



History of the Indian English novel: A Analytical study

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Abstract

When we think of the early Indian English Novel, we think of the trinity (Mulk Raj Anand 1905), (R.K. Narayan 1906) and (Raja Rao 1908). All three began writing in the nineteenth thirties and three have seen the turn of the century. Their influence or their importance in the world of the Indian English novel cannot be measured. With Anand's *Untouchable*, Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and Rao's *Kanthapura*, the Indian English novel found its place in the gamut of Indian Literatures.

English education was introduced in India in early nineteenth century. All this should lead almost naturally to fiction in English- short as well as long.

Keywords: Century, untouchable, education, establishment, journals, earlier, literature

Introduction

But even to begin the history of the Indian English novel without mentioning other earlier prose writings is to do injustice to earlier writers. The stage for longer fiction was set by sketches and memories and short fiction. The first Indian prose writer of note in English is not so surprisingly Raja Ram Mohan Roy. M.K. Malik regards his essay 'A Defence of Hindu Theism : One of the Major essayists was Behramji Malabari was also a poet but here we are interested in his role as one of the pioneers of Indian journalism.

Early Fiction

'A journal of 48 hours of the year '1945' by K. L. Chunder Dutt was published in 'The Calcutta Literary Gazette' 6th June 1835). This is the late of an unsuccessful revolt against the British. The writing in English perforce meant critiquing the English as well as the local Indian reality.

Shoshee Chander Dutt was a JP and Rai Bahadur. His short novel, 'The Republic of Orissa' : Annals from the pages of the Twentieth Century.

The first Indian English Novel:- As a matter of fact famous Bangali novelist, Bakim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote his novel first) in English. This was Rajmohan's wife, which was serialized as *Wife in the Calcutta Weekly*, the Indian field, in 1864. In a sense, the main agenda of the Indian English novel was set in the first attempt itself. Rajmohan's wife is about the bad effects of a bad marriage on the woman. The suffering of a middle class housewife, Matangini at the hands of her husband, Rajmohan, in rural East Bengal forms the subject of the novel. Bakim's Bangali novels were to influence the course of the novel in India.

Other Early Novels

The second Indian English novel of note is also by a Bangali. Lal Behari day published *Govinda Samanta* or, the history of a Bangali *Raivat* in 1874. The Novel is set in Burdwan district in mid-nineteenth century.

Toru Dutt is better known as a poet. But she may very well be the first woman novelist in Indian English, and perhaps the first Indian novelist in French! Her unfinished English

novel, 'Bianca or the young Spanish maiden', was published in Calcutta in 1878. Another women novelist Shevanti Bai Nikambe, Social reformer and educationist, who wrote *Ratnabai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Wife* (1895).

The male novelist of late nineteenth and early twentieth century, we find that many wrote historical romances. But, Shoshee Chander Dutt, whom we have already referred to, wrote *Shunker: A Tale of Indian Mutiny 1857*, and the young zamindar.

While Romesh Chander Dutt translated his own Bangali novels into English. A Madaviyah wrote quite a few novels in English *Satyananda*, *Thillai Govindan* which was published earlier. He manages to portray the middle class Indian of his times with wonderful felicity and ease.

Towards Independence-Novels and Novelists:- When what Naik calls Gandhian Whirlwind struck India, many things changed including the novel. This is K.S. Venkataramani. He has two novels- *Muragan*. The *Tillar* and *kandan* the patriot : *A Novel of New India in the Making* (1932).

Another Novelist we should name before we talk of the trinity is K.Nagarajan. As we know the trinity of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao began writing in 1930's. Mulk Raj Anand is a prolific writer. His first literary efforts were to chronicle the lives of under-privileged. If *Untouchable* is about a sweeper, *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* are about labourers.

Kanthapura is the only novel written by Raja Rao. It is one of the most important documents in Indian English Literature.

Post Independence Novels and Novelists Till 1980.

The Trinity: The Trinity have continued their long and distinguished career after independence but there have also been a number of other novelists during the period we are looking at.

Anand's next novel was *The Road* (1963) which travels the same territory as *Untouchable*.

R.K. Narayan started off with *Mr. Sampath* (1949), a novel about the world of films. Raja Rao has written his second

book 'Serpent and the Rope', which won him his Sahitya Akademi Award: Shakespeare is a metaphysical comedy. Other Novelists: A major novelist who began writing in 1947 is Bhabani Bhattacharya. His first novel, 'So many Hungers' (1947) is set during the years of Bengal famine. One such novel is G.V. Desai's 'All about H. Hatters' (1948). This is a book that displays great comic. Kushwant Singh's 'Train to Pakistan' (1956) which has been made into a feature film recently, is his first and most famous novel.

Rushdie and After

Other novelist and to read are Upamanyu Chatterjee whose 'English August' explores the empty and ridden life of the upper middle class. Vikram Seth is a wonderful example of poetic whose 'Golden Gate Skills'.

Conclusion

Meenakshi Mukherjee in her influential study of Indian English fiction, 'The Twice Born Fiction', states there were three kinds of fictions from the 1920's till the 1970. They are the historical novel, the socio-political novel, and the novel of identity. After Rushdie, the English novel has gone transnational with many writers living in the west. Indian English novel still do not forsake India.

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