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Indian Postmodern English Novels: A Diachronic Survey

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ABSTRACT

The Indian literary scenario, after 1980, is typically postmodern in all walks of life as it has been with the rest of the world. There are a number of rationales that have gone into the making of it. And its outcome has also been multi-directional. In India, more than post world war circumstances, postcolonial pressures have played a crucial and unique role. It is a fact that a genre called Indian Writing in English is unlimitedly and enormously flourished and continues to do so only during this period i.e. after 1980 to 2010. Under this background, this paper documents Postmodern Indian English Novel highlighting its past, and other aspects like Translated (regional vernacular) Novels into English, and the contemporary books on criticism.

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1. Introduction

This study aims at consolidating the Indian English Literature after 1980. There are a number of books produced by literary stalwarts like Srinivasa Iyengar, C. D. Narasimmaiya, M. K. Naik etc., explaining the beginning and the progress up to 1980. But till date, tentative compilation is lacking and this paper will be handy for a briefing over the contemporary literary pedalling of around three and a half decades. Apart from the deficit of proper published source of works consulted than Wikipedia, every now and then, periodically this kind of history is mandatory.

Postmodernism is the term used to denote the depiction of life after world war-II in Art, Literature and Culture and the kind of changes that manifested due to this in all walks of life across the world. Postcolonial features also come under this account. The depiction finds place in fine arts, architecture, literature, philosophy, ethics, culture, custom etc. The study of these features and its consequent outcome in man's creations, foregrounding fragmentation, and a sense of alienation is postmodernism. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) explains the features of postmodernism in literature as:

Post modernity is said to be a culture of fragmentary sensations, eclectic nostalgia, disposable simulacra, and promiscuous superficiality, in which the traditionally valued qualities of depth, coherence, meaning, originality, and authenticity are evacuated or dissolved amid the random swirl of empty signals.... Postmodernism may be seen as a continuation of modernism's alienated mood and disorienting techniques and at the same time as an abandonment of its determined quest for artistic coherence in a fragmented world: in very crude terms, where a modernist artist or writer would try to

wrest a meaning from the world through myth, symbol, or formal complexity, the post modernist greets the absurd or meaningless confusion of contemporary existence with a certain numbed or flippant indifference, favouring self-consciously 'depthless' works of fabulation, pastiche, bricolage, or aleatory disconnections described above...(P: 174-175)

In India, post 1980 is described as the postmodern period. After 1980s, India realized itself as a multi-cultural, Multi-ethnic, Multi-lingual, Post-colonial, and Postmodern nation. Its past evolves out of the King's Regime, failure of one kingdom lead to the success of another. The fall of the Mughal Empire paved way for the establishment of East India Company. The British Colonisers entered India for trading, but gradually established colonial rule in India. India was one of the British colonized countries nearly for two centuries. During the time of colonial regime, Lord Macaulay introduced English Education in India in 1835. Coincidentally, it was during the same time that the formal education system in England was also established.

Literary history is tightly intertwined with the social history of India. Previously too, India had education system called 'Gurukula'. India had rich cultural and economical heritage. Sanskrit was the medium of education; 'the Ramayana' and 'the Mahabharatha' were the ancient epics. The major drawback during the ancient period was the four divisions of caste system which divided the people of India. To add fuel to the fire, Mughal and British people found inroads in India. At this juncture, India had various languages. They included Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, English etc. The introduction of English as the ruler's language as the medium of official and administrative



communication gained supremacy. Ram Mohan Roy heralded the advent of English Language and Rajaji recommended it.

As Gandhiji remarked, language is to say what you want to say, use whatever the language that comes in handy and accomplish the task (Iyengar, 1994). In the early phase of Indian Writing in English, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Madhusudhan Dutt repented for having made a wrong beginning with English Language as they found the ambience was not to be favourable. But later on, particularly the second generation, after Independence, started using English to expose their creativity to the world not only to their local reading audiences. Thus, 'Indian Writing in English', evolved gradually as a subdivision of English Literature as well as Indian Literature.

As K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1994) opined: it (Indian Writing in English) should feel like Indian literature to an Indian reader and should read like English for an English reader. In the year 1913, Tagore proved even a century ago that an Indian, whose mother tongue is any one of the Indian Languages, can write and excel in English by receiving Nobel Prize for Literature. Indian Writing in English primarily deals with the emotions and experiences of an Indian, expressed through the medium of English. Undeniably, it is the Standard written English that is used unlike the various non-standard registers that are used in England. Initially, when Indian writers started writing in English, from 1864 up to 1930, it was the period of imitation. They imitated the English authors like Defoe, Fielding etc. Particularly it is the Victorians who influenced Indian writers. From 1930 to 1960, it was the period of Indian freedom struggle. During this time, Gandhian waves filled the writings. East-West encounter was the predominating theme of the times.

Gradually, Indian writers outgrew imitation and found their own ethos and emotions expressed in their artifacts. 1960 to 1980 was the time of transition from Indian Modernism to Postmodernism. In the year 1981, Indian Diasporic writer Salman Rushdie's "*Midnight's Children*" announced the birth of Postmodernism with its unique magical-realism.

