A History of Indian English Literature

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Sahitya Akademi

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Preface

Acknowledged ‘with civil leer’ by many and damned ‘with faint praise* by some for a long time, Indian English literature, designated variously as ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’, ‘Indo-finglish I Itcrature' and ‘Indian Writing in English' (and once even regarded unjustly as part of‘Anglo-Indian Literature’), is now more than a hundred and seventy years old. In spite of the great pioneering efforts of Professor K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar— virtually the father of the serious study of this body of writing— in his Indo-Anglian Literature (1943), The Indian Contribution to English Literature (1945) and Indian Waiting in English (1962, 1973), a systematic, comprehensive and critical history of this literature, clearly defining its nature and scope, adopting a proper period-division and relating writers and schools firmly to changing indo-political conditions .had not been attempted. Viewing Indian English literature as essentially a significant by-product of the eventful encounter between India and the Indian ethos on the one hand, and England, the English language and Western culture on the other, the present work tries to trace the course nl this literature from 1809, the year when probably the first < (imposition in English of some length by an Indian - namely, (V. Boriah’s ‘Account of the Jains’--appeared (in Asiatic Researches, Vol. IX, 1809) to the end of 1979. While the needs o|. a systematic chronological survey have been kept in mind throughout, the responsibility of rigorous critical evaluation has not been sought to be evaded. Writers like Sri Aurobindo, Pitblndranath Tagore and Sarojini Naidu have often driven cri-n. 'i ii nd reviewers into opposite camps, generating both uncritical adulation and unthinking condemnation. The present work tries to adopt a balanced approach to these writers.

‘A work is never necessarily finished’, says Paul Valery, ‘for he who made it is never complete'. This is perhaps specially true of a history of literature, which involves one single mind's encounters with a large number of authors belonging to different periods and schools and exemplifying different kinds of sensibility. The writing of a literary history must therefore necessarily involve the education of the historian’s literary taste, and I must thank the authorities of the Sahitya Akademi for giving me this opportunity to acquire such an education.

I have received much help from numerous friends in the compilation of this history. A forbiddingly large number of books published in the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries were not easily available—some of them not even in reputed metropolitan libraries. B.A. Olkar—an old friend and a confirmed bibliophile—went expertly hunting in antique book-shops in Bombay, and similar operations zestfully carried out by my young friends,' S. Subrahmanya Sarma and R. Raphael in Madras, S. Krishna Bhatta in Bangalore and G.S. Balarama Gupta at Annamalainagar also yielded a sizable harvest. Dr. G.S. Dikshit, Dr. Amalendu Bose, Dr. V.M. Kulkarni, Mr. D.G. Angal, Mr. M.N. Nagaraj, Mr. N.B. Marathe, Dr. Prema Nandakumar, Dr. Shyamala Narayan, and Dr. H.S. Saksena also made much valuable material available to me. Dr. V.K. Gokak, Dr. Chaman Nahal, Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghose, Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy, Mr. Ruskin Bond, Dr. Nirmal Mukherjee, Dr. Sujit Mukherjee, Dr. M. Sivaramakrishna, Dr. K. Ayyappa Panikar, Dr. K.N. Sinha, Mr. Lakhan Deb, Dr. H. Raizada, Dr. R.B. Patankar, Mr. V.D. Trivadi, Dr. Visvanath Chatterjee, Miss Eunice D'Souza and Miss Kaushiki Sen Verma answered my numerous queries (I strongly suspect that during the last two years many of my correspondents must have dreaded the periodic arrival of a hastily w^itf^p little post-card from Dharwar asking for information).

The librarians and the staff of the following libraries extended their willing co-operation to me: National Library, Calcutta,; Tagore Museum and Library, Santiniketan; University of Bombay Library and Asiatic Library, Bombay; Poona University I .ibrary, Deccan College Library and Fergusson College library, Poona; Os mania University Library, C.I.E.F.L. Library, Salar-jung Museum Library, Sir Nizamut Jung Library, State Library and Andhra Pradesh Archives, Hyderabad; Bangalore University Library, Bangalore; Mysore University Library, Mysore; Madras University Library, Adyar Library, Presidency College Library, Connemara Library and Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras; Sri Auiiobindo Ashram Library and the Romain Rolland Library, Pondicherry, and the Regional Library and Kamatak College Library, Dharwar. To Mr. K.S. Deshpande and his enthusiastic band of colleagues at the Karnatak University Library, Dharwar I owe a special debt of gratitude. The more I asked for, the more responsive they were (a couple of assistant librarians once even allowed themselves to be dragged to the Binding Section to search for the back numbers of periodicals).

In writing about prose of different types—political, historical,' philosophical, etc., and criticism of Sanskrit literature and the arts, I had inevitably to depend upon the acknowledged expertise of my University friends belonging to different disciplines—Dr G.S. Dikshit, Dr K. Raghavendra Rao, Dr K. Krishnamoothy,

Dr G.K. Bhat, Dr S.S. Settar, Dr R.B. Patankar, Dr L.C. Mulatti and Professor K.J. Shah. Dr Rao and Dr Dikshit also read my typescript and drew my attention to matters that called for a reconsideration. Prof. R.G. Chenni assisted in preparing the typescript for the press, Dr C.V. Venugopal read the proofs and compiled the Index with a mastery born of long practice.

1 am deeply grateful to all these numerous friends and associates. In the final chapter, I have drawn on my essay, ‘Ini Defence of Indian Writing in English’ included in Indo-English Literature (1977) edited by Dr K.K. Sharma. The grant of a National Fellowship for three years enabled me to take time off from my normal teaching duties and also made work in the various libraries possible. My thanks are due to the authorities of the University Grants Commission and Kamatak University for this generous gesture.

Before concluding, I must place on record my appreciation of the patience and consideration shown by the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary (Programme) and the other authorities of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, in extending (more than once) my deadline for submitting the final typescript of this history.

M.K. NAIK

Dharwar, January 1980.

CHAPTER 1. The Literary Landscape: The Nature and Scope of Indian English Literature

Indian English literature began as an interesting by-product of an eventful encounter in the late eighteenth century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India. As a result of this encounter, as F.W. Bain puts it, India, a withered trunk ... suddenly shot out with foreign foliage.'1One form this foliage took was that of original writing in English by Indians, thus partially fulfilling Samuel Daniel's sixteenth century prophecy concerning the English language:

Who (in time) knows whither we may vent

The treasures of our tongue?

To what strange shores

This gain of our best glory shall be sent

T'enrich unknowing nations with our stores.

What worlds in th'yet unformed orient

May come refined with th'accents that are ours.

The first probiem that confronts the historian of this literature is to define its nature and scope clearly. The question has been made rather complicated owing to two factors: first, this body of writing has, from time to time, been designated variously as IndoAnglian literature', 'Indian Writing in English' and 'Indo-English literature'; secondly, the failure to make clear-cut distinctions has also often led to a confusion between categories such as 'Anglo-Indian literature', literature in the Indian languages translated into English and original composition in English by Indians. Thus, in his A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908), E.F. Oaten considers the poetry of Henry Derozio as part of 'Anglo-Indian literature'. The same critic, in his essay on Anglo-Indian literature

in The Cambridge History of English Literature(Vol. XIV, Ch. 10) includes Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore and 'Aravindo [sic] Ghose' among 'Anglo-Indian' writers along with F.W. Bain and F.A. Steel. Similarly, Bhupal Singh's Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction (1934) deals with both British and Indian writers on Indian subjects. V.K. Gokak, in his book, English in India: Its Present and Future (1964), interprets the term Indo-Anglian Literature' as comprising 'the work of Indian writers in English and 'Indo- English literature' as consisting of 'translations by Indians from Indian literature into English'. In his massive survey, Indian Writing in English (1962), K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar includes English translations of Tagore's novels and plays done by others in his history of Indian creative writing in English, while H.M. Williams excludes these from his Indo-Anglian Literature 1800-1970: A Survey (1976). John B. Alphonso Karkala (Indo English Literature in the Nineteenth Century) (1970) uses the term 'Indo-English literature' to mean 'literature produced by Indians in English.'

Strictly speaking, Indian English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is clear that neither 'Anglo- Indian Literature', nor literal translations by others (as distinguished from creative translations by the authors themselves) can legitimately form part of this literature. The former comprises the writings of British or Western authors concerning India. Kipling, Forster, F.W Bain, Sir Edwin Arnold, F.A. Steel, John Masters, Paul Scott, M.M. Kaye and many others have all written about India, but their work obviously belongs to British literature. Similarly, translations from the Indian languages into English cannot also form part of Indian English literature, except when they are creative translations by the authors themselves. If Homer and Virgil, Dante and Dostoevsky translated into English do not become British authors by any stretch of the imagination, there is little reason why Tagore's novels, most of his short stories and some of his plays translated into English by others should form part of Indian English literature. On the other hand, a work like Gitanjaliwhich is a creative translation by the author himself should qualify for inclusion. The crux of the matter is the distinctive literary phenomenon that emerges when an Indian sensibility tries to express itself originally in a medium of expression which is not primarily Indian. There is, of course, that infinitesimally small class of Indian society called the 'Anglo-Indian' i.e., the Eurasians, who claim English as their mother tongue; but with notable exceptions like Henry Derozio, Aubrey Menen and Ruskin Bond, few of them have tried to express themselves creatively in English. But even in their case, the Indian strain in them is bound to

condition the nature of both their artistic sensibility and their way of expression. (In fact, the poetry of Derozio is a copybook example of this.) However, since literature is not a science, there will always be a no man's land in which all attempts at strict definition are in danger of getting lost in a haze. Thus, there are exceptional cases like Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. The former, bornof a Sri Lankan Tamil father and an English mother, was neither an Indian citizen nor did he live in India; and yet the entire orientation of his thought is so unmistakably Indian that it is impossible not to consider him an Indian English writer. As for Jhabvala, she is virtually an international phenomenon. Born of Polish parents in Germany, she received her education in English, married an Indian, lived in India for more than twenty years, and has written in Engtish. This daughter-in-law of India (though a rebellious one, in her later work) shows such close familiarity and deep understanding of Indian social life (especially in her earlier work) that she has rightly found a place in the history of Indian English literature. On the other hand,V.S. Naipaul's Indian ancestry is indisputable, but he is so much of an outsider when he writes about India and the Indians and so much of an insider while dealing with Carribean life and character, that there can be no two opinions on his rightful inclusion in the history of West Indian Writing,

It is obvious that Indian English literature, thus defined is not part of English literature, any more than American literature can be said to be a branch of British literature It is legitimately a part of Indian literature, since its differentia is the expression in it of an Indian ethos. Its use of English as a medium may also give it a place in Commonwealth literature, but that is merely a matter of critical convenience, since the Commonwealth is largely a political entity—and, in any case, this does not in the smallest measure affect the claim of Indian English literature to be primarily a part of Indian literature.

