



## Indian Writing In English And The Genre - Novel In Indo-Anglian Literature

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### ABSTRACT

Literature is one of the fine arts that took up "language" as a medium of expression. Indo-Anglian literature contributed to the common group of world writing in English. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*; published in 1793 in England.

If we take a glance at the beginnings of Indo-Anglian literature, Raja Rammohan Roy appears first. The first Indian English poet, Henry Derozio had cherished English verse in India. The period between the two world wars and comprising them both was the Gandhian Age in India.

Writers like K. S. Venkataraman, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, G. V. Desani, Khushwant Singh Manohar Malgonkar, Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Markandya, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghose, Salman Rushdie and many others have enriched Indian literature.

### Keywords : Indian writing, English, Literature

Literature is one of the fine arts that took up "language" as a medium of expression. It is essentially an expression of human feelings, sufferings and joys. Good literature is never out-of-date and knows no bounds of place and time. It is also worldwide, in the sense that it requests to the readers across national or linguistic boundaries. Language or culture may be special but human sentiments remain basically the same in all literatures of the world.

In India, there are various languages and literatures. India is a country where the cultural origin is the same although there are marked differences in regional literatures owing to the genius of respective languages in which they are written. Nowadays Indian literature reached at the peak of the creation with the contribution of regional and national writers. I would like to focus on the root and brief literary history of Indian writing in English and the genre - novel in Indo-Anglian literature up to the time of Mulk Raj Anand. At this time, it is necessary to mention the brief history of Indian writing in English and the contributors of it.

Indo-Anglian literature contributed to the common pool of world writing in English. It is a literature which is mixture of Indian literature and Indian literature written in English.

Indian English literature has a relatively recent history; it is only one and a half centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet*; Mahomet's travel narrative was published in 1793 in England. Early Indian writers used English untouched by Indian words to express an experience which was essentially Indian.

Indian writings in English are the creation of the historical encounter between the two cultures-Indian and the western-for about one hundred and ninety years.

The greatest cultural impact came with the establishment of four universities and with the introduction of western educational method. Hence, the strange body of Indo-Anglian literature was created while its contents were to be Indian; its medium of expression was English.

If we take a diffident glance at the beginnings of Indo-Anglian

literature, the stalwart figure of Raja Rammohan Roy appears first. The renaissance in modern Indian literature starts with Raja Rammohan Roy. He had gained good command over English language by working with British officers and wrote poetry and prose in it. The first Indian English poet, Henry Derozio had cherished English verse in India.

Moreover Indian languages like Bengali, Sanskrit and Tamil, he was soundly versed in classical languages like Greek and Latin too. He also had a fluent understanding of modern European languages like Italian and French and could read and write the last two with perfect elegance and simplicity.

Bengal was epicenter for renaissance because it has given literary scholars who gave popularity to India at globe. His translation into English verse from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Rig Veda, The Upanishads, Buddhist literatures, Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava* and Bharavi's *Kiratarjuniya* - is most creditable contribution. Another gleaming star of Indian literature is Manmohan Ghose.

Up to this time, Indian literature had flourished in its comprehensiveness but it was Rabindranath Tagore who elevated Indian literature at world level and attained for modern India a place on the world literary history that won Noble Prize for literature and offered recognition to India on global scale. He was the versatile personality of Indian literary scholar considered as - the Rishi, the Gurudev and the Maharshi. He was a poet, dramatist, actor, producer, musician, painter, educationist, reformer, philosopher, prophet, novelist, story writer, and a critic of life and literature.

Before he was eighteen, he had written more than 7000 lines of verse. For *Gitanjali* he won the noble prize for literature and became poet of the world. After that his other works and *Gitanjali* were translated by literary scholars into major languages of world. To his credit, there is a long list of poems and plays, both in Bengali and English which had made his place among the world's greatest writers.

In the list of the path makers for Indo-Anglian literature, Sarojini Naidu was the first female contributor who served Indo-Anglian literature for her life time. Her first volume of poetry *The Golden Threshold* was followed by *The Bird of Time* and

*The Broken Wing* made her greatest poetess of the age.

The importance of Gandhi in Indo-Anglian literature is outstanding as he has prepared a new generation of literature which later came to be recognized as Gandhian literature. The period between the two world wars and comprising them both was the Gandhian Age in India.

The period of thirty years of the Gandhian age was brought the revolutionary changes not only in the political scene but in all walks of Indian life also. In the social sphere, the Gandhian movement led to remove untouchability, awareness among women, religious reform movements, awareness among the depressed classes etc. which has greatly influenced Indian English literature. His autobiography- *Experiments With Truth* (1925) which describes the unfolding process is one of the imperishable classics of Indian literature.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) is the most remarkable name in the history of India as well as in the history of Indo-Anglian literature. His first collection of letters published as-*Letters from a Father to His Daughter* (1930) consists of thirty one letters written by him to his daughter Indira Gandhi. His most remarkable work-*Glimpses of World History* (1934) is written between October 1930 and August 1933 comprising the 196 letters written by Nehru from prison.

I would like to explore the rise of novel in India and the founder fathers of novel where it ripen in the hands of "Three Big" - Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. It is very much clear that novel form of literature was new for India but it has been easily accepted by Indian writers in English as well as by writers of regional languages. Indian novels are ruled by their writer's more general and social interest while a younger generation is more politically and socially aware of contemporary issues.

India got Independence through bloodshed and migration. Khushwant Singh wrote *A Train to Pakistan*. His next novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* presents an ironic picture of a joint Sikh family, illustrative of different Indian reactions to the freedom movement of the forties.

In the first two decades of twentieth century, the Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. At that time writers like K. S. Venkataraman, Mulk Raj Anand, and R. K. Narayan have started their writing career between the late 1920s and the early 1930s while Bhabhani Bhattacharya, G. V. Desani and Khushwant Singh's first works date from the 1940s. Even during this period around twenty novels originally written in English by Indian male and female novelists contributed for the new sort of literature in India. Today, the Indian novelists writing in English are large in number. Besides Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao the three foremost Indian writers of fiction in English, there are also K. Nagrajan, Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Shashi Deshpande, Kamla Markandya, G.V. Desani, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghose

and many others. All these novelists have considerably enriched Indian literature.

Among the later writers, the most notable is Salman Rushdie, born in India, now living in the United Kingdom. Rushdie with his famous work *Midnight's Children* (Booker Prize 1981, Booker of Bookers 1992, and Best of the Bookers 2008) ushered in a new trend of writing. He used a hybrid language - English kindly showered with Indian terms - to convey a theme that could be seen as representing the vast canvas of India. Other authors include, Kiran Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Raj Kamal Jha, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharti Kirchner, Amit Chaudhuri, Vikas Swarup, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Nagarkar and C. R. Krishnan.

The history of Indian English literature has one most important event in the nineteen thirties was appearance on the scene of its major trio; Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao, whose first novels were published in 1935, 1935 and 1938 respectively; and it is a mark of their importance that they revealed each in his own characteristic way, the diverse possibilities of Indian English fiction. R.K. Narayan is a writer who contributed over many decades and who continued to write to till his death. He was discovered by Graham Greene in the sense that the latter helped him find a publisher in England. Graham Greene and Narayan remained close friends till the end. Similar to Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. For some critics, Narayan, the parochial, detached and closed world that he created in the face of the changing conditions in India at the times in which the stories are set. Others, such as Graham Greene, however, feel that through Malgudi they could vividly understand the Indian experience. Simultaneous with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very different writer, Mulk Raj Anand, was similarly gaining credit for his writing set in rural India; but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of class caste and religion.

In the history of Indian fiction, the most prominent writer that contributed very significantly to Indo-Anglian literature is Mulk Raj Anand. He was really, the right representative of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indian literary situation. His literary works refer that he was not merely great intuitive observer but penetrating commentator on life.

The influence of Tolstoy, Morris, Ruskin, and Gandhi, however, moderated his views on socialism, which pervades throughout his *Untouchable*. Anand's *Coolie* sharpens his profound sense of humanism and deepens his moral tone. Here K. R. S. Iyenger rightly judges: *If Untouchable* is a microcosm; *Coolie* is a macrocosm that is Indian society.

Thus, he as realist and with a deep sense of humanism and compassion for the poor, the backward and the downtrodden and as a stylist with command over a language which can be truly called the people's language and mastery over the language for Mulk Raj Anand, narrated his works with the sympathy and full of love for victims.

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