

most celebrated critiques of imperialism, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Another aspect of postcolonialism indicates a version of nativism, a return to native languages, giving up English language and culture. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the diasporic African settled in America, is the chief architect of this praxis through novels like *Matigari* (1987) and *Wizard of Crow* (2006). *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, the Marxist psychiatrist who fought for Algerian independence, were the inspiration and model for this liberation through letters.

## INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Indo-Anglian literature, one of the most important variants of postcolonial literatures, refers to the literary works of writers in India who use English language as the medium of expression, though they have one of the Indian tongues as their native language. It also takes into account the works of the Indian diaspora, such as V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh.

India is a land with an ancient cultural as well as literary heritage. After the oral literature phase, the classical era of Indian literature includes the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the two great epics, the Vedas and Upanisads and the plays of Kalidasa and Bhasa. Throughout its history, India has produced wonderful literary works in various languages like *Ramacharitmanas* in Awadhi, *Kamba Ramayanam* in Tamil and *Gitagovinda* in Sanskrit. However, the west considered India as the Orient – an exotic Other - that needed to be colonized and thus reformed.

The history of writing in English began in India with the native people's interaction with the colonial people. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1793), a travel narrative. Poets who were active in the early phase of Indian writing were Henry Derozio and Toru Dutt. The first Indian novel in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), was authored by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. However, it was only in the twentieth century that writings in English became prominent and popular in India. At this stage, it was a literature of imitation where genres popular in English were used to tell Indian experiences.

Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan form the triumvirate of the Indo- Anglian novel. Through *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope*, Rao narrated a literature of protest covered in the wisdom of

Indian philosophy and politics. He was also one of the first to address the language question: “

...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. We are all instinctively bilingual, 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 some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it.

The satirical fictions of R. K. Narayan, set in the fictional Malgudi, dealt with the socio-political problems of India of the pre-independent and post-independent phase. Mulk Raj Anand was primarily a social critic who used the traditional social realism of a Dickensian style to critique social evils like the exploitation of the working class and the dalits in novels like Untouchable and Coolie. *Mulk Raj*

In an attempt to create nationalism that was quintessential in the context of the freedom movement, Nehru argued that India was a historic nation with a right to sovereignty, in A Discovery of India. Rabindra Nath Tagore, the first Nobel laureate from India and Sarojini Naidu presented the nation as a mother figure with a historical legacy, in their poems. The transition from political liberation to a spiritual one is seen in the numerous writings of Aurobindo Ghose, as well.

After independence, India became one of the most vibrant countries in the production of literatures in English. There arose two distinctive attitudes towards English in postcolonial India. Balachandra Nemade, for instance, argued for nativism which was a total rejection of English in the academic as well as cultural affairs as the presence of English in post-independent societies suggests colonized mental landscapes. On the other hand, Salman Rushdie came up with the idea of chutnification of English, the transformation of English by adding an additional connotation, making the texts tangier, more flavoursome and exciting. The sacred master language is replaced and ‘chutnified’ by profane Indian elements. While the former focused on the rejection of English, the latter endorses subversion.

The decisive break in Indo-Anglian fiction happened with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) - (Booker Prize 1981, Booker of Bookers 1992, and Best of the Bookers 2008). This historical novel which uses magical realist elements employs a narrative that spans

across the subcontinent over nearly sixty years. The British Indian novelist later went on to deal with controversial novels like *The Satanic Verses*, *Shame*, *Fury* and *The Enchantress of Florence* etc. The employment of history in the context of partition, and colonial wars also explored by Amitav Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines*, *The Glass Palace* and the *IBIS* trilogy. Vikram Seth, however, uses a narrative in the Jane Austen tradition, mixed with poetic elements in *The Golden Gate* (1986) and *A Suitable Boy* (1994). *Such a Long Journey* (1991) and *A Fine Balance* (1995) by Rohinton Mistry are social realist novels in the Dickens tradition that portray India during the Bangladesh War and the Emergency. Shashi Tharoor's satire *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), about the Indian politics of the twentieth century follows the storytelling (though in a satirical) mode of the *Mahabharata* drawing his ideas by going back and forth in time. David Davidar, Aravind Adiga, Manu Joseph, Jeet Thayil and Neel Mukherjee form the new generation of Indian English fiction in innovative narrative frames.

After 1947, Indian English had some influential women novelists articulating feminine concerns against the backdrop of the mainstream patriarchal societies. (Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai and Nayantara Sehgal are some powerful writers addressing these problems in different ways.) Kamala Markandaya's *Two Virgins* (1973) is a good example of a female bildungsroman. Anita Desai, in her psychological novels like *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain*, presents the image of a suffering woman preoccupied with her inner world, her sulking frustration and the storm within: the existential predicament of a woman in a male dominated society. The image of the New Woman and her struggle for an identity of her own form the base of Nayantara Sehgal's novel, *Rich Like Us* (1986). Shashi Deshpande investigates the ideological issues implied in the structure of conservative Hindu marriages in *Roots and Shadows* and *That Long Silence*. Ruth Pravar Jhabvala's first novel *To Whom She Will* (1955) and her Booker Prize winning *Heat and Dust* (1975) explore female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal society, narrating the transition from girlhood to adulthood.

(The second generation of women writers – Arundhati Roy, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Anita Nair, Kiran Desai, Meena Alexander, Rani Dharker and Jhumpa Lahiri – focus more on the postcolonial experience and the clash between tradition and modernity. The diasporic identity crisis also emerges as a strong impulse in some novels, whereas provincial Indian experience forms the narrative context of some other fictions.

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Indo-Anglian poetry too had some distinctive names. While Kamala Das focused on the feminine experience, nostalgia and oppressive structures of patriarchy in a confessional mode, Nissim Ezekiel employed satire as a genre in describing the man in the metros. Nostalgia is the main theme in A. K. Ramanujan's poetry. Some other notable poets are Dilip Chitre, Eunice de Souza, Kersy Katrak, Arun Kolatkar, P. Lal, Jayanta Mahapatra, Dom Moraes, Smita Agarwal, Makarand Paranjape, Arundhati Subramaniam, Ranjit Hoskote, Jerry Pinto, Meena Kandasamy, Dr Tapan Kumar Pradhan, Rukmini Bhaya Nair, Anju Makhija, and Gieve Patel. Modern expatriate Indian poets writing in English include Agha Shahid Ali, Sujata Bhatt, Richard Crasta, Yuyutsu Sharma, Tabish Khair and Vikram Seth.

India has had a rich tradition in drama since the classical period. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Is this Called Civilization* (1871) is one of the earliest Indian plays in English, in the realist tradition. Tagore and Aurobindo were the two prominent Indian playwrights of the pre-independence phase. During the freedom movement and after, regional theatre movements like IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) and KPAC (Kerala People's Arts Club) were employed to interrogate the politics of the state. Girish Karnad, the postmodern playwright from Karnataka, wove myth, fantasy and folktales in famous plays like *Yayati* (1961), *Tuglaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1972) and *Nagamandala* (1988). Vijay Tendulkar, Safdar Hashmi, Satish Alekar, Badal Sircar were the other important Indian dramatists who critically analyzed the state by bringing in the 'other' and exposing the lives of the individuals getting mercilessly crushed down by the terror of the state. The leading female voice in Indian theatre was Mahasweta Devi, the practitioner of 'the theatre of protest'. In plays like *Bayen* and *Mother of 1084*, she has chronicled and problematized the dalit/subaltern experience.