

DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH WRITINGS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO R.K. NARAYAN

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Abstract:

In the field of fiction, the Indian writers in English have made the most significant contribution. Among all literary genres, the novel is the most popular form today. It is undoubtedly the most popular vehicle for the transmission of Indian ideas to the wider English-speaking world. In India, to a greater extent, are indebted to the European and English novel because as an art form, it has been imported to India from the West. In other words, it is a gift of Western literature. In this article, development of Indian novel in English writings with special reference to R.K. Narayan has been highlighted.

Keywords: English, Writings, Indian, R.K. Narayan

INTRODUCTION:

In the nineteenth century with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) and Lal Behari Day's *Govind Samanta* (1874), Indian novel in English has grown by leaps and bounds in respect of thematic variety and linguistic maturity. Both of them have used an acquired language to comment on the Indian social context. But compared to the recent output most of the early novels in English were almost imitative and faulty. It is assumed that Indian novel in English has its roots in the nineteenth century realistic tradition of English novel. [1] The impact of English education, national awakening and the influence of European models are the chief factors responsible for the rise and development of Indian novel in English. But with the passage of time, the Indian novel in English has become thoroughly Indian in terms of the themes, techniques and the human values. In this regard, Meenakshi Mukherjee observes; "The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to emerge from shared factors like the Puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content."

INDIAN NOVEL IN ENGLISH WRITINGS AND IT'S DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO R.K. NARAYAN:

In order to understand rise and development of Indian English Novel, it is necessary to take into consideration its emergence, developing stages and continuing traditions. The Indian novel in English has been divided into three successive periods such as: a) novel from 1875 to 1920, b) novel from 1920 to 1947, and c) novel from 1947 onwards, by the Indian scholars like K.R.S. Iyengar (1962), M.K. Naik (1982) and Meenakshi Mukherjee (1985), considering the socio-political changes in India before and after the Independence. On the other hand, the classification of the novel by P. K. Rajan (1995: 9) refers to a) Early Realism: From 1864 to 1935, b) Critical Realism: From 1935 to the 1960's, c) Modernism: From the 1960s to the 1980s, and d) The New Novel: From 1981 onwards. However, such classification has its own limitations as placing an individual writer in a specific period creates several problems. [2] Besides it, an individual writer practices several literary modes and values of representation at the time of writing. Hence, the whole corpus of Indian novel in English may be divided into three broad groups:

- a) The traditional novel of social realism before Independence.
- b) The modern novel of experimentation after Independence.
- c) A new contemporary novel since 1981.

Prior to Independence, India's intellectuals focused on society and the national awakening with realism. Bengal appears to have given rise to the Indian novel in English since famous nineteenth-century pioneers such as upper-class Bengali authors Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Toru Dutt, and Rabindranath Tagore, who addressed social issues within their means, were Bengalis. In the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, "deep involvement in values and experiences which are valid in the Indian context," these writers weren't just copying Western culture. The early novelists sought to replace traditional social ideals with a new social morality. They wanted to change the way things were, so the story turned into an exercise in social realism. [3]

Indian novelists who write in English draw inspiration from both Indian and Western traditions. They faced difficulties in clearly expressing Indian sensibilities in a foreign tongue. The novels have no English tradition, despite being written in regional languages including Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, and Malayalam. Naturally, the English translations of Tolstoy, Balzac, and Dostoevsky's European masterpieces had a significant influence on Indian writers throughout their formative years. The Romantic and early Victorian authors' writings had a significant influence. They were not, however, mindless copycats of Western models. On the other hand, they tried to start their own tradition of writing novels that was similar to the Indian tradition of telling stories. [4]

Rajmohan's Wife, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's lone English-language book, served as the model for first-generation authors who would later document India's rich cultural history and

social upheaval. He was followed by male and female novelists who stressed their private and personal experiences. As a result, the early novels were rudimentary, domestic, and disengaged from current events in politics. Early novelists placed equal focus on morals and societal evils as they represented rural and home life, which was full of superstitions and religious whims. Despite this, their originality was pitifully subpar. Their novels do not touch on the more profound themes of both national and personal life. While their male contemporaries wrote about social themes, the female authors focused on naive romances and marital dysfunction. The Bronte sisters, George Eliot, and Jane Austen were the three greatest female novelists. Their reality, however, was distinct from the socio-ethical one depicted by British novelists. Early Indian novelists emulated Western novelists' story structure, characterization, and narrative style. Despite this, following the First World War, the Indian novel in English has unquestionably advanced greatly. The First World War stoked Indians' nationalist sentiments and advanced the Mahatma Gandhi-led liberation struggle, which spread over the entire country. It had an impact on the entire country and the English-language Indian novel in the 1930s. Authors like Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand made an attempt to examine modern Indian society without twisting the truth. Even though they were reformists and not teachers, they were still trying to spread propaganda. [5,6]

In 1930, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand made their literary debuts. It marked the beginning of the end of the Indian book in English. They were referred to by William Walsh (1990: 62) as "the actual novelists," or the form's founding fathers. They started the tradition of Indian English fiction in the 1930s with the publication of *Untouchable* (1935), *Swami and Friends* (1935), and *Kanthapura* (1938), respectively. Around the 1930s, there was a need for Indian authors who wrote in English and could understand the social scene and the human mind, as well as show the real Indian life through unique themes, issues, and approaches.

A mere 150 years have passed since the beginning of Indian English literature. For Sake: Dean Mahomet's *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, also known as *Mahomet's Travel Narrative*, was the first book written by an Indian in English and was released in 1793 in England. It was initially influenced by Western books as an art form. Early Indian writers utilised pure English, devoid of any words from their own language, to describe an experience that was fundamentally Indian. The first Indian novel written in English was *Rajmohan's Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya (1838–1894), which was published in 1864. The *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and The Rope*, two works of Indian literature with strong narrative elements, were written by the Indian philosopher Raja Rao (1908–2006). In addition to writing in Bengali and English, Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) also translated his own works into English. The first Indian novelist to receive a literary honour in the US was Dhan Gopal Mukerji. *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, written by non-fiction author Nirad C. Chaudhuri, is most widely recognised for its descriptions of the author's influences and life experiences. In the 1950s, P. Lal, a poet, translator, publisher, and essayist, established a publishing house called *Writers Workshop* for authors who wrote in Indian English. Ram Nath Kak, a veterinarian from Kashmir

who lived from 1917 to 1933, authored his autobiography, *Autumn Leaves*, which has gained some notoriety as one of the most vivid depictions of life in Kashmir throughout the 20th century. [7]

The body of writing produced by Indian authors who use English as their primary or secondary language and one of the many Indian languages as their first language is referred to as Indian English literature. It is linked to the writings of people of Indian heritage who live abroad, like V.S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahri, Agha Shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry, and Salman Rushdie. It is often called "Indo-Anglo literature" (Indo-Anglian is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with the term Anglo-Indian). This work falls within the broader category of postcolonial literature, which includes works from once colonised nations like India.

The translation of many fictional works from Indian languages into English, particularly from Bengali into English, is where Indo-Anglian fiction gets its start. It was greatly and drastically influenced by Tagore. His short stories and novels, *Gora*, *The Wreck*, *The Home*, and *The World*, were initially written in Bengali. English translations of these were made. His works have a dated format. His writings infused Indo-Anglo fiction with reality and a sense of social purpose. He offered a character portrayal with emotional and psychological depth.

The term "Indian English writing" refers to a body of Indian literature produced in English. It could take the literary genre forms of poetry, prose, fiction, or theatre. Despite the fact that English is not our mother tongue and that we are not natural speakers, when English was introduced as a language of instruction in our educational system in the first half of the nineteenth century, Indians were able to study western literature that was available in English. They discovered literature and language to be flexible, and some intellectuals began using them to express their social and religious beliefs. For instance, the writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and others began to stream in, giving rise to a prose literature with significant sociocultural value. As soon as poets began composing poetry in English, like Ramesh Chandra Dutt and Toru Dutt, this genre was heavily inspired by the tone and subject matter of English literature. Sir Edmund Gosse recommended Sarojini Naidu to write about her own culture and nation when she started composing poetry while living in England and showed him her work so that others might learn about India. [8]

There were those who said that since English was not our original language, this writing did "not belong to the soil" when Indians began employing the English language creatively. However, academics like K.R. Srinivasa Iyenger and C.D. Narasimhaiah saw it as having enormous promise. Iyenger's books on *Indo-Anglican Literature* (1943) and *The Indian Contribution to English Literature* (1945) gave legitimacy to Indian writing in English. The first thorough history of this literature was written by him in *Indian Writing in English* (1962). C.D. Narasimhaiah

made it clear in his 1969 book *The Swan and the Eagle* that he thought Indian writing in English was mostly Indian literature.

The most productive time has been since the end of the independence war. Anand introduced the novel stream-of-consciousness technique to India. Raja Rao also improved the autobiographical methods of narrative, plot, and characterization that he used. Both quantity and quality were higher. The scenario was enhanced by the social, rural, detective, historical, and romantic novel types. K.S. Venkatramani, Shankar Ram, S. Nagarajan, Kumar Guru, A.S.P. Ayyar, S.K. Chettur, and G.V. Desani made significant contributions in this area. The credit for giving Indo-Anglian fiction a name and reputation, however, falls to a select group of modern authors, including Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, and Nirad Chaudhuri. They serve as the four wheels of modern Indo-Anglo literature. Khwaja Ahmed, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamla Markandeya, Anita Desai, Mrs. R. Praver Jhabavala, Lumber Mascarenhas, Mrs. Vimla Raina, Khushwant Singh, and other literary giants are among those who have enhanced Indo-Anglian fiction.

The presentation of a personal narrative against the backdrop of contemporary Indian history, the conflict of values between the family and the individual, and awareness and social change are just a few of the straightforward and universal elements that define Indo-Anglian fiction despite its diversity of themes and techniques. A recurring theme in Indo-Anglian fiction is the battle between the West and the East, or between innovation and tradition. The Indo-Anglian writers of fiction wrote with an eye and hope on western audiences, which influenced their subject matter choice. Due to this, sadhus, fakirs, caverns, temples, Vedanta, Gandhi, Rajahs, Nababs, etc. can be found in Indo-Anglo fiction. The western audience is interested in these topics. They fundamentally represent the western conception of India, but they also have Indian characteristics, such as nationalism and patriotism, an appreciation of India's past, and sympathy for the teeming millions of the nation. The Indo-Anglian novel, in the words of Meenakshi Mukherjee, "formed a different look in the twenties, then steadily gained confidence, and entrenched itself in the following two decades." The trend is still going strong; there have been more novels published in the 1960s than ever before. Particularly considering that until the 1920s, there were just a handful of Indo-Anglian novels, this surge in output is difficult to explain. The emergence of Indo-Anglian could be one of the causes. [9]

The novel's maturation in the regional tongue of India coincided with fiction.

The first-person narrative is the most popular form of narration in Indo-Anglian fiction. The narrator of a narrative is usually the main character or hero. Numerous novels, like K. Nagarajan's *The Chronicles of Kedaram* and Nayan Tara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy*, use this strategy. Additionally, there are several novels written in third person narrative that combine both first and third person perspectives, such as Mulk Raj Anand's writings, Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* and *The Guide*, Mahohar Malgaonkar's *A*

Bend in the Ganges, etc. The idea of finding happiness and fulfilment through hardship and sanyas is another recurring topic in Indo-Anglo literature. It may be found in the books Guide by R.K. Narayan, Dark Dancer by B. Rajan, The Serpent and the Rope by Raja Rao, and He Who Rides a Tiger by Bhawani Bhattacharya. Additionally, from 1920 to 1950, politics was a significant theme in Indo-Anglian fiction. The parts of fiction that are most important—comedic tone, sensitivity to atmosphere, exploring psychological aspects, a crisis in the individual soul and how it is resolved, and, most of all, an outsider's view—were pushed to the background.

Gandhi's functions and beliefs greatly affected the political theme that was chosen. The struggle for independence, the Indian National Army, the Indian Army, modern politics, the failure of Princely India, the partition, and independence are some of the issues covered in this essay. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and *The Cow of Barricades*, K.A. Abbas' *Inquilab*, R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, Anand's *Sword and The Sickle*, C.N. Zutshi's *Motherland*, Amir Ali's *Conflict*, Zeenut Futehally's *Zohra*, and Manohar Malgaonker's *Bend in the Ganges* These books are about Gandhi and his methods for attaining freedom, including revolution, Satyagraha, the Quit India Movement, etc. Other books about politics, particularly post-independence politics, include *This Time of Morning* by Nayan Tara Sehgal, *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh, *Bend in the Ganges* by Manohar Malgoonker, *Sunlight on a Broken Column* by Attia Hossain, etc.

The Serpent and the Rope by Raja Rao and *When East and West Meet* by J.M. Ganguly both have the East-West encounter as their main theme (1960). *Princes of Destiny* by S.K. Ghose; *Murugan the Tiller* by K.S. Venkatra Mani; and *Dark Dancer* by B. Rajan. Some recurring characters in Indo-Anglian fiction include the anglicised Indian Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian Prince or Rajah, Sahib or Englishman, Eurasian, Muslim, saint or Swami, and *The Suffering Woman*.

The East India Company noticed a communication gap between the British rulers and the locals soon after establishing their dominion in India, which led them to introduce the English language there. Charles Grant, one of the directors of the East India Company, argued for the adoption of the English language in 1792 in order to address the communication issue, which was a significant barrier in a foreign country. The English language was later adopted in 1835 by a brief decision of the Governor General in Council for the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, after a gap of 43 years. With Lord William Bentick's proclamation that he would teach Indians English literature and science through the use of English, a new age was inaugurated in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a master of the Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic languages, believed that all Renaissance knowledge was primarily compiled in the European languages in the middle of the nineteenth century. Roy had started social reform programmes and, in the process, preferred the English language for spreading the wealth of knowledge and culture available in British publications.

The English language was initially met with distrust by the Indians, but they eventually warmed to it. In India, the English language has been given a unique place. Indian writers needed people who knew English to begin with in order to write in that language. The many elements helped to create a whole that expressed itself in English. The introduction of English education in India was one of the main causes. It supported the development and mastery of English as a language against the suspicion of a segment of society that English education was being introduced to produce a class of clerks and sycophants who would thereafter destroy India's social and cultural fabric. [10]

Intellectuals in India in the nineteenth century started to challenge the traditional prejudices, dogmas, and superstitions that were prevalent. The influence of western education gave the Indian Renaissance new life. Indian society has changed dramatically. An unheard-of awakening occurred in India as a result of the rebirth of Indian classical learning and the introduction and study of European arts and sciences. For the first time in Indian history, a middle class of intellectuals started to break free from the feudal system, sparking a fierce nationalism in which the people of India battled to express their profound feelings and views using whatever tools they had at their disposal. While others believed that English rule had come to stay and used the language of the rulers, writers like Bankimchandra and Saratchandra Chaterjee, caught up in the provincial patriotism, revived the regional language, giving rise to a new genre of Indian writing in English that was initially referred to as Indo-Anglian literature.

The Indian Renaissance was primarily concerned with recreating real life in the West; as a result, Indo-Anglian literature arose from a natural desire to imitate. Thus, it was clear that the writers had been influenced by the west when they began writing. English writers either directly or indirectly influenced their works. The educated Indian class made an effort to copy western methods and literary styles. These advancements were greatly influenced by the English-language Western education that was provided to Indians in the educational institutions established throughout the nation. Western education turned the minds of the Indians inside out, whereas the progressive measures adopted by the missionaries and officials led to an overhaul of outdated education, goals, techniques, resources, and instruments. It eliminated the mental barriers and encouraged within them a new integral perspective. The Indians became aware of the benefits of materialism and social organisation through the dissemination of contemporary scientific and sociological ideas. As a result of the expanding impact of science and sociological theories, Indians started to appreciate the virtues of democracy as a way of life. It was believed that reason, as a tool for analysis and critical thought, was the champion of free and independent thought. The awakened Indian started to speak up in all kinds of Western writing, but especially in the novel.

According to Max Mueller, Buddhist and Vedic literature directly influenced the Indian Renaissance. According to Max Mueller's theories, the Indian Renaissance occurred significantly

earlier than the European, Italian, and English Renaissances, at least two thousand years earlier. As a result, Avadhesh Kumar Singh writes in *Indian Renaissance Literature*:

The fact that Max Mueller discussed learning from India in 1882—nearly five decades later—is important. Leaving aside the issue of learning from it, T.B. Macaulay and his brother-in-law, Charles Traveyan, had rejected Indian wisdom.

Due to the Indians' talent for storytelling, which dates back to the Rig-Veda and the Upanishads, the country had greater promise for the narrative tradition form than the West. Perhaps the most well-known portions of the throne in Sanskrit and other regional languages are the thirty-two stories pertaining to King Vikramaditya and Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*. What matters is how deeply these stories are rooted in modern social realities.

In our day and age, there are also a few historical romances and books with a historical setting. Sardar Jogender Singh's *Nur Jehan, the Romance of an Indian Queen* (1909), a significant addition to Indian-English historical literature, serves as one example. The historical story tries to show how Akbar lived in the countryside, and it ends with Nur Jehan getting married to Jahangir.

Authors of early Indian historical fiction imitated the styles of Walter Scott and other western authors. Although Govinda Samantha, the first Indian novel in English, satiated every requirement of contemporary realistic fiction, the majority of the novels that were published in the three decades that followed revealed a preference for romance, dreams, and poetry, not to mention incredible adventures and escapades. Though they also had literary brilliance, the novels written by women novelists were more poetic and lyrical than realistic. With the release of sketches by authors like Malabari and Nagesh Vishwanath Pai, we may notice the reassertion of realism in Indian writing in English. As a "pilgrim reformer," a pioneer of journalism in India, and with satirical and reformist intent similar to Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith, who were pioneers in eighteenth-century England, Malabari helped to shape the development of English prose fiction in India. In the same vein, Nagesh Vishwanath Pai introduced fresh facets of creativity to the sleepy village of Chakmakpore and foreshadowed Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan. Novels like *The Love of Kusuma*, *Sarala and Hingana*, *The Dive for Death*, and *Padmini* appeared concurrently with these realistic sketch romances, but those books first appeared after 1889.

Although the early novelists' efforts were sincere, they did have a few flaws. These books mostly focus on social issues. In order to bring about social or economic reform, they authored these novels with the express purpose of exposing the oppressive social practises and superstitions or the depressing economic situation of the peasants. Such instructional works could be made more engaging by adding a well-developed, interesting plot or compelling characters. [8,9]

R.K. Narayan was a prolific author who contributed for many years before passing away recently. In the sense that Graham Greene assisted him in locating an English publisher, he was discovered by the author. Narayan and Graham Greene remained close friends right up until the very end. Narayan invented the fictional town of Malgudi, which is reminiscent of Thomas Hardy's Wessex, as the setting for his books. He received criticism for the narrow, distant, and closed universe he produced. However, other people, like Graham Greene, believe that Malgudi can help people grasp India's culture more fully. In the 1980s and 1990s, India became a significant literary power. *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, which won the Booker prize, was a worldwide sensation. He became the first writer from the Indian diaspora to join the exclusive group of international writers as a result of its widespread success, leaving a lasting impression on the world of literature. Amitav Ghose (*Circle of Reason*, *Shadow Lines*), M. Ananthanarayana, Bhavani Bhattacharya, Arun Joshi, Kushwant Singh, O.B. Vijyan, Allan Sealy (*The Trotternama*), Shashi Tharoor (*Show Business*, *The Great Indian Novel*), and others are other well-known contemporary Indian English novelists. Another is V.S. Naipaul. [7, 10]

Arundhati Roy is one of the authors in the Indian English literature genre who has completely taken the globe by storm. Her book, "The God of Small Things," which won the 1997 Booker Prize, instantly became a best-seller around the world. Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus Kanga, Kiran Desai (*Strange Happening in the Guava Orchard*), Sudhir Kakar (*The Ascetic of Desire*), Ardeshir Vakil (*Beach Boy*), and Jhumpa Lahiri (*Interpreter of Maladies*) are also well-known authors who come from India.

Poets like Nissim Ezekiel (*The Unfinished Man*), P. Lal, A.K. Ramanujan (*The Strides, Relations, Second Sight, Selected Poems*), Don Moraes (*A Beginning*), Keki, N. Daruwalla, and Geive Patel came to prominence in mid-20th century Indian literature in English. These writers were greatly influenced by literary movements in the west, such as Symbolism, Surrealism, and Existentialism. By using a lot of Indian words along with English words, these authors tried to create a blend of Indian and Western cultures.

The Anthology of Indian English Literature is a sincere effort to showcase the increasingly uncommon gems of Indian English writing. Indian English has evolved from being a distinct and uncommon, somewhat gradual native flare-up of genius to becoming a new sort of Indian culture and voice in which Indians regularly talk. Since the time before independence, Indian authors—poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists—have made a significant and consequential contribution to world literature. However, in recent years, Indian English writing has experienced enormous growth and success on the international stage. In the current climate, Indian authors of English-language books are dominating the best-seller lists and receiving a tonne of praise from critics. Starting with Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Amitav Ghosh, and Jhumpa Lahiri, and continuing through Mulik Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Sarojini Naidu, and Toru Dutt. There are a lot of names on the list of the five Indian writers, like Chitra Banerjee, Arundhati Roy, and Vikram Chandra.

CONCLUSION:

R.K. Narayan approaches the situation with a certain level of understanding and objectivity while avoiding easy fixes or moral judgments. Nevertheless, we sense that a spark of optimism for a change for the better has been lit. There is a resurgence of trust in the impending emancipation of women through higher education, as well as an awakening of the spirit. In this regard, R.K. Narayan deserves praise for the way he handled the debate between conservatism and reform.

As if India is the best modern example of a wisdom based on compromise, hospitality, and tolerance, he celebrates the survival of timeless principles.

The passages with a newfound fervour and confidence combined with social aspects and spectacular situations in the fictitious world are the most notable results of these transformations.

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