2. Themes of Earlier Indian Novels in English

Though an imported form, it deals with the story of an Indian, or Indian child life, or a native Christian's life. Even prior to this, Bible was translated by the Christian missionaries. It was an important event in the annals of history of Indian writing in English. Freedom struggle, East-west encounter, allusion to Indian history, allusion to Indian mythology, abolition of 'sati' system, highlighting lingual, ethnic, religious, caste clashes along with the deep-rooted corruption, and eroding ethical system are some areas that novels portray. The novels covered the success story of Indian men and women, both in India as well as abroad, and their utter failures too.

It is the multi ethnic and multi cultural backdrop that provided something for every reader. Indian novelists could broadly be divided into patriots, non-patriots and re-patriots. Indian Diaspora cannot be strictly expected to be patriotic. So their staunch criticism on India like *India: a Million Mutinies Now*, and *India: an Area of Darkness* of V. S. Naipaul were banned in India. Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* also had a similar fate. And there are a few who have lived overseas for a while, before they got back to India.

An Indian writer has no alternative but to manipulate English to his requirement. He communicates to the universe crossing national boundaries. Language is a boon for



an Indian to make his expression self-sufficient. Novel is a long narrative in prose with plot, sub-plot, characterization, theme etc. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) is the first Indian novel in English. It is noticeable that when Modernism was the trend in the world Literature, India produced its first novel in English. *Anandamath* was the second novel. It had "Vande Mataram" the Indian patriotic song. Then came Krishna Punt's *Bay of Bengal*, *Kandan*, *Filler*, Toru Dutt's *Bianca*, Jogendra Singh's *Nur Jahan* and Madhusudhan Dutt's *Kamarupa and Kamalata*. Toru Dutt was the major literary figure of the times. Till 1930, it was an imitation of British Literature and also had historical romances.

Then came the major trio: Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Mulk Raj Anand was a social realist highlighting the inexpressible burden and sufferings of the lower strata people. His novels include: *Untouchable* (1935), and *Coolie* (1936). Backha and Munoo are the exact examples of working class children. He depicted the contemporary reality acutely. As the writers of this period belong to a particular high-class Indian society, they empathised the untouchables of India. *The Bubble* (1984), *Little plays of Mahatma Gandhi* (1991), *Nine Moods of Bharata: Novel of a Pilgrimage* are his later novels.

R.K. Narayan created a world called 'Malgudi' like Thomas Hardy's Wessex. Hailing from middle-class, all his characters and their living revolve around bourgeois life though the portrayed life was a caricature. His novels are: *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1948), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The*

Man-Eater of Malgudi (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), *The Painter of Signs* (1977), *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983), *Talkative Man* (1986), *The World of Nagaraj* (1990), and *Grandmother's Tale* (1992).

Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) tells the story of the village kanthapur. His *Serpent and the Rope* (1960) won the coveted Sahitya Akademy Award. *Cat and Shakespeare* is also his notable work. He exposed Gandhianism and Advaidik concept in the novels. Society was the main concern for these writers. They wrote to enlighten their society. Bhabani Bhattacharya wrote *So Many Hungers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952), *He who Rides a Tiger* (1952), *A Goddess Named Mohini* (1960), *Shadows from Ladakh* (1966). At this time, Manohar Malgonkar also depicted social reality in his *Distant Drum* (1960), *The Princess* (1963), *Bandicot Run* (1982), and *The Devil's Mind* (1972).

Ruskin Bond (1934 -) is an Indian writer of British descent. In 1992, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award, India's National Academy Award for Literature, for his short story collection, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 for contributions to children's literature. He now lives with his adopted family in Landour, near Mussoorie. His first novel is *The Room on the Roof* (1956), the semi-autobiographical story of the orphaned Anglo-Indian boy, Rusty. It won the 1957 John Llewellyn Rhys prize, awarded to a British Commonwealth writer under 30. He wrote *Vagrants in the Valley*, as a sequel to *The Room on the Roof*. His novel, *The Flight of Pigeons* (2003), has been adapted into the film *Junoon*. *The Room on the Roof* has been adapted into a BBC-produced TV series. In 2007, the Bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj made a film based on his popular novel for children, *The Blue*



Umbrella. The movie won the National Award for Best Children's film. Some of his notable novels include: *The Room on the Roof*, *Vagrants in the Valley*, *Scenes from a Writer's Life*, *A Flight of Pigeons* (2003), *Landour Days— A writers Journal*, *The Sensualist by Ruskin Bond*, *The Road To The Bazaar*, *The Panther's Moon*, *Once Upon A Monsoon Time*, *The India I love*, *The Kashmiri Storyteller*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *The Tiger In The Tunnel*, *Delhi is Not Far*, *Animal Stories*, *Funny side up*, *Ruskin Bond's Children Omnibus*, *Angry River*, *Roads To Mussoorie*, and *All Roads Lead To Ganga*.