Another problem which the historian of this literature has to face is that of choosing from among the various appellations given to it from time to time—viz., 'Indo-Anglian literature', 'Indian Writing in English', 'Indo-English literature' and 'Indian English literature'. The first of these terms was first used as the title of the Specimen Compositions from Native Students, published in Calcutta in 1883. The phrase received general currency when K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, the pioneer of this discipline, used it as a title to his first book on the subject: Indo-Anglian Literature (1943). He, however, now agrees that ' "Indo-Anglian" strikes many as a not altogether happy expression." He adds, 'I know many are allergic to the expression "Indo-Anglian", and some would prefer

“Indo-English”. The advantage with “Indo-Anglian” is that it can be used both as adjective and as substantive, but “Indo-Englishman” would be unthinkable. “Indo-Anglian” is reasonably handy and descriptive." But a major flaw in the term ‘Indo-Anglian’, as pointed out by Alphonso-Karkala, is that it would suggest ‘relation between two countries (India and England) rather than a country and a language.’7 ‘Indo-Anglian’ is thus hardly an accurate term to designate this literature. Apart from that, ‘Indo-Anglian’ also appears to be cursed with the shadow of the Anglican perpetually breathing ecclesiastically down its slender neck, and threatening to blur its identity. (In fact, Professor Iyengar has noted how, in his book, Literature and Author- ship In India,‘Indo-Anglian’ was changed to ‘Indo-Anglican’ by the enterprising London printer who, puzzled at so odd an expression, transformed it into something familiar.) For his first comprehensive study of the subject, published in 1962, K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar used the phrase, ‘Indian Writing in English'. Two pioneering collections of critical essays on this literature, both published in 1968, also followed his example: Indian Writing in English-. Critical Essays by David McCutchion and Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English edited by M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai and G.S. Amur. But the term ‘Indian Writing in English’ has been accused of having a rather circumlocutory air, and while ‘Indo-English literature’ possesses an admirable compactness, it has, as noted earlier, been used to denote translations by Indians from Indian literature into English. The Sahitya Akademi has recently accepted ‘Indian English Literature’ as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing. The term emphasizes two significant ideas: first that this literature constitutes one of the many streams that join the great ocean called Indian literature, which, though written in different languages, has an unmistakable unity; and secondly, that it is an inevitable product of the nativization of the English language to express the Indian sensibility. Nevertheless, by whatever name Indian English literature is called, it remains a literary phenomenon worthy of serious scrutiny.

CHAPTER 2- The Pagoda Tree: From the Beginnings to 1857

The British connection with India was effectively established in the beginning of the seventeenth century, though the first I nglishman ever to visit India did so as early as A.D. 883, when one Sigelm, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle notes, was sent (here by King Alfred on a pilgrimage, in fulfilment of a vow.

T he discovery of the sea-route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498 brought the Portuguese and the Dutch to India long lirfore the British. In early and mid-sixteenth century, British interest in India mostly remained in the formative stage. A petition addressed to King Henry VIII in 1511 reads: ‘The Indies are discovered and vast treasures brought from thence everyday. Let us therefore bend our endeavours thitherwards.’1I inally, the East India Company which was to link India’s destiny firmly with Britain for almost two centuries was granted its first charter by Queen Elizabeth I on the last day of thelastmonth of the last year of the sixteenth century, as if to usher in a new era in the East-West relationship with the dawn of the new century.

The East India Company, whose original aim was primarily ommerce and not conquest, however, soon discovered its manifest destiny of filling the vacuum created in the eighteenth century India by the gradual disintegration of the Mughal empire. In Kipling’s words,

Once, two hundred years ago, the trader came/Meek and tame./Where his timid foot halted, there he stayed,/Till mere trade/Grew to Empire,/And he sent his armies forth/South and North,/Till the country from Peshawur to Ceylon/ Was his own.

After the Battle of Plassey (1757) which made the Company virtually master of Bengal, the British who had come to India to sell, decided also to rule. The business of ruling naturally involved the shaking of the Indian ‘Pagoda tree' of its treasures. (One recalls Clive’s famous reply to his detractors after the sack of Murshidabad in 1757: T stand astonished at my own moderation.’) But those engaged in shaking the ‘Pagoda tree’ were also instrumental in planting the seeds of a modernization process in the eighteenth century Indian Waste Land—seeds which started burgeoning in the nineteenth century. The rise of Indian

English literature was an aspect of this Indian renaissance.

As Sri Aurobindo points out, the Indian renaissance was less like the European one and more like the Celtic movement in Ireland, ‘the attempt of a reawakened national spirit to find a new impulse of self-expression which shall give the spiritual force for a great reshaping and rebuilding.’3 The awakening of India, as Jawaharlal Nehru observes, ‘was two-fold: she looked to the West and, at the same time, she looked at herself and her own past.’4 In the rediscovery of India’s past, some of the early officials of the company played a significant role. Many of them were scholars with a passion for oriental culture and it was not unusual in those days to find an East India Company official fully equipped to discuss the Koran with a Maulana Mohammad Ali and a Purana with a Viswanath Sastri with equal competence. Sir William Jones, who founded the Bengal Asiatic Society as early as 1784, H.T. Colebrooke, the author of Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Succession (1797-98), and James Prinsep, the discoverer of the clue to the Asokan inscriptions, were some of the representative white men in India then whose burden was certainly not imperial.

While these Englishmen were rediscovering India’s past. (he gradual spread of English education and Western ideas brought forth a band of earnest Indians who drank deep at the fountain of European learning. This consummation was not, however, achieved before the British policy concerning the education of Indians had passed through two diametrically opposed stages. To begin with, for almost a generation after the East India Company had virtually become the de facto ruler of Bengal, the Government had no official education policy, probably because at that time, even in Britain itself, education had not yet been accepted as a responsibility of the Government. But soon, practical considerations stressed the necessity to evolve such a policy. There was a pressing need for suitable pundits and maulvis to help judges in the administration of justice. It was therefore decided to revive the study of Sanskrit and Persian among the Indians. This led to the establishment by Hastings of the Calcutta Madarasa for teaching Persian and Arabic in 1781 and that of the Sanskrit College at Benaras by Jonathan Duncan in 1792. The Orientalists among the Company officials naturally supported this policy enthusiastically. By the turn of the century, however, second thoughts began to prevail. First, there was an equally pressing need for Indian clerks, translators and lower officials in administration and a knowledge of English was essential for these jobs. Furthermore, with the rise of the Evangelical movement in Britain, the ideal of spreading the word of Christ among the natives assumed vital importance for some Englishmen. Even before

the close of the eighteenth century, Mission schools which taught English besides the vernacular had already been functioning in the South, while the beginning of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of similar schools in Bengal and Bombay. The missionaries believed that in imparting Western education to Indians, every teacher was ‘breaking to pieces with a rod of iron the earthenware vessels of Hinduism.1 The imperialists also championed the cause of English, which for them was a potent instrument to civilize ‘the lesser breeds without the law'. They also thought that the spread of English education among the natives would lead to the assimilation of Western culture by the Indians and that this would make for the stability of the empire—a view strongly advocated by Charles Grant, who argued: ‘To introduce the language of the conquerors seems to be an obvious means Of assimilating a conquered people to them.’

The Orientalists were seriously alarmed at this growing support to English. Their stand was forcefully expressed by H.H. Wilson, who observed: ‘It is not by the English language that we can enlighten the people of India. It can be effected only through forms of speech which they already understand and use.. . . The project of importing English literature along with English cotton into India and bringing it into universal use must at once be felt by every reasonable mind as chimerical and ridiculous.’7 It was however, obvious that the Orientalists were fighting a losing battle. As K.K. Chatterjee notes, ‘The Home Office despatches from 1824 onwards went on being increasingly insistent on re-orienting Indian education to teach the useful science and literature of Europe. ... All the presidencies in the 1820s were headed by Governors who were generally inclined to English education, though with varying emphases (Elphinstone in Bombay, Thomas Munro in Madras, and above all the reformist Bentinck in Bengal).’

As for the Indians themselves, ihere was no doubt in the minds of most of their intellectuals as to which way the wind was blowing. Perhaps the most adaptable of people, they had whole-heartedly taken to Persian some centuries earlier, with the Muslim conquest, and had mastered that language. It was obvious to them that a similar strategy with regard to English was now called for. As early as 1816, we find a Calcutta Brahmin named Baidyanath Mukhopadhyaya telling the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court that ‘many of the leading Hindus were desirous of forming an establishment for the education of their children in a liberal manner,’ meaning obviously English education. A strong prejudice against Western education was indubitably rampant in the conservative circles. It is on record that the office of the Inspector-General of Schools at Patna was at

one time popukrriy known as ‘Shaitan ka daftarkhana’10(i.e., the Devil’s Office). Nevertheless, the more forwar<Mqoking among the Indians were convinced that English education was not the Devil’s wine but a Godsend. So enthusiastic was especially the younger generation in its desire to learn English that, as Trevelyan has noted, an Englishman coming to Calcutta by steamer was pressed by eager boys clamouring for English books: ‘He cut up an old Quarterly Review and distributed the pages. As the same writer points out, on the opening of the Hughli College in August 1836,‘there were 1200 applications for admission within three days.’

The cause of English education found its ablest Indian champion in Raja Rammohun Roy. In his persuasive Letter on English Education addressed to the Governor-General, Lord' Amherst in 1823, he argued most forcefully against the establishment of a Sanskrit School in preference to one imparting English education:

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner, the Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had' been the policy of the British legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing ... useful sciences, which may be accomplished by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe and providing a college furnished with the necessary books instruments and other apparatus.

Even before this letter was written, Rammohun Roy had already been active in the cause of Western education. Together with David Hume, the British watch-maker turned educationist and Edward Hyde-East, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bengal, he established in 1816 an Association to promote European learning and science. This was the first step towards the founding of the Hindu College at Calcutta on 20 January 1817. Rammohun Roy also founded at his own expense a school in Suripara (near Calcutta) to teach English to boys (1816-17).... Rammohun invited the best among them to his house for advanced coaching by English instructors. He also founded another school in Calcutta called the Anglo Hindu School (1822).

With the tide running so strongly in favour of English, the coup de grace was delivered by Macaulay's famous Minute on Education of 2 February 1835, which clinched the issue. Macaulay, who combined in himself the spirit of staunch Evangelism, Messianic imperialism and Whig liberalism, was richly endowed with a boundless courage of conviction, which admitted no possibility of there being another side to the question at all. He stated emphatically that it was both necessary and possible 'to make the natives of this country good English scholars' and that 'to this end all our efforts ought to be directed.'

