writing, too, learned a trick or two from him’ (Rushdie, 1997: pg. xviii).

Anthony Burgess, in his preface to the 1969 edition of Desani’s novel, says, ‘the "meteque" (the term coined by F.W. Bateson, referring to writers for whom English was a second or third language), “the writer with a non-English linguistic, racial or political background” who, some critics, like F.W. Bateson
claim that, being on the fringe of a language and the culture that begot it, lacks respect "for the finer rules of English idiom and grammar...which leads them to attempt effects of style, sometimes successfully, that the English writer would feel to be a perverse defiance of the genius of the language"...Most of us would say that "the finer rules" are essentially the property of non-creative pundits who, at the higher level, compile manuals of usage and, at the lower, scold children for constructing verbless sentences......

English is plastic, and as ready to yield to the "meteque" as to Mr Bateson. Indeed, if we are to regard Poles and Irishman (presumably Burgess means Joseph Conrad & James Joyce) as "meteques", there are grounds for supposing that the "meteques" have done more for English in the 20th century (meaning that they have shown what the language is capable of, or demonstrated what English is really like) than any of the pure-blooded men of letters who stick to the finer rules. Burgess further writes in the same preface:

'But it is the language that makes the book, a sort of creative chaos that grumbles at the restraining banks. It is what may be termed Whole Language, in which philosophical terms, the colloquialisms of Calcuuta and London, Shakespearean archaisms, bazaar whinings, quack spiels, references to the Hindu pantheon, the jargon of Indian litigation, and shrill babu
irritability seethe together. It is not pure; it is like the English of Shakespeare, Joyce and Kipling, gloriously impure.’ (Desani, 1969: 7-10)

Though Desani doesn’t share much commonality with Joyce at the level of style and technique, it seems proper to read the novel as a kind of modernist experimentation. Desani only shares Joyce’s interest in altering the English canon a bit derisively. Desani’s canon is, however, a bit fringeier, having at its center the eighteenth-century classic, *Tristram Shandy*. There also seems to be the picaresque spirit of Apuleius here; some episodes read a little like they might have come out of *The Golden Ass*. Third is Lewis Carroll, whose “Mad Hatter” is alluded to in “Hatterr”. (It’s an amusing exercise to speculate on where the extra ‘r’ comes from) There are many sources in the novel but the most ubiquitous literary reference point by far is Shakespeare. Some of Desani’s Shakespearisms are simple comic misquotations, but others are very much unrelenting. The opening of Chapter 1 is a kind of remix of *Hamlet*. Hatterr, however, is playing the guard:

‘All’s well, friend Master Keeper o’ Literary Conscience!

‘The name is H.Hatterr, how d’ you do?

‘What of that?"
‘Well, thereby hangs a tale…

‘List’

‘List!’ is what the ghost in Hamlet says “listen”. (Desani, 1998: 15)

Here Desani seems to be playing around with words. ‘List!’ also seems to mean “enumerate!”- as in, explain yourself, dammit! The given example is a framing device for the novel that follows other things.

All About H.Hatter, is indeed a fine hilarious novel, a rare stroke of Desani’s comic genius. The name Hatter appears to be borrowed from Lewis Carroll’s mad Hatterrr in Alice in Wonderland. In the novel, Hatter on his return from England to India, is involved in seven adventures with gurus, fakirs and women. His Indian mistress, a laundry woman, a dhobin creates a big scene at the club, and Rozie, the Lion-lamer exploits his gullible nature, and Appandine Sinclair elopes with his wife. The grotesque characters and their equally grotesque deeds or misdeeds are described by Desani with great comic power and virtuosity. Desani’s use of English language for creative purposes is itself a very original form of modernist linguistic experimentation and fictional comic mood. The crazy English of the novel is thoroughly self conscious and finely controlled performance of the novelist.
Influenced by Desani’s linguistic innovation, Salman Rushdie coined ‘chutnification of English’. Rushdie, in his novels made serious efforts to conquer English language. In an article entitled, “The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance”, which appeared in the London Times of July, 3, 1982 he wrote about what he called the ‘decolonizing of the English language’. In this article he remembers Desani and others for “forging English into new shapes” and for demonstrating “how English could be bent and kneaded until it spoke in an authentically Indian voice.” Rushdie is audacious to acknowledge the importance of Desani’s novel All About H. Hatter on his language, and explains how it served as a linguistic model for transforming his English:

‘The way in which the English language is used in that book is very striking; it showed me that it was possible to break up the language and put it back together in a different way......one thing it showed me was the importance of punctuating badly. In order to allow different kinds of speech rhythms or different kinds of linguistic rhythms to occur in the book, I found I had to punctuate it in a very peculiar way, to destroy the natural rhythms of the English language; I had to use dashes too much, keep exclaiming, putting in three dots, sometimes three dots followed by semi-colons followed by three dashes.....That sort of thing just seemed
to help to dislocate the English and let other things into it. Desani does that all the time in Hatterr.' (Rushdie, 2000:10)

3.2.2 Use of linguistic devices in post colonial Indian English fiction:

After independence, the Indian English novelists have shown their mettle in exploring different shades of Indian life and culture. It was possible for them to express their thoughts in English only by the use of various linguistic devices. English language was nativised and the content of the novel had a distinct Indian flavor.

Salman Rushdie is the pioneer in the field of post-colonial experimentation in Indian English fiction. His novels made new beginnings in terms of structure and theme as also the narrative style. Midnight’s Children brought about a significant change in the way Indian English fiction came to be written. The established form of the Indian English fiction and the purity of content got destroyed with the publication of this novel. The novel is a post modernist deconstructionist account of Indian history of the recent past. We find the characters of the novel typically voyeurs and secret-sharers. An eaves-dropper hears a different story from the one that is in the public domain, and the narrative he consequently produces has the flavor of lip-smacking gossip rather than bland documentation. The novel is written with an exceptional verbal
energy and employs an amazing multiplicity of linguistic and narrative tradition.

Rushdie aptly uses rhetoric language in *Midnight’s Children*. His language is compelling. He makes it more appealing and powerful by using certain linguistic devices. He frequently uses lengthy and intricate sentences in the novel. One such example is his description of the operation of Saleem’s nasal passage:

‘O, spell it out, spell it out; the operation whose ostensible purpose was the draining of my inflamed sinuses and the once-and-for-all clearing of my nasal passages had the effect of breaking whatever connection had been made in a washing chest; of depriving me of nose-given telepathy; of banishing me from the possibility of midnight’s children.’ (1981: 304)

We find Rushdie being rhetorical in the above passage from the novel. For one critic, Rushdie’s “verbal play, internal rhyme, and strange verbal conjoining characterize the linguistic practices of postmodernism”. But for Rushdie the reshuffling of the language in his novel *Midnight’s Children* is not only postmodern, but also a way of accommodating Indian speech patterns into English:
Midnight’s Children was partially conceived as an opportunity to break away from the manner in which India had been written about in English, not just by Indian writers but by Western writers as well. (1981:4)

The manner in which Rushdie represents certain aspects of speech in written form is unique and very close to those of his literary heroes, G.V. Desani and Laurence Sterne. Narration, in the novel takes the form of a dialogue between two voices: that of Saleem and that of Padma, who embodies the audience. Saleem now and again asks the reader questions using asides. The narrative is written and told in front of an audience: rhetoric is therefore paramount.

Rushdie’s narration in the novel reminds the readers of Desani’s language in his novel All About H. Hatterr. One can easily notice the same sardonic, humorous rhetorical tone, filled with superfluous adjectives and attributes.

We also see code-switching and code-mixing in the novel. The changeover of English within an Indian context is well exemplified in the code-mixed Indian English Rushdie adopts for his characters’ speech. An example of this can be seen in the speech of the narrator’s uncle Hanif:

‘……….He wallops me in the black, toppling me forwards into Mary’s arms.'
“Hey little wrestler! You look fine!” “But so thin, Jesus! They

Haven’t been feeding you properly? You want

cornflour

Pudding? Banana

Mashed with milk? Did they give you

chips?” .............And

Hanif booms,

“Yes, tickety boo! The boy is really ship-shape!

Come

on pahelwan: a

ride in my Packard, okay?” And talking at the same

time is Mary

Pareira, “Chocolate cake,” she is promising,

“laddoos, pista-ki-lauz,

Meat samosas, kulfi. So thin you got, baba, the

wind will blow you
away.” ….. “Your Pia aunty is waiting! My god, you see if we don’t have a number one good time!” (1981: 239)

In the novel, we see the interaction of English with the Indian vernacular languages. It results in English being used as a pan-Indian language which seeks to contain the vernaculars. While the use of English serves to objectify the representation of Indian culture for a global audience, it also gets fixed to the Indian context and becomes instrumental for distinctively national concerns. The language which emerges from the syntactical and lexical exchanges between English and other Indian languages is eloquent and yield new meaning in specifically Indian context. Rushdie’s use of English in Midnight’s Children exemplifies the discursive wavering between the global and the vernacular which characterizes the language of Indian English literature.

Heteroglossia, namely, the dialogic interrelation of different registers and dialects, which gravitate within the orbit of a national language, is in constant tension with the tendency towards linguistic centralization and unification. (Bakhtin 272-73) In India, there is no single national language. It is a country of mixed languages and culture. Rushdie has artfully exploited this feature of India in his novel, Midnight’s Children. His different use of language mixture forms
an integral part of his differing representations of Indian heteroglossia, and proposes conflicting political solutions for India’s ‘present needs’.

Switching from Standard English to Indian English or from English to Hindi is a strategy employed by Rushdie in order to assert commonality. This device is used by him to mark the identity of the speaker and also to conceal region, religion, class and nationality. According to Braj Kachru, code-mixing with English is not only pan-Indian, but it is an indication of modernization, socio-economic position, and membership in an elite group:

'It continues to be used in those contexts where one would like to demonstrate authority, power and identity with the establishment.'

(1981:200)

In Indian English, a switch to Hindi-Urdu is associated with in-groupings. A switch from English to Hindi marks personal involvement and emotional attachment or support. The translations in his novel are expressionistic in the sense that they are pervaded by the coarseness of street Hindi. He does use these linguistic devices to give his language a humorous and local effect. There is a strong contrast between the dialogues, which are in Indian English, and the language of the narrator, which is in English much closer to the British standard. The objective of Rushdie’s translated Urdu is to reproduce the syntactical structures, lexical items, and tone of the source language. He tries
hard to express the crude form of Hindi-Urdu spoken by some of his characters. An example to illustrate this point is when Parvati-the-Witch, Saleem’s future wife, first meets Saleem in person (they had telepathic communication before), she exclaims happily:

“‘Arre’ baap, Saleem, you remember - - the children, yaar, O this is too good! So why are you looking so serious when I feel like to hug you to pieces? So many years I only saw you inside here,” she taps her forehead, “and now you’re here at last with a face like a fish. Hey, Saleem! Say one hullo at least.” (1981:379)

There is another example of code-mixing with Urdu and hybridization in the form of the speech of the boatman Tai. We see Tai telling Aadam Aziz of his meeting with the aged Isa (Jesus Christ) when, according to legend, he came to the Kashmir valley:

‘Nakkoo, listen, listen. I have seen plenty. Yara, you should’ve seen that Isa when he came, beard down to his balls, bald as an egg on his head. He was old and faged-out but he knew his manners. “You first, Taiji,” he’d say, and “Please to sit”; always a respectful tongue, he never called me crackpot, never called me tu...
either. Always aap. Polite, see? And what an appetite! Such a hunger, I would catch my ears in fright. Saint or devil, I swear he could eat a whole kid in one go. And so what? I told him, eat, fill your hole, a man comes to Kashmir to enjoy life, or to end it, or both. His work was finished. He just came up here to live it up a little.’ (1981: 17-18)

In the above passage, we see that Tai explains that Isa used the respectful form aap of the personal pronoun, instead of the more casual tu, which is used for people who are socially inferior. The linguistic dissimilarity becomes a social one but only a reader having knowledge of Hindi or Urdu would be able to understand. The expression, ‘Please to sit’ also gives a flavor of Indian English.

It is not that Rushdie allows the vernaculars to move unhindered within his text. He sometimes provides the translations of Hindi-Urdu words next to the original in the text and sometimes does not. Rushdie believes that the text of the novel should be self explanatory and engrossing in it. He celebrates the disorderly, chaotic multiplicity of voices and languages that take over the voice of the narrator who finds it difficult to govern them. The voices, however, make themselves heard anyway.

Rushdie uses English language in the Indian context and is successful in creating the impression of it being an Indian language. This vernacularization of
English is a characteristic feature of his narration of India. He shows the extent to which English can be made into an expressive medium for chronicling present-day India. In the novel, we see the use of many different Indian languages in the form of dialogue or in the form of indirect communication of characters whose first language is not English. Rushdie radicalizes Bakhtinian heteroglossia as a model for inventing Indian English.

(a kind of snack) and many others. Rushdie has used such phrases and expressions to provide accuracy, authenticity and reliability so much important for a novel which deals in history.

The use of hybridization and inventing new forms of existing English is also perceptible in *Midnight's Children*. Rushdie has creatively used these linguistic devices to give the novel an artistic touch. We see him trying to break away from the accepted norms of English. There are many examples of the aforesaid linguistic devices in the novel. Some of them are: ‘dislikeable’, ‘doctori’, ‘unbeautiful’, ‘sonship’, ‘memoryless’, ‘historyless’, ‘dupatta-less’, ‘chutnification’ etc. Another example is the word, “jailkhana” used by a character in the novel:

“Oh my God my hour has come, my darling Madam, only let me go peacefully, do not put me in the jailkhana!” (1981:279)

There are instances in the novel where Rushdie uses compounds by combining words and phrases. Some of the examples are: ‘overandover’, ‘downdowndown’, ‘updownup’, ‘suchandsuch’, ‘noseholes’, ‘birthanddeath’, ‘whatdoyoumeanhowcanyousaythat’, ‘blackasnight’, ‘nearlynine’, ‘nearlynineyearsold’, ‘almostseven’, and ‘godknowswhat’. These compounds show Rushdie’s creativity and his complete command on the English language. He employs them where he thinks they will be able to provide a desired effect.
The use of slang- mostly Indian are also to be seen in the novel. The examples are: ‘funtoosh’, ‘goo’, ‘gora’, ‘zenana’, ‘hubsee’ etc. The list of the slangs doesn’t end here. He goes on to create new slang words like: ‘other pencil’, ‘cucumber’, ‘soo soos’ and ‘spitoon’. In the sentence: ‘So now that the writery is done, let’s see if we can make your other pencil work!’ (1981:39) which Padma whispers in the ears of Saleem, the word ‘writery’ is used for writing and the expression ‘your other pencil’ refers to the male sex organ. In another sentence, ‘despite everything she tries, I cannot hit her spitton’ (1981:39) the word ‘spitton’ refers to the female sex organ. The word ‘cucumber’ in the expression, ‘the useless cucumber hidden in my pants’ (1981:141) also refers to the male sex organ. Rushdie’s use of such expressions is suggestive and imagistic. Rushdie very much likes using them.

There are also occasional misspellings of the words in the novel. Rushdie, through the deliberate use of misspellings appears to mocking at the Indians use of English in their day to day lives. Some of the words which are misspelled in the novel are: ‘unquestionabel’, ‘straaange’, ‘existance’, ‘ees’ etc. Even from the grammatical viewpoint we find some incorrect words in the novel such as: ‘mens’, ‘lifeliness’ and ‘informations’. Rushdie has also tried to defy the accepted norms of English grammar. There are certain lapses of

Another notable feature of Rushdie’s linguistic experiment is repetition of words, phrases, even the description of events. The repetition of the monosyllabic adjectives makes the narration metrical and rhythmic. The result is that the reader’s attention never slows down. This is a feature which is generally characteristic of spoken Indian English. A very appropriate example of the repetition of words, phrases, and the description of events can be noticed in the very first line of the novel:

‘I was born in the city of Bombay.....once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15 th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it’s important to be more..... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India’s arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. There were gasps. And, outside the window, fireworks and crowds.’

(1981:11)
We find a similar kind of description towards the end of the novel at the time of the birth of Saleem Sinai’s son:

‘He was born in Old Delhi……once upon a time. No that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: Aadam Sinai arrived at a night shadowed-slum on June 25 th, 1975. And the time? The time matters, too. As I said: at night. No, it’s important to be more…..On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clockhands joined palms. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the instant of India’s arrival at Emergency, he emerged. There were gasps; and, across the country, silences and fears. And owing to the occult tyrannies of that benighted hour, he was mysteriously handcuffed to history, his destiny indissolubly chained to those of his country.’ (1981: 419)

Rushdie understood it very well that Indian English allows for a great abundance of types of lexical and grammatical repetition. He is successful in associating the history of the individual to the history of the nation by the use of repetitive words and phrases and even the description of events. His use of this linguistic device testifies the fact that repetition serves certain artistic purposes and is capable of producing a rhetorical effect.
The reason for the reduplication of verbs, nouns and adjectives is the archaic structure of the Indian languages. It is both syntactic and semantic. In Indian English, reduplication is used for emphasis and to indicate continuation of a process and to provide the effect of colloquial speech. Some words and phrases have been persistently used in the novel. For example, ‘form’, ‘shape’, ‘fragments, ‘broken’, ‘cracks’, ‘pieces’, ‘centre-parting’, ‘spitton’, ‘black’, ‘white’, ‘nose’, ‘knees’, ‘snake’, ‘ladder’, ‘chutney’ etc.

Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her well known critique on Indian English fiction, *The Twice Born Fiction* says,

> ‘the most significant challenge before the Indo-Anglian novelist is the task of using the English language in a way that will be distinctively Indian and still remain English.’ (1974: 165)

Rushdie’s innovative style in *Midnight’s Children* makes the novel distinctively Indian as well as global. The ‘chutnification’ of various registers in narration makes the novelty of the novel possible. There are situations in the novel, we find Rushdie using the language of the Bombay film industry to make the language distinctive in nature. Neelam Srivastava, in her article on ‘Languages of the Nation in Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children and Vikram Seth’s A Suitable Boy’ reflects:
‘In Midnight’s Children the dialogues often recall spoken Indian English. Saleem’s childhood in Bombay, his dealings with family and friends, are all mediated through the Indian English of upper-class families living in Bombay in the 1950s. Bombay was the most Westernized of all big Indian cities, and Saleem’s family belong to the Anglicized business class that was emerging just after Independence. Saleem is brought up speaking both English and Urdu, but most of the dialogues of his Bombay period are in English. The language of this ‘Bombay period’ of the novel is a language re-created from memory, gleaned and reshaped from what Saleem remembers of his childhood, as he sits by his lamp “in a pool of Angle poised light” and tells his story. Thus, though it sounds very much like spoken Indian English, it is still a creative re-imagining, rather than a faithful mimesis of the ‘original’.

One example of the Bombay language can be seen in the following lines of the novel:

‘I permit myself to insert a Bombay-talkie-style close-up – a calendar ruffled by a breeze, its pages flying off in rapid succession to denote the passing of the years; I superimpose
turbulent long-shots of street-riots, medium slots of burning
buses.’ (1981: 414)

It is Rushdie’s interest in the post-modern mass culture that brings out the
innovation in his language and style. His English is no doubt, post-colonial and
post-modern. The way he uses his language gives the readers a glimpse of his
craftsmanship.

We see the use of Latin and Arabic words in the novel at the lexical level. It is
here, we can see his mastery at ‘decentring’ and ‘hybridity’. Some of the
examples of these linguistic innovations are: ‘mucuna pruritis’, ‘feronia
elephanticus’, ‘sunt lacrimae rerum’ (all Latin), ‘kam ma kam’ ‘fi qadin
azzaman’, ‘tilk al-gharaniqal’, and ‘ula wa inna shafa ata-hunna la-turtaja’ (all
Arabic).

We also see the use of aggravating language in the novel. We get a variety of
strongly idiosyncratic idiolects. The characters use their own particular brand of
Indian English. The inhabitants of a Muslim muhalla in Delhi speak Hindustani,
rendered as a literal translation of Indian vernacular idiom, at the time of the
birth of Saleem. They are upbraiding the Hindu Lifafa Das who is showing his
famous “peepshow”, a sort of magical lantern full of pictures from all over
India. The ‘Dugdugee-men’ from all over India kept shouting:
‘Dilli dekho, come see Delhi, See the whole world, come see everything’ (1981: 76)

Communal hatred sparks, and from the balconies the Muslim inhabitants cry:

‘Mother raper! Violator of our daughters! .... Rapist! Arre my God they found the badmaash! There he is! ....... So, mister: it is you? Mister Hindu, who defiles our daughters? Mister idolator, who sleeps with his sister?’ (1981: 76-77)

These epithets – ‘Mother raper, mister idolator who sleeps with his sister’ – are typical Indian bawdy and abusive language which are translated in English. The use of abusive language in Indian English is to draw one’s attention, to express contempt, and to be aggressive and provocative. Such language is sometimes also used as a form of verbal seduction. Indian English abusive abound in such expressions as ‘rape-mother’, ‘rape-sister’, ‘rape-daughter’, ‘brother-in-law’. This probably is an outcome of the interference of Indian languages with English. Basically these abusive are reflective of the emphasis Indian society puts on the decencies of family life. Rushdie’s novel brings before the readers many such expressions. Even before him scathing language was used as a source of exhibiting power and command.
The novels of Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal also show dozens of abusive expressions. Literal translations of Hindi-Urdu idioms were the most notable experimental aspect of these novelists. Rushdie later exploited this in his novel, *Midnight’s Children*. It is felt by the novelists that the translations of the swear words produce crude and ludicrous effect. The gravitational pull of the native language makes wonders. The chief purpose of the use of the translations is to give the English language an Indian domicile. Salman Rushdie in his *Midnight’s Children* and before him Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh and Chaman Nahal in their novels injected the lewd expressions to achieve the radiation of the liveliness, the mirth and the peculiarity of the Indian culture. The aggravating language reflects the cultural overtones and undertones and one need to be amphibious, both culturally and linguistically, to fully enjoy the aggravating language. More significantly, the abusive expressions and swear words make the dialogues amusing and lively and the characters true to their soil. Z. N. Patil in his book, *Style in Indian English Fiction*, makes a very pertinent observation:

‘It can be argued that no language is vital and complete unless there are swear words and abusive words. The use of salacious, licentious, scurrilous, or lewd language is an aspect of the novelist’s artistry and, surprisingly enough, literary critics and
discourse analysts have left it in comparative neglect perhaps because of a feeling that anything scurrilous must be trivial. The Indian English novelists seem to be a discriminating user of the bawdy. He makes it one of the most potent weapons in his art. Yet it is still not the case that all his indecencies are artistically significant.’ (p.211-12)

There is another aspect of linguistic innovation in the novel which needs to be mentioned here. Through his sheer mastery of language, Rushdie makes use of a lot of images and analogies in the novel. Toilets are called "thunderbox" and the silence of the night splits "like milk" (1981:56) and: "And then the silence of the night split like milk by a single, sawn-off shriek" (1981: 173). The English language transcribes the constitutive metaphoricity of the Urdu language. The letter itself, the initial, has in store a myriad of meanings. Saleem chooses the initials of the Metro Cub Club for the Midnight's Children Conference (1981: 247). He randomly mentions that he borrowed these initials from those of the then English cricket team touring the country. Furthermore, in the last chapter, the same initials are reused for the murky and weird "Midnite-Confidential Club" (1981: 540). Another passage, at the beginning of the chapter ‘At the Pioneer Café’, displays the productivity of the signifier. In it, full stops are the only punctuation signs and words seem to follow each other.
without any apparent logic. It is the extract about Saleem's anticipated vision of
the prison in which he and the midnight's children are confined. The vocabulary
is limited to a few repeated words and it gives the narrator the opportunity to
produce meaning, to exploit the liberating power of the signifier:

"No colours except green and black the walls are green the sky is
black (there is no roof) the stars are green the Widow is green but
her hair is black as black. The widow sits on a high high chair the
chair is green the seat is black the Window’s hair has a centre-
parting it is green on the left and on the right black. High as the
sky the chair is green the seat is black the Widow’s arm is long as
death its skin is green the fingernails are long and sharp and
black. (1981:204)

Rushdie says that this vision was inspired by a nightmare he had as a child
about The Wicked Witch of the West. He mentions this in his essay on The

The stylistic devices are varied. First, the periphrasis, to avoid divulging the
identity of Mary Pereira, the unexpected owner of the chutney factory, before
the end. The narrator also abundantly uses the ellipsis and rhetorical devices
whose aim is to interrupt the flow of the sentence so as to leave the reader in
charge of its completion: the aposiopesis and the preterition. They can be spotted out by the massive use of dots, especially in Chapter Nine that recounts Saleem's birth.

"Now my father began to think about me (not knowing ...); [...] possessed by the love of me (even though...)" (1981: 135).

Reading becomes a way towards elucidation. The target of the reader is not to fall into the traps set in the narrative. The account of the narrator's birth shatters all the reader's certainties and breaks the pact of reading between the addresser and the addressee of the work. There are so many examples to show this in the novel. In fact, the narrator makes a lot of mistakes a number of times in the chronology of India, especially for Gandhi's death (p. 169; the error is noted on p. 198.) and the general election in 1957. Furthermore, he mixes up the conditions of the Mahabharata with those of the Ramayana (1981: 177). The most obvious example occurs in the last but one chapter of the novel. Saleem deliberately lies to the reader, making him believe that Shiva (Saleem's main enemy) is dead. He corrects that lie in the last chapter.

Style in these passages is attentive and uses all the resources of prose to speed the narrative and involve the reader/listener. The conjunction of coordination "and" and dots are used, truncating sentences and regulating the delivery.
Nominalizations and stylistic figures that create an effect of juxtaposition have a contrapuntal value as they bring instability and disorder. Asyndeton and anacoluthon remove logical links or interrupt the syntax without losing the meaning (1981: 123-26). Then, as in the first recapitulation, the anaphora of the phrase "there was/ were" provides the narration with an impetuous tempo which is mimetic of the constant jostling of allusions in the narrator's mind:

"Thirty-two years before the transfer of power, my grandfather bumped his nose against Kashmiri earth. There were rubies and diamonds. There was the ice of the future, waiting beneath the water's skin. There was an oath: not to bow down before god or man. [. . . ] And There was a sheet in a gloomy room" (1981: 123).

During the anesthesia that precedes the removal of his sinuses, Saleem's style turns into an elliptic one, which is in keeping with his progressive falling asleep. The absence of parts of the sentence and the elisions are relevant to the anesthesia of the language:

"Can't catch me. Multitudes have teemed inside my head. The master of the numbers, me. Here they go again 'leven twelve. [. . . ] Twen" (1981: 363).
These summaries are a paradoxical way of moving forward in the narrative.

Book One is full of bawdy puns and funny anecdotes. Purple patches are also an important factor in order to please the reader, as the description of Doctor Aziz before the massacre recounted in the chapter "Mercurochrome" or when the reader realises that William Methwold's hair is, in fact, a wig. The writing plays with the unsaid to increase the surprise of the revelation. Mistakes when found out add to the delight of the reading/ listening experience.

One can also notice the mirrored pleasure of storytelling, the most obvious instance being the interruption of a sentence at the end of a page that compels the reader to turn the page prematurely and causes Padma to fly into a temper — "the cloth of modesty, until eyes meet eyes, and then" (1981: 61). The will to persuade the reader/ addressee is discernable as when the narrator states, "Padma, it's true" (1981: 96) and "The midnight's children shook even Padma's faith in my narrative; but I brought her round, and now there's no more talk of outings" (1981: 236, 253). By being charming, he aims at coaxing the reader into consenting to the truth of what the speech proposes and imposes.

Parodies as well as inter-textual references are also to be found in the novel. Some are made to Shakespeare. To be able to decode them is at the heart of a
certain "pleasure of the text". For instance, New Delhi is described in terms that are strangely reminiscent of the kingdom of Denmark in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*:

"something smelled rotten in the capital" (1981: 509).

It is clear from the above descriptions that the abundant and creative use of the linguistic devices by Rushdie in his novel *Midnight’s Children* makes the novel exceptional. It was Rushdie’s linguistic competence that we could experience a new variety in English.

**Vikram Seth** is another prominent Indian English novelist of the 80s. He has made a name for himself by writing novels such as *A Suitable Boy* (1993), and *The Golden Gate: A Novel in Verse* (1986). His novel, *A Suitable Boy*, is a Nehruvian epic. Its narrative is realistic and well thought-out. The novelist has depicted magnificently arranged characters whose voices are always controlled within the unassuming presence of the third-person omniscient narrator. The realism of Seth’s style is underscored by a developmental and statist idea of the nation-state. The novel endorses Nehruvian secularism as the only feasible way of maintaining communal harmony and peace between communities. It is apparent in the novel that the novelist is against the fragmentation of the polity. He strongly feels that minorities are vital part of the country’s national identity.
and lays emphasis on the multilingual reality of modern India by using a secular standpoint of an omniscient third-person narrator.

Seth has used English as a pan-Indian, secular language in the Indian linguistic context. We can see some or little code-switching and code-mixing from other languages in the novel. English also functions as a language of “translation” from other Indian languages. The other language of interaction is Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, and a “rustic dialect” spoken in the village of Deoria. The translations of Indian languages in the novel display a symbolic use of the vernacular. English, in some instances becomes a symbolic Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, and so forth. Translation plays an important role in the vernacularization of English and the globalization of languages. It is through mixing Indian languages, English can be vernacularized and become Indian English and thereby become an integral part of post-colonial, globalized literary English. As Salman Rushdie observes in Imaginary Homelands:

‘It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.’ (p.17)

Vikram Seth renders the complex Urdu speech of the Muslim courtesan and musician Saeeda Bai, who we see tenderly reproaching her lover Mann for not visiting her:
‘“Rumour has it, Dagh Sahib, that you have been in town for some days now. Twirling, no doubt, that handsome ivory-headed cane. But the hyacinth that obtained favour yesterday appears withered today to the connoisseur.”

“Begum Sahiba”—protested Mann.

“Even if she has withered away only for lack of the water of life,” continued Saeeda Bai….’ (p.871)

The English in the above example functions as a symbolic Urdu. Seth has used an elevated register of English in order to give prominence to the purity of the language. We do not find any code-mixing with Urdu here. There is no hybridization either as it is felt by the novelist that the use of any linguistic device cannot match the elegance of “chaste” Urdu. Seth has not given translations of Hindi, Urdu or Bengali words. He had a statist idea of Indian nation, like the statist idea of Nehru. It is hence, we find the vernaculars being systematically contained within a symbolic use of translation in the novel. Seth’s English undermines Standard English in restrained ways, often turning common figures of speech into humorous and evocative images. An example of the new twists to English idiomatic expressions given by an old Bengali clerk is as follows:
‘“But you are probably making hail while the sun shines, and sowing oats. That is why I have come,” (said Biswas Babu).

“Sowing oats?” Amit was puzzled.

“But Meenakshi has rolled the ball, now you must follow it.”

It suddenly struck Amit that Biswas Babu was talking……about marriage.’(p.451)

The possible metamorphoses that English can undergo native utterance become apparent in Biswas Babu’s unconscious creative reformulations of metaphors. Seth’s privileging of the symbolic representation of the vernacular is highly stylized renderings of Indian heteroglossia.

It is noteworthy here that Vikram Seth’s symbolic translation of Urdu functions in the same way as the transfer of context. There are many cases in the novel where we find that the cultural and linguistic translation is almost the same.

G.J.V. Prasad in his book, *Writing Translation* claims that Indian English writers are not so much translating texts from vernacular languages into English, as using various strategies to make their works read like translations. To quote Neelam Srivastava,
“The idea of Indian English Writing as translation is based on the analogy described by Maria Tymoczko:

‘The culture of tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext which is rewritten—explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground—in the act of literary creation. The task of the interlingual translator has much in common with the task of the post-colonial writer; where one has a text, however, the other has the meta text of culture itself.’” (p.20)

The worth mentioning devices by which English is Indianized in Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy* are code-mixing, hybridization and transfer of context. ‘Transfer of context’ is a term coined by Braj Kachru, which ‘involves transfer of those cultural patterns which are absent or different in those cultures where English is used as a first language. For instance, in Indian English fiction, the following cultural patterns, which repeatedly occur in typically Indian plots, come under such transfer: the caste system, social attitudes, social and religious taboos, superstitions, notions of superiority and inferiority.’ (p.131)

The readings of Indian English fiction, especially of the post-colonial phase makes it clear that when two or more languages come into contact with each other it results in code-switching and code-mixing. In the words of Kachru, ‘the alternation of codes “is determined by the function, the situation, and the
participants.” Code-mixing, in this case, consists of the presence of Hindi-Urdu words in the dialogues or the narrative voice. Kachru observes that in Indian creative writing languages get blended in order to extract various effects.

Indian English writing has been defined as a contact literature, which grows out of close proximity to Indian languages, while simultaneously immersed in an Indian context. (Braj Kachru) The creativity within the realm of possibility of contact literature can be expressed in the language of Mikhail Bakhtin thus:

> ‘The unity of a literary language is not a unity of a single closed language system, but is rather a highly specific unity of several “languages” that have established contact and mutual recognition with each other.’ (p.295)

Vikram Seth in very subtle ways Indianizes English in his novels. An example is the bizarre but humorous dissonance created by Seth’s spoof on nationalist Indian poetry of the worst kind. In *A Suitable Boy*, Dr. Makhijani, an “eminent” poet from the University of Brahmpur, is shown reciting his “Hymn to Mother India” to a captive audience:

> ‘How to describe bondage of Mother pure

> By pervert punies chained through shackles of law?

> British cut-throat, Indian smiling and slave:
Such shame will not dispense till a sweating grave.’

While reading the above stanza, Dr. Makhijani became highly agitated,

But he was restored to equanimity by the next one:

‘Let me recall history of heroes proud,
Mother-milk fed their breasts, who did not bow.
Fought they fiercely, carrying worlds of weight,
Establishing firm foundation of Indian state.’ (163-64)

It is interesting to distinguish between deliberate spoofs of Indian English- a representation of language use by Indian speakers to comic effect- and an effective “recreation” of Indian English as a spoken variant of Standard English.

Language is considered to be an indispensable part of the nation building process. Seth’s novel provides room to various methodological jargons which form part of the linguistic structure necessary for the development of a well-designed autonomous state. English, Hindi and Urdu surfaces as the languages of the nation building process in post-independence India – the languages of business, law and politics. The novel shows Hindi and Urdu as the language of
politics and reflects the continual rise of Hindi-speaking regional elites-which was the result of post-independence democratic politics. The elitism in the novel is represented by the Kapoor family and Seth depicts the slow but steady rise of the elite class during the fifties. The language break up marks the uneven differences in socio-cultural terms between the regional elite, represented by the Kapoors and the English-educated elite such as the Mehras and Chatterjis. The reading of the novel makes it clear that it belongs to Hindi-Urdu linguistic field and points to the contested authority of English as a link language. Seth tries to explore in his novel the ups and downs in linguistic popularity in the field of politics as well as society. He considers them to be the foundational moment in the process of nation building. It would be right to say that multilingualism in the novel shows the diversity of the Indian nation – it’s multi-culture and multi-religion.

The debate raging around the official status of language in the state of Purva Pradesh can be seen in the novel when begum Abida Khan, the representative of the Muslims and a member of the upper class, the zamindari class take the stance in the Legislative Assembly that Hindi and Urdu should be adopted together. The conservative Hindu Home Minister Mr. Agarwal, who represents the bania (traders) class takes a hard line stand that there can be only one official language, or rather only one official script, Devanagri:
‘Urdu is not being dispossessed, as the honourable member supposes. Anyone who learns the Devanagri script will find no difficulty in coping.’ (p.1107)

Begum Abida Khan tries to explain that the differences in the two languages go past the different scripts that they adopt. But for the Home Minister Agarwal, adopting two different scripts will be like pacifying the minority community. He strongly believes in one language theory. He is irked at what Begum Abida is asking for in the Assembly. His anguish is reflected in the following lines:

‘minority appeasement.....You are asking for a two language theory now, you will be asking for a two nation theory tomorrow.’ (p.1105)

Agarwal’s unyielding ‘one nation-one language’ appears to be counteracting to the point the novel tries to make, that is, a multi-lingual nation. The novel’s multi-lingual position throws light on the linguistic situation of post-independence India.

*A Suitable Boy* remains to be one of the finest Indian English novels to come out in the post-colonial phase. It gives an excellent picture of Seth’s depiction of the Indian social life and his brilliant use of the linguistic devices.
Amitav Ghosh is a novelist well known for his direct and lucid style and for his extraordinary perception of the complexities of human relations in the multicultural world. His novels have been acclaimed worldwide. He is original to the core. His originality of narrative style was apparent in his very first novel *The Circle of Reason* (1986) which was appreciated for its bold experiment with content and form. Ghosh, in this novel concerns himself with the transnational cultural processes. His next novel *The Shadow Lines* (1988) concerns about cross border humanity. The novel reflects on the communal carnage and sectarian tension in the Indian subcontinent.

The novel has a first person narration which provides the very structure of the narrative. We find the narrator referring to his own opinions and thoughts as well as to his relationship with the characters. All through the novel, the reader gets a feeling of experiencing the narrator’s story in his own distinct style. We find repeated use of ‘I’ and ‘me’ in the novel which suggests the dimensions of space and time of the narrative corresponding with the narrator’s experiences.

In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee:

‘[T]he narrator remains not only the ‘large lucid reflector’ but also the agentive site where random shards of memory are realigned towards some measure of coherence’ *(Maps and Mirrors: Co-ordinates of Meaning in The Shadow Lines, p.260)*
In an interview with John C. Hawley, Ghosh, asked about the philosophy of narrative technique compatible to his purposes as a novelist, referred to the potency of Proustian recollection:

‘The narrative structure of Ford Madox Ford’s *The Good Soldier* made a huge impression on me when I first read it, in my teens. My interest in Proust was born when I found out, many years later, that Madox Ford had been influenced by *Remembrance of Things Past*. However, I did not read *Remembrance of Things Past* until 1985, after I had written my first novel, *The Circle of Reason*. This was about the time that I was starting my second novel, *The Shadow Lines* and Proust certainly had a great impact on that book......Proust’s influence on *The Shadow Lines* is clearly evident I think, even in the structure of its sentences. Similarly, it was in deference to Proust that the narrator of *The Shadow Lines* was left unnamed. But Proust’s influence is evident also in the ways in which time and space are collapsed in the narrative of *The Shadow Lines*. I remember that at the time my ambition was to do with space what Proust had done with time: that is, to make completely different instances of a continuum immanent in each other.’ (Hawley)
We see the narrator in the novel recollecting things of the past. This process brings in him utter gloom when he contemplates about the things which have been lost. Ghosh mentions some historical events in the novel, for example, the freedom movement in Bengal, the Second World War, and the partition of India in 1947, the communal hatred in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and India following the '64 Hazratbal incident in Srinagar. The novelist has pleasingly captured the trauma of emotional rupture and estrangement in the lives of millions of people. The historical moments become a convincing tale in the form of Ghosh’s novel.

The narrator in the novel is a partaker. Ghosh’s deployment of the linguistic techniques in the novel include: paralipsis (the narrator’s omission of some events pertaining to the main characters focalized), ellipsis (omission of some events), analepsis (a retrospective narration) and prolepsis (the reference to some future event of the story by the omniscient narrator). Murari Prasad in his essay on ‘Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines: Re-Reading its Craft and Concerns’ says,

“Ghosh makes skillful use of narrationally-framed free direct and free indirect speech to supply the structural frame for the memory’s content.”

For instance, while interweaving Ila’s and her mother’s versions of a story about their house in Colombo with narratorial commentary, Ghosh deploys free
direct speech and free indirect speech in conjunction with a trustworthy, authentic narrative voice:

‘Their house was in a quiet part of Colombo where diplomats and senior civil servants and people like that lived....It was a big house with large verandas and a steeply sloping roof covered with mossy tiles. The garden was at the back....here was only one problem: adjoining on to the garden at the back, was a poultry farm..This caused Ila’s mother a good deal of worry...for she had heard that snakes were certain to appear wherever there were chickens....One morning, soon after they moved in, their cook Ram Dayal came running upstairs and burst in upon Ila’s mother who was taking her mid-morning nap in an easy chair on a veranda upstairs.

Mugger-muchh, shrieked Ram Dayal. Save me, burra mem, bachao me from this crocodile.

He was a tall, willowy, usually drowsy man, but now his eyes were starting from his gaunt face and his lips were flecked with spittle.

Never heard of such a thing, Ila’s mother said to us. Crocodile in my garden; almost fell out of my easy chair.

My grandmother and I looked carefully away from eachother...
Shatup Ram Dayal Queen Victoria [Ila’s mother] snapped. Stop bukbukking like a Chhokra-boy…

And right he was, Queen Victoria said, her voice shrill with amazement….But being as she was, the daughter of a man who had left his village in Barisal in rags and gone on to earn a knighthood in the old Indian Civil Service, she retained her composure. (Ghosh, 1988: 24-25)

We see that a spectrum of continuous effects is being created by subtle modulations of the narrative register as the prose moves in and out of free direct speech (grammatically speakerless sentences with back-shifted tenses and third person pronouns), free indirect speech (character’s direct utterances without inverted commas and with or without reporting clauses) and the narrative reports of speech acts wherein unimportant stretches of conversation are summarized by the narrator. In the direct strings of narrative speech presented above in a freer form (by omitting the inverted commas), the characters apparently speak to us more immediately without the narrator as an intermediary. The narrative voice becomes protean with telling shifts in the cline of the narrator’s control over the character’s speech. The characters, while retaining their subjectivity, seem to be in temporary narratorial alignment, that is, the characterological point of view is narratorially adopted. The mediating first person narrator does not subsume the words of the characters under focus.”
The characters in the novel, *The Shadow Lines* appear to be representing an authentic Indian flavor through their own distinctive voices. In his appreciation of the novel, Khushwant Singh, an eminent Indian novelist and journalist says, ‘This is how the language should be used.......This is how a novel should be written.’ Amitav Ghosh appears to have evoked an Indian sensibility in his own distinctive voice in the novel *The Shadow Lines*. While going through the novel we come across a number of words and expressions which suggest the ‘Indianness; of the novel. Ghosh has used such expressions

‘as a stylistic device for creating contextually and linguistically typical Indian plot and character types.’(Kachru, 1971: 7)

The linguistic devices which are easily noticeable in the novel include calquing or literal translation of Hindi expressions into English, borrowing, hybridization, reduplication and others. Since the setting of the novel happens to be Calcutta and Dhaka, we can’t help noticing that Amitav Ghosh’s method of expression becomes dialectal at various places throughout the novel. The novelist has no doubt proved that colloquial expressions in Indian English fiction are ‘as distinctive and colorful as the Irish or the American’. The language of the novel functions in the Indian socio-linguistic context which of course, contributes to its Indianness. Words and expressions such as – ‘hot shingaras’, ‘rosogollas’, ‘shandesh’, ‘joi-ma-jagad janani’, ‘mashi’, ‘shador-
bajar’, ‘ukil-babu’, ‘shaheb’, etc. show the impact of Bengali language in Amitav Ghosh’s art of narrating the events. The human situation which has been described in the novel is of course, culture bound and contextual but the way in which the novel has been conceived is absolutely brilliant and evokes things Indian.

Talking about the linguistic explorations in the novel, we see Amitav Ghosh using a number of devices. Literal translation of Hindi expressions into English i.e. Calquing is very much used in the novel. Such expressions as – ‘the car got hotter and hotter’(p.44), ‘…….picture was hanging over there’(p.51), ‘my body began to tingle as it did after a mustard-oil massage on a winter morning’(p.156), ‘drumming of the monkey man’(p.194), ‘……stroke his moustache and puff at his biri’(p.196), ‘mosquito-netted beds’(p.207), ‘clothes hanging from nails’(p.210), paying the price of his sins’(p.210) do help in giving the novel a local colour. The novelist has taken the help of linguistic devices in order to create an Indian effect. Perhaps, the artistic effect, which has made the novel a work of lyric beauty, would not have been there if the situations were described in pure Standard English. Expression like- ‘Then he would raise his sickle and shout an invocation- joi-ma-jagad-janani – and the blade would flash and the chicken’s head would jump off its neck’ (p.196) has
its own contextual meaning. The reader would find it difficult to appreciate unless he is acquainted with the culture of the soil.


The novel also consists of collocations and compounds formed through a process of hybridization. Hybridization is a subcategory of code-mixing, and entails the use of at least one item of English and one from a native language. In the words like, ‘paan-shop’, ‘paan-stall’, ‘hot shingaras’, ‘crisp little dalpuris’, ‘street corner addas’, ‘peepul leaf’, ‘tonga horse’, ‘English memsahib’ etc. we see an English word being used along with the native word. This has immensely helped in depicting Indian life and scene. Amitav Ghosh has convincingly rendered the idiom and nuances of the speech of non-English speaking people into English. Another type of hybridization which we notice in the novel is those which are formed either by adding an Indian suffix or by adding an English suffix. In words like ‘bukbuking’, and ‘poshest’ we see English suffixes ‘-ing’ and ‘-est’ being added to the native words ‘bukbuk’ and ‘posh’.
In an example, ‘gymkhana’, we see an Indian suffix ‘khana’ being added to the English word ‘gym’. Transliteration of English word is also found in the novel e.g. ‘shat up’ Ram Dayal, Queen Victoria snapped.

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997), is another milestone in the history of Indian English fiction after Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*. It is not for nothing that the novelist received the prestigious Booker prize for her work. Like Rushdie, Roy dared to break the accepted rules and norms of Standard English and made bold experiments with language. She created the language which she required for her novel by breaking and dislocating the rhythms of the English language. The novel is known for its play with words. We find her language classical, unparalleled and unprecedented. The twists and turns, the reshaping of English for a desired effect, creates an arresting, startling sort of precision. In common with the other Indian English postcolonial novelists, Arundhati Roy’s sense of her own identity demands an awareness of the continuing, damaging effects of colonial rule. She feels that India is still struggling with the legacy of colonialism and still flinching from the cultural insult. She is afraid that Indian’s are still caught up in the business of disproving the native’s definition of us.

This issue is most evident in her sensitivity to language use and the force of ‘History’ in the novel. Roy recycles and challenges the linguistic inheritance of
British colonialism in various ways. The dense patterns of quotation and literary reference that she weaves through the novel, not only reveal the intermixtures and cross-fertilizations of contemporary South-Asian culture, but also throw hidden or disturbing aspects of this history into relief. In keeping with her two-way time scheme, Roy does not confine herself to redressing the 'insults' of a colonial past, but is also keenly aware of the shadow of an older pre-colonial history. In this sense, 'the postcolonial' is just one aspect of the novel, the other aspect considers the enduring effects of India's ancient Vedic and Hindu history and traditions, as well as looking forward to its fully industrialized, globally integrated present.

Like Rushdie, Roy also uses compounds by combining words and phrases to give an artistic touch to the novel. Some of the words which she uses in the novel are: 'thunderdarkness', 'echoingstationsounds', 'stopit', 'stoppited' etc. There are also compounds with the use of hyphens in the novel. They are: 'mitten-shaped', 'Ammu-eyes', 'tying-not-to-cry-mouth'. There is another linguistic feature in the novel which needs to be mentioned here. It is the abundant use of similes which are at times serious and at times humorous. Here is an example of such a use:
‘History was wrong footed, caught off guard. Sloughed off like an old snakeskin….. As plain to feel as the heat on a hot day, or the fug of a fish on a taut line.’ (p.176)

There is another example of a simile that shows her keen sense of humour. K.N.M.Pillai’s son, who is dressed in yellow shirt and black shorts is compared to a taxi: ‘dressed like a taxi’. We can also find sentences consisting of one or two words without a verb:

‘He began to swim towards her. Quietly. That it belongs to him. The water. The mud. The Trees.’ (p.333)

More often than not, Roy’s sentences in the novel are terse, brittle and simple. The text is filled with a wide range of images. Her narrative pattern appears to be puzzle like. Readers keep moving to different times – present, past and future and different places. Roy has ‘made a very good use of songs, jokes, slapstick, and horseplay. The narrative behaves like a child. As Kannammal srinivasan says:

‘It is a fascinating experience to focus on the text’s play with space and time. Roy’s fiction jumps, runs and plays like a child – now running a few spaces with speed as if time is all important, then stops hourlong to inspect an
unimportant object putting on innocence and all the time tricking people and escaping the control of authority.’ (p.95)

The punctuation we come across in the novel looks to be strikingly original. The readers get a feeling that they are going through some kind of experimental poetry. There are instances where we find words printed in capital letters; some words begin with capital letter in the middle of a sentence. For example: ‘Now WHAT?’, ‘the WHAT snapped’, (p.107), ‘He held his sticky Other Hand’ (p.105), ‘A Free Cold Drink’ (p.103) etc. There are also instances, where words, a clause in the sentence or the whole sentence or the passage are printed in italics. An example of this can be seen in the sentence: ‘How could she stand the smell?’ (p.76) ‘With her own spit!’ (p.85) The method of making Banana Jam is printed in italic in the form of a prescription:

**Banana Jam** (in his *old* best writing)

*Crush ripe banana. Add water to cover and cook on a very hot fire till fruit is soft.*

*Squeeze out juice by straining through course muslin.*

*Weigh equal quantity of sugar and keep by.*

*Cook fruit juice till it turns scarlet and about half the quantity*
evapourates.

Prepare the gelatin (pectin) thus:

*Proportion 1:5*


We find the novel stuffed with such examples. They clearly serve the purpose of emphasizers. We also find lines running in a verse form:

‘Past glass casks of vinegar with corks.

Past shelves of pectin and preservatives.

Past trays of bitter gourd, with knives and coloured finger-guards.

Past gunny bags bulging with garlic and small onions…’ (1997:195)

The play on the Latin phrase *Locus Standi* “Locust Stand I” [...] on later, “Lay.Ter.”, inventions like “getting outedness”, “green mossing”, “Sad-Ahout-Joe-Silence”, “Stoppited”, the use of Malayalam words like “Pada Patti”, “Arayathi pennu pizhachu poyi” (p.219) and songs and the use of Hindi words “Raksha”, “Baba”, clubbing words together as if they are one word “thiswayandthat” using a phrase in parenthesis as a full sentence “a viable die-able age” and many more experiments with the language perhaps, in imitation
of Salman Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children demonstrates her linguistic competence.

We see that Arundhati Roy employs a third person omniscient narrator. It is because she wants to give voice to Rahel and Estha’s perception of the social, political and religious life of Kerala. She wants to depict the life of the state through their eyes.

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CHAPTER-IV

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES IN POST COLONIAL INDIAN FICTION

“We shall not cease from exploration.
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

Little Gidding (No.4 of ‘Four Quartets’: T.S.Eliot)

Introduction:

What we have to explore and what indeed, we must explore is the Indian consciousness in the post colonial Indian fiction. The modern Indian English novelist is a mediator or a reflector on the history of modern India. He is involved in the creative process of transforming the historical facts, the emergence, the rise and fall of the British raj into art form, that is, novel. The world has seen the works of many Indian novelists writing about different subjects in a different style. There have been novels of introspection, personal and confessional in nature, there have been re-writings of history and restatements of the past, and there have been writings on the social and political
condition of the nation. We have also seen the novelist turning in to nostalgia of the past and glorify and idealize it, or to turn to the present in a gesture of protest if not disgust.

4.1.1. Novelists of the Colonial Period:

When we look back to the days of the colonial period, we become aware of the fact that the novelists of that period wrote about the social, economic and political condition of the time. The 1930s saw the rise of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan as major Indian English novelists. Without any qualms, they can be called as the heroes of Indian English fiction. They showed to the world that they could master the language and develop their own literary style. The novels which they have written during the pre-independence period reflect the social, economic and political condition of that time. Their writings deal with subjects like Gandhism, Communism, and Socialism etc. Their novels give the readers of the present times a chance to peep into the historical and social background of the period.

The social and political events and their impact on the individual lives and families provided the thematic lineament of the colonial and earlier post-colonial period. Rightly, the novels of the period are known as novels of ‘Social Realism’. We can also say that the novelists of the pre-independence period or those of the early period after independence were nationalist in orientation.
Their themes were largely Indian mysticism and spiritualism. We find that the main concern of almost all the novelists was one: to free India from the alien rule. The novels written during the period of the nationalist movement for independence, rightly called the Gandhian period of Indian literature, tended to identify themselves and their protagonists idealistically with the struggle. In order to unite the country in a shared vision, they portrayed the aspirations of the rural masses and the poor, and showed middle class or educated characters either throwing in their lot with these masses or betraying them as enemies of the people. This period lasted into the first decade after independence, and then from the early sixties, tended to give way to a period in which writers expressed disenchantment with the corruption and failures of the government and its bureaucracy and often turned away from the public sphere altogether, in angry, desolate, existentialists novels that charted estrangement, interiority and insanity.

Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* is one of the most important and the most discussed novel of the pre-independence India. In fact, the process of nativization of Indian English fiction began with this novel. The novel focuses on the barbarism of the British rulers in dealing with the non-violent agitation of the freedom fighters. The characters can be divided in two camps: the British rulers and the freedom fighters. The theme of the novel is the impact of Gandhi’s name and idea’s on an obscure Indian village. Raja Rao has also used myth in
this novel. We see political revolution getting transcended and assimilated into the racial heritage as myth and legend. (Iyenger, 1985:390)

R. K. Narayan, a major novelist of the pre-independence India is best remembered for his works like: *Swami and Friends* (1935), *Bachelor of Arts* (1936), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for the Mahatama* (1955), *The Guide* (1958) etc. His novels give a real picture of India of the colonial period. Narayan through his novels and stories expressed the way of life of the Indians. ‘Narayan’s is the art of resolved limitation and conscientious exploration: he is content like Jane Austen, with his ‘little bit of ivory’, just so many inches wide: he would like to be a detached observer, to concentrate on a narrow scene, to sense the atmosphere of the place, to snap a small group of characters in their oddities and angularities: he would if he could, explore the inner countries of the mind, heart and soul, catch the uniqueness in the ordinary, the tragic in the prosaic. ‘Malgudi’ is Narayan’s ‘Casterbridge’, but the inhabitants of Malgudi – although they may have their recognizable local trappings – are essentially human, and hence, have their kinship with all humanity. In this sense, ‘Malgudi’ is everywhere.’ (Iyenger, 1985; 360) Narayan in his novels tries to explore human nature veraciously and captivatingly and remarkably.
Mulk Raj Anand, another prominent novelist of the colonial times wrote ‘of the people, for the people, and as a man of the people’. (Iyengar, 1985: 333) Along with R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, Anand is credited with establishing the basic forms and themes of Indian English fiction. His novels give the impression of his being a humanist and a socialist. They explore the political and social situation of India during the colonial period. The tribulations of working class life in India were realistically portrayed in Anand’s novels. Anand, like his contemporaries was against the caste system which was very much rampant in the Indian society of the colonial times. His novels, *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936) depict the cruelties inherent in the caste system and the suffering induced by poverty. The novels also present Anand’s lifelong campaign against social injustice, cruelty and all forms of dehumanization.

4.1.2. Novelists of the Post-Colonial Period:

It has been said, no writer ever maintains his hold on the imagination of successive ages without a profound and searching knowledge of human nature and that if a writer is superficial as a reader of men then indeed, it is vain to call him great. Knowledge of human nature is the touchstone alike a great poetry or a great prose. The novelists of the post-independence period certainly had the root of the matter in them. They were able to depict ‘how the joy of freedom has been more than neutralized by the tragedy of the ‘partition’; how in spite of
the freedom there still exists corruption, inefficiency, poverty, oppression and heart-rending miseries of the poor owing to the widening gaps between haves and have-nots; how after the establishment of the popular democratic government, the evils and besetting ills have continued to reign and remain uncured.' (Agrawal, Sinha, 2003: 4)

The post-colonial Indian English novelists had to appeal to the heterogeneous community, people of diverse ethnic-religious and cultural backgrounds. For this purpose he chose themes and situations that had more or less the same validity all over the country. These themes emerged to form recurrent patterns and major trends which were more easily discernible in post-independence Indian society than in that of pre-independence India. That is why the range of the novel widened and the various features of Indian society, economic, political, religious and cultural were exhaustively covered by it. (Agarwal, Sinha, 2003: 6)

The eighties revolutionized Indian English fiction with the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in 1981. It was a novel which drew a lot of attention from all over the world for its content and form. Rushdie had made a serious attempt to nativize English language in this novel. He was followed by novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Upamanyu Chatterjee and many others who had found new voices for their
narratives. Each of these novelists set their own linguistic and literary standards and the world seemed to be prepared to listen to them. Their narrative techniques, their themes are aspects which require reader’s thoughtful attention. Here, we discuss the major novelists of the 80s and 90s and their contribution to Indian English literature.

Salman Rushdie, a major Indian English novelist of the post-colonial phase needs no introduction in the field of Indian English fiction. The impact of his novels on the novelists of the eighties and nineties is palpable. The publication of his *Midnight’s Children* (1981) was greeted all over the world because of its exuberance of language and style, its combination of hilarious comedy and mocking political satire.

The charm of the novel lies in its narrative technique. Rushdie has used this technique for the factual rendering in historical setting. With an unbiased approach, he portrays personal experiences and situations. Rushdie’s narrator in the novel builds his own reality. He gives an augmented picture of reality and rejects partial realities. While doing so he depicts this reality with a touch of fantasy. The novel is multi coated with episodic causality. His exalted diction, grand word usage and felicitous word phrases leave a strong impact on the readers. We see the use of bold literary innovations and disarrangement, such as unconventional words in the novel.
Narration in the novel is in the form of a dialogue between two voices: that of Saleem and that of Padma, who embodies the audience. The narrative is written and told in front of an audience. Rhetoric is therefore, paramount. Three main principles drawn from Cicero's technique can be summoned. It is under their aegis that the act of narrating is performed. The first principle of eloquence is movere, which means "to move" in Latin. The orator has to capture the audience's attention by playing with pathos and their emotions. This strategy starts at the beginning with the traditional captatio benevolentiae, so as to have the reader/spectator on his side:

"And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumours, so dense, a commingling of the improbable and the mundane! I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well" (Rushdie, 1981: 4).

The narrator insists on the reader's and the audience's necessary good will's for the rest of the story. These captationes will recur throughout the narrative. Saleem arouses emotions in the reader as it is all about controlling the
addressee's sympathy through a self-disparagement often full of involuntary irony as when he writes,

"This flaw in his [Saleem's] character can partially be excused on the ground of his tender years: but only partially. Confused thinking was to bedevil much of his career" and, after a paragraph, "I can be quite tough in my self-judgements when I choose."


His childhood is a string of unhappy and poignant events. The succession of mutilations, from the piece of hair pulled out to the eardrum pierced by a mighty blow dealt by his father (1981: 194), from the cut finger to the sinus operation which brings about the loss of telepathy (1981: 364), all of them arouse the two emotions Aristotle attributed to the genre of tragedy in his Poetics, that is to say, pity and terror. The most moving mutilation is perhaps the one he ceaselessly tries to repress and which resurfaces throughout the narrative is the sterilization he underwent. The second principle has to do with efficiency. It corresponds to the verb docere, which means, "to teach". Saleem is very intent upon delighting his reader/listener. Thus he emphasizes how he strives
"to recapture the rapt attention of my revolted Padma Bibi" by "recount[ing] a fairy tale" (Rushdie, 1981: 382).

Efficiency in a narrative is fundamental to Rushdie. In an interview, he drew a comparison between his style and the technique used by Indian storytellers:

"In India the thing that I've taken most from, I think, apart from the fairytale tradition that we were talking about, is oral narration. Because it is a country of still largely illiterate people [like Padma] the power and the vitality still remain in the oral storytelling tradition. [. . .] And it struck me that the storyteller much more so than the novelist, has the problem of holding the audience." (Rushdie, 2000: 76).

The least faux pas brings about a lack of interest in the audience whose disagreement is shown by their leaving. This is what happens as Padma, weary of Saleem's digressions, decides to leave for three chapters (chapters eleven to thirteen). The didactic mood can be found in the numerous résumés of the novel: the first is in the last chapter of Book One and directly precedes the birth of Saleem and India.
The two series of time and space compose the process of representation, according to Louis Marin in *On representation*. It is an idea that was first developed by Kant. There are two antagonistic patterns at the origin of representation. The pattern of "before" and "after", which is characterised by "a space articulated as the trajectory of successive places according to the oriented and irreversible line of historicity" and the pattern of "high" and "low", in which "what is cancelled out is time, in the temporal zero point that is the unique instant" (Marin, 2001: 127-28). The two concepts are inseparable and any attempt to define them ends up in a tautological manner. It is first important to start focusing on the space of the narrative through the concepts of linearity and non-linearity, as it does not follow the usual chronology.

There are numerous digressions in the novel. It can account for all the arguments between Saleem and Padma, who is only interested in "what-happens-next" and the logical order of the causes and their effects. Saleem himself recognizes that he puts the cart before the bullock, which is why the notions of beginning, middle and end are so paramount, as well as their constant confusion. The title of Chapter Sixteen, "Alpha and Omega" reminds the reader of that dimension. Moreover, the narrator often refers to the time of enunciation and cannot help mentioning what is going to happen or what has just happened. Two strategies are used: he either does it himself in the very first chapter and throughout the novel, or he uses mediation such as the soothsayer
in Chapter Six (Rushdie, 1981: 99). He announces the mysterious birth of Saleem and Shiva ("Noses and knees and knees and nose") and foresees the crucial moments of his life: "'Spittons will brain him — doctors will drain him — jungle will claim him — wizards reclaim him! Soldiers will try him — tyrants will fry him . . . '") In this oracle, the poetic function of language is particularly emphasized. The effect is that of an incantation, of a magic formula that predicts Saleem's cycle of destiny. The soothsayer's movements, who circles around Amina, stress the obsessive character of it all:


The narrator, in the same fashion, recalls past events. There are ellipses, analepses (the "retrospective evocation of an event before the point where the story is at") and prolepses (a "narrating maneuvering consisting in telling or evoking a future event in advance"). The biggest prolepses, in terms of reach (that is to say the temporal distance between the moment in the story where the narrative is interrupted and the event itself) are as follows: in Book One, Saleem announces the date of his birth and the rest of that first part will consist in reaching it while starting in 1915. The loop of the narrative ends where it started at the end of Chapter Eight, the day when India became independent in a cyclical movement. Then, the other prolepsis has to do with the narrator's
absence of sexual identity: the isotopic elements are introduced from the outset; they are evidence, such as the recurrent past participle "unmanned", of the impossibility to satisfy Padma's need and of the responsibility imputed to a mysterious "Widow", but the repressed moment of sterilisation is postponed to the last but one chapter. This oscillation between "before" and "after" is somewhat mimetic of the orality of the narrating, as Rushdie put it in an interview:

"It's a very eclectic form; and of course, not at all linear. I mean, the story does not go from the beginning to the end but it goes in great loops and circles back on itself, repeats earlier things, digresses, uses sometimes a kind of Chinese-box system, where you have the story inside the story inside the story and then they all come back"

Let us now focus on the metaphors and metamorphoses of temporality. Time is a baroque entity. First, it is the catalyst of the narration's dynamic. The narrator is animated by a true sense of urgency to write before his final collapse. He hastens to narrate many times: he seems in a hurry to finish, interrupting himself with statements like "But it's time to get things moving" (Rushdie, 1981: 535), and "to cut a long story short" (Rushdie, 1981: 540). His situation,
according to him, is also more precarious than that of Princess Scheherazade who, in *The Arabian Nights*, has to tell a story every night to stay alive:

"But I have no hope of saving my life, nor can I count on having even a thousand nights and a night. I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to to end up meaning – yes, meaning – something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity." (Rushdie, 1981: 4).

The conventional chronology does not exist any longer: plays with the referential time are permanent.

Time ceaselessly transforms itself: it stretches in Book One, which starts in 1915 (or even at the beginning of mankind, with Tai the boatman) and finishes in 1947, it then considerably settles between Chapters Nine and Twenty, in which a period of eighteen years elapses, until the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965. It then retracts itself even more in Book Three, which lasts twelve years, until the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's Emergency. It is in constant movement, as in Chapter One ("Time settles down and concentrates on the importance of the moment") and Chapter Ten ("Time is slowing down for Amina once more," (Rushdie, 1981: 17, 172). An analysis of the opening paragraphs of the novel shows all its complexity (Rushdie, 1981: 3-5). "One Kashmiri morning in 1915" introduces the first temporal series, that is to say the moment when the
grandfather hit his nose against the ground. "The world was new again" constitutes the second series with the use of the pluperfect. It expresses a result since it is about the metamorphosis of nature (after the winter), before the first temporality. "To reveal the secret of my grandfather" is the third temporality that precedes the other two. The pluperfect here expresses anteriority since it describes the years Aziz spent in Germany before coming back to India. There are two exceptions though: one in the preterit comes back on the incident of the nose injury and the other anticipates on the end of his life. "On the morning when the valley" is the fourth series. It immediately precedes the fateful moment when Aziz harms himself when praying. It joins up with the first temporality and hence closes the chronological loop.

The disclosing of the story presupposes the abolition of the classical time and it seems that one needs to borrow this pattern from Augustine, in Book Eleven of his *Confessions*. It is the notion of triple present, which, by the mediation of the *distensio animi*, of the movement of the mind, contains the past and heralds the future. It seems that this temporality is at work in *Midnight's Children*. It characterizes the conscience of the narrator:"just as consciousness, the awareness of oneself as a homogeneous entity in time, a blend of past and present, is the glue of personality, holding together our then and now" (Rushdie, 1981: 420) It is never better expressed than in passages telling about several synchronous events. The first occurrence of simultaneity is in Chapter Six,
during Amina's visit to the soothsayer and the misadventures of Ahmed and his acolytes in the firm's warehouses. The two descriptions are told together:

"One at a time, then and here is Amina Sinai beneath the high walls of Red Fort [. . .] But here, refusing to wait for its turn, is another taxi, pausing outside another fort." (Rushdie, 1981: 91)

One can see that in these sentences there are echoes through the use of deictic elements and logical links.

Clutching their grey bags, they [Ahmed and his acolytes] move into the ancient, crumbling world. Clutching at her handbag, my mother sits beside a peep-show (Rushdie, 1981: 91).

Two techniques are used here: the dots, which acquire another meaning (the action is seen as taking place, in medias res) and the anaphora of the present participle "clutching" and of the same juxtaposed structure.

"Somewhere above them, on the topmost landing of the turret tower, three grey bags wait in the gathering dark. . . . In the gathering dark of an airless stairwell, Amina Sinai is climbing towards a prophecy" (Rushdie, 1981: 94).

The rhetorical figure used is the anadiplosis, the repetition of the same word (or group of words) at the end of a sentence and at the beginning of the next.
The use of the "-ing" form makes it possible to maintain the process of the action and the link between the two utterances is all the easier to do. Another passage demonstrates the variety of the stylistic techniques employed to express the synchronicity of several events. The conjunction "while" is repeated. This recapitulating sentence includes what has happened to the characters in an avalanche of embedded subclauses. It is a recurring technique in the novel that increases the surprise of the reader-listener: a very brief apodosis follows a long-winded protasis:

"Baby Saleem fell ill. As if incapable of assimilating so many goings-on, he closed his eyes and became red and flushed. While Amina awaited the results of Ismail's case against the State authorities; while the Brass Monkey [Saleem's sister] grew in her womb; while Mary entered a state of shock [ . . . ]; while umbilical cord hung in pickle-jar and Mary's chutneys filled our dreams with pointing fingers; while Reverend Mother ran the kitchens, my grandfather examined me and said, 'I'm afraid there is no doubt; the poor lad has typhoid.'" (Rushdie, 1981: 174)

Last, the narrating seems to correspond to an ordering of chaos. Disorder is not only perceptible in the teeming variety of narratives and events, but also in the cracks that metaphorically threaten the book. The syntax is mimetic of this
deformation and the English language, broken, truncated by the dots and the punctuation, is also deformed. There remains that Saleem is literally obsessed by form and meaning — as is the subcontinent. One cannot escape them:

"As a people, we are obsessed with correspondences. Similarities between this and that, between apparently unconnected things, make us clap our hands delightedly when we find them out. It is a sort of national longing for form — or perhaps simply an impression of our deep belief that forms lie hidden within reality; that meaning reveals itself only in flashes" (Rushdie, 1981: 359).

He becomes the guarantor of this formalisation; the novel, a finite object, embodies this form *per se*. The three Books of the novel are reminiscent of the Victorian three-decker and the division into thirty chapters that are as many jars gives form to the not-yet-formed. Furthermore, the organisation and the ordering of the facts, of the plot, the "plotification", subsume the multiplicity of fragments under a certain unity.

There is "no escape from recurrence" (Rushdie, 1981: 342), says the narrator: it is indeed recurrence that enables us to explain the process of disclosure of the narrative. The construction of the novel is first compared to composing a musical work:
"I wish, at times, for a more discerning audience, someone who would understand the need for rhythm, pacing, the subtle introduction of minor cords which will later rise, swell, seize the melody" (Rushdie, 1981: 116).

This could remind the music-lover of the composing of a fugue in particular: it starts by introducing the different elements that will then be progressively disclosed and unveiled. Rushdie himself insisted on the significance of the leitmotiv, which creates a formal field of meaning, "a non-rational network of connections" (Rushdie, 1985: VII. 1). It creates a backdrop without which representation is impossible. Leitmotivs — or as Eliot put it, "objective correlatives" (Eliot, 2007: April 5th) — are very numerous. They are all linked with the turning points of the novel. The "perforated sheet" is the catalyst of the relationship between Aziz and Naseem and indirectly brings about the birth of a genealogy, however discontinuous it may be. It is also the catalyst of the story of the novel. It reoccurs many times to describe the love relationship between Ahmed and Amina, but also when Saleem uses it to dress up as a ghost and when Jamila sings for a concert. The "silver spittoon" is the object bearing a great influence: it is first given to Ahmed and Amina as a wedding present. It will remain with the narrator and will become the only object left after the destruction of his house and the death of his parents. These two objects are magical: the "perforated sheet" is identified with a "talisman" and an "open-
“sesame” (Rushdie, 1981: 4). It literally puts the narrating in motion and triggers the metonymic movement of the narrative. Moreover, the "silver spittoon" has a cathartic function. At the end of Book Two, the whirling object hits the head of Saleem, who instantly loses his memory and enters a state of amnesia liberating him from the fetters of the past:

As I pick myself up dizzily after the blast, something twisting turning somersaulting down, silver as moonlight, a wondrously worked silver spittoon inlaid with lapis lazuli, the past plummeting towards me [. . . ], because now I look up there is a feeling at the back of my head [. . . ] before I am stripped of past present memory time shame and love [. . . ] and then I am empty and free. [Rushdie, 1981: 409]

This amnesia is emphasised in the text by the ellipsis of the instant of the impact. The other main motifs are the blood, with its deceiving double, Mercurochrome (Naseem mistakes it for blood in Chapter Two). This liquid is full of meanings: not only is it the blood of wound, of war, but also of soiling, of the loss of virginity, such as the one that stains the "perforated sheet". The "pointing finger" is also full of symbols: its first occurrence is a movement performed by the ferryman Tai, heralding the painting hung in the little Saleem's bedroom. In this picture, the young Raleigh can be seen looking at the
"Fisherman's Pointing Finger" — the title of Chapter Nine. It designates the outside of the frame, off-camera, and points to the horizon or to reality, perhaps transgression. Red is also a recurring colour. It attracts attention, as it is redolent of the finger amputation that was undergone by the narrator, who is an avid observer of signs and reads the world as a book. Repetition is the basis of the musicality of *Midnight's Children*. Echoes are permanent throughout. For instance, in the passage in which Doctor Narlikar presents his project of tetrapods, he shows the building site with a "pointing finger" and in the chapter entitled "How Saleem Achieved Purity", the minaret of the mosque is compared to a "long pointing finger" (Rushdie, 1981: 156, 394). The linguistic sign displays all its potential in this theme and variation structure. Repetition is also at the basis of the magic of the text: the many recaps, the leitmotifs are as many incantations and litanies that remind us that literature was originally oral. Indeed the poems of antiquity, the *carmina*, were above all songs, injunctions. This narrative is told as well as written: it therefore, bears the characteristics of orality. This magic is materialised in the formula "Abracadabra" which runs through the last chapter and gives it its title. The search for semantic landmarks, through isotopy in particular, is coupled with a quest for meaning led by the narrator himself. It is almost compulsive and goes together with the quest for form. Indeed the term isotopy is relevant to meaning and literature: it is the field of meaning made possible by the repetition of the same in a different form
in the same text. The reading of a narrative becomes possible and the entire world of reference relies on it.

The text of *Midnight's Children* is a surface on which the semes of the sheet, of the veil and of revelation are sprinkled ("sheet, purdah, unveiled, carpet, reveal, bedsheets, Revelation). Meaning can only be half-perceived in the constant coding and decoding of the writing.

Saleem describes himself as a sort of Prospero, the demiurge of *The Tempest*. He boasts about his omniscience and makes comments about every stage of the narrating. The narrator tries to write in a syncretic manner, which would enable him to say everything. As we have seen, the lists are very numerous, as well as the recapitulations. The will to exploit the possibilities of the signifier can be stressed stylistically. Hyphens and adverbs partake of this concatenation of the style that ends up creating hypallages. For instance, the concrete tetrapods for the land-reclamation process are described as "concrete dreams": the hypallage is here coupled with an oxymoron and a pun. The juxtaposition of a living characteristic to a thing occurs in the noun phrase depicting Ahmed Sinai's drunkenness, during a "djinn-soaked evening" and also in the description of the barbershop where the young Saleem was circumcised. The place is comically called the "circumcising barbershop": a hypallage is here added to a metonymy. The fantasy of a full and faithful mimesis is shared by a character redolent of
the narrator: a painter who is a friend of the poet Nadir Khan and who wants to represent everything in his paintings. It leads him to a never-ending quest bound to fail, as he eventually takes his own life. Then Lifafa Das travels around with his "peep-show", a little box that contains a multitude of postcards meant to represent the world comprehensively. This shows the vertigo inherent to disclosing and representing reality.

Representation is paradoxical and deceitful, the closer it strives to reach meaning, the further away it gets. This is a structural tension in the novel which crystallizes itself in the dialectic of void and fullness. The impossibility of retrieving meaning is almost acknowledged in a book that develops an aesthetic of the trace, that "absolute origin of sense in general", according to Derrida (1976: 65). The narrating strategy of deferring of disclosure turns into an emblematic "differance" of sense, which is never established and always postponed. Two passages illustrate this point particularly well. Here is the first, drawn from Chapter Two, before the recounting of the Amritsar massacre in April 1919:

"Close-up of my grandfather's right-hand: nails knuckles fingers all somehow bigger than you'd expect. Clumps of red hair on the outside edges. Thumbs and forefinger pressed together, separated
only by a thickness of paper. In short: my grandfather was holding a pamphlet" (Rushdie, 1981: 31).

The next passage is, towards the end of Book One, in the chapter entitled "Tick, Tock", when Methwold is about to leave India:

"William Methwold raised a long white arm above his head. White hand dangled above brilliantined black hair; long tapering white fingers twitched towards centre-parting, and the second and final secret was revealed, because fingers curled, and seized hair; drawing away from his head, they failed to release their prey; and in the moment after the disappearance of the sun Mr. Methwold stood in the afterglow of his Estate with his hairpiece in his hand. 'A baldie!' Padma exclaims, 'That slicked-up hair of his . . . I knew it; too good to be true' "(Rushdie, 1981: 31, 132).

In these two extracts, written in a quasi-pointillist technique, we can notice a few points in common. The visual aspect is predominant owing to the absence of punctuation and nominalizations. The movement of the descriptions is the same: it oscillates between the whole and the part, between the one and the many. The precision is that of an entomologist: the shifters and the different semantic fields paradoxically emphasise the blurriness of representation and its vertigo. The A-B-A structure applies to both excerpts: "my grandfather" —
body parts — "my grandfather", then "William Methwold" — body parts — 
"Methwold". The juxtaposition puts different, even antagonistic elements on the 
same level. In the second passage, two phrases seemingly contradictory are 
placed next to each other and only one comma opposes them: "pressed together, 
separated". Moreover, the two verbs share some identical phonemes: p,s,t and 
s,p,t. The similarity on the plane of the signifier diminishes the dissimilarity on 
the plane of the signified. The potentialities of representation are multiplied, all 
the more as the animation of the inanimate ("they failed to release their prey") 
confuses the issue. Last, the uncertainty between the whole and the part is 
maintained until the end, and culminates in the term "hairpiece", which refers 
either to a wig, either (proleptically) to a tuft of hair, such as the one that 
Professor Zagallo will tear off Saleem's head.

What is at stake in these two passages, true composition exercises, is, it seems 
the analysis (in the etymological sense of “cutting” of the process that 
corresponds to what Derrida called the "formation of the form", that is to say 
"differance" (Derrida, 1976: 63). A deconstruction of the significant elements 
has been operated, as Pascal did, to demonstrate the intrinsic aporia of every 
description, and Rushdie's technique is reminiscent of the aesthetic of the 
"Nouveau Roman", for which representation literally exceeded the real. The 
faculty of representing and figuring things out depends on the capacity to 
subsume the diverse and the multitudinous under a certain unity and not on the
drifting into endless precisions which will only increase the fragmentation of the real. Pascal had said it at the beginning and at the end of the quoted excerpt, and this is what happens at the end of both passages, which end on a meaningful syncretic conclusion, both an overview and a metaliterary decoding. The former is performed by Saleem, the latter by Padma. These recapitulating sentences signal on the one hand the impossibility of putting an end to the constant circulation of meaning along the signifying chain and, on the other hand, the impasse in which any attempt to unveil reality is confined.

In the novel, the writing oscillates between the impossibility of total mimesis and the refusal of any partial disclosure. The reader is confronted to the "potential infinity of language" (Kristeva, 1980: 64-91) and constantly has to find new landmarks for representation.

His narrative technique is considered to be path-breaking in the history of Indian English fiction. He experiments with the English language to destabilize its association with the colonial powers. He has shown his mettle in contriving appropriate phrases and giving them aromatic ingredients. They are diffused all over his works. His corpus glitters with them.

The narrator of Midnight’s Children, Saleem Sinai, presents his story as an autobiographical narrative that bring around self conscious parallels between events in his own life sub continental history as seen from the point of view of
he and his diasporic Muslim family during their frequent changes in location between Kashmir, Delhi, Bombay, the Sunderbans, Dhaka, and Karachi.

The novel also throws light on the state of Emergency during the 1970s. It was a period of unrest and turmoil in the country and we see in the novel a kind of scathing political satire of the mid-1970s state of Emergency. In 1975, the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi declared a state of National Emergency, in which all civil rights were suspended, censorship was imposed on the press, people who opposed the government were jailed and all executive powers were concentrated in her hands. The Emergency was an autocratic rule that lasted almost two years.

*Midnight’s Children* celebrates the disintegration of the polity because it signifies the pluralism of democracy as opposed to the dictatorial discourse of Indira Gandhi’s rule. Saleem is a delegate of many voices, many languages, many characters, and he struggles to contain them all until the end of the story, where he foresees his impending disintegration into 600 million separate identities. His disintegration is seen as a positive value for the polity, because it reaffirms the pluralism that is an essential constituent of democracy. We see Rushdie being robust in endorsing such a form of government.

The disentanglement of the story — from Saleem’s birth and life to the history of India and the subcontinent — accounts for what Roland Barthes called the
"pleasure of the text" in his book of the same title. In *Midnight's Children*, the text is a tapestry of many texts and a mixture of languages. In the words of Barthes:

"the subject gains access to bliss by the cohabitation of languages working side by side: the text of pleasure is a sanctioned Babel"

(Barthes, 1976: 4)

According to the Bakhtinian concept, this is chiefly significant to the genre of the novel, in which voices are eternally intermingled in a constant dialogicality. The "Midnight's Children Conference", which gathers all the children born at and just after midnight on the day of the Independence of India and Pakistan, August 15th 1947, can exist through Saleem's telepathy and is the forum of the sub-continental languages, a sort of new Babel. Midnight's Children is the locus of a constant dynamic in the narrative and the disclosing of both plot and events. A dynamic between two successive states implies a potentiality, a tension between virtual and actual. The natural "unfolding of [the] tale", (Bakhtin, 1994: 224) intermingles past, present and future storylines in the woven arte-fact of the text.

The opening scene of the novel brings forth the paradigm of the "perforated sheet". Dr Aziz can see his patient's body through it. It shows part of the body
and hides the rest of it. This constitutive eroticism is a metaphor for Rushdie's narrative technique. Roland Barthes drew a comparison between the two:

"Is not the most erotic portion of a body where the garment gapes? In perversion (which is the realm of textual pleasure) there are no "erogenous zones" (a foolish expression, besides); it is intermittence, as psychoanalysis has so rightly stated, which is erotic: the intermittence of skin flashing between two articles of clothing (trousers and sweater), between two edges (the open-necked shirt, the glove and the sleeve); it is this flash itself which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance" (Barthes, 1976: 10).

The description of the above scene in the novel is infused with eroticism as stated in, *The pleasure of the Text*, to represent is to unfold, to reveal and exhibit. Through the reading, the text regains its original and etymological dimension. It is a "perforated sheet" that lets us peep through its holes. Every page turned is a bit of sheet removed to uncover what is hidden, the rest of the story and the rest of the body. The narrator toys with this ambiguity by using a term "sheet" which has multiple meaning (bed linen and page). The productivity, the potentiality of the signifier, and within it, of the letter itself, is founded upon the structuring around the time of the writing. It is a recurring

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fact in the genre of the autobiography. We find several references to the moment of utterance in the novel. Saleem, time and again mentions the office where he is writing, the "Anglepoised light" (1981: 14) and the pickle factory. As at the beginning of the chapter "All India Radio" where the spectator moves towards the cinema screen, the movement of the narration seems to be incessantly oriented towards the magnet of the present:

Suppose yourself in a large cinema, sitting at first in the back row, and gradually moving up, row by row, until your nose is almost pressed against the screen. Gradually the stars’ faces dissolve into dancing grain; tiny details assume grotesque proportions; the illusion dissolves – or rather, it becomes clear that the illusion itself is reality...we have come from 1915 to 1956, so we’re a good deal closer to the screen..... (Rushdie, 1981: 164)

That section of time is also that of the continuous present of creation. It’s a way of relentlessly renewing one’s existence. Saleem is aware of his looming death. The anchoring of the narrative in the eternal present of the text enables him to challenge both the coming of an ending and death itself. He tries to postpone his death. He keeps the telling of it until the end of Book One, in a decision that angers Padma.
Midnight's Children is full of revenges and vendettas of all sorts. If we take the example of the inflicting strategy set up by Alia, Saleem's aunt and Amina's sister, we can see that her aim is announced at the very outset. Its catalyst, in Book One, is her abandonment by Ahmed (Saleem's father) for Amina. This event opens the sequence: Amina will from now on try to take vengeance for that slight. When the Sinais move to Pakistan, Alia houses them and cooks for them. This event gives the narrator the opportunity to develop his aesthetics (whose etymological sense is "sensation") and describes the vengeful flavours of the dishes: he calls it "the impregnation of food with emotions" (Rushdie, 1981: 394-97). This achievement culminates and results in devastating repercussions. The pregnant Amina imagines she will give birth to a monster and becomes ugly while Ahmed's business goes bankrupt. The last stage is the ending of the sequence, its actualization: the parents' death (and Alia's) corresponds to its closing (a bomb destroys the house). Chapter Ten's opposition between "snakes" and "ladders", in other words this "perfect balance of rewards and penalties" (Rushdie, 1981: 160-167) is a metaphor for that strategy: to commit a misdeed will inevitably lead an individual to bear the consequences later. The narrator exploits every event to arouse the reader's curiosity, telling the reader,

The accident is almost upon me; and the children of midnight are waiting (Rushdie, 1981: 185).
He uses the common convention of suspense and cliff-hanger, a method that is redolent of Victorian novels published in installments. Padma is part of this process: her questions, especially at the end of chapters, verbalize the reader's doubts and add to the possibilities inherent to each element of the narration. For instance, in Book One, which is devoted to Saleem's birth and enigmatic parenthood, a single question asked by Padma re-establishes the potential of a sequence by creating doubt in the reader's mind and making him/her more curious.

'Is that him?' Padma asks, in some confusion. 'That soft cowardly plumpie? Is he going to be your father? (Rushdie, 1981: 53) (she is talking about Nadir the poet, Amina's first husband).

Puzzled about the list of virtual fathers, he (or she) sees his (or her) interest being suddenly rekindled. The narrative has a constant capacity to self-begetting. The narrator himself recognizes that "besides [the jar] one jar stands empty." (Rushdie, 1981: 549). These pickle-jars represent each chapter: that one of them, on top of the other thirty, remains empty, is the acknowledgement of the impossibility of closure, both in the real and figurative sense of the word. The signifying chain is inexhaustible and the text is permanently reborn in an assertion of what Barthes called its dimension of "production".
Productivity also deals with the level of the signifier. The Rushdian signifier is ubiquitous: it crosses innumerable dialects - without mentioning English and Urdu. It spreads all its semantic possibilities since it is the constant object of puns and spoonerisms. The most comical of them all is to be found in the passage in which Saleem, as he is talking about the quantity of mucus produced by his nose, alters the rose passage in *Romeo and Juliet* ("What's in a name?"), which turns into:

> What's in a nose?" -- "What was in my nose was snot" (Rushdie, 1981: 183).

The permanent play on real sense and figurative sense also partakes of the activity of the signifier: the freezing of Ahmed Sinai's financial assets corresponds to the freezing of his anatomical assets.

*Midnight's Children* is a novel that plays with the reader's longings. The reader has to find and guess what is partly uncovered. The book becomes the locus of an investigation in which evidence that will provide an illuminating insight into the riddles introduced at the beginning, is scattered here and there. Only at the end of Book One is the identity of Saleem's parents revealed; only at the end of the novel do we learn about the circumstances of his sterilisation. In both cases, the narrative consists in a succession of partial information and digressions. Barthes analysed that in terms of "function", which is in his terms a correlation.
Therefore, everything has to make sense and if one element is mentioned, its presence will be understood later on. The emphasis granted in some descriptions to William Methwold's parting of hair is explained at the end of Book One, when the reader assesses the power of attraction of this libidinous entity. It is actually cryptically alluded to at the beginning: "and there will be another bald foreigner." The reader deals with a heuristic of the text: the narration becomes a series of evidence and traps. Even the narrator admits it, as he compares his novel to a field of investigation: "as I wrote centuries ago, the trick is to fill in the gaps, guided by a few clues one is given." Many events are postponed in the course of the narrative. For example, in Book One, the digressions are announced with warnings: "But there are other mothers-to-be, other future fathers, wafting in and out through the silence."

It is clear that Rushdie with his sheer mastery of the language, and his total understanding of the Indian culture was able to narrate the novel in a way that could attract the world. The novel exhibits his profound knowledge of the Indian culture.

Amitav Ghosh is a novelist of immense repute. He appeals to our universal instincts. His novels, like the plays of Shakespeare, like the novels of George Orwell, E.M.Forster deal with the dissonance in the human psyche, with good and evil, with such primal things as love, hate, animosity, vengeance, violence,
age old family feud, the desire for union, the need for separation, the quest for
normalcy, the need for renunciation, with something incalculable in each one of
us which may at any moment rise to the surface and disturb our normal balance,
with mysteries, uncertainties, complexities of human existence and relationship.
Naturally, he is for many of us what E.M. Forster was for Lionel Trilling,
the novelist who can be read again and again and who after each
reading gives what few writers can give us, the sensation of
having learned something. (Trilling, 1965:78)

It gives me special satisfaction to write about Amitav Ghosh in the present
work for a consideration of his novels is useful in the troubled world in which
we find ourselves today, in the midst of cruelty and strife and hatred and
madness that surround us on every hand.

Nationalism, political freedom and international relations are the major themes
of Amitav Ghosh’s first two novels, *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow
Lines*. In *The Circle of Reason* (1986), his highly regarded debut as a novelist,
Amitav Ghosh talks about unity and diversity, in weaving which brought
welcome changes all over the world, in history which “is hope as well as
despair”-in a living belief that the world of greed and destruction may be
transformed by Reason, that Reason may make it one and bless it with
diversity. We can’t cease from weaving- weaving which is Reason, which
makes the world mad and makes it human. Ghosh believes in order, harmony, in unity of the world- not in its division into continents and countries. He lays stress on “connection”. It is connection with people and places which bring positive changes in the life of an individual. He loves to see individuals rising and prospering through connections.

The novel also exhibits Amitav Ghosh’s annoyance with the Indian culture when it tries to work on divisive and discordant lines. Dr. Mishra, one of the characters in the novel says,

Why don’t we give them a more realistic picture of ‘our culture’? Why don’t we show them how all those fancily dressed-up brides are doused with kerosene and roasted alive when they can’t give their grooms enough dowry? Why don’t we show them how rich landlords massacre Untouchables and raze their villages to the ground every second day? Or how Muslims are regularly chopped into little bits by Hindu fanatics? Or maybe we could just have a few nice color pictures of police atrocities? That’s what ‘our culture’ really is, isn’t it Verma? Why should we be ashamed of it? (Ghosh, 1988: 379-80)

Amitav Ghosh believes in building a new rational world. It is possible only when we start working on positive lines and start doing things with whatever
we have. The novel ends with its orphan protagonists return to India. The sermons of profane rationalism that nurtured him gets blown up and consigned to the flames. He was forced to live a life on the run from his own native land, and now he finds himself free to return and make a new beginning. But it is clear that making a new beginning is not going to be easy for him, he will have to work with the fragments he has. As one character in the novel says,

Nothing’s whole any more. If we wait for everything to be right again, we’ll wait forever while the world falls apart. The only hope is to make do with what we’ve got. (Ghosh, 1988: 416-17)

*The Shadow Lines* (1990) is a moving monumental novel in which Amitav Ghosh appears to have put his very soul. It emanates from memories, intricate relationships. It is absolutely no surprise that besides receiving wide acclamation from such leading novelists and journalist as Khushwant Singh, A.K. Ramanujan, Girish Karnad, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Gopal Gandhi and almost all over the English speaking world it did also get the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989.

The novel starts with the narrator’s perceptive and eccentric cousin Tridib. The narrator’s relationship with Tridib is not based on narrow, insular considerations but perhaps on that ‘clear stream of reason which has not let its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habits.’ In Tridib, the novelist contrives
a character who is as much content with his ‘addas’- right from Gole park to Gariahat as with the book-lined room of his on the upper floor. While Tridib of the ‘addas’, is a source of disgust and annoyance to the narrator’s grandmother, Tridib, the lover of books, the searcher of ‘impersonal places…’ is a source of joyance and mental peace to the narrator. It is Tridib who gives the narrator, worlds to travel in and eyes to see them with long before he leaves Calcutta. His beautiful cousin Ila would always break his heart. She has been all around the world and seen nothing; while the narrator in his imagination touches the Great Pyramid. Under the benign influence of his eccentric cousin the narrator learns how he should imagine and what he should imagine. As William Blake says in a defense of his paintings,

he who doesn’t imagine in stronger and better lights than his perishing mortal eyes can see he doesn’t imagine at all.

In his boyhood, the narrator finds himself sucked into history, his old grandmother stuck in an age old family feud. Tridib and his parents leave for London in 1939. In England, May starts loving Tridib and the relationship end in tragedy. Apart from these details relating to private turmoil, there is also moving references to public turmoil, the blitz in war time London, civil strife in post partition in Dhaka and a riot in Calcutta. So we see that Amitav Ghosh builds on intensely vivid, funny and moving story out of an intricate web of
memories, relationships and images. The focus of the novel is the meaning of political freedom in the modern world and the force of nationalism. Amitav Ghosh points out the absurdity of drawing lines between peoples and nations. But at the same time he also mentions that the habit of drawing lines however, futile and fatuous it may be, is, consistent with human nature. And perhaps, it is difficult, well nigh impossible for us to get rid of it. The Shadow Line we draw between people and nations has been a source of terrifying violence. It is one of the great themes of our times.

The novel exhibits Amitav Ghosh’s impatience with the ‘cribbed, cabined and confined’ surrounding of his Calcutta home, with his old grandmother engaged in age old family feud and his profound love and admiration for Tridib and for other things and places, neutral and impersonal and necessary for happiness. It is clear in the beginning of the novel that the narrator does not feel at ease in the company of his grandmother but all the time longs for the union, for deeper communion with his perceptive cousin Tridib. He speaks quite differentially of Tridib realizing the wrongness of his grandmother who believes in drawing lines and who is dogmatic about his views and opinions relating to persons and places. In the course of time, he discovers that the very effort on the part of man to understand his fellow beings is difficult. He has no difficulty in finding out that the only way men can hope to be happy in a growing, complicated, complex world is the way of Tridib, the philosophy which he lived and
practiced. Tridib had the ability ‘to listen to the loud, quick silver conversations in silence of talkative population of students and would be footballers and bank clerks and small time politicos and all the rest’ towards the stretch of road between Gariahat and Gole Park. Tridib didn’t bother to make friends with the people he talked to. He hugged the view that it is difficult to make peace with friends:

‘He did not seem to want to make friends with the people he was talking to, and that perhaps was why he was happiest in neutral, impersonal places, coffee houses, bars, street corner addas – the sort of place where people come and go away without expecting to know each other any further.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 9)

Amitav Ghosh holds that love of neighbor’s is not enough and that one must go out of one’s neighborhood (after the fashion of Tridib) to experience peace and happiness within oneself. Visiting street corner addas was not an exercise in futility on the part of Tridib (as assumed by the novelist’s grandmother). It rather meant for him a deliberate conscious effort for the development of that disinterested outlook which no pleasure can entice nor pain overpower. The grandmother of Amitav Ghosh was wrong about Tridib for he was nothing at all like the ‘hardened gossip lovers but something of a recluse……. happiest
in that book lined room of his right at the top of their family house.’
(Ghosh, 1988: 18)

The remarkable thing about Tridib was his detachment. He mixed with all sorts
of people but then ‘he didn’t seem to want to make friends with the people he
was talking to.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 90) This was the reason why ‘he was happiest in
neutral, impersonal places’ right from Ballygunj to Gole Park. Though he was
the centre of everybody’s attention, he didn’t trust the people. He didn’t mind
what they said. Even their laughter didn’t attract him. He viewed them with
suspicion or distress:

‘Tridib didn’t seem to be at all put out, either by what I had said or
by their laughter. He laughed too, shrugging good naturedly, and
said: If you believe anything people tell you, you deserve to be
told anything at all…. ’(Ghosh, 1988: 12)

The people of the street corners, of addas where Tridib would go had all sorts of
opinion about him:

‘You can’t believe a word he says........he just likes to
bamboozle people and play jokes on them.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 12)

The grandmother of the novelist thought and felt that he simply wasted his time
and advised the novelist:
'Time is not for wasting, time is for work.' (Ghosh, 1988: 13)

But the novelist realized that his grandmother was wrong about Tridib, that he was often maliciously dismissive of the hardened gossip lovers and that ‘he was happiest in that book lined room of his.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 18) The novelist did not in fact like the Tridib of the street corners but the Tridib who was a voracious reader, the imaginative Tridib: ‘The Tridib who had said that we could not see without inventing what we saw so at least we could try to do it properly.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 31) Through the character of Tridib, Amitav Ghosh tries to pinpoint that a certain kind of detachment is necessary for sustained relationship, for happiness.

In *The Shadow Lines*, Amitav Ghosh emerges as a realist. On the one hand he does not blame ‘the sensible people, of good intention’ for their thought ‘that there was a special enchantment in lines, something admirable in moving violence to the borders and dealing with it through science and factories’ and on the other hand he speaks of the absurdity of drawing lines, of the greater unity of the world, of the powerful impact of the atlas of Tridib on his mind or sensibility:

‘His atlas showed me for example, that within the tidy ordering of Euclidean space, Chiang Mai in Thailand was much nearer Calcutta than Delhi is; that Chengdu in China is nearer than
Srinagar is. Yet, I had never heard of those places until I drew my circle, and I cannot remember a time when I was so young that I had not heard of Delhi or Srinagar. It showed me that Hanoi and Chungking are nearer Khulna than Srinagar, and yet, did the people of Khulna care at all about the fate of the mosques in Vietnam and South China (a mere stone’s throw away)? I doubted it? (Ghosh, 1988: 232)

We see that Amitav Ghosh commits himself to the whole world of nationalism or internationalism. He neither defends separation or the habit of drawing lines nor defends it openly or completely. His position appears to be that of a realist or agnostic and he takes this position chiefly because of the complexity of human nature or situation because of the inadequacy of human belief or conviction. Human nature is a riddle, perhaps the greatest puzzle that God has created for man on this earth. In fact, no man can ever explain or justify any of his action. Amitav Ghosh states or describes human situations all around the globe – Dhaka and Calcutta as he sees them and instead of jumping to conclusion he leaves it to his readers to draw them.

Amitav Ghosh has the ‘negative capability’ of a true artist, the capacity mostly discernible in the works of Shakespeare and Keats. Obviously, he finds his sole wisdom in learning ‘mysteries, uncertainties and doubts.’ He is as much
interested in ‘enchanted lives’ as in the ‘tidy ordering of Euclidean space.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 233)

The concept of separation or segregation, appeals to Amitav Ghosh exactly in the same way in which his commitment to the whole world of good and evil. Ghosh appears to have discovered for himself that love and hate for things and people spring eternal in the human breast. His grandmother loved jewelries but there came a time in 1965 (when India and Pakistan were at war) when she had no hesitation in parting with her gold chain, in giving it to the war fund for the sake of freedom:

‘I had to, don’t you see? for your sake, for your freedom. We have to kill them before they kill us; we have to wipe them out.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 237)

Amitav Ghosh makes us realize that man is not only to be recognized by his instinct of love or harmony but also by his instinct of savagery, of violence, of cruelty and strife. He makes us think that freedom and violence are at times interdependent or contingent. We cannot preserve our freedom without being violent. Most of us cannot help behaving like the grandmother of Amitav Ghosh:
‘She gave her bloody hand a shake, put it on her lap and stared at it bemusedly, as the blood dripped down the sides of her saree dyeing it a gentle, batik life crimson.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 237)

Ghosh tries to show that freedom has its mysterious links with violence, that people indulge in violence to be free:

‘Freedom, he said laughing. You know, if you look at the pictures on the front pages of the newspapers at home now, all those pictures of dead people - in Assam, the north-east, Punjab, Sri Lanka, Tripura – people shot by terrorists and separatists and the army and the police, you’ll find somewhere behind it all, that single word; everyone’s doing it to be free.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 246)

Freedom does not come easily or smoothly. We have to work and work hard for it, we have to purchase it and pay its price by our blood and sweat, by our precious materials. We have to make sacrifices for it:

‘We have to be willing to pay a price for our unity and freedom.’ (Ghosh, 1988: 246)

Drawing lines is not going to help us. It is an absurdity since human memory can hardly be divided. The circumstances leading to the cutting open of Khalil’s stomach and of cutting Tridib’s throat from ear to ear are certainly not the
creations of human beings. They are beyond their control, beyond their power and beyond their understanding; they are mysterious – acts and works wholly inexplicable and unintelligible:

‘The whole thing is a mirage. How can anyone divide a memory? If freedom were possible, surely Tridib’s death would have set me free.’(Ghosh, 1988: 247)

Amitav Ghosh lays stress on the helplessness of man in a hostile world. He appears to be whispering in our ears:

‘There is a divinity that speaks our ends,

Rough-hew them how we will.’

(Shakespeare, *Hamlet, Act 5, Scene2*)

Ghosh never fails to remind us that human thinking, human understanding is fallible. No man or woman can ever claim perfection about his or her thought and action. The greatest tragedy of man in this world is that he lacks the ability to understand what he does. We are perhaps, grievously mistaken, arrogant when we assume or take it for granted that we owe anybody his life. Our sufferings and troubles, Amitav Ghosh tells us have their routes in our arrogance:
'For years I was arrogant enough to think I owed him his life. But I know now I didn’t kill him; I couldn’t have, if I’d wanted. He gave himself up; it was a sacrifice. I know I can’t understand it, I know I mustn’t try, for any real sacrifice is a mystery.' (Ghosh, 1988: 251-252)

Ghosh makes it abundantly clear that it is only the liberal approach based on reason and love which can save us from disastrous consequences. The two characters at the end of the novel do not appear to be caring for anything except their love and regard for each other, for love which is worth living for, worth dying for, perhaps the only satisfying good that we can grasp at, the shifting shadows at our brief existence.

In some respects, the novel can be thought of as a historical novel. We find Amitav Ghosh being interested in recuperating histories squeezed out of the state’s homogenizing myth of the nation. Tridib teaches the narrator that all communities are imagined or narrated:

‘Everyone lives in a story, he says, my grandmother, my father, his father, Lenin, Einstein, and lots of other names I hadn’t heard of; they all lived in stories, because stories are all there are to live in, it was just a question of which one you chose.....’ (Ghosh, 1988: 182)
The Glass Palace (2000), another major novel of Amitav Ghosh, like many other great works of art is an artistic exfoliation of a vision with intense intricacies born of a deep intuitive and cognitive meditation over human existence in a world which admits of no simple and conventional explanation.

The novel is about the rise and fall of imperial powers in the twentieth century. Its locale is different parts of Burma, Malaya and India and the characters belong to three generations. Ghosh takes his readers to the time of the British rule in the South Asian countries through the gripping story of Rajkumar and Dolly, the two main characters of the novel.

The Glass Palace reveals Amitav Ghosh’s catholicity of taste and outlook. It exhibits his aversion for politics which pushes all decent things out of us and diverts people’s attention from their real problems and thereby forces them to live ‘in abject, grinding poverty’. (p.346) Mere cry for nationalism, for freedom is not enough. The people require to be lifted from the state of poverty, from the painful state of ‘cringing in shame’:

‘It seemed that in Malaya even ordinary people were able to afford cars and refrigerators: some even had air conditioners and telephones. In India only Europeans and the richest of rich Indians could afford such things.’ (Ghosh, 2000: 345)
Through the pages of *The Glass Palace* there runs a deep current of humility and humanity, of objectivity and detachment, of the clear stream of reason (laying constant and consistent stress on the development of a state of mind like the earth or water) which can never lose its way into the dreary, desert sand of dead habits. One finds Amitav Ghosh frequently turning to the scriptures, to the discourses of Buddha. But like the calm-eyed Buddha, Amitav Ghosh does so not to run away from life but to live it and enjoy it. The discourses of the Buddha find appreciable echoes in Amitav Ghosh’s soul. This is apparent from the fact that Dolly, the nurse of Manju and one of the major character’s of the novel reads to her ‘from the scriptures- from such translations as she could find’ (2000: 343) particularly at the time of Manju’s pregnancy. Manju is moved by the first sermon of Lord Buddha:

‘......birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, disease is sorrow, death is sorrow, contact with the unpleasant is sorrow, separation from the pleasant is sorrow, every wish unfulfilled is sorrow.’ (Ghosh, 2000: 344)

No doubt, during Manju’s pregnancy period, the realization of inevitable sorrow and suffering, made a great impression on her mind. But as soon as she was delivered of her child, her baby was ‘given two names- Jaya was to be her Indian name and Tim May the Burmese.’ (2000: 344) We find that Manju does
not find sanity in comprehending the mysteries of life and death, of sorrow and suffering on the earth. On the contrary, she wants to make the best use of the present. She intends to live in harmony with the world. Perhaps, she realizes that life and joy and beauty are better than dusty death. The moment she holds her child to her breast she finds the sermon of the Lord Buddha incomprehensible. What is of value to her solely is her new born daughter:

‘The words (of Lord Buddha) had made a great impression on her at the time, but now with her new born daughter beside her, they seemed incomprehensible: the world had never seemed so bright, so replete with promise, so profligate in its rewards, so generous in its joys and fulfillments.’ (Ghosh, 2000: 344)

The words which, in my humble opinion, Manju finds comprehensible are those of Shakespeare:

“O mistress mine, where are you roaming?

O stay and hear! Your true love’s coming

That can sing both high and low

Trip no further, pretty sweeting,

Journey’s end in lovers’ meeting-
Every wise man’s son doth know.

What is love? ‘tis not hereafter;

Present mirth hath present laughter;”

Just as Manju realizes the absurdity of ruminating over the past and over sorrow and suffering Amitav Ghosh too realizes the insignificance of meaningless cries for division and disintegration of the country and the world. He wants to live in the world and move with it for the sake of his profit and pleasures. Division or disintegration of the world into so many countries, compartments is not the solution for the human predicament. Amitav Ghosh discovers for himself that there is no room for narrow nationalism, for exclusiveness, for dogmatism in the modern world. He pins his faith in the principle of mutability- not in the absolute moral code.


The voluminous novel, *A Suitable Boy* (1993), a much admired epic of Indian life, is set between 1950 and 1952. It brings before the readers a panoramic view of the Indian society in the years immediately after independence. It was a
transitional period after independence. Seth in this novel writes about the social, religious and familial customs of India. The middle class was on a rise and the nation was marching ahead on the secular lines. The plot of the novel focuses on the lives of four Indian families, three Hindus and a Muslim linked by marriage and friendship. The whole novel is a narration of the intertwining lives and relationships of these four families of Brahmpur, an imaginary north Indian state. The Muslim family i.e. the Khans, belong to the zamindari upper crust, whose feudal rights were being swept away by the land reform movements that were taking place after independence. The second family of the Hindu Chatterjee contains the first Indian High Court justice. The third family is fathered by a powerful minister of revenue who is also a member of the national legislative assembly. The fourth family contains one of the first Indian executives in a high profile British management firm. The novel highlights the inner workings and travails of these four families. The guiding string is supplied by a quite conventional theme, that is to say, a young woman’s search for a husband.

Vikram Seth explores in his novel some of the most important political and social issues of the time. He appears to be bent on presenting before his readers the interstices of social change, the way that life and love will go on no matter what history may be up to.
The story is about a mother's wish to find a suitable boy as a husband for her daughter, Lata. The mother Mrs. Rupa Mehra and the youngest, rebellious daughter Lata are the two main characters of the novel. Rupa Mehra is a widow whose task throughout the novel is to take care of her family, and in particular, the search for a husband of suitable Hindu character for Lata. Lata is frayed by her mother's wishes and her own love for a Muslim boy, Kabir Durrani.

The romantic plot, the “private” narrative of the novel, alternates with its “public” narrative, which revolves around the land reforms taken by the Congress government in the 1950s and the first general elections of 1951. In its exploration of social, political, and economic changes in the first few years after independence, *A Suitable Boy* endorses an idea of progressivism and gradualist approach to the dynamics of social transformations. Vikram Seth beautifully depicts the social and political changes in the country soon after independence. His approach to the idea of Indian nationhood in this novel is statist and secular.

The novel aspires to give an idea of India in a realistic manner. The narration explores the Indian society of the post-colonial phase in its multiple political, religious, cultural and communal ramifications. In her article on ‘The Invention of India in Vikram Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*, Neelam Srivastava says:

Seth’s narrative technique has invited comparisons with novelists such as R.K.Narayan, George Eliot, and Leo Tolstoy, because his
novel displays a rare belief in the possibility of representational ‘authenticity’, which it seeks to achieve through an impressively detailed and documented reconstruction of Indian society around the time of the first general elections. Amidst the anti-realist tendencies of postmodern fiction, Seth’s novel is striking for its re-appropriation of the realist mode which is characterized by an omniscient narrator, linear chronology and psychologically coherent characters, all immersed in a ‘universe of ordered significance’.

The novel endorses the idea of ‘strong’ India, of cultural harmony and religious tolerance. It also echoes Jawaharlal Nehru’s views on secularism as the only way towards development and progress of the Indian nation. Any other approach in India would mean the breaking up of India. The period after independence was important in the consolidation of the nation. The novel depicts the Indian life and culture during the fifties. Seth believes in making India a strong nation. Communal harmony and economic development are important issues for him. His description of many events in the novel can be seen as ‘symbolic moments in the nation –forming process, characterized by gradual rather than violent, social change.’
During the 1950s the government made serious efforts to bring social and economic changes in the country. The land reform act was one such effort. Seth talks about the Zamindari abolition act in this novel. This act aimed to abolish the feudal land-holdings in the imagined state of Purva Pradesh. It was one of the important social changes which the country witnessed after independence. The seeds of a modern industrialized state were sown and the nation saw the rise of the Indian middle class. It was a phase of transition and a very important moment in the development of modern India. Seth’s portrayal of the Indian nation is natural and instinctive. He appears to be very clear in endorsing the Nehruvian ideology of a secular state built on communal harmony, equality and brotherhood.

Vikram Seth’s description of ‘Purva Pradesh’- an imagined state gives the impression of the whole of India. In many ways, Vikram Seth reminds us of R.K.Narayan’s Malgudi- an imaginary south Indian town in his novels. We get a feeling that Seth’s ‘Brahmpur’, the capital town of ‘Purva Pradesh’ is like so many north Indian towns like Delhi, Lucknow, Varanasi, Patna etc. At the beginning of the novel, Lata Mehra, one of the central characters of the novel is daydreaming during her sister’s wedding. She is looking thoughtfully abstracted:
......this little fire was indeed the centre of the universe. For here it burned, in the middle of this fragrant garden, itself in the heart of Pasand Bagh, the pleasantest locality of Brahmpur, which was the capital of the state of Purva Pradesh, which lay in the centre of the Gangetic plains, which was itself the heartland of India.....and so on through the galaxies to the outer limits of perception and knowledge. (Seth, 1994: 16)

The novel contains an astounding experience. It gives us a vivid and lively picture of India. Its vast depiction of the Indian society during the 1950s is characterized by the blending of the ‘aesthetic and referential purposes’. Neelam Srivastava in her article on ‘The Invention of India in Vikram Seth’s A Suitable Boy’, says, ‘the aesthetic purpose has a containing function, in that it directs the description towards the production of a meaning. On the other hand, the assumed reality of the referent prevents the description to turn into fantasizing. This fact becomes very apparent in the crowd scenes in A Suitable Boy.’ We have seen that in the description of such scenes Indian English novelists try to explore the multiplicity of Indian culture and ethos. Vikram Seth also tries to do the same in this novel. The scene in which Mann Kapoor takes a stroll through the old part of the city of Brahmpur, he sees:
Crows cawed, small boys in rags rushed around on errands (one balancing six small dirty glasses of tea on a cheap tin tray as he weaved through the crowd), monkeys chattered in and bounded about a great shivering-leaf pipal tree and tried to raid unwary customers as they left the well-guarded fruit stand, women shuffled along in anonymous burqas or bright saris, with or without their menfolk, a few students from the university lounging around a chaat stand shouted at each other from a foot away either out of habit or in order to be heard, mangy dogs snapped and were kicked, skeletal cats mewed and were stoned, and flies settled everywhere…….(Seth, 1994: 97)

We can easily see the elements of spontaneity in Vikram Seth’s description of India. He is successful in trying to familiarize his readers with the town of Brahmpur. Seth’s technique of naturalizing while describing the diversity of Indian life and culture reminds us of Jawaharlal Nehru who has done the same in his book, The Discovery of India. The novel contains frequent allusions to Nehru’s nationalist text. The different languages (which are aligned with the sense of social idioms) that make up the voices of the novel are composed into a “structured stylistic system” which reveals a more “orderly”- one could say a statist- vision of the nation. In both Seth’s and Nehru’s texts we see that they
stress on the fact that India is a land of diversity and that the only way towards progress is to live in communal harmony.

*A Suitable Boy* was published in India in 1993 when the country witnessed an aggressive brand of communal politics. It was the time when the Hindu right wing slowly tried to seize the Indian national identity. The novel can be seen as a response to the aggressive communalization of politics during the 1990s. We see in the background of the novel, the underlying Hindu-Muslim conflict in the city of Brahmpur, where the story is primarily set. Seth considers his novel a plea for religious tolerance among other things. In one of his interviews he says:

‘It’s an insult to Hinduism that these people have hijacked what it means to be Hindu. It’s tolerance, understanding – not just trying to bash your neighbor over the head because he is Muslim. These things need to be said.’ (Seth in an interview)

Hindu-Muslim tension is a persistent theme across the novel, be it the political of Mahesh Kapoor and the Nawab sahib, the friendship between their respective sons, Mann and Firoz and its difficulties, the communal riots that deface, or Lata’s infatuation for the Muslim student Kabir. The novel’s secular and realistic narration and its depiction of the Indian society make it worth reading.
Vikram Seth, though a modern novelist believes in absolute moral code. He appears to be conventional in his thoughts and beliefs. He is of the opinion that man should not become passion's slave. He suggests, through this novel that the meaning of life lies in man's renunciation of passion, and in understanding the value of family togetherness. Passion and fanaticism of all kinds must be forcefully exorcised and rational calm and tranquility should prevail. Towards the end of the novel, we find Lata Mehra delivering a passionate denunciation of passion. Lata explains to her best friend Malati why she has given up her romantic infatuation with Kabir and decided to enter into marriage with a suitable boy. The following passage makes it clear why she turns her back to her romance with Kabir:

‘I’m not myself when I’m with him. I ask myself who is this – this jealous, obsessed woman who can’t get a man out of her head – why should I make myself suffer like this? I know that it’ll always be like this if I’m with him.’

‘Oh, Lata – don’t be blind – exclaimed Malati. ‘It shows how passionately you love him –’

‘I don’t want to,’ cried Lata, ‘I don’t want to. If that’s what passion means, I don’t want it. Look at what passion has done to the family. Maan’s broken, his mother’s dead, his father’s in
despair. When I thought that Kabir was seeing someone else, what I remember feeling was enough to make me hate passion. Passionately and forever.’ (Seth, 1994: 1296)

The above passage reveals Vikram Seth’s moral and ethical views. Seth makes it plain that man can achieve serenity and composure only if he has the will to renounce passion. There may be pain, there may be sufferings but that is the only way which can lead man to experience tranquility. Seth, through this novel gives the message that humour, self-discipline, marital order and work ethics are important things in a man’s life. The chaos of passion and the breaking down of civil order leads to anarchy and destruction. Lata chooses Haresh as her husband, who is hardworking, honest, egalitarian, outspoken, is opposed to monogamy and most importantly has no objection in her pursuing an independent career as a teacher. Lata appears to be marrying a symbol of what Vikram Seth would like to proclaim as his hope for a new India – a determined, practical, anti-snobbish, working-class, self-made Indian man.

Upamanyu Chatterjee established himself as a major Indian English novelist of the post-colonial phase with his novel, English August (1989). He too, like other prominent novelists of his time believes in the true and candid depiction of life. The kind of novels he has written shows his cognizance with the Indian culture. In his novels, we find that he stresses on understanding human nature.
The trouble is that no human being tries to understand one another and that leads to the breakdown of human relations.

Chatterjee’s *The Last Burden* is a fascinating portrayal of life in an average Indian middle class family. We see in this novel a vivid portrayal of the awesome burden of family ties. Tracking backwards and forwards in time and space, the book unfolds the picture of Jamun and his family. Jamun, a young adrift man, is the central character of the novel. He stays away from his family which comprises his parents, Urmila and Shayamanand, his elder brother Burfi, his sister-in-law Joyce, his two nephews and the children’s ayah. The story moves around Jamun’s family. Jamun comes to his family after hearing about his mother’s illness. The illness of his mother prolongs and so does his stay at home. During his stay he comes to know about the intricacies which crop up in his family. His parents appear to be disillusioned with their elder son who gets married to a Christian girl. Somehow or other they feel that life has become a void for them. The comfort which they expect from their elder son appears to be far-fetched:

‘Truly, living is null-like mud-when one’s children are one’s misfortune. Everything feels ill spent dust. But one twitches on. Good blood is the real fortune. (Chatterjee, 1994: 26)
Burfi and Jamun, on the other hand, feel that there can be no harmony between parents and children if both have contrary states of mind. We see both parents and sons getting shocking experiences from each other. Shayamanand's excruciating comments to Burfi time and again only widens the gulf in their relationship.

Upamanyu Chatterjee skillfully tries to present before his readers the emotional demands which the parents make upon their children. We see Shyamanand and Urmila getting jittery at times towards their sons for they find them insensitive to their feelings. The wretchedness of Shyamanand and Urmila is, perhaps, the coldest of their distress. The conflict of ideas between parents and sons is depicted throughout the novel. Burfi and Jamun are more enthralled and attracted to the western culture than to the Indian culture. Their characters reveal how the western culture is making its presence felt in the Indian society. Burfi's wife, Joyce, doesn't seem to be interested in Indian beliefs, values and customs. Her adherence to her own values and culture is clearly reflected in her deeds and actions. The sons feel that their father's thinking is depraved and that he often comes between them and their happiness. Shayamanand has no control over his tongue. He never hesitates in divulging his mind to his sons. He finds himself ill at-ease to see his sons making merry and their mother suffering from illness. Shyamanand woefully narrates Jamun his and Urmila's horrid experiences at home, about their ill-treatment at the hands of their elder son.
Burfi. Jamun finds himself in the midst of infinite complexities. His slightest attachment towards Burfi and sister-in-law Joyce makes Shayamanand feel that he hasn’t come to see his ailing mother but to see his sister-in-law:

    You itch for that artful Joyce- I know it ! you hurtle home every three months for her. Your goofy mother presumes that you scuttle home for us, for her, but the quarry is Joyce…..

(Chatterjee, 1994: 51)

There are moments when we see Jamun letting lose his temper at the never ending complaints and unpleasant remarks of his father for his sons. The battle of words between Shayamanand and Jamun reveal some bare truths about the Indian middle class family where familial ties appear to be an awesome burden.

_The Last Burden_ shows parents’ disgust and disappointment at their son’s failing to live up to their expectations and to meet their emotional demands. The troubles and afflictions which parents suffer are hardly realized by children, who crave for their own golden world. Burfi, the elder son, has his own family to think of, Jamun too pines for his own world. His attraction towards Kasturi, an old friend, keeps him engaged. Shyamanand and Urmila are at pains to see their sons falling for women whom they consider mismatch. The very thought that their elder son has married a Christian girl and their grandsons being reared as Catholics fill their hearts with repugnance. While Urmila is recuperating from
her illness, she does miss the care and attention she needs from her sons. She is naturally aggrieved at her son’s insensitivity. She tells Jamun:

‘....you must foster me; for I fostered you.....For hundreds of years, generation upon generation, why’ve the old been abandoned......Pista and Doom’l shed you in a big house that you’ll shout you erected for them....and next their young will....’(Chatterjee, 1994: 105)

Upamanyu Chatterjee, through this novel tries to project the peculiar characteristic of man to abandon the old and pine for something new, something fresh. Shyamanand and Urmila are not the only parents who feel that their sons are clinging towards a new and alien culture but there are many more in this generation who are getting attracted to western ideologies and beliefs. The affinity towards modern beliefs and customs is dishonorable to Shyamanand and Urmila. It is hard for them to accept that the bonds of family which were revered earlier have now become inapt or out of date:

‘They seem brand-new and alien, in jeans and T-shirts of dubious shades, and articulate a puzzling species of English; whereas Urmila and he had ripened in an earlier, illusorily genial world (in which Shyamanand and his siblings had nested together in parsimony, bale-fullness and rancor), wherein, mawkish that he
is, he reckons that the bonds of family had been sturdier, and parents more revered.’ (Chatterjee, 1994: 108)

The novel also exhibits the inner friction of a middle class family where every individual appears to be thinking about his or her own self. India is a country where family is given top priority, but there are people who do not get the right meaning of the word family and the responsibilities that come with it. The bond of love among the family members seems to be totally missing in the novel. The relationship between Shyamanand and Urmila too exhibits their lack of understanding for each other. There are times when they too are seen to be at odds. Urmila feels that Shyamanand doesn’t like her being in a comfortable state. She tells Jamun:

He may seem solicitous, but inlay he festers whenever he spots me at rest.(Chatterjee, 1994: 113)

We observe that there exists a certain amount of uneasiness in the family. Parents are not happy with their children and so are children with their parents. Husband and wife do not have a cordial relationship. The elder son Burfi appears to be governed by his wife. Jamun feels that Burfi’s ‘opinion on virtually everything- on every topic save money and sex- on education, religion, therapeutics, vocations, his upbringing, the family-has been recast by his marriage.’(1994: 124)
Upamanyu Chatterjee makes it clear in his novel that shouldering responsibilities of familial ties is not an easy task. It requires understanding of human nature. It requires understanding of human sentiments and emotions. The modern generation especially belonging to the middle class appears to be lacking these essential human feelings. In pursuit of a higher standard of living they forget primal human feelings. They even tend to forget that selfish emotional demands can only result in unhappiness and restlessness. Jamun, we see, at times, brooding over man’s existence in this world. He recognizes the importance of the exhibition of human feelings:

We can never express the due sentiments- love, devotion, kindness- we can never act humanely, while those whom we cherish are healthy and alive. (Chatterjee, 1994: 225-26)

It is, perhaps, man’s lack of understanding for each other, his failure in exhibiting love and care for each other which creates gulf between relationships. Happiness is possible only if human beings can keep stress on the fact that mortal life would be fragmentary without family.

The death of Urmila changes Jamun’s life. He realizes the importance of happiness in man’s existence. It’s ‘the single glow amongst the anguish, malevolence, rancor and rage’ (Chatterjee, 1994: 255) in man’s life. Jamun reflects upon his mother’s life which he thinks to be like a void. He feels that
his mother had not experienced any delight during her entire life. Jamun is seen to be filled with a kind of remorse for being unable to do anything for his mother’s happiness. He admits the fact that human beings unlike other species ‘clutch and claw the emotions of their spawn forever.’ (Chatterjee, 1994: 265)

*The Last Burden* gives sharp insight into middle class Indian family life and does help in explaining why people in India abandoned the traditional joint family structure in favour of a nuclear one. All the intricacies of life, be it financial pressure, lost love, unwanted but unavoidable obligations have been depicted in this novel. The hold that Chatterjee maintains over the readers, in the novel is really captivating and at times, unsettling.

**Rohinton Mistry** with his novels like *Such a Long Journey* (1992) and *A Fine Balance* (1996) showed to the literary world that he is a novelist who believes in depicting life as it really is. Both the novels exhibit his complete understanding of Indian social life. The portrayal of the Indian middle class is the high point in Mistry’s narratives. His bitterness, his anguish towards the government’s hostile attitude towards the poor is evident in his novels. His novels can be read for its realism.

*Such a Long Journey* (1991) is a great work of art by Rohinton Mistry which deserves to be mentioned in the present study. The novel announces Mistry’s advent as a gifted Indian writer. The novel is set against the background of the
Indo-Pak war of 1971. It delves into the human predicament meted out to its central character, Gustad Nobel. His hopes are shattered by circumstances beyond his control. Mistry depicts Gustad Nobel as a classical tragic hero. Gustad appears to be completely serene and tranquil in his approach towards life. His sufferings and struggle with fortitude and humility in life reminds us of the classical tragic hero’s life and sufferings. The journey which he undertakes in the novel is a journey from hopelessness to hope.

The novel derives its form from the classical literary tradition. Mistry’s narration reminds the readers of the great tradition where the novelist not only changes the possibilities of art for practitioners and readers but becomes significant in terms of that human awareness they promote, awareness of the possibilities of life. We find the elements of comedy, tragedy and satire. We also find Mistry sharing his thoughts on beliefs, superstitions, the super natural, rites, nationalistic ideas, humanism, discrimination, secular views and so on and so forth. We find the central character of the novel, Gustad, having pains and sufferings in his life. The readers are reminded of the fact that no happiness can last forever.

In the opening of the novel, Gustad is described as a God fearing man, the envy of all:
Tall and broad—shouldered, Gustad was the envy and admiration of friends and relatives whenever health or sickness was being discussed. (Mistry, 1992: 12)

He is a bank employee and has three children. During the course of the novel we find that Gustad’s hopes, dreams and aspirations get shattered. He considers destiny to be the cause of his misfortunes. The sudden disappearance of Major Bilimoria, who had been a loving brother to him and a loving and affectionate uncle to his children, from Khodadad building, his son’s Sohrab’s aggressive temper and bad manners and finally his refusal to become an IIT student, the prolonged illness of his daughter, Roshan, his receipt of a package from Major Bilimoria and the trouble thereafter to hide ten lakh rupees, his close friend Dinshawji’s illness and his ultimate death, the death of Tehmul Langra, an idiot and retarded child of the Khodabad building and the destruction of his sacred wall by the municipal authorities were events in Gustad’s life which had brought utter gloom and hopelessness in his life.

Sohrab’s selection in the IIT was a matter of great pride for Gustad but his refusal to become an engineering student and his fierce temper shows a hostile father-son relationship in the novel. The sudden and un-called for snub of Sohrab at the party Gustad had arranged as a celebration of his selection in
engineering, shatters his hopes and dreams. He finds it difficult to have a check on his emotions:

Throwing away his fortune without reason. What have I not done for him, tell me? I even threw myself in front of a car. Kicked him aside, saved his life, and got this to suffer all my life [slapping his hip]. But that is what a father is for. And if he cannot show respect at least, I can kick him again. Out of my home, out of my life! (Mistry, 1992: 52)

Gustad, as a loving father had done everything possible for the happiness of his children, even got himself fractured his hip to save his son’s life but the son’s hostile attitude makes him woeful.

There are other events in the novel which cause Gustad’s annoyance and disgust. The horrid smell and flies and mosquitoes coming from the wall side of his home, used as a public latrine fill him with repugnance:

The flies, the mosquitoes, the horrible stink, with bloody shameless people pissing, squatting alongside the wall. Late at night it became like a wholesale public latrine. (Mistry, 1992: 16)
The above passage can also be seen as a depiction of an Indian society where people do not have common civic sense. Mistry gives a real and truthful picture of the country’s social life.

The novel also exhibits Mistry’s awareness and understanding of the Indian supernaturals. Miss Kuptitia, one of the characters in the novel, maintains that Gustad’s daughter Roshan’s illness is caused by some evil eye or some “jaadu-mantar”. To protect her from “jaadu-mantar” she asks Dilnawaz (Gustad’s wife) to perform a ritual:

Take your needle and thread, a nice strong thread with a big knot at the end. Select a yellow lime, and seven chillies. Chillies must be green, not turning red. Never red. String them together with the needle. Lime goes at the bottom. Then hang the whole thing over your door, inside the house. (Mistry, 1992: 149-50)

She continues to say,

It is like a *taveej*, a protection. Each time Roshan walks under it the evil eye becomes less and less powerful…Actually everyone in your family will benefit. (Mistry, 1992: 150)

There is another important thing which Mistry talks about in the novel. He emphasizes on the importance of religious tolerance. He believes in the unity of
the society. He abhors things which divide the society. The pavement artist, who has painted gods and goddesses from all religions of the world on the wall, is one through whom the Indian secularism is reinforced. The morcha director shouts:

The wall of Hindu and Muslim, Sikh and Christian, Parsi and Buddhist! A holy wall, a wall suitable for worship and devotion, whatever your faith! (Mistry, 1992: 326)

Mistry’s concept of faith and belief is unquestionable. He makes the pavement artist speak in the following manner about faith:

You see, I don’t like to weaken anyone’s faith. Miracle, magic, mechanical trick, coincidence – does it matter what it is, as long as it helps? Why analyse the strength of the imagination, the power of suggestion, power of auto-suggestion, the potency of psychological pressures? Looking too closely is destructive, makes everything disintegrate. As it is life is difficult enough. Why to simply make it tougher? After all, who is to say what makes a miracle and what makes a coincidence? (Mistry, 1992: 289)
Such a Long Journey (1992) shows Rohinton Mistry's awareness of the social and political situation of India during the 1970s. Mistry gives a realistic and satirical picture of the Indian political system of those times. He appears to be unrelenting so far as his attack on Nehru and Indira Gandhi is concerned. He condemns Nehru for India's defeat at the hands of Chinese in the Indo-Chinese war of 1962. He describes Nehru's frustrations, his ill-temper, his political maneuverings; his feud with Feroze Gandhi for the latter's exposure of scandals in his government, his fixation for his "darling daughter Indira", who left her husband in order to live with him. Quite conversely, he praises Lal Bahadur Shastri, who became India's Prime Minister after the death of Nehru. He believes that during his reign, "the stagnant waters of government would at last be freshened and vitalized." (Mistry, 1992: 114) Shastri proved to be far better than Nehru in the war against Pakistan in 1965. Dr. Paymaster, one of the characters in the novel describes Shastri thus: "Short in height but tall in brains is our Lal Bahadur" (Mistry, 1992: 114). Indira Gandhi is shown to be a suspect in his sudden death at Tashkent "so that her father's dynastic democratic dream could finally come true" (Mistry, 1992: 114) We find unswerving attacks on Indira Gandhi for her nationalization of banks, for her support to make a separate Maharashtra state that caused mayhem and riot, for her creation of Shiv Sena to divide people on the basis of class as Dinshawji remarks, "wanting to make the rest of us into second class citizens" (Mistry, 1992: 39) and for her
narrow political gains, that is, to get the votes of the poor and show them that she is with them. Mistry exposes the crumbling political order of the country by mentioning the political details in his novel. Sohrab, Gustad’s son suggests two things for a drastic social change. He comes up with the words of Major Bilimoria:

Only two choices: communism and military dictatorship, if you want to get rid of these Congress party crooks. Forget democracy for a few years, not meant for a starving country.

(Mistry, 1992: 68)

Mistry, is however, not in favour of dictatorship in the country. He wants change, a refreshing change which can bring fresh lease of life to people’s lives. Gustad’s immediate response to his son’s Sohrab’s views on dictatorship and communism suggests Mistry’s dreams and longings for the nation:

Be grateful this is democracy. If that Russiawala was here, he would pack you and your friends off to Siberia. (Mistry, 1992: 69)

The novelist feels that the sickening dirt, ugliness and pollution in the city, in the bazaar, and at the Kholabad building are summation of what happens at the centre. Congress government, at the centre – ‘are called a rogues’ gallery’ (Mistry, 1992: 325) People cannot tolerate the crumbling of society,
insatiability, deceit, dishonesty, loss of morality and cheating for long. These
are things which push the nation back. Dr. Paymaster puts the magnitude of the
situation metaphorically in the following terms:

.....our beloved country is a patient with gangrene at an advanced
stage. Dressing the wound or sprinkling rosewater over it to hide
the stink of rotting tissue is useless. Fine words and promises will
not cure the patient. The decaying part must be excised. You see,
the municipal corruption is merely the bad smell, which will
disappear as soon as the gangrenous government at the centre is
removed. (Mistry, 1992: 313)

The world which Mistry creates in the novel is a world in which all forms of
corruption can be seen. Hypocrisy, cruelty towards the poor, loss of moral and
ethical values, despair and decay has become paramount. The rampant
corruption in the society makes Mistry a realist. He is perturbed to find people
living in sub-human conditions because of corruption. He appears to be a
reporter of human conditions as in itself it is. Wars between nations show the
degenerating political situation of the world. Breakdowns of communication
between nations lead to political unrest and upheavals. Mistry becomes ruthless
in his criticism of the government because he is a nationalist at heart and is
concerned about the lives of the people of the nation.
A Fine Balance (1996) is an absorbing and moving text about life of common, vulnerable people who scuttle about on this globe and whose lives are caught in the vicious cycle of poverty. The novel depicts the picture of the present-day India, shows the sufferings of the outcasts and innocents trying to survive in a cruel and hostile world and grapples with the question of how to live in the face of death and despair. The poor— who are the main characters in this novel— are not always going to remain poor, but are also maimed, mutilated, poisoned, homeless and hopeless. The novel is pessimistic and the images Mistry gives us— God as the giant quilt maker sewing patches together, chess as the game of life, a reward being immediately matched by a disaster— propose a world in which nothing can really change or improve the condition of the poor people, deprived people. Their conditions are going to remain the same. The society is a place only for the rich, the corrupt, the oppressive and the unscrupulous. They keep growing luxuriantly. Mistry concludes the novel on the intriguing note that no matter how much the lower and deprived class struggles it will always find it difficult well nigh impossible to break the very shackles of poverty. It will keep getting suppressed and will be driven into extreme survival struggle by the fraudulent and the malicious system.

The period which Mistry mentions in this novel was a period of great civil unrest. The novelist is successful in creating the story around his readers and involving them in the lives of his characters. Mistry’s depiction of the Indian
society at the time of Emergency is such that one gets a feeling that the events are getting unfolded before one's eyes - the smell of the street, the loud, blatant vendors screaming their slogans as the pedestrians walk by take the readers directly to the locale of the novel.

The first part of the novel give the reader brief histories of each of the main characters. The story takes place in an "unnamed city by the sea", somewhere in India, exploring the lives of four very different people of diverse backgrounds. Mistry beautifully uses his descriptive language to make ordinary things extra-ordinary. The first section of the novel reveals the interaction of the characters quite differently from the interaction they eventually have. We find the characters being rigid and formal with each other. Their bonding with each other grows as we move to the next section of the novel. They try to help and protect each other through the trying and testing circumstances they face.

Dina Dalal, whose fortunes we follow in the first part of the book, hopes to live as an independent woman after her husband's early death, managing a small tailoring business and maintaining her own apartment. She embodies the woman who is far ahead of the times, she is completely independent and free thinking. Greedy landlords, a mean and ignoble brother who never cared for her because of his hypocritical ideals but only bullied and used her, and sheer misfortune robs her of this modest dream after years of struggle. After the early
demise of her husband, Dina tries to regain her foothold on life but indeed, the road towards independence and self-reliance could not lie through the past.

Maneck represents the young hero who is on a journey of self discovery whereas Ishwar and Omprakash- the two tailors uncle and nephew; represent the hard working lower class who always strive for better. They struggle out of their abysmal conditions as “untouchables” in their village and come to town and work for Dina. They have hopes too. They think that their fortunes will change in the city and they will be able to lead a decent and comfortable life. Ishwar hopes that some day he would be able to find a good match for his nephew Om and dares to hold out for it. The misfortunes that later fall on them are unbelievably dreadful. Dina is forced to make Ishwar and Om spend several nights on the streets as they were illegally living in her apartment. On one of these nights, the two men get rounded up with the other street dwellers and taken to a work camp far outside the city. Trouble emanates when they have no way of telling Dina about their whereabouts. They eventually come back to the city only to leave again for their village when Ishwar decides that Om needs a wife. Their misfortunes do not stop following them even in their village. Mistry leads up to the dramatic events in their village with loads of foreshadowing and short diction and sentences. What finally happens to Ishwar and Om is utterly devastating. Ishwar ends up legless on a trolley and Om is castrated; a victim of sterilization targets on the eve of his wedding. Maneck, finds himself in
extreme despair and ends up throwing himself under a train when he hears what has happened to his friends.

The happiest person in the novel is a beggar called Shankar, nicknamed "Worm", whose legs and fingers were chopped off soon after birth—he has nothing much to lose and scoots about on a little trolley, helping people and wise-cracking. Everybody else has hopes, and is therefore vulnerable.

It is clear in the novel that the politics of the nation is responsible for the sufferings of the common man. The characters of the novel have to pay a heavy price for their simplicity and their lack of understanding of the national politics during the time of Emergency. The novel is a harsh condemnation of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her associates, and of the disparaging viciousness of Emergency. Mistry takes his readers to a roller coaster of emotions throughout the novel leading them from happiness to depression in the blink of an eye. He makes it clear that the world can be a cruel place. He shows his anger and disgust for the Indian government by being remorseless in bringing destruction down on his characters. The giant figure of Mrs. Gandhi, the huge slogans of her regime, the irony of her "Beautification" programs (meaning cleaning people off the city streets and having them forcibly sterilized or killed), the descriptions of labor camps and poisonous, stinking factories, the sheer misery of millions made to labor to produce a certain image for the powerful: this is
really the subject of Mistry’s book. He is certainly not happy with the government’s style of functioning during the Emergency. The oppression of the lower class shows his exasperation.

Mutilation, both physical and emotional is such a strong theme of the novel that it’s hard not to equate it with the geographical mutilation of the original, arbitrary act of partition. The novel is also about the power of human perseverance and the ability of the downtrodden to always look forward to the next day with optimism. The characters in this novel face tremendous ordeals in their lives and yet they manage to maintain a small amount of control over their lives. Rohinton Mistry writes in such a manner that one can see the vulnerability of the characters as well as their mental strength at the same time. They find solace in small little things and show their faith in a system that is continually failing them. Mistry, like Amitav Ghosh appears to be against the divide in society on the basis of caste and religion. There has to be a balance in the society:

“‘You see, we cannot draw lines and compartments. Sometimes you have to use your failures as stepping stones to success. You have to maintain a fine balance between hope and despair. He paused, considering what he had just said. ‘Yes’, he repeated, ‘In the end it’s all a question of balance’” (Mistry, 1996: 214)
The struggles of the characters to cling to life hold our attention all through the novel. Mistry, undoubtedly succeeds in depicting a moving tragedy with his strong impulse toward political and social commentary. The novel explores the resilience of human spirit and the searing heartbreak of futile imaginings.

His novels *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* can be read for their treatment of the layers of socio-political irregularities and caste aberrations that generate a society of anarchy.

**Arundhati Roy** entered the Indian literary scene with her award winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). The novel set in the southern Indian state of Kerala, during the late 1960s when Communism rattled the age-old caste system, is an arresting novel for its exuberance of style. The recipient of the Booker prize, Roy in this novel presents before her readers the story of a broken family. It is supposedly the story of young twins Rahel and Estha and the rest of their family but the book feels like a million stories whirling out indefinitely. The plot of the novel, focus around a destined, forbidden relationship between Ammu, a divorcee and Velutha, the low cast untouchable carpenter. The narrative is presented from the perspective of Ammu’s twins Rahel and Estha. Their story stretches both backwards and forwards, not only into the subdued past in a pattern of ‘analepsis’ (flashback) but also towards its horrendous conclusion, which is anticipated, repeatedly in a process of ‘prolepsis’ (a flash
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forward in which future events are anticipated in the narrative ‘present’). Julie Mullaney quotes Roy’s comments on the effect of these narrative devices,

‘the structure of the book ambushes the story – by that I mean the novel ends more or less in the middle of the story and it ends with Ammu and Velutha making love and it ends on the word tomorrow.’ (Mullaney, 2002: 56)

We find the characters of the novel suffering from some sort of despondency. With her innovative linguistic style and impressive narration, Arundhati Roy unfolds the secrets of her characters unhappiness and miseries.

Rahel and Estha, the two central characters of the novel are fraternal twins who share a strong emotional bonding. The kind of bonding we see between them is hardly to be found between siblings. They think of themselves to be the same with one identity. Rahel laughs at Estha’s funny dream in the midnight. She experiences his sensations. They are seen as a single person with double, dually sexed bodies:

‘The twins, not rude, not polite, said nothing. They walked home together. He and She, We and Us.’ (Roy, 1997: 237)

Rahel and Estha’s childhood home hums with unknown antagonisms and pains that only family members can give one another. There are other members
in the family too, besides Rahel and Estha: the grandmother of the children, Mammachi, who is blind; Ammu, the twins mother and a divorcee who fled from her husband because of his addiction to alcohol and other impossible and unreasonable demands, Baby Kochamma, Rahel and Estha’s grandaunt and Chacko, the twins uncle who is divorced from her English wife and separated from her daughter since her infancy; Velutha, the twins beloved Untouchable. 

There are reasons for the miseries of the members of the families. Mammachi had to suffer years of maltreatment at the hands of her highly respected husband. Kochamma, nurses deep-rooted bitterness for a life time of unreciprocated love. It is a kind of bitterness that plays out reticently against everyone in the family. The readers come to know about her past which is bitter. In her youth, she fell in love with an Irish-Roman-Catholic priest and converted to his faith later to see him converting to Hinduism.

The family’s tragedy revolves around the visit of Chacko’s ex-wife, widowed by her second husband, and his daughter Sophie Mol. It is during the course of their visit that Estha experiences terrible things, things which should certainly not cross the threshold of a child’s mind. Ammu’ intimacy with Velutha, the man whom the children love by the day, the death of Sophie Mol, the fate of the beloved untouchable, Velutha are the proceedings in the novel which forever alters the course of all the members of the family. Roy doesn’t seem to divulge her story in a traditional narrative order. Her story jumps through time, making
its way through Rahel’s memories and attempts at understanding the hand fate deal with her family.

The characters of the novel do not appear to have any verve or positive emotion apart from their careers. They seem to be contented and taking pride to the fact that they belong to the higher strata of the society. We see an ongoing conflict between the good and the bad, English and Indian, Touchable and Untouchable surfacing in the novel at various levels. The novel throws light on the class conflict in the state.

Social decorum is paramount and those who refuse to accept it are ruined by it. Velutha, the Untouchable and the god of small things is swallowed by madness and is ruined physically by the people who enforce law. Ammu pays a price for loving the untouchable, Velutha. She is forced to split her children, Rahel and Estha. She dies alone. Rahel and Estha form an unusual conclusion to the story, a dysfunctional product, formulated by the events they have lived through their lives, which is of course very disturbing.

*The God of Small Things* is out of the ordinary, written in a language that is new and revitalized by the influence of Indian languages and culture. Roy’s clarity of vision is extraordinary, her voice unique, her story brilliantly constructed and masterfully told.
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CHAPTER-V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present chapter focuses on summarizing the analysis of some of the major novels of the post-colonial period. It will reflect on the study carried out to show the narrative and linguistic competence of the Indian English novelists.

5.1. Summary

In this study, an effort has been made to exhibit the nuances of Indian English fiction in the post-colonial fiction, especially the fiction of the 80s and 90s. It was difficult to ignore the credentials of some of the important pre-independence novelists like Raja Rao, MulkRaj Anand and R.K.Narayan. Their contribution to Indian English literature is of immense value. A slight and slender evaluation of some of their important works was carried out to depict the beginning of the nativisation process in India. English language was redefined during the eighties true, but the process had started long back. Raja Rao, G.V.Desani, Anand and Narayan dared to give English an Indian sensibility. G.V.Desani’s All About H.Hatter was not very well received by the critics and reading public across the world at the time of its publication because of its style and linguistic creativity. There were people who ridiculed Desani and his novel. It was some years later...
that Desani was hailed as a genius for his linguistic competence. Salman Rushdie acknowledged his influence upon his writing.

The taste for a new variety of English developed with the publication of Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*. It was a novel which brought a revolutionary change in the field of Indian English fiction. It paved the way for the new novelists to tell their tale in their own distinct voice. Rushdie’s effort in decolonising the English language is of great importance. He not only changed the general perception of English being the language of the coloniser but also made the world accept Indian English as one of the important and distinct variety. We can now say that post-independence Indian English fiction has deep roots in the soil of India.

The study tried to analyse the nativisation of English in Indian English fiction by discussing the works of the major novelists of the pre-independence and the post-independence era. It also concentrated on the importance of English as a global language and its advent in India.

**Chapter One** was an introduction with the aim of understanding English and its importance all over the globe. The power of English and the tale of English travel to India were also discussed. The chapter also reflected on the history of Indian English literature and fiction in particular. The three phases in the introduction of bilingualism in English in India and Macaulay’s minute was also discussed. It was observed that the kind of writing we had in the early period was social and
The writing later shifted its focus on history, society, political domain, economic status, tradition of Indian sub-continent and other issues in a language and style that was captivating and engaging. The major novelists of the pre-independence period, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan wrote many great novels in English, depicting the conventional and informal Indian life styles and traditions. With the passage of time, Indian English novel broke away from the colonial literary overshadowing and evolved a subaltern consciousness. The post-colonial phase of Indian English fiction, especially the period between the 1980s and 1990s gained prominence and fame all over the world. This was because of the fact that the novels had an uncanny dissimilar shades, varied dialects and traditional flavour. The novelists became successful in reaching a notable status.

The chapter also talked about Indian English and its features. It was noticed that Indian English is basically the variety of English which is spoken all over the Indian nation. One of the outstanding features of Indian English is that, it has been influenced by the Indian languages in terms of style and diction. Literal translations of local idioms can be easily seen in the works of many Indian English novelists. The process of nativisation, the rise of Indian English novels, the acceptance of Indian English as one of the distinct varieties of English in the world were some of the other issues discussed in the chapter.
Chapter Two discusses the process of nativisation in India. It reflected on the important issues related to nativisation. It was noted that because of nativisation, Indian English novelists created their own language and affirmed their own distinct identity in the world. The accumulation of new words and meanings to suit the social and cultural requirements was something important for the novelists of the new generation. They knew that they are using English in a new environment, different from its origin, and that they would have to adjust and change it to suit the Indian environment. The growth of English in India in all possible genres and especially fiction acknowledges the fact that it has changed and adjusted to suit its Indian environment.

The debate among linguists whether to safeguard Standard English, or to accept the various varieties of English as legitimate forms were discussed. Prominent linguists Halliday’s and Kachru’s observations on the use of English in culture specific situations were also analysed. It was noted that Indian English displays a variety of form and function. It is in fact, the result of the linguistic variation and culture differences across the country. The linguistic variations, in the novels of post-colonial Indian English novelists, are products of the interaction between the language and the society in which it is used, the different social requirements it serves, the new cultural and ideological load it carries, and the features of the contact languages it assimilates. Nativization occurs across all levels of social discourse. The study of the structure and organisation of the postcolonial English
language in India revealed the extent of concessions and liberties taken in the process of nativizing the language.

The Indianness, in Indian English fiction, which is the depiction of India in its totality, the feeling of the Indian sensibility in the novelist’s thought and expression, the way of writing in a distinct language was discussed in the chapter. The novelists of the pre-independence period along with the novelists of the post-colonial period were discussed for their distinct literary style and also for their linguistic exploration. The major pre-independence novelists discussed in the chapter were Raja Rao, MulkRaj Anand, R.K.Narayan and G.V.Desani. It was observed that they were the pioneers of the new beginning. Moving to the new generation of novelists, the chapter focussed on the works of the major post-colonial novelists like, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Upamanyu Chatterjee, and Arundhati Roy. Their thematic and linguistic explorations were the main points discussed in the chapter.

Chapter three explores the linguistic innovations in Indian English fiction of the colonial and post-colonial periods. It was noted that because of the long use of English in India by the educated class for different and varied purposes a new variety of English emerged which was different in form and content. It was not a substandard variety. It was used by the Indian writers with adequate mastery and ease. People all over the world recognized it as a distinct, respectable variety. It was explored that the Indianness in Indian English fiction is not merely to catch
the eye of the world but to be accepted as one of the finest linguistic and cultural innovations of the modern times. Prominent novelists of the post-colonial phase like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Tharoor, etc wrote in a new way about the realities of life, about the socio-cultural issues, about history, about everything which could have been of any interest to them. It was observed in the chapter that there were some challenges in the beginning but those were creatively handled by the Indian English novelists. The challenges were also done away with because of Indian fiction writer’s ability to use the English language to their own intendment for the imaginative and cogent expression of the different shades of their emotions and ideas, for the depiction of the Indian culture and the expression of Indian sensibility. This was found to be apparent from the discrete imagery, diction and even syntactic patterns in their novels, and also in the collocation variations, semantic shifts and lexical extensions which characterize the composition and growth of Indian English. The chapter observed that Indian English was the product of an evolutionary, creative process, influenced by Indian languages. One of the important characteristic features of Indian English has been experimentation and innovation and using the language in typically Indian context. Desani’s linguistic innovations in his novel *All About H.Hatter* was discussed. The chapter also highlighted the use of linguistic devices such as hybridization, calquing, borrowing, code-mixing, code-switching, literal translations of Hindi-Urdu words.
in English, collocations, compound words etc., by the Indian English novelists in some of their major novels. Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, Seth’s *A Suitable Boy*, Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*, The *Glass Palace* and The *Circle of Reason* Mistry’s *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance*, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* were some of the novels discussed.

**Chapter four** discussed the narrative techniques in the post-colonial Indian English fiction. It started with the major novelists of the colonial period. Raja Rao, MulkRaj Anand, R.K.Narayan were discussed as the outstanding novelists of that phase. They showed to the world that they could master the language and develop their own literary style. The novels which they have written during the pre independence period reflect the social, economic and political condition of that time.

The eighties brought a revolution in the field of Indian English fiction. The publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* was seen as retaliation towards English as a colonial language. It was a novel which drew a lot of attention from all over the world for its content and form. Rushdie had made a serious attempt to nativize English language in this novel. He was followed by novelists like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Upamanyu Chatterjee and many others who had found new voices for their novels. *Midnight’s Children* was greeted all over the world because of its exuberance of language and style, its combination of hilarious comedy and mocking political
satire. Rushdie’s exalted diction, grand word usage and felicitous word phrases leave a strong impact on the readers. We see the use of bold literary innovations and disarrangement, such as unconventional words in the novel.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* emanates from memories, intricate relationships. He describes human situations all around the globe. His novel make it clear that it is only the liberal approach based on reason and love which can save the world from disastrous consequences. We also find in the novel, Amitav Ghosh being interested in recuperating histories squeezed out of the state’s homogenizing myth of the nation. *The Glass Palace*, another major novel of Amitav Ghosh, like many other great works of art is an artistic exfoliation of a vision with intense intricacies born of a deep intuitive and cognitive meditation over human existence in a world which admits of no simple and conventional explanation.

Vikram Seth’s voluminous novel, *A Suitable Boy* (1993), a much admired epic of Indian life, is set between 1950 and 1952. It brings before the readers a panoramic view of the Indian society in the years immediately after independence. It was a transitional period after independence. Seth in this novel writes about the social, religious and familial customs of India. He explores in this novel some of the most important political and social issues of the time.

Upamanyu Chatterjee established himself as a major Indian English novelist with his novel, *English August*. He too, like other prominent novelists of his time
believes in the true and candid depiction of life. The kind of novels he has written shows his cognizance with the Indian culture. In his novels, we find that he stresses on understanding human nature. The trouble is that no human being tries to understand one another and that leads to the breakdown of human relations. This appears to be an important theme of Upamanyu Chatterjee’s novels.

Rohinton Mistry with his novels like *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* showed to the literary world that he is a novelist who believes in depicting life as it really is. Both the novels exhibit his complete understanding of Indian social life. The portrayal of the Indian middle class is the high point in Mistry’s narratives. His bitterness, his anguish towards the government’s hostile attitude towards the poor is evident in his novels. His novels can be read for its realism.

Arundhati Roy entered the Indian literary scene with her award winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). The novel set in the southern Indian state of Kerala is an arresting novel for its exuberance of style. The recipient of the Booker prize, Roy in this novel presents before her readers the story of a broken family. The novel gives a realistic portrayal of the caste system which is still prevalent in India.

5.2 Conclusion

The idea of exploring the linguistic innovations and analysing the narrative techniques of the major novels of the post colonial period was the impetus behind
Summary and Conclusion

Chapter-V

this study. The study aimed to look into the nativisation process in Indian English fiction of the post colonial phase. It was important to have a brief idea about the advent of English in India and its importance in the world today. The study helped in exploring the various aspects of the English language. It was also known that English being a flexible language can become a distinct variety when used in a specific culture. English used in environments different from its origin, would adjust and change to suit its new environment. The growth of English in India in all possible genres acknowledges the fact that it has changed and adjusted to suit its Indian environment.

The novels discussed and analysed in this study helped in exploring the narrative techniques and linguistic innovations of the novelists of the post colonial period. It was found that the novels of the pre independence era or the early years after independence were humanistic and traditional. The 80s brought a revolution in the narrative techniques with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*. The richness and diversity of Indian English fiction can be seen in Rushdie and his successors like Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Rohinton Mistry, Upamanyu Chatterjee and many others. Each of these novelists set their own linguistic and literary standards.

The study makes it clear that the novelists of the post-colonial period, especially of the 80s and 90s wrote for people belonging to diverse religious and cultural background. The novelists tried their hands at subjects which could appeal to the
whole of India rather to the whole of the world. Their themes emerged from those social and political spheres which were more easily discernible in post-independence Indian society than in that of pre-independence India. They had a wide range which covered various features of Indian society like economy, politics, religion and culture.
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