Ruth Prawar Jabwala and Kamala Markandaya joined the bandwagon sooner. Ruth Prawar Jabwala mocked the Hindu marriage system, and the poor conditions of Indian women. She wrote *To Whom She Will* (1955), *The Nature of Nassan* (1956), *The House Holders* (1960), *Esmond in India* (1958), *A New Dominion* (1973), *Heat and Dust* (1975), and *In Search of Love and Beauty* (1983). On the other hand, Nayantara Sahgal depicted political themes, sexual freedom, erosion of moral values and disillusionment in India's past and present. Her novels include: *A Time to be Happy* (1958), *Plans for Departure* (1958), *This Time of Morning* (1968), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich Like Us* (1985), *Plans for Departure* (1985), *Mistaken Identity* (1988), *Lesser Breeds* (2003). Kamala Markandaya wrote *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *Some Inner Fury* (1955), *Possession* (1963), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffey Dams* (1969), *The Nowhere Man* (1972), *Two Virgins* (1973), *Golden Honey Comb* (1977), *Pleasure City* (1980), and *Rich Like Us* (1985). These novels depicted the social reality. Khushwant Singh was another

important novelist who wrote *Train to Pakistan* (1956), *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), and *Delhi* (1992). Balchandra Rajan also wrote *The Dark Dancer* (1959), *Too Long in the West* (1961). Sudhindranath Bose explored Indian ethos in *And Gazelles Leaping* (1949), *Cradle of the Clouds* (1951), *The Vermillion Boat* (1953), and *The Flame of the Forest* (1955). And G.V. Desani wrote *All About Hatter* (1948).

With the arrival of Anita Desai and Arun Joshi (1939-1993) on the scene, the depiction switched from society to individuals. The Indian novel in English found a new dimension. Anita Desai is an expatriate living abroad. Arun Joshi's novels include: *The Foreigner*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice*, *The Last Labyrinth*, and *The City and the River*. Chaman Nahal, another notable novelist, wrote *My True Faces* (1973), *Into Another Dawn* (1977), *Azadi* (1975), which won Sahitya Akademy Award for the year 1977, *The English Queens* (1979), *Crown and the Loincloth* (1981), *The City and the River* (1990), *The Triumph of the Tricolour* (1993), *Epilogue* (1993), and *The Salt of Life* (1993).

In the Postmodern novels of 1980s, there are different modes of narrative techniques. They project social realism, mythical realism, historical romance, magical realism, bildungsroman, etc. Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Amitav Gosh, Taslima Nasrin, VasANJI, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Suketu Mehta, Vandana Singh, Bharti Kirchner, Amit Chaudhuri, Rohinton Mistry, Gita Mehta, Dina Mehta, Indira Ganesan, Uma Vasudeva, Namita Gokhale, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Chandra, Manil Suri, Richard Gasta, Siddharth Dhanwan, Shanghvi, Rana Das Gupta are Indian Diasporic writers who live overseas. They have neither the roots nor the



destination. They have two worlds one of the past and another of the present. They celebrate their “in-betweenness” that is postmodernity. The Postmodern men and women disregard their sense of belongingness and resort to celebrate and glorify even their despair at the cost of material comforts.

3. Award Winning Indian Novels of Post 1980

The following postmodern novels won Sahitya Academy Award. In the year 1982, Arun Joshi won for *The Last Labyrinth*. In 1986, Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*, in 1988 *The Golden Gate* by Vikram Seth, in 1989 Amitav Gosh's *The Shadow Lines*, in 1990 Sashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, in 1996 Sunetra Gupta's *Memories of Rain*, in 2000 Kiran Nagarkar's *Cuckold*, in 2004 *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* by Upamanyu Chatterjee, in 2006 *The Sari Shop* by Rupa Bajwa, in 2007 *Disorderly Women* by Malathi Rao, and in 2010 *The Book of Rachel* by Esther David received the awards. It is notable that the Sahitya Academy Award is conferred to the best novels written in English by Residents as well as Non-Residents of India [The NRIs who received the award are: In 1991 *The Trotter Nama* by Allan Sealy (NRI), in 2002 *A New World* by Amit Chaudhuri (NRI)]. The Hindu Literary Prize Award was started in the year 2011. It was won by Manu Joseph for *Serious Men*, Rahul Bhattacharya for *The Sly Company of People Who Care* and Jerry Pinto for *Em and The Big Hoom* in the year 2011, 2012, and 2013 respectively. Vodafone Crossword Award plays multi-dimensional task: it is awarded for best translation (from regional to English), best fiction, best children's book etc. Kalpana Swaminathan (born 1956) is a writer from Mumbai. She also writes with Ishrat Syed as Kalpish Ratna. Swaminathan and Syed are both

surgeons. Swaminathan won the 2009 Vodafone Crossword Book Award (Fiction) for *Venus Crossing: Twelve Stories of Transit*.

Arundhati Roy (1961 -) is a writer cum political activist. Her *God of Small Things* (1997) won Man Booker Prize for the year 1998. But it carries unrestrained description of sex. It is the most acknowledged novel of the time. The extreme oppression of an Indian woman finds extreme exposure (erotic) in this novel. This extremity is another aspect of postmodern novels. Centre fails to hold the extremities. She lives in New Delhi. She was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award (2006), and a national award by India's Academy of Letters for her collection of essays on contemporary issues. Githa Hariharan's (1954 -) first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 1993.

Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* won the Booker Prize in the year 2008, and it depicts the complications involved in the upward mobility of an Indian underprivileged and the role of corruption. Apart from Man Booker Prize and Commonwealth Writer's Prize, and Sahitya Akademi Award to gauge the excellence of the contemporary writings that hail from India, there is the Hindu Best Fiction Award and Vodafone Crossword Book Award too. These prizes enable academicians as well as critics to pick out the best and work on it.

4. Other Postmodern Indian Novelists

Sashi Deshpande (1938 -) is another award winning postmodern Indian novelist. She has authored nine novels till date. They are *The Dark Holds No Terror* (1980), which explains the futility of a women's marriage and the realization that she need not be a dependant on her husband. *That Long Silence* (1980) won Sahitya Akademi and



brought Padma Shri Award in 2009 to the author. It narrates the frustrations of marital life of Jaya, and her utter failure to be close to her husband, it depicts the plight of the educated Indian women of the current era. *If I Die Today* (1982), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983) are crime novels. *Roots and Shadows* was published in 1983. She presents women who negotiate the trials of relationship in *Small Remedies* (2000), *A Matter of Time* (2001), and *The Binding Wine* (2002). In *Moving On* (2004) she presents the illicit desire of widowhood. *Country of Deceit* (2008) deals with extramarital love.

Shobhaa De (1948 -), is a freelance writer, columnist and novelist. Her novels are *Second Thoughts* (1996), *Starry Nights* (1989), and *Socialite Evenings* (1989).

Irwin Allan Sealy (1951-) is a writer born in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India. He has worked in Canada, the USA, New Zealand and Australia. His first novel *The Trotter Nama: A Chronicle* (1988) tells the story of seven generations of an Anglo-Indian family. He now lives in Dehra Dun. He has won Commonwealth Writers' Prize in 1989, Sahitya Akademi Award in 1991, Crossword Book Award in 1998. *Hero: A Fable* (1991), *From Yukon to Yukatan: a Western Journey* (1994), *The Everest Hotel: A Calendar* (1998), *The Brainfever Bird* (2003), *Red: An Alphabet* (2006) are his other works.

Vikram Seth (1952 -) is a novelist and poet. He has written several novels and poems. He has received several awards including Padma Shri, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award. Seth identifies himself as bisexual and is a polyglot. He knows Welsh, German, French, Mandarin, English, his mother tongue Hindi and Urdu. His novels are *The Golden Gate* (1986), *A*

Suitable Boy (1993), *An Equal Music* (1999) and *A Suitable Girl* (2013). In 1994 he won Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book) for *A Suitable Boy*. In 1994, he received WH Smith Literary Award for *A Suitable Boy*. In 1999, he got Crossword Book Award for *An Equal Music*. In 2001, he won EMMA (BT Ethnic and Multicultural Media Award) for Best Book/Novel *An Equal Music*.

Lakshmi Raj Sharma (1954 -) is an author, novelist, and academician. He teaches English literature and literary theory. He is currently a Professor at the Department of English and Modern European Languages at the University of Allahabad, Allahabad. His novel- *The Tailor's Needle* (2009) is a postmodern historiographic Metafiction.

Shashi Tharoor (1956-) is the Indian Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, and a columnist. He is a writer, diplomat and politician. His first novel is *The Great Indian Novel* (1989). It is satirical, historical and mythical and is the portrayal of contemporary Indian political situation. *Mahabharatha* is used to yarn the history of Indian Independence and its aftermath. It is full of reference to history, geography and current Scenes in India. His second novel *Show Business* (1992) is a postmodern novel. It satirizes Bollywood cinema. It is based on Amitabh Bachan, the biggest superstar of Bollywood. He meets with a serious accident while shooting and is taken to the hospital as he fights for life in the Intensive Care Unit. His third novel *Riot* (2001) is based on love, religious fanaticism and the impossibility of knowing the truth. It centers on the mysterious murder of Priscilla Hart, a young American Lady, who came to India to participate in a health programme. It deals



with communal violence after the 1992 Babri Masjid incident.

Mukul Kesavan (1957 -) is an Indian historian, novelist and essayist. His novels include- *Looking Through Glass* (1994), and *The Narrator* (1995). Susan Visvanathan (1957 -) is a sociologist, social anthropologist and a fiction writer. Her novels are *The Visiting Moon* (2002), *Phosphorus and Stone* (2007), *Seine at Noon* (2007).

David Davidar (1958 -) is a novelist and co-publisher of Aleph Book Company. He is the author of three published novels, *The House of Blue Mangoes* (2002), *The Solitude of Emperors* (2007) and *Ithaca* (2011). *The House of Blue Mangoes* was based on Davidar's own family, and covered fifty years of South Indian history. It was published in 16 countries and translated into many languages. Davidar's second novel, *The Solitude of Emperors*, which was based on his experiences as a journalist, and the outrage he felt at the communal riots that took place in India in the 1990s. His third novel, *Ithaca*, was an account of the world of international publishing.

Upamanyu Chatterjee (1959-) is an Indian civil servant in Maharashtra. He is the Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Defence. *English August: An Indian Story* (1988) is his first novel. The book chronicles one year in the life of a trainee civil servant, Agastya Sen. It is a comedy of errors. It tells the story of self-discovery in postmodern India. His second novel *The Last Burden* (1993) tells the story of an Indian middle-class family at the end of 20th century. It is the portrayal of transition from the joint family to the nuclear family system. Third novel *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000) is a sequel to *English August*. It won Sahitya Akademi Award in 2004. *Weight Loss* (2006) is a dark comedy.

And his fifth novel *Way to Go* (2010) is a sequel to *The Last Burden*. He focuses on a new class of westernized Urban Indians who are dominated by women, literature, and soft drug.

Tarun J Tejpal (1963 -) is a journalist, publisher and a novelist. He is the editor-in-chief and publisher of *Tehelka* magazine, that was first launched in March 2000. His debut novel *The Alchemy of Desire* (2006), won *Le Prix Mille Pages*, followed by *Story of my Assassins* (2010), and *The Valley of Masks* (2011).

Ashok Banker (1964 -) is a successful journalist, columnist and novelist. He writes on cross cultural themes and is noted for his realistic portrayal of Indian urban issues. He has written science fiction, and retold mythology. His works are *Amazing Adventure at Chotta Sheher* (1992), *The Iron Bra* (1993), *Murder and Champagne* (1993), *Ten Dead Admen* (1993), *Vertigo* (1993), *Byculla Boy* (1994), *The Missing Parents Mystery* (1994), *The Pocket Essential Bollywood* (2001), and *Gods of War* (2009).

Jerry Pinto (1966 -) is an author of poetry, prose and children's fiction in English, as well as a journalist. His first novel is *Em and The Big Hoom* (2012) which won The Hindu Literary Prize in the same year. Raj Kamal Jha (1966 -) is a daily newspaper editor and an internationally acclaimed novelist whose works inhabit the surreal, often dark and violent, space between fiction and fact to explore contemporary India. He lives in Gurgaon. Jha's first novel, *The Blue Bedspread* (1999) won the 2000 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (Eurasia region) and was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year. His second novel was *If You Are Afraid of Heights*. His third novel *Fireproof*



was debuted in German at the “Frankfurt Book Fair” in October 2006.

Ashwin Sanghi (1969 -) is an entrepreneur and novelist of thriller, mystery or conspiracy fiction genres. He is the author of three bestselling novels, *The Rozabal Line*, *Chanakya's Chant* and *The Krishna Key*. All these three books are based on historical, theological and mythological themes. He is the author of the new era of retelling Indian history or mythology in a contemporary context. *Chanakya's Chant* won the Vodafone-Crossword Popular Choice Award for 2010.

Rana Dasgupta (1971 -) has authored two novels. They are *Tokyo Cancelled* (2005), and *Solo* (2009). Amish Tripathi (1974 -), is a novelist and his first novel is *The Immortals of Meluha* (2010). His second book is *The Secret of the Nagas* (2011). And the third is *The Oath of the Vayuputras* (2013). The trilogy is a re-imagination of the Hindu deity Shiva's life and adventures.

Sarnath Banerjee (1972 -) is an Indian graphic novelist, artist, and film maker and a co-founder of the comics publishing house, Phantomville. His novels are *Corridor* (2004), *The Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers* (2007), *The Harappa Files* (2011). Graphic novels are another version of postmodern narration.

Aravind Adiga (1974 -) is a journalist cum writer. He currently lives in Mumbai, India. He carries dual citizenship of India and Australia. Aravind Adiga's debut novel, *The White Tiger*, won the 2008 Booker Prize. He is the fourth Indian-born author to win the prize, after Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai, (V. S. Naipaul, another winner of Indian origin). His second novel is *Between the Assassinations* (2008). The title refers to the period between the assassinations of Indira Gandhi in 1984 and

her son, Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991. Indira Gandhi was the serving Prime Minister of India when she was assassinated; Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister in 1984, and left office following his party's defeat in the 1989 general election. The stories take place in the fictitious town of Kittur in Southwest India. It was originally modeled on Adiga's hometown of Mangalore, but was substantially changed to make room for more diverse plots and characters. The stories revolve around different classes, castes and religions in India. In each story, a new set of characters is introduced, but places and names appear again in other stories. His *Last Man in Tower*, the book features 12 interlinked short stories. It tells the story of a struggle for a slice of shining Mumbai real estate. The protagonist of the novel is a retired school teacher named Yogesh. Murthy is affectionately known as Masterji. A prominent builder offers to buy out the entire apartment block. All of the occupants agree, except for Masterji. This creates problem for the builder and the other residents.

Chetan Bhagat (1974 -), is a, columnist, speaker, and a novelist. He has five novels to his credit. They are *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night @ the Call Center* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008), *2 States* (2009), *Revolution 2020* (2011), He is a commercially successful novelist rather than a literary one. The film adaptations of his novels are *Hello* adapted from *One Night @ the Call Center*, *3 Idiots* and *Nanban* from *Five Point Someone*, *Kai Po Che* from *The 3 Mistakes of My Life*, and *2 States* from *2 States: The Story of my Marriage*.

Manu Joseph (1974 -) is a journalist and writer. He is the current editor of *OPEN* magazine, and a columnist for *The International New York Times*. His debut



novel *Serious Men* (2010) won the The Hindu Literary Prize and the PEN/Open Book Award. His second novel is *The Illicit Happiness of Other People* (2012). He currently lives in Delhi.

Anurag Anand (1978 -) is a Banker, Marketing Professional, and novelist of general and historical fiction. His first novel *Tic Toc – A tale of love, hate and terror* (2009) presents the common man's hatred for terrorism. Second novel *The Quest for Nothing* (2010) is a contemporary story of a young and ambitious couple and their conflict between their personal and career accomplishments. The third novel *Reality Bites* (2011) is a youthful love story set in a high school hostel. His fourth novel *The Legend of Amrapali* (2012) is a historical fiction on the courtesan Amrapali who lived in the kingdom of Vaishali around 500 BC. The fifth novel *Of Tattoos and Taboos!* (2009) is a contemporary story that traces the transition of an innocent, small-town girl into a modern, independent, city resident.

Rahul Bhattacharya (1979 -) is a cricket journalist and novelist. His novel *The Sly Company of People Who Care* (2011) won the Hindu Literary Prize (2011), the Ondaatje Prize (2012) and a Kirkus fiction Book of the Year. He currently resides in New Delhi. Samit Basu (1979 -) is the author of five novels and comics too. *The Simoqin Prophecies* (2004), *The Manticore's Secret* (2005) and *The Unwaba Revelations* (2007) are the three parts of *The Gameworld Trilogy*, *Terror on the Titanic* (2010) is a Young Adult novel, and *Turbulence* (2012), a superhero novel set in India, Pakistan and England. He currently lives and works in Delhi, India.

Anuradha Roy is a journalist, editor and award-winning novelist. Her novels are *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008), and *The*

Folded Earth (2011). Jamyang Norbu has written non-canonical Sherlock Holmes pastiche novel *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999) (published in the U.S. as *Sherlock Holmes: The Missing Years*). The novel is an account of Holmes' adventures in India and Tibet where, posing as Norwegian explorer Sigerson, he meets the Dalai Lama and Huree Chunder Mookerjee, a character from Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim*.

Anil Menon is another leading writer of speculative fiction of 2000s, as well as an eminent computer scientist. After working for several years as a computer scientist, he started writing fiction. In 2009, Zubaan Books, India's leading feminist press, published his debut young adult novel *The Beast With Nine Billion Feet*. It was shortlisted for the 2010 Vodafone Crossword Book Award.

Manju Kapur, a contemporary female novelist. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, won the 1999 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. She teaches English at Delhi University under the name Manjul Kapur Dalmia. Her novels are *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2003), *Home* (2006), *The Immigrant* (2008), and *Custody* (2011).

Vikas Swarup is a novelist and diplomat who has served in Turkey, the United States, Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Japan and now in Delhi. He is best known for his novels *Q & A*, *Six Suspects* and *The Accidental Apprentice*. His debut novel, *Q & A*, tells the story of how a penniless waiter in Mumbai becomes the biggest quiz show winner in history. Critically acclaimed in India and abroad, this international bestseller has been translated into 43 different languages. It won South Africa's Exclusive Books Boeke Prize 2006, as well as the Prix Grand Public at the 2007 Paris Book Fair. It was voted winner of the



Best Travel Read (Fiction) at the Heathrow Travel Product Award 2009. Film4 of the UK had optioned the movie rights and the movie titled *Slum dog Millionaire*, directed by Danny Boyle, which was first released in the US to great critical acclaim. It received 10 Oscar nominations of which it won 8, including the Best Picture and Best Director. Vikas Swarup's second novel *Six Suspects* (2008) is being translated into more than thirty languages. Vikas Swarup's most recent novel is *The Accidental Apprentice* (2013).

Preeti Shenoy is among the best-selling authors in India. Her second book *Life is What you Make it* was among the top selling books of 2011 in India and her third book *Tea for Two and a Piece of Cake* which was released in February 2012 made it to the top five best-selling Indian fiction of 2012.

Mohan Deep is a contemporary novelist. His novels are: *It's My Life* (1997), *Nehru & Tantrik Woman* (2002), a historical fiction, and *The Five Foolish Virgins* (2013). Ramendra Kumar is a well known Indian writer for children with fifteen books to his credit. His novels are: *Terror in Fun City* (2008) and *Now or Never* (2010)

Ira Trivedi is a novelist, yoga teacher, entrepreneur, and speaker. Her works are *What Would You Do To Save the World?* (2006), *The Great Indian Love Story* (2009) and *There is No Love on Wall Street* (2011).

Kiran Nagarkar is notable among Indian novelists. His novels are: *Seven Sixes are Forty Three* (1974) (tr. of *Saat Sakkam Trechalis*), *Ravan and Eddie* (1994), *Cuckold* (1997), *God's Little Soldier* (2006), and *The Extras* (2012).

Anita Nair is another contemporary writer. Her novels are *The Better Man* (2000), *Ladies Coupé* (2001), *Mistress* (2005), *Lessons In Forgetting* (2010), and *Cut Like Wound* (2012). Tulsi Badrinath is another contemporary novelist and classical

dancer. Her novels are *Meeting, Man of a Thousand Chances*. Kavery Nambisan is a novelist and surgeon. Her career in medicine has been a strong influence on her fiction. *The Truth (almost) About Bharat* (1991), *The Scent of Pepper* (1996), *Mango-coloured fish* (1998), *On Wings of Butterflies* (2002), *The Hills of Angheri* (2005), and *The Story that Must Not Be Told* (2010) are her novels. Nandhini Krishnan and Priya, K are also the emerging postmodern women novelists.

Other Novels of 1980s

Nina Sibal's *Yatra* (1987)

Raj Gill's – *JO Bole* (1983)

Shiv K. Kumar's - *Nude before God* (1983) [His first novel is *The Bone's Prayer* (1979)]

Other Novels of 1990s

Boman Desai's *The Memory of Elephants* (1998)

Esther David's – *The Walled City* (1997)

Farukh Dhondy's – *The Memory of Elephants* (1998)

Gautam Bhatia's – *Short Story of Everything* (1998)

Jai Nimbkar's - *Come Rain* (1993)

Kiran Nagarkar's - *Ravan and Eddie* (1995), ... *Cuckold* (1997)

Manoj Das' – *A Tiger at Twilight*, 1991 [Cyclones (1987)]

Makarand Paranjape's - *An Angel in Pyjamas* (1996)

Pankaj Mishra's – *The Romantics* (1999)

P.V.Narasimma Rao's *The Insider* (1998)

Radhika Jha's– *Smell* (1999)

Raj Kamal Jha's – *The Blue Bedspread* (1999)

R.K. Laxman's – *The Messenger* (1993)

RukunAdvani's - *Beethoven Among the Cows* (1994)

R. W. Desai's – *Frailty, Thy Name is Woman* (1993)

Shauna Singh Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers* (1999)



Shiv K. Kumar's - *A River with Three Banks* (1998)

Sudhir Kakar's *The Ascetic of Desire* (1998)

Tabish Khair's - *Bombay Duck* (1990)

Other Novels of 2000s

Altaf Tyrewala's *No God in Sight* (2005)

Akil Sharma's *An obedient Father* (2000)

Amita Kanekar's *A Spoke in the Wheel* (2005)

Anita Rao Badami's *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call?* (2006)

Amitava Kumar's *Husband of a Fanatic* (2004), ... *Home Products* (2007)

Farukh Dhondy's - *Asylum, U.S.A.* (2000)

Hari Kunzuru's *Transmission* (2004)

Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis* (2012)

Manil Suri's *The Death of Vishnu* (2001)

ManojDas' - *The Escapist* (2001)

Milan Kundera's *Ignorance* (2003)

Navtej Sarna's *We Were Not Lovers Like That* (2003)

Sudhir Kakar's - *Ecstasy* (2001)

Sangarika Ghose's - *The Gin drinkers* (2000)

Shiv K. Kumar's - *Infatuation* (2001)

Tabish Khair's *The Bus stopped* (2004)

Tishani Doshi's *The Pleasure Seekers* by Tishani Doshi (2010).

5. Contemporary Indian Language Fiction Translation into English

Translation is a very vital secondary creative activity as far as any language is concerned. *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were translated into English. As the order of the day is reversed that the English Language is universal and it is the first Language in Indian CBSC schools, Translations into English has gained momentum. The following novels won Vodafone Crossword Book Award for best translations. In 1999, *On the Banks of Mayyazhi*, a Malayalam novel by Mukundan and translated into English by Gita Krishnan Kutty. It is translated into French too. In 2000, *Karukku*, a Tamil novel was translated into English by

Lakshmi Holmström. In 2004, *Astride the Wheel (Yantrarudha)* written by Chandrasekar Rath was translated by Jatindra Kumar Nayak which won the prize. In 2005, *The Heart has its Reasons* by Krishna Sobti won the prize. In 2006, *Ambai* by C. S. Lakshmi was translated into English as *In a Forest, A Deer* by Lakshmi Holmström, for the same year *Kesavan's Lamentations* by Mukundan was also nominated. In 2007, *T'ta Professor* by Manohar Shyam Joshi translated by Ira Pande won the prize. In 2009, *Othappu: The Scent of the other Side* by Sarah Joseph and translated by Valson Tampu won. In 2010, *Litanies of Dutch Battery* by N.S. Madhavan translated by Rajesh Rajamohan won the prize. In 2011, *The Araya Women* by Narayan which was translated by Catherine Thankamma and Anita Agnihotri Translated by Arunava Sinha were the nominations. Charu Nivedita's *Zero Degree* English version was added as a text book in Modern Asian Classics. He is a contemporary Tamil writer, His original name is Arivazhagan. Mayyazhippuzhayude Theerangalil (*On the Banks of the River Mayyazhi*) is a Malayalam novel by M. Mukundan. Widely regarded as the author's masterpiece, the novel vividly describes the political and social background of Mahe (Mayyazhi), the former French colony, in the past. The novel was translated into English and French, both the versions have been winning accolades.

Lakshmi Holmström is an Indian-born British writer, literary critic and translator of Tamil fiction into English. Her most prominent works have been her translations of short stories and novels of the contemporary writers of Tamil Literature like Mauni, Pudhumaipithan, Ashoka Mitran, Sundara Ramasami, C. S. Lakshmi, Baama and Imayam. Her translations are: *Ambai's A Purple Sea* (1992), *Silappadikaram*:



Manimekalai (1996), *Ashoka Mitran's My father's friend*, which won Sahitya Akademi Award (2002), *Bama's Karukku* (2000), *Imayam's Beasts of Burden* (2001), *Pudumaipithan: Fictions* (2003), *Sundara Ramasami's That's It But* (2003), *Na Muthuswamy's Neermai (Waterness)* (2004), *Bama's Sangati* (2005), *Madhavayya's Clarinda*, a Historical Novel, won Sahitya Akademi Award (2005), *In A Forest, A Deer: Stories By Ambai* (2006), *Salma's The Hour Past Midnight*, (2009). She has bagged the following laurels (1) Vodafone - Crossword prize (in the Indian language fiction translation category) for *Karukku* – 2000, and for *In a Forest, A Deer* – 2006, (2) Iyal Virudhu (Lifetime Achievement Award) awarded by the Canada based Tamil Literary Garden – 2007, (3) Fellow, The Royal Literary Fund at University of East Anglia, 2003–06.

Jatindra Kumar Nayak is a translator, literary critic, columnist, editor and educationalist from Orissa. He has translated several works of Oriya literature into English, including *Yantrarudha*, an Oriya language novel by Chandrasekhar Rath, as *Astride the Wheel* that received the Hutch Crossword Book Award 2004 for Indian Language Fiction Translation. Nayak is a co-translator of Fakir Mohan Senapati's Oriya novel *Chha Mana Atha Guntha*. The English translation of the book was first published in the USA under the title *Six Acres and a Third*.

6. Award winning Indian Critical Essays

Criticism is another aspect of any literary activity. It standardizes the artifact, and it provides better interpretation for better understanding. A particular way of interpretation based on typical norms evolves into a type of criticism. Post Colonial literary criticism is already established in India. Apart from that, other contemporary literary

universal theories are also being attempted. In 1993 *After Amnesia* written by G. N. Devy, in 2003 *The Perishable Empire* by Meenakshi Mukherjee and in 2009 *Mahabharata: An Inquiry into the Human Condition* by Chaturvedi Badrinath have won Sahitya Akademi Awards.

7. Conclusion

To sum up, the second generation (post-independence) Indians who are educated in English Language have mastered the art of fiction writing. Those who have migrated abroad have also studied the Creative Writing Courses offered in the foreign universities and have cultivated their passion for authentic story-telling in the Universal Language. The other contemporary writers are predominantly from the academic and journalistic fields. On the whole, writing novels is one of the most profitable fields of making money in the current scenario. Postmodern Indian novels in English explore Indian life in India and abroad, handle magic realism and historical romance very well and the most successful themes turn out to be social reality and Indian Mythology. They carry the universal theme, social issues and concerns and the individual's reaction to it that are much relevant to a contemporary reader, who is perplexed with new issues every day. These novels are readable, enjoyable, and appreciable. There is a wide range of postmodern Indian novels that remain to be explored and analyzed.

To end this survey, the Postmodern Indian Writing in English is multi-faceted. Particularly the canvas comprises Indian novels written in English, regional novels translated into English, Film Adaptations, and Criticism that evolves from the interpretation of the novels.

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Indian English Novels in Bharathi Women's College, Chennai, which is affiliated to the University of Madras. She has published a number of research papers in Journals. Her areas of Research include Translation (Vernacular to English), Diasporic Writers, and Postmodern Indian English Novels on which she has worked considerably.

Dr. T. Jayasudha, Research Officer, Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education, TESOL Master Trainer, is a prolific academician and a freelance writer too. She has published articles, books etc. Her areas of interest include English Language Teaching, Indian Writing in English and Linguistics. She has been teaching English for the last two decades. She has organized workshops, and participated conferences of different areas of her interest.

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