In a passage entirely typical of his cast of mind and his style (which made Lord Melbourne once exclaim: 'I wish I could be as cocksure of any one thing as Tom Macaulay is of everything') he declared:

'The question now before us is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach -languages in which by universal confession there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which by univeral confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse, and whether, when we can patronize sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at public expense medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high and reigns 30,000 years long and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.'1

Macaulay did not rest content with championing the cause of English so strongly; he even threatened to resign from his position as President of the Governor-General's Council, if his recommendations were not accepted by the Government. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General immediately yielded and the Government resolution of 7 March 1835 (a red-letter day in the history of Modern India) unequivocally declared that 'the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.'17

The extremism of this policy was sought to be corrected some time later by Sir Charles Wood, a member of the Select Committee of the British Parliament in 1852-53. In his well- known Despatch of 19 July 1854, while reiterating the necessity to 'extend European knowledge throughout all classes of the people', he observed that 'this object must be effected by means of the English language

in the higher branches of instruction, and by that of the vernacular languages of India to the great mass of the people.’18 The logical outcome of Wood’s Despatch was the establishment of the three first Indian universities—those of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras—in 1857. These universities soon became the nurseries of the resurgent Indian genius, which within hardly a generation thereafter ushered in a renaissance in the political, social, cultural and literary spheres of Indian life.

Early Prose

More than two decades prior to Macaulay's Minute of 1835, Indians had already started writing in English. Cavelly Venkata Boriah's 'Account of the Jains' published in Asiatic Researches or Transactions of the Society instituted in Bengal for inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Art, Sciences and Literature of Asia, Vol. IX (London, 1809, written in c. 1803) is perhaps the first published composition in English of some length by an Indian. Boriah (1776-1803), an assistant to Col. Colin Mackenzie (1753-1821)—the first Surveyor General of India and well- known in South Indian history for the collection, Mackenzie Manuscripts—was described by Mackenzie as 'a youth of the quickest genius and disposition.'1* A master of a number of languages including Sanskrit, Persian, Hindustani and English, he studied mathematics, astronomy and geography; wrote poetry in Telugu; discovered ancient coins and deciphered old inscriptions. His 'Account of the Jains' has been described in the essay itself as 'collected from a priest of this sect at Mudgeri' and 'translated by C. Boria' [n'c] This essay of twenty-eight pages is not therefore an original composition, though it remains of historical importance as probably the first considerable attempt by an Indian to write in English. Raja Rammohun Roy's essay on 'A Defence of Hindu Theism' (1817) may be regarded as the first original publication of significance in the history of Indian English literature. Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833), aptly described by Rabindranath Tagore as 'the inaugurator of the modern age in India'20 was indeed the morning star of the Indian renaissance. The casual Western reader of today who perhaps remembers him best as the original of the absurd Rummon Loll in Thackeray'sNewcomes, certainly does him less than justice. A pioneer in religious, educational, social and political reform, he was a man cast in the mould of the Humanists of the European Renaissance. Born at Radhanagar in the Hooghley district (which was also to produce Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Aurobindo) of Bengal in 1772, Rammohun was the son of a rich landlord. Going to Patna at the age of nine to study Arabic and Persian, he steeped himself in Muslim theology, Islamic culture and Persian poetry there. Under the influence of the doctrines of the Mutazalis school, he developed a rationalistic approach to religion, which he lost no time in applying to Hinduism. Expelled from his father's house for his iconoclasm at the age of sixteen, he travelled far and wide and is supposed to have lived in Tibet for sometime to study Buddhism there. This was followed by a sojourn at Benaras, where he mastered orthodox Hindu theology and

philosophy. Restored to his father's favour in 1794, he returned home and joined the East India Company service in 1804. Resigning his post in 1811, he settled down in Calcutta in 1814 and till the end of his life carried on a crusade for social, cultural, religious and political reform. Plunging into journalism, he edited periodicals in three languages-The Brahummunical Magazine in English (1821-23), SambSd Kaumudi in Bengali (1821) and Mirat-ul-Akhbar in Persian (1822-23). In 1828, he founded the Brahmo Sabha or Samaj, which was the earliest attempt of its kind in the nineteenth century to revitalize Hinduism. Sailing for Britain in 1830 as the envoy of the Mughal emperor who conferred on him the title 'Raja', he continued his mission there until his death at Bristol in 1833.

Proficient in about half a dozen oriental and an equal number of occidental languages, Rammohun Roy wrote extensively in Bengali, Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit and English. [His collected writings—The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy (6 vols., 1945-51) were edited by Kalidas Nag and Debajyoti Burman. Selected Works of/Raja Rammohun Roy, issued by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, appeared in 1977]. Of his English works, as many as thirty-two are original essays on various subjects. The earliest of his writings on religion were in the form of translations: 'An Abridgement of the Vedant' (1816) and renderings of the Kena and Isa Upanishads (1816). An attack on the 'Abridgement of the Vedant' by one Sankara Sastri prompted Rammohun Roy to write his first original essay in English: 'A Defence of Hindu Theism' (1817)—a masterly vindication of monotheism. This was followed by 'A Second Defence of the Monotheistical system of the Vedas in reply to an apology for the present state of Hindoo Worship' (1817).21 Next, embarking upon the study of Christian theology, he read the scriptures in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and compiled 'Precepts of Jesus: Tlie Guide to Peace and Happiness, Extracted from the Books of the New Testament ascribed to the Four Evangelists with translations into Sungscrit [r/c] and Bengalee' (1820). 'The translations, however, if they were ever issued, have never been traced. The probability is that they were never issued.'22 Here, boldly 'separating from the other matters contained in the New Testament, the moral precepts found in that book', Rammohun Roy tried to place before his 'fellow creatures the words of Christ'. When the book was bitterly attacked as heretical by Christian missionaries, Rammohun Roy wrote in succession three rejoinders: 'An Appeal to the Christian Public, in Defence of "The Precepts of Jesus" ' (published under the pseudonym, 'A Friend of Truth') (1820); 'Second Appeal to the Christian Public, in Defence of "The Precepts of

Jesus" ' (1821); and 'Final Appeal to the Christian Public, in Defence of "The Precepts of Jesus' (1823). In these 'Appeals', Rammobun Roy reiterates the necessity to reject Christian myth, miracle and dogma in favour of the actual teachings of Christ; chastises the missionaries for the unChristian spirit shown by them in the controversy, and emphasizes the need for a 'religion destructive of differences and dislike between man and man and conducive to the peace and union of mankind. Dr. Lant Carpenter found the 'Second Appeal* 'distinguished by the closeness of his (Rammohun Roy's) reasoning, the extent and critical accuracy of his scriptural knowledge, the comprehensiveness of his in vestigations and the acuteness and skill with which he contro- vents the positions of his opponents.' This comment would fit the other two appeals equally well.

Social reform was equally dear to Rammohun Roy. Here, the plight of women in orthodox Hindu society became his special concern. His broadsides against widow-burning include: 'A Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the Practice of burning Widows alive'(1818);'A Second Conference between an Advocate for, and an Opponent of, the Practice of burning Widows alive' (1820); 'Abstract of the Arguments regarding the burning of Widows Considered as a Religious Rite'(1830),'Address to Lord William Bentinck' (1830); and 'Anti-Suttee Petition to the House of Commons' (1832). In his 'Brief Remarks regarding Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females According to the Hindu Law of Inheritance' (1822) he attacks polygamy and shows how ancient Hindu laws have been misinterpreted to deny women equal rights to inheritance. Rammohun Roy's famous 'Letter on English Education' (11 December 1823), which has already been mentioned, is a document of so great importance that it could very well be called 'the manifesto of the Indian renaissance'.

The most significant of Rammohun Roy's political writings are the two 'Petitions Against the Press Regulations' (1823) drafted by him and signed along with him by his supporters. These petitions were occasioned by the passing of a Government ordinance in March 1823 suppressing the freedom of the press, known as 'Adam's gag' after John Adam, the acting GovernorGeneral. In the first petition, described by Miss Collet as 'The Areopagitica of Indian history'24, Rammohun Roy argues:

'Every good Ruler, who is convinced of the imperfection of human nature, and reverences the Eternal Governor of the world, must be conscious of the great liability to error in managing the affairs of a vast empire; and therefore he will

be anxious to afford to every individual the readiest means of bringing to his notice whatever may require his interference. To secure this important object, the unrestrained liberty of publication is the only effectual means that can be employed.’21

When the petition was rejected, and the Press Regulation Act was promulgated, Rammohun Roy appealed to the King-in- Council. In the second petition, he tells the King:

'If your Majesty’s faithful subjects could conceive for a moment that the British nation, actuated solely by interested policy, considered India merely as a valuable property and nothing but the best means of securing its possession and turning it to advantage, even then it would be of importance to ascertain whether this property be well taken care of by their servants. . .therefore the existence of a free Press is equally necessary for the sake of the Governors and the governed.’

Rammohun Roy’s ‘Exposition of the Practical Operation of the Judicial and Revenue Systems of India’ (1832) represents the evidence given by him before a Parliamentary Select Committee in London in 1831. This document, which embodies Rammohun Roy’s views on administrative reform, is specially remarkable for its spirited protest against the economic drain in India under the East India Company rule and the exploitation of the peasantry by the rich landlords.

During the last year of his life, Rammohun Roy wrote a short autobiographical sketch at the request of his friends. (Its authenticity has been questioned, but not conclusively.) This sketch, though all too brief and written in a somewhat matter- of-fact manner, is of interest as the first exercise in Indian English literature in a form which was to be handled with conspicuous success by later writers like Nehru and Nirad C. Chaudhuri.

Rammohun Roy’s writings obviously belong to the category of ‘Literature of Knowledge’, rather than ‘Literature of Power’, yet, he is a master of a distinguished English prose style. In a personal letter, Jeremy Bentham complimented Rammohun Roy on ‘a style, which but for the name of a Hindoo, I should certainly have ascribed to the pen of a superiorly educated and instructed Englishman.’27 In the same letter, praising James Mill’s History of India, Bentham added, ‘though as to style, I wish I could with truth and sincerity

pronounce it equal to yours.’28 Rammohun Roy’s style is reminiscent of Burke's eloquence, though it does not possess the English master’s colour and splendour. Nevertheless, clear thinking, soundness of judgement, comprehensiveness of views, forceful and logical argumentation and moderation and dignity in refuting the criticism of his adversaries are the outstanding features of Rammohun Roy's prose style, which indubitably makes him the first of a long line of Indian masters of English prose. The father of Bengali prosewriting, he is also the first ‘begetter’ of Indian prose in English.

Apart from Rammohun Roy’s work there was not a little prose writing of note during mid and later nineteenth century in metropolitan centres like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Most of this writing was on religious, social, historical and political subjects and some of it in the form of journalism and pamphleteering.

In Bengal, Krishna Mohan Banerji (1813-85), a pupil of Henry Derozio, the poet, and one of the prominent Christian converts of the day, wrote strong articles exposing the errors and inconsistencies of Hinduism in the Enquirer in 1831. His Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy (1861) is a potted handbook for missionaries and his Aryan Witness (1875) seeks to prove that the Prajapati of the Vedas is Jesus Christ. Another pupil of Derozio, Ram Gopal Ghose (1815-68) was actively associated with many literary, cultural and political organizations in Calcutta. Connected with journals such as Agyananashun, Durpan and The Spectator, he was an enthusiastic pamphleteer and a forceful speaker, eulogised as the ‘Indian Demosthenes’. His pamphlet, ‘Remarks on the Black Acts’ (1851) in defence of the so-called ‘Black Acts’ of 1849, which abolished some of the privileges of Europeans in India, caused a furore in that community. The Times described his speech on the Charter Act as 'a masterpiece of oratory’ and his oration on the Queen’s Proclamation made the Indian Field comment that ‘If he were an Englishman, he would have been knighted’.2His Speeches were published in 1868. Hurish Chunder Mukerji (1824-60) edited The Hindoo Patriot from 1854 to 1860 with a passionate tense of mission, championing widow-remarriage, counselling reconciliation after the Mutiny and exposing the iniquities of the British planters. Rajendra Lal Mitra (1824-91), Assistant Secretary and Librarian, Bengal Asiatic Society, and hailed by Tagore as ‘Sabyasachi’ (i.e., ambidextrous) was one of the earliest Indian antiquarians, Indologists and historians. His numerous studies, including Antiquities of Orissa (1875, 1880) and Buddha Gaya (1878) earned him Max Muller’s praise in Chips from a German Workshop. His Speeches, edited by R.J. Mitter, appeared in 1892. Girish Chunder Ghosh (1829-69) founded in 1849 The Bengal Recorder

Weekly, which became The HindooPatriot in 1853. He also founded and edited The Bengalee (1861- 68)

and fearlessly advocated social and political reform. His vigorous pleading in The Bengalee led to the appointment of the Famine Commission in 1866. Selections from the Writings of Girish Chunder Ghosh, edited by his grandson, Manmath Nath Ghose, appeared in 1912. Raja Ram's Essays on the Architecture of the Hindus (Calcutta, 1834), is perhaps the earliest attempt at art criticism.

The first name that comes to mind when one turns from Bengal to Bombay is that of Bal Shastri Jambhekar (1812-46), a great pioneer of the new awakening in the Bombay presidency. Perhaps the first Sanskrit pundit of note to study English, he became the teacher of such men as Dadabhai Naoroji, Bhau Daji, and K.L. Chattre. Linguist, educationist, translator, antiquarian (he contributed frequently to the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society), Jambhekar is best remembered as the founder of the first English-cum-Marathi journal in Maharashtra, The Durpan (1832), the aim of which as described in its Prospectus was, 'to encourage among their countrymen the pursuit of English literature and to open a field for free and public discussion. The journal sought to 'please, to convey information on passing events, and to point out the means and opportunities for improvements.' His contemporary, Dadoba Pandurang (Tarkhadkar) (1814-82), scholar, educationist, religious and social reformer, and author of the earliest standard Marathi Grammar, wrote 'A Hindu Gentleman's Reflections respecting the works of Emanuel Swedenborg (1878) —an enlightened study in comparative religious thought. Bhau Daji (1822-74), a physician by profession, was active in many causes. A founder secretary of the Bombay Association, he became the first sheriff of Bombay. Apart from conducting investigations in Indian medicine, he wrote numerous articles on antiquarian research and social and political problems. His 'Essay, on Infanticide' appeared in 1847. His Writings and Speeches (1974) have recently been edited by T.G. Mainkar.

In the Madras presidency, apart from Boriah's 'Account of the Jains', another noteworthy early document is Vannelakanti Soobrow's (He was, significantly enough, known as 'English Soobrow') report on the 'State of Education in 1820,'30 submitted to the Madras School Book Society of which he was a nominated member. Written on 22 November,, 1820, it was published in theFirst Report of the Madras School Book Society for the year 1823. Soobrow's report contains interesting bits of information such as that The Arabian Nights was one

of the prescribed school texts then and that ‘Among the Natives, English school masters at Madras, there are. . .very few who-have a knowledge of grammar.’ In 1844, Gazulu Lakshmi Narsu Chetty (1806-68), a public-spirited businessman and founder of the Madras Native Association, started The Crescent—a newspaper dedicated to ‘the amelioration of the condition of the Hindoos.”1 He was also instrumental in drawing up several memorials and petitions to the Government on issues such as the grievances of the people and the need for transferring the administration of India from The Company to the Crown. The Madras presidency also enjoys the distinction of having produced the first work of literary biography in Indian English literature. This was Cavelly Venkanta Ramaswami’s Biographical Sketches of the Dekkan [sic] PoetsSketches of the Dekkan [sic] Poets 1840), the elder brother of C.V. Boriah (the author of the 'Account of the Jains’) describes in this book the lives of more than a hundred Indian poets, both ancient and modern, in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Marathi. The accounts vary in length and accuracy and are written in a rather pedestrian style, there being no attempt at critical comment on the poetry. But to have written in English a work of this nature and with this scope in early Nineteenth century India is itself no mean a feat.

In contrast with the Bengal, Bombay and Madras presidencies, the north India of the period shows little sustained interest in Indian English writing, but as if to compensate for this, it can boast of having produced the first extensive Indian English autobiography (Rammohun Roy’s autobiographical sketch is an all too brief affair): Autobiography of Lutufullah: A Mohamedan Gentleman and His Transactions with his fellow creatures: Interspersed with remarks on the habits, customs and character of the people with whom he had to deal (1857). The son of a Muslim priest, Lutufullah (b. 1802) served in the states of Baroda and Gwalior, and later, having learnt English, became a tutor in Persian, Arabic and Hindustani to British officers. He travelled widely over India and also visited England. Part travel diary and part autobiography, Lutufullah’s book is the expression of a man who wps well read (he quotes from Shakespeare, Bacon, Prior and Rowe), enterprising, observant and broad-minded. His boldness of judgment is revealed in his description of the character of the English. Though he admires their civility, respect for law and spirit of patriotism, he is highly critical of what he calls their 'obedience, trust and submission to the female sex’ which, according to him, 'are far beyond the limit of moderation.’

Early Poetry

Cavelly Venkata Ramaswami's English rendering of 'Viswa- gunadarsana' of Arasanipala Venkatadhvarin, an early seventeenth-century Sanskrit poem, is probably the earliest (1825) book of verse in English by an Indian, though being a translation (and not an original work) it cannot properly form part of Indian English literature. An interesting point about the book is that it was published inCalcutta, with the help of donations, and the list of donors given on the last page includes the names of Rammohun Roy and Dwaraknath Tagore.32In his Viographical Sketches of Dekkart Poets, Ramaswami also gives a competent translation in heroic couplets of passages from Vasu Charitra, a Telugu epic by the sixteenth-century poet, Bhattu Murti.

The first Indian English poet of note, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31) was the son of an Indo-Portuguese father and an English mother. A precocious child, he had already taken to writing in his teens. After completing his school education, he worked for sometime as a clerk in Calcutta and on an indigo plantation at Bhagalpur, and also tried his hand at journalism before joining the Hindu College, Calcutta, as a lecturer. Here, his fearless spirit of inquiry, his passion for ideas, his reformis- tic idealism and his romantic enthusiasm fired the imagination of many a student. Under his leadership, a debating club ('The Academic Association') and a magazine (The Parthenon) were started to discuss all subjects under the sun, including Hindu religious practices, the rights of women and political issues. Orthodox Hindu society in Calcutta was seriously alarmed at these activities which wild rumour painted in the darkest colours. For instance, Derozio and his pupils were accused of 'cutting their way through ham and beef and wading to liberation through tumblers of beer.'33 It was also said that 'some Hindu boys, when required to utter mantras at prayers, would repeat lines from the Iliad instead (and) that one student, asked to bow down before the goddess Kali, greeted the image with a "good morning, Madam."34The mounting pressure of hostile public opinion finally compelled the College authorities to dismiss Derozio from service in 1831 on the charge of corrupting the minds of youth. Undaunted, he started a daily,The East InAian, but suddenly died of cholera six months later.

In his all too brief poetic career lasting hardly half a dozen years, Derozio published two volumes of poetry: Poems (1827) and The Fakeer of Jungheera: A Metrical Tale and Other Poems (1828). The shorter poems show a strong

influence of British romantic poets in theme (e.g. ‘Sonnet: To the Moon’; ‘The Golden Vase’; ‘Sonnet: Death, my Best Friend’), sentiment, imagery and diction, with some traces of neo-classicism (e.g.)

The heart.. .where hope eternal springs’, with its obvious echo of Pope). His satirical verse (e g. 'Don Juanics’) and the long narrative poems (The Fakeer of Jungheera) clearly indicate his special affinity with Byron. In sharp contrast to the wilting sentimentality of his romantic lyrics, Derozio’s satirical verses give evidence of energy and vigour, as in the lines: ‘That sponging is the best of all resources/For all who have no money in their purses.’ The Fakeer of Jungheera is an extremely competent narrative of the tragic life of Nuleeni, a high-caste Hindu widow, rescued from the funeral pyre by a young robber-chief, whose love she returns. Her relatives, however, are determined to reclaim her. In the ensuing battle, the lover is killed and is finally united in death with the heart-broken Nuleeni. In this fast-moving tale, Derozio skilfully employs different metres to suit the changing tone and temper of the narrative. He uses the iambic four-foot couplet for straight-forward narration, but adopts a slower line for the descriptive passages and the anapaestic metre for the spirited account of the battle, while the choruses of the chanting priests and the women round Nuleeni’s funeral pyre are in trochaic and dactylic measures.

A noteworthy feature of Derozio’s poetry is its burning nationalistic zeal, somewhat surprising in a Eurasian at a time when the average representative of his class was prone to repudiate his Indian blood and identify himself with the white man, for eminently practical reasons. Poems like 'To India—My Native Land’, ‘The Harp of India’, and ‘To the Pupils of Hindu College’ have an unmistakable authenticity of patriotic utterance which stamps Derozio as an Indian English poet who is truly a son of the soil. Derozio is also a pioneer in the use of Indian myth and legend, imagery and diction (though he also employs allusions to Western classical myths with equal competence): e.g. ‘Highest Himalay’ (‘Poetry’); ‘Gunga’s roil’ (‘Song of the Indian Girl’); ‘Chandra’s beams’ (‘The Eclipse’), ‘Sweet Sitar’ ('Song of the Hindoostani Minstrel’) etc. Unlike Sarojini Naidu, Derozio is able to strike the singing note only occasionally, and his most successful poems are the sonnets in which the imperatives of the form save authentic emotion from slipping easily into soft sentimentality. It is obviously impossible to accept today E.F. Oaten’s over-generous assessment of Derozio as ‘the National bard of modern India.’36 A poet of slender actual achievement, Derozio, ‘a lamp too early quenched’ remains a writer of sadly unfulfilled promise.

Three years after Derozio signalled the birth of Indian English poetry, the first volume of verse by an author of pure Indian blood appeared: The Shair or Minstrel and other Poems (1830) by Kashiprasad Ghose (1809-73). Fired, at a young age, with the ambition to compose original verse in English, Kashiprasad Ghose studied prosody and criticism on the advice of his British teacher in the College. As he says, he also ‘continued reading the best poetry in a regular and measured tone which soon accustomed my ear to English rhythm.’ The results, as revealed in his work are generally correct verses, undistinguished either by authentic emotion or poetic imagination. Kashiprasad Ghose seems to intimate by turns the stylized love-lyrics of the Cavalier poets, the moralizing note in neoclassical poetry and the British romantics, his ‘Shair’ being obviously Scott's ‘minstrel’ in an Indian garb, slightly dishevelled as a result of the arduous voyage across the seas. His use of Indian material in his poems about the Hindu festivals and in lyrics like ‘The Boatman’s Song to Ganga’ indicates an honest attempt to strike a native wood-note which fails not because earnestness of purpose is wanting but owing to sheer lack of true poetic talent.

Equally undistinguished are Rajnarain Dutt’s (1824-89) verse narrative, Osmyn: An Arabian Tale (1841) in faded heroic couplets; Shoshee Chunder Dutt’s (1815-65) Miscellaneous Poems (1848) and Hur Chunder Dutt’s (1831-1901) Fugitive Pieces(1851). A better title to fame the last two Dutts possess is that they were the uncles of a girl who was to write Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan a generation later.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73), better known as an epoch-making writer in Bengali, began his career as an Indian English poet. In addition to some sonnets and shorter pieces, he wrote two long poems in English; The Captive Ladie (1849) narrates the story of the Rajput King, Prithviraj, his Lochinvarlike abduction of the Kanouj King’s daughter, and his unsuccessful battle with the Muslim invader, ending in his own death tnd that of his queen. Dutt takes liberties with history, by making Prithviraj and his queen kill themselves by mounting a funeral pyre at the end, while in actual fact, the Hindu king was captured and put to death by his Muslim conqueror. But, in contrast to his history, his prosody is pure, and his octosyllabics move with almost as much vigour and energy as in his models—viz., Scott and Byron. In fact, The Athenaeum declared that the poem ‘contained passages which neither Scott nor Byron would have been ashamed to own."’ In Visions of the Past (1849), a poem in Miltonic blank verse, complete with weighty, abstract diction and Latin inversions, Dutt handles the Christian theme of the temptation and fall and

redemption of Man. The result is a skilled pastiche of Milton. In spite of his command of English and his sense of rhythm, Dutt's English poetry hardly rises above the level of derivative, if technically accomplished, verse. He was really able to spread his wings only when he turned to Bengali for artistic expression, following Drinkwater Bethune's advice that 'he could render a far greater service to his country and have a better chance of achieving a lasting reputation for himself if he would employ the taste and talents which he has cultivated by the study of English in improving the standard and adding to the stock of the poems of his own language.'

The first period of Indian English literature may be said to end in the 1850s, a few years before the Indian Revolt of 1857 —that great watershed in the relationship between India and Britain. During this period British rule in India was generally accepted by most Indians as a great boon divinely delivered. The holocaust of the Revolt ushered in different ideas. Winds of change soon began to blow over the land, affecting accepted attitudes. It was ultimately as a combined result of these changes that Indian English literature slowly struggled during the next two generations from psittacism to authentic artistic utterance.

CHAPTER 3: The Winds of Change: 1857 to 1920

With the end of the Great Revolt and the proclamation of peace on 8 July 1858 came the end of the East India Company rule also, though the Company itself lingered on for a few years more, until its formal dissolution on 1 January 1874. The Queen's proclamation of 1 November 1858 heralded the birth of a new age. The Revolt and its aftermath led to several radical changes in the Indo-British relationship. Unfortunately, they were all in the direction of widening the cleavage between the two peoples.

In fact, this process had already set in during the forties; the Revolt and its repercussions only served to accelerate it. In the early days of the Company dispensation, many of its servants came to India as 'writers' at a young age, filled with a- spirit of youthful adventure and curiosity and fascinated by the land of opportunity in which they found themselves. The story told of John Malcolm's interview for cadetship is not unrepresentative. Asked 'What would you do if you met Tipu Sultan?' the young laddie promptly answered in broad Scots, 'I would cut off his head.'1 Furthermore, unaffected by colour prejudice and unspoiled by imperialistic hauteur (though these attitudes were certainly not totally absent from the scene), some of them saw nothing wrong in taking Ipdian mistresses—and, a few, even wives. 'Going native' had not yet become the capital crime it was to be after 1857. Col. Kilpatrick, British Resident of Hyderabad, was said to have dyed his beard with henna, married a Muslim lady and dressed like a Muslim nobleman; and Col. Charles Stewart came to be known as 'Hindoo Stewart' on account of his passion for Hindu culture.* Actually, in the early days, the company 'patronized both Hindu and Muslim religions. Offices were open on Sunday but closed on Indian Holidays. Troops were paraded in honour of Hindu deities. .. British officials assisted in the management of Hindu religious trusts.'3 Out of this kind of a spirit of identification—though not always expressed in such extreme ways-had come the loving discovery of ancient Indian culture by the British officials of the early days.

The Evangelical revival in England, the social and educational reforms of the 1830s, the advent of the steamships during the 1840s, and the changes made in

the system of recruitment to Company service in the 1850s ushered in totally changed attitudes. From 1853, admissions to the Company's training college at Haileybury began to be made by competitive examinations. This brought to India a different race of civil servants, ending the tradition of hereditary service by which sons of certain families like the Prinseps and the Bechers had served India generation after generation. W.S. Blunt declared in 1909, 'The Anglo-Indian official of the Company's days loved India in a way no Queen's official dreams of doing now.. .Also. .. loving it, he served it better than now, and was better loved in return.'4 The impact of the Evangelical revival and its after- math often generated a feeling of contempt for Hindu religion and culture in the Englishman's mind; and the stance of the white man's superiority came naturally to self-made men, the products of the new social and educational reforms. Again, with the introduction of steam-navigation, an Englishman could reach Bombay from London within thirty days, this period being reduced still further with the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. This meant that there was no need henceforth for the British officials to make India their home. It was very much easier now for their wives and families to come to India. The small British colony—a tiny white oasis in the brown desert around —now appeared on the social scene. As W.S. Blunt noted in 1909, 'The Englishwoman in India during the last thirty years has been the cause of half the bitter feelings there between race and race... It is her constantly increasing influence now that widens the gulf of ill-feeling and makes amalgamation daily more impossible.'11 As a total result of these various factors, for the new British civil servant, India came to be mostly exile and not home, a 'land of regrets' in Sir Alfred LyalPs phrase.

The many horrors of 1857-58 and the cruelties perpetrated by both the sides during the Revolt left inveterate scars which were never to heal completely. As G.T. Garrat pointedly put fifty years ago, 'The English have never attempted to remove the irritation caused by their behaviour after the Mutiny, and from that time we must date the long and bitter estrangement between the two races. Born of hatre ' and fear, it was nourished on a series of unfortunate incidents most of which were the direct result of the new spirit which the Mutiny encouraged amongst Europeans.'7 Garrat adds, 'Countless middle-class Englishmen learnt to look upon Indians as the creatures, half gorilla, half Negro, who appeared in the contemporary Punch cartoons. They were usually depicted standing over a murdered woman but cowering before an avenging Britannia. . .praying to the God of Battles to steel our soldiers' hearts. For another generation their children learnt of India from the same source.'8 As late as the turn of -the century, we find a British official in India describing his situation thus: 'Here we stand on the

face of the broad earth, a scanty, pale-faced band in the midst of 300 millions of unfriendly vassals.’8 And this kind of an official had become, in the words of Blunt, ‘the practical owner of India.. . irremovable, irresponsible and amenable to no authority but that of his fellow-members.’10 The alienation of the British official from those he governed now became, with extremely few exceptions, virtually total.

If the British attitude to the Indian thus underwent a radical transformation, the Indian too was changing, and changing very fast. When the first products of higher education in India started coming out of the portals of the earliest Indian universities (established ironically enough in the year of the Revolt itself), the seeds of the ideas sown by Raja Rammohun Roy a generation earlier began to sprout vigorously. The gradual spread of the vast railway network, the growth of the native press in the bigger cities and the acquisition of a common language—viz., English—soon brought the new Indian intelligentsia close together. While the old Indian aristocracy lay supine, licking its wounds, dreaming of past splendours and shutting its eyes to the realities of the present, there ‘was born from the middle stratum of society a new integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas and values. .. It was a dynamic minority; It had a sense of unity, of purpose, and of hope. It was the newborn soul of modern India. In time it was to infuse the whole of India with its spirit.’

This spirit soon began io express itself through movements of religious, social and political reform. As already noted, a beginning in this direction had been-made by Raja Rammohun Roy as early as 1828, when be founded the Brahmo Samaj, an attempt to reorganize Hinduism along the lines of monotheism and repudiation of idol-worship and superstition. After Rammohun Roy’s death, the movement was strengthened by Dwaraknath Tagore. With Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84), came a period of expansion, when the movement assumed an all-India character, leading to the establishment of similar organizations like the Prarthana Samaj by M.G. Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar in Bombay in 1867. In spite of a schism in the Brahmo Samaj in 1866, brought about by the growing differences between the conservatives and the reformers, the movement continued to be vigorous, especially in Bengal, and influenced, in some measure, the thought of men like Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore.

A similar movement was Arya Samaj, established in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83). This was an attempt to revive Hinduism in the pristine

purity of the Vedic age. Repudiation of Puranism and polytheism, rejection of the hereditary caste system and revival of proselytization were its chief doctrines. The Arya Samaj, which also started a number of educational institutions imparting both oriental and occidental knowledge, later continued its mission of militant Vedic Hinduism with renewed vigour under the leadership of Swami Shrad- dhanand and Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928)

The year which marked the establishment of the Arya Samaj also saw the rise of another movement based on ancient Hindu religious and philosophical thought. This was the Theosophical Society founded in New York by Madame H.P. Blavatsky, Col. H.S. Olcott, W.O. Judge and others. Unlike the Arya Samaj this was a western movement but the society shifted to Adyar in India in 1878. With its blend of the teachings of Hinduism, Buddhism, Pythagoras and Plato, ancient Egyptian thought and early Christianity, Theosophy was an eclectic creed, but like the Arya Samaj it also helped the prevailing climate of the Indian resurgence.

While all these movements aiming at religious reform flour - ished, the appearance of a genuine Hindu saint and mystic at this juncture showed how the ancient Hindu tradition, far from being fossilized, was still vigorous enough to produce new living manifestations. Swami Ramakrishna (1836-86), who made his entire life an ecstatic pilgrimage of spirituality, cast a spell on the youth of modern Bengal. During the last year of his life, his disciples, led by Swami Vivekananda, formed a holy brother-hood which finally took shape as the well-known Ramakrishna Mission. Under the dynamic leadership of Swami Vivekananda, the Mission effectively carried the message of ancient Hinduism abrood, while in India itself, Vivekananda's fiery eloquence, having dazzled the West, instilled a new self-confidence in the minds of his compatriots.

This was one of the signal gains of the new religious resurgence. Earlier, under the first impact of Western education, the Indian, swept off his feet by European culture and thought, had often been a prey to an inferiority feeling, as he contemplated, in comparison, the state of his own tradition-bound religion and culture. In Bengal especially, the younger generation had, for a time, taken pride in rebelling against what it considered to be crass obscurantism; and some like M.M. Dutt had even abjured Hinduism to embrace Christianity. As Surendranath Banerjea observes, ‘Our fathers, the first fruits of English education, were violently pro-British. They saw no flaw in the civilization and the culture of the West. They were charmed by its novelty and its strangeness. The

enfranchisement of the individual, the substitution of the right of private judgment in place of traditional authority, the exaltation of duty over custom—all came with the force and suddenness of a revelation to an oriental people who knew no more binding obligation than the mandate of immemorial usage and of venerable tradition.'12 The new reform movements proved a strong corrective and restored the balance.

The general climate of resurgence in the country did not fail to affect the Muslim community also, though here orthodoxy was even more firmly entrenched. Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98) became to the Muslims what Rammohun Roy was to the Hindus earlier. Making the dissemination of western ideas and education among the Muslims the sole mission of his life, he founded the Anglo-Arabic College at Aligarh (1873), which later developed into the Aligarh Muslim University. In course of time, this institution became the most important centre of Islamic thought in India. As a friend of Syed Abmed Khan has observed, 'other men have written books and founded colleges; but to arrest, as with a wall, the degeneration of a whole people, that is the work of a prophet.'

Even before the inception of the college of Aligarh, the Mohammedan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta had been founded by Abdul Latif in 1863. In 1878, Ameer Ali started the National Mohammedan Association, the policy of which was loyalty to the crown and assimilation of the progressive tendencies of the age. By 1888, the Association had more than fifty branches, mostly in the northern and eastern regions of India.

The new reformists zeal was inevitably accompanied by a political awakening as well. The first organized effort in this direction was the founding of the British India Association in 1839, to be followed quickly by the Bengal British India Society in 1843 and the British Indian Association of Calcutta in 1831. In 1876, Surendranath Banerjea founded the Indian Association, which was intended to be the centre of an AII-India movement based on 'the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini.' Soon, agitations against the lowering of the age limit for Civil Service examinations, the Arms Act, the Vernacular Press Act and the Ilbert Bill accelerated the tempo or Indian political activity. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was established, with the support of liberal-minded Englishmen like A.O. Hume, Sir William Wedderburn and Sir David Yule. In the beginning it was mostly a body of moderates who had unshakable faith in the British sense of justice and fair play, and who pledged complete loyalty to the King Emperor. It passed courteously worded resolutions

requesting the Government for political and social reform. Most British administrators refused to take it seriously. (Lord Dufferin's dismissal of it as 'Babu Parliament supported by a microcosmic minority' and 'hysterical assembly in which the more violent and silly of their members rule the roost,' is characteristic.) Continued Government indifference and mounting Indian impatience fanned by the rise of radicals like B.G. Tilak and Aurobindo Ghose led to the eclipse of the moderates and the Congress increasingly became a more militant body. The coup de grace was administered by the ill-advised partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon (that 'most superior person') whose boundless egotism made him so blind to the political realities of his time that we find him prophesying as late as 1909 that the Congress was 'tottering to its fall' and that one of his great ambitions while in India was 'to assist it to a peaceful demise.'1To Indians the partition appeared to be not so much an administrative necessity as a planned attempt to weaken the nationalistic movement. A popular agitation set in, which, 'starting as a purely local movement, led to and merged itself in a national struggle of All India character against the British, which never ceased till India won her independence.'

The increasing self-confidence generated by the re-discovery of the Indian identity received a further boost with Japan's epoch-making victory over Russia in 1905, which pricked the bubble of Western superiority. As Lord Curzon himself put it, 'The reverberations of that victory have gone like a thunderclap through the whispering galleries of the East.'18 Again, the revolutionary movements in China and Turkey in the first decade of the twentieth century and the Persian liberal movement 'all suggested that the path of progress consisted in using western techniques and ideas to regenerate ancient societies and then to use western weapons against western supremacy. The belief in an irresistible West from which nothing but pure imitation could procure even a modicum of self-respect was broken. India and the East might look forward to independent life again.'

This conviction was strengthened by the impact of World War I and its aftermath. As Percival Spear points out, 'American democracy emerged as a force which might counter the old Western imperialism. President Wilson's1 Fourteen Points and his doctrine of self-determination shot a thrill of expectancy through Asia. . . .The American influence changed the emphasis of political discussion from constitutionalism and legal rights to the abstract rights of man. A more radical tone came into political discussion which, if it sometimes led to dangerous unreality, increased the self-confidence and determination of the new

popular leaders. As Europe was seen to be no longer invincible, Britain was realized to be less powerful in the European system than had previously been thought. This new evaluation of Britain and the West encouraged the organizers of anti-government movements.'20

Thus, during the period from 1857 to 1920, the Indian ethos gradually underwent a sea-change from the shock of defeat and frustration and the trauma of inferiority feeling to a new-found self-awareness and self-confidence. It is against this background that the work of the prominent writers of this period must be viewed; and it now becomes clear why the diffident psittacism of Kashiprasad Ghose should now make room for the confident authenticity of Toru Dutt, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore; and also why, while we have only a solitary Rammohun Roy—a genius well ahead of his times—before 1857, the next sixty years produced a Ranade and a Gokhale, a Tilak and a Vivekananda. Indian English literature really came of age after 1857, when India's rediscovery of her identity became a vigorous, allabsorbing quest and when she had learnt enough from the West to progress from imitation and assimilation to creation.

Poetry

This change, of course, came gradually and there is no trace of it in the first notable work of poetry in this period—The Dutt Family Album (1870), though it appeared more than twenty years after M.M. Dutt's Visions of the Past; but significantly enough, Toru Dutt's work lay only half a dozen years ahead. The Dutt Family Album, the only instance of a family anthology in Indian English poetry, is a collection of 187 poems by three Dutt brothers—Govin Chunder, Hur Chunder and Greece [sic] Chunder, and their cousin, Omesh Chunder. The Dutts, descendants of Rasmoy Dutt, who had been a lieutenant of Rammohun Roy, had abjured Hinduism in favour of Christianity and Govin Chunder, who had visited England with his family, had once even thought of settling down there. These poets can hardly therefore be expected to write with India in their bones; they treat their Indian material as something poetically serviceable. Their major subjects are Christian sentiment, Nature, and Indian history and legend and like the poets of the earlier generation they are content to play the sedulous ape to the British Romantics. When Govin Chunder, addressing the spirit of Romance asks ‘Who hath not seen thee, fair one, when the day/ Urges his coursers over the dappled clouds’ (‘A Farewell to Romance’), he is obviously echoing Keats’s well-known apostrophe to Autumn. Similarly, in contemplating a Himalayan peak, Greece Chundur Dutt can only repeat all the appropriate Wordsworthian responses, including ‘peaceful thoughts and calm delight/And soothing hopes and sadness mild’ (‘Sonnet: Like a great temple’). Omesh Chunder Dutt, while recounting the exploits of a Rajput prince, visualizes him as a medieval English knight equipped with a gerfalcon (a north European bird) and attended by a squire (‘The Chief of Pokurna’). And Hur Chunder Dutt’s sonnet, ‘India’, sports all the correct sentiments—‘I love thee with a boundless love/Land of my birth’, but provides little evidence of actual personal involvement expressed in evocative terms. The Dutt Family Album, like the poetry of Kashiprasad Ghose and M.M. Dutt earlier, again shows how mere technical competence unattended by freshness and genuineness of response does not make for authenticity in art.

neness of response does not make for authenticity in art. 1918), on the other hand, there are certain glimpses of authenticity. In his verses are seen the first tentative flickerings of the myitical flame which was to burn bright later in Sri Aurobindo and Tagore. His works include Willow Drops (1873-74), The Last Day: A Poem (1886) and Shiva Ratri, Bhagaboti Gita and Miscellaneous Poems

(1903). The Poetical Works edited by D.C. Mallick appeared in 1919. A versatile poet, Ram Sharma wrote occasional verse (‘Ode in commemoration of the visit of Prince Albert to India in 1875); satires (‘Lines Addressed to James Skribblerus’); narratives (‘Mohinee’); lyrics on various themes and mystical verse. As one who had practised yoga for forty years, he was certainly in a position to recreate genuine mystic experience in poetic terms. Unfortunately, the still uncxorcized demon of psittacism in him often compels him to express his responses through conventional western myth and frame of reference, as when he describes his Hindu yogic experience as ‘a very sabbath of the soul’ (‘Music and vision of the Anahat Chakram’), or in visualizing a meeting after death between Swami Vivekananda and his master, he brings them toge ther in Elysium (‘In Memory of Swami Vivekananda’).

It was with Toru Dutt (1856-77) that Indian English poetry really graduated from imitation to authenticity. The third and youngest child of Govin Chunder Dutt, Torulata, born a Hindu, was baptized along with the other members of the family in 1862. She learnt English at a very early age and reading and music were her chief hobbies. Sailing for Europe in 1869, she spent a year in France, studying French, and was thereafter in England for three years. Returning to India in 1873, she died of consumption four years later, at the age of twentyone. One of her father’s sonnets contains a remarkable pen-portrait of her: ‘Puny and elf-like, with dishevelled tresses/Self-willed and shy. . . /Intent to pay her tenderest addresses/ To bird or cat,— but most intelligent.’The fifty odd letters'1 she wrote to her English friend, Miss Martin, reveal an interesting personality. There is inevitably much in them of the usual schoolgirl gossip about the trivial minutiae of daily life—news of the calving of a cow and the killing of a large snake; and at one place one finds her demanding a mosquito curtain for her canaries; but there is something much more also: a sad awareness of the passing of time and strange intimations of maturity, as, for instance, when she declares, ‘I am getting quite old, twenty and some odd months and with such an old-fashioned face that English ladies take me for thirty.’ For one living so sheltered a life, she shows a surprisingly lively interest in the social and political scene. When a European who had killed his syce is reported to have been fined only £2, she comments indignantly, ‘You see how cheap the life of an Indian is in the eyes of an English judge.’ Her comments on the books she reads show a well-developed critical sense. She wonders why Hardy’s heroines ‘generally marry the men they loved the least.’ An impish sense of humour too breaks out occasionally, as when, on being chided by an elderly relative for not getting married yet, she replies demurely, ‘I was only waiting for your permission.’

Her attitude to England is ambivalent. The burden of her letters is, ‘I wish I was there,’ and ‘I so long to be there.’ She misses at home ‘the free life we led there.’ When she drives by the Calcutta harbour, the sight of the steamships fills her with a sudden des're to jump aboard one of these ‘homeward bound’ steamers. She even refers to her own countrymen (quite innocently though) as ‘natives’, and apologizes when pulled up by her British correspondent. But as her study of Sanskrit during the closing years of her life brought her nearer to the springs of her own culture, she ceased to be a ‘Brown Englishwoman’. She now realizes ‘how grand, how sublime, how pathetic our legends are,’ and during the last few months of her life she writes, ‘strange to say I do not much relish the idea of leaving Calcutta. I am very fickle, for it was Iwho regretted the most leaving England. I wonder why this is so.’

Toru Dutt’s tragedy is that she died just when her talent was maturing with her discovery of her roots. Of her two collections, only one appeared in her own life time and that was not in the nature of original work. A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1876) comprises 165 lyrics by about a hundred French poets, (iinstated into English mostly by her, only eight of the pieces including the much-praised ‘Still barred thy door—the far east glows being by her sister Aru. Edmund Gosse’s description of the volume as ‘a wonderful mixture of strength and weakness’51 is a just evaluation. Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan (1882) published posthumously shows how Keatsian in pace was the progress achieved by Toru Dutt during the last two years of her life. Two of these ballads deal with the archetypes of Indian womanhood, Sita and Savitri; four narrate the legends of youngsters, Dhruva, Buttoo, Sindhu and Prehlad; one recounts a legend about the goddess Uma; and Lakshman and king Bharata are the other characters that figure here. As this list indicates, Toru Dutt is the first Indian English poet to make an extensive use of Indian myth and legend, though scattered references to these had been employed by her predecessors. Furthermore, her treatment of these legends reveals, on the whole, an instinctive understanding of the spirit underlying them, though as a recent Christian convert living in a half- anglicized environment at home, she occasionally betrays certain inadequacies. She sings of Savitri’s matchless wifely devotion, her faith in the omnipotence of fate and her belief in Maya; Sunneetee’s enunciation of the doctrine of Karma, and Prehlad’s pantheism with an insider’s sense of conviction. At the same time, in ‘The Royal Ascetic and the Hind,’ she is tempted, at the end, to read a Christian sermon on Divine Love to the reader, thus missing the point of the original tale in theVishnu Parana, which seeks to emphasize the need to concentrate all one’s thoughts not on a worldly being, but

on God, at the moment of death.

Toru Dutt's poetic technique shows a sure grasp of mofe than one poetic mode. 'Savitri' reveals her skill in brisk narration; 'Lakshman' a keen sense of drama, and the sonnet 'Baug- maree' —one of the seven 'miscellaneous poems' included in the collection—a flair for description. But it is again a mark of her peculiar ambivalence that she misses altogether the dramatic irony inherent in the finale of the story of Sindhu (better known as 'Sravana'), where the prophecy of the boy's hapless parents that King Dasaratha too would die of grief at parting from a child comes like a fortunate curse to the King who is childless. Her imagery makes evocative use of local colour. The forest in which Buttoo wanders is full of 'the sombre soul', 'the bitter neem' and 'the seemul, gorgeous as a bride', though one wonders how the 'Pampas', more typical of South America, have found their roots here. A jarring note is similarly struck when the peacocks in Sindhu's forest are endowed with 'Argus wings'. But in describing the Seemul's red flowers she writes what is perhaps her most memorable line: 'Red, red, and startling like a trumpet's sound'—an image surprisingly modern in its use of synaesthesia, a device used so effectively by Edith Sitwell.

Her diction is naturally of the Victorian romantic school, and true to the Ballad motif, she employs archaisms like 'hight' and 'dight'. She gives ample evidence of her prosodic skill in employing different forms like the Ballad measure with its variations (eight syllable quatrain; a mixture of eight and six syllables; lines arranged in eight and twelve line units); Blank verse; five, eight and eleven line stanza forms, and the sonnet. Unlike Sarojini Naidu, she is no singer, and her short poems, like what is perhaps her best-known single piece, 'Our Casuarina Tree', often strike a note of nostalgia. In her narratives she is sometimes flat-footed as in, 'Savitri liked her new life much' and 'Can we in such / A matter delicate, proceed?' Her artistic immaturity is also revealed when, ignoring the lesson to be learned from Milton's deliberate vagueness in his description of Death in Paradise Lost, Book II ('The other shape/If shape is might be called that shape had none') she attempts a detailed description of Yama, the god of Death ('His skin was dark as bronze' etc.) and fails to create the desired effect of awe and terror. And at one place she even descends to bathos, when she makes Savitri take her husband's soul, 'no bigger than a thumb', and run to his lifeless body in which she presumably inserts it, like a clever housewife armed with a do-it-yourself kit swiftly fitting a spare part to a faulty kitchen stove.

But none of these failings is such as a chance to grow .and mature would not

have easily corrected. What is most impressive about Toru Dutt's poetry is its virtually total freedom from imitation (in contrast with Kashiprasad Ghose and M.M. Dutt) at an age when most writers are in their artistic swaddling clothes. She quotes from Pope and Wordsworth, but it would be difficult to cite definite examples of psittacism in her verse. This indicates that hers was an individual talent capable of growing according to the laws of its own nature. It is therefore all the more sad that she died Keatslike, before her pen had gleaned her 'teaming brain.' Edmund Gosse's well-known des- cription of her as 'this fragile blossom of song'2 is certainly misleading. There is nothing 'Glass Menagerie' like about Toru Dutt's poetry. Her best work has the qualities of a quiet strength, of deep emotion held under artistic restraint and an acute awareness of the abiding values of Indian life. Permitted a few more years of life, she could have proved capable of far greater things, as her actual achievement, though slender, unmistakably indicates.

Toru Dutt's authenticity stands out in sharp relief, when one turns to Behramji Merwanji Malabari (1853-1912), whose The Indian Muse in English Garb (1876) appeared in the same year as Toru Dutt's first collection. There is more of the 'English garb' (and that too soiled by the Indian dust) than of the 'Indian Muse' in this slim collection of 32 pieces. It opens with half a dozen specimens of occasional verse, celebrating the 'great and Heav'n-directed Sovereign' Queen Victoria, the 'Sun of India', i.e., the Prince of Wales, and the Prince consort. Even personal emotion fails to give wings to Malabari's pedestrian muse. While lamenting the death of his benefactor, Dr. John Wilson, the best he can manage is'those briny pearls... trembling in your widow's eyes.' The exercises in social criticism like 'The Stages of a Hindu Female Life' and 'Nature Triumphs over Caste', with their stereotyped mouthing of conventional sentiment do more credit to Malabari's reformists zeal than to his muse. Pieces like 'The Folly of War' and 'Defence of Time' Show his pitiful attempts to run with the Neo-classical hare, while in those like'An Ode to Night' and 'Lost Love', he tries unsuccessfully to hunt with the romantic hounds. Atrocious rhymes like 'slavery-mockery' and 'misery- memory' tell an equally dismal tale about Malabari's technique. His best effort is 'A Sketch'—a lively autobiographical piece in Popean Heroic couplets, in which Malabari for once happily gives free rein to his talent for satirical observation of men and manners, which is seen to far better advantage in his prose works.

Apart from Malabari, the then Bombay presidency also heard contemporary minor voices like a fellow-Parsi, Cowasji Nowrosi Vesuvala (Courting the

Muse, 1879); the poet who wrote under the ‘spicy' name ‘Chili Chutnee’ (Social Scraps and Satires,1878), M.M. Kunte (The Risi, 1879), and Nagesh Wishwanath Pal '(1860-1920) who, like Malabari, makes a better showing as a prose writer. His The Angel of Misfortune: A Fairy Tale (1904) is a romantic narrative of about 5000 lines in ten books, recounting the legend of King Vikramaditya of Avanti and Ujjain, his relentless persecution by the god Shani, ‘the Angel of Misfortune’ and his final deliverance through the love of Princess Indira, daughter of the ruler of Champa. Writing under the inevitable shadow of his Romantic and Victorian masters, Pal tells his tale competently in derivative blank verse but unlike Toru Dutt, he cannot make his legend pulsate with life.

It was, however, not Bombay, but Bengal—the first home oflndian English literature—that was to continue to dominate the poetic scene for many more years. Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), a cousin of Toru Dutt, was an Indian Civil Service official who retired voluntarily at the age of fortynine in order to devote himself to scholarly and creative writing. He wrote in both Bengali and English; all his original creative work was in Bengali and his English verse all in the form of translations, while he wrote reflective and critical prose in English. His Lays of Ancient India (1894) is a collection of workmanlike versetranslations from Sanskrit and Prakrit classics including the Rigveda, the Upanishads, Kalidasa and Bharavi, and Buddhist texts like theDhammapada. The translations of the Mahabharata (1895) and the Ramayana (1899) are a far more ambitious undertaking. Dutt’s aim was to produce condensed versions of these two great Indian epics; and the method he adopts is not abridgement, but the selection of major incidents for complete translation, with the linking up of these portions by short connecting notes. He thus reduces the 48,000 lines of the Ramayanaand the 200,000 of the Mahabharata to 4,000 each; and copying the model of the Western epic, he adopts the twelve book structure, whereas the Sanskrit Ramayana contains seven kandas and the Mahabharata eighteen parvas. In his epilogue to the translation of the Mahabharata, Dutt claims to have tried to preserve something of the ‘musical movement’ of the original in the English translation. With this aim in view, he employs the ‘Locksley Hall’ metre as the ‘nearest equivalent’ to the Anustubh or slokametre of bis originals.

If the epic sweep and complexity of these Hindu classics is inevitably lost in Dutt’s condensations, the spirit of the originals also evaporates as a result of this extremely unhappy metrical choice. The sloka metre, with a pause dividing each line into two parts, has the qualities of simplicity, vigour and energy, native to folk poetry, and lends itself easily to trenchant and frequently epigrammatic

expression. With its easy flexibility, it is also capable of almost endless varieties of mood, tone and effect. These are precisely the qualities which the ‘Locksley Hall’ metre, with its jingling rhythm (which inevitably palls when served in large doses), its uniform flow and its sophistication and polish, singularly lacks. Furthermore, in order to fill in the long flowing lines of his chosen measure, the translator is often compelled to use a lot of padding, thus disturbing the taut structure of the original. For instance, Sita’s memorable words to Rama in the Ayodhyakanda:

Na pita natmajb natma na mata na sakhljanah Iha pretya qa narlnam patirekd gatih sada

are translated extremely loosely as ‘Sire nor son nor loving brother rules the wedded woman's state/With her lord she falls or rises, with her consort courts her fate.’ Here, the concentrated epigrammatic force of the last fout key words is irretrievably lost in the diffuse second line of Dutt’s rendering which contains more than three times the words in the original without a third of its clinching quality. While acknowledging fully Dutt’s services in making these two great Hindu epics easily accessible to the Western reader in the popular idiom of late Victorianism, the final verdict on his translations must be the same as that well-known assessment of Pope’s Homer: ‘A pretty poem . .. but not Homer'.

Among the younger contemporaries of R.C. Dutt was Man- mohan Ghose (1869-1924), whose poetic career is a classic example of how the lack of roots stunts the growth of an artist cursed with ‘an exile’s heart’ in his bosom. Educated in a convent school away from home, Manmohan was sent to England for higher education at the age of ten. English became his first language and his own mother tongue remained almost a closed book to him. His overpowering sense of alienation was accentuated by an unhappy childhood and adolescence. He never perhaps recovered fully from the childhood trauma of his mother’s insanity and his father’s sternness. (He describes his father as ‘so strangely unsentimental that I am assured he would vivisect me if he thought that was my highest good.’24) As he once wrote to Laurence Binyon, 'Thus from childhood I was subject to fits of gloom and despondency which grew with my age... . Also, I believe there is something repulsive about me. Nobody ever took a liking to me. ... As a boy I often perceived with jealousy that my brothers were always perferred to me.’ Going upto Oxford in 1887, where he specialized in classical literature, he made friends with the poets of the Decadent school and had his poems published in the collection Primavera of which Binyon was one of the

editors. Unwilling to return to India after his graduation, he once wrote to Binyon, 'I shall try to persuade my father to let me stay in England for good; I am sure with the tastes I have I shall be of no use in India ’2* And again, ‘There is nothing I dread so much as going back to India. I feel quite at home with my surroundings here. ... There I should be utterly out of sympathy with everything. I know neither the people nor the language—all is strange and alien. I am fourfifths an Englishman, if not entirely one; and it is in England I should do the most good to my country and myself.’21 But all his efforts to get a post in the British Museum and the civil service failed. Compelled to return to India in 1894, after the death of his father, he became a professor of English in a Government college in Bengal. Utterly frustrated and totally alienated from the life around, he wrote to Binyon, ‘Green things are indeed wonderful here, but brown things (that is man) is absurdly out of sympathy with me.’ In another letter he laments, ‘For years not a friendly step has crossed my threshold. With English people in India there can be only a nodding acquaintance or official connection, and with Indians my purely English upbringing and breeding puts me out of harmony; denationalised, that is then the word for me.’ His marriage in 1898 and the subsequent birth of a daughter brought him a brief spell of happiness, before tragedy struck in 1905, when his wife was permanently paralysed by a heavy fall, though she lingered on, with intermittent spells of recovery till her death in 1918. Manmohan himself died six years later, a blind, broken man, who had planned just a few months before to settle down in England after his imminent retirement.

Manmohan Ghose’s poems in Primavera (1890), which also included the work of Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Cripps, are typical of the mood of world-weariness and yearning and the colourful aestheticism of the Eighteen Nineties.Love Songs and Elegies (1898), while expressing the same strain more effectively, adds to it a celebration of Nature, and a surer command of image and phrase. Songs of Love and Death (1926), published posthumously, shows the poet still lost in the fin de siecle world, as a lyric like ‘London’ (‘This is London.

I lie and twine in the root of things’) shows. Orphic Mysteries (‘Songs of Pain, Passion and the Mystery of Death’) andImmortal Eve (‘Songs of the Triumph and Mystery of Beauty’) were the products of a lyric upsurge following the death of the poet’s wife in 1918, though they were published as late as in 1974, in the collected edition. Here, the poet struggles through a direct and often moving expression of personal sorrow towards consolation and the reassurance of a reunion: ‘You my love/ Did with the roses burn/where you are gone I shall

not fear/ With roses to return.’ Perseus, the Gorgon Slayer, an epic, planned as amagnum opus, was begun in 1898 but abandoned in 1914, under official pressure, consequent to unfounded allegations that it was a seditious political allegory. This fragment of six (out of the projected twelve) books runs to about 7500 lines of blank verse, and was to have for its central theme the idea of progress in human history and the slaying of the spirit of stagnation and annihilation (Medusa), which makes progress possible. An elegant pastiche entirely classical in conception and execution, this is a copy-book example of the ‘epic delusion’ to which Indian English poets of the Nineteenth century, like their American counterparts have often succumbed. Nollo and Damayanti, a verse drama begun in 1916, after the abandonment ofPerseus, the Gorgon Slayer, also remained incomplete and is of interest chiefly as a rather belated attempt to handle Indian poetic material, though the principal characters here are shadows of Shakespearian figures bearing Indian names. Adam Alarmed in Paradise (1918), a ‘lyric epic', also remained a fragment.

Manmohan Ghose’s work reveals a limited but genuine poetic talent which, however, failed to grow to its fullest stature. Hovering all through his life between the two worlds of the England of the Eighteen Nineties and India—the one ‘dead’, and the other ‘powerless to be born’ for him—he never fulfilled the early promise of Primavera. His poetic equipment was by no means inconsiderable. Perfectly at home with the English language, he bad an unfailing sense of rhythm and a fine sensitivity to the sound and feel of words. His delight in Nature and his passion for beauty were intense. His longer poems like ‘Inda’s Idol’ show that along with a delicate lyricism, he was also capable of sustained poetic flight in the narrative mode. Unfortunately, his spiritual home was the England of the Age of Decadence. Long after he had been exiled from it, he continued to be unaware that Camelot had totally vanished, while he equally disastrously failed to realize the supreme importance of striking his roots in the land of his birth, to which he returned, not as a native but as an alien. He was therefore doomed to remain a minor figure and could not become a major voice.

A younger brother of Manmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose (Sri Aurobindo) (1872-1950) provides a striking contrast. Though he had very much the same kind of upbringing as his elder brother, whom he accompanied to England at the age of seven, Sri Aurobindo found his roots in Indian culture and thought immediately on his return to India from Cambridge in 1893. Manmohan’s career is a sad story of arrested artistic development; Sri Aurobindo’s, a glorious chronicle of progress from patriot to poet, yogi and seer. After a brief, quiet spell

in Baroda State Service (1893-1906) and a much shorter but far more hectic one as a political radical (1906-10), which landed him in jail for one year, Sri Aurobindo escaped to Pondicherry (then a French possession) in 1910, and made it his permanent home thereafter. His incipient mystical leanings had become apparent immediately on his return to India. As he set foot on the Indian soil, ‘a feeling of the Infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies’30 came to him, and instead of the murky pall that had surrounded him while in England, now ‘a vast calm descended upon him and surrounded him and remained with him for long months afterwards.’31 These tendencies strengthened by yogic practices led, when he was in Alipore Jail, to a remarkable mystic experience which he described as ‘Narayana Darshan’. Continuing his yoga at Pondicherry, he was joined in 1914 by a French lady, Madame Mirra Richard (later known as the ‘Mother’), who recognised in him the guru of her own quest. After another significant spiritual experience characterized by him as the descent of a new power of consciousness, on 24 November 1926, Sri Aurobindo withdrew into complete seclusion for some time. He continued his spiritual quest and his literary work comprising poetry, drama, philosophical, religious, cultural and critical writings unceasingly till his death on 5 December 1950.

Sri Aurobindo’s long poetic career spanning sixty years yielded an impressive volume of verse of several kinds—lyrical, narrative, philosophical, and epic. The early Short Poems (1890- 1900) are mostly minor verse of the ‘romantic twilight’ of the Eighteen Nineties, celebrating the characteristic themes of love, sorrow, death and liberty in a typically romantic style to which the introduction of Greek names like ‘Glaucus’ and ‘Atheon’ adds a classical touch, to be expected of a young poet who, like his elder brother, was an accomplished classical scholar. The call of mystic India is already heard here in the Envo5, in which the poet hears Saraswati and the Ganges beckoning him. 0 1 Short Poems 1895-1908, written after Sri Aurobindo’s return to India strike a note of rapturous mystic awareness in pieces like ‘Invitation' and ‘Revelation'. In . In 1930 and 1930-1950, he attempts reflective and symbolic verse as in ‘The Rakshasas'and ‘The Meditations of Mandavya'. Sri Aurobindo also wrote some remarkable sonnets, including 'Transformation', which distils the essence of a mystic experience and that trenchant comment on modern technology— ‘A Dream of Surreal Science'. The Poems in New Metres included inCollected Poems(Collected Works, Vol. V) contain some of his best-known mystical lyrics like ‘The Bird of Fire’ (1933), ‘Thought the Paraclete’ (1934) and ‘Rose of God’ (1934) which are charged with an emotional rapture, a verbal exuberance and a

passion for audacious technical innovation comparable to Hopkins in his most characteristic vein.

Among the longer poems of the early period are three complete narratives: ‘Urvasie’, ‘Love and Death’ and ‘Baji Prabhou’ [sic.] and six fragments including four with an Indian background—‘The Rishi’, ‘Chitrangada’, ‘Uloupie’ and ‘The Tale of Nala’, while of the remaining two, ‘The Vigil of Thaliard’ has the setting of a medieval chanson and ‘Khaled of the Sea: An Arabian Romance’ is an Eastern tale with Keatsian opulence. ‘Urvasie’, a poem of about 1300 lines of blank verse and in four cantos, is a retelling of the ancient Indian legend of King Pururavus and his love for the celestial damsel, Urvasie—a legend immortalized by Kalidasa in his play,Vikramorvasia. The poet makes a determined effort to give an epic cast to the narrative by employing epic similes, set descriptions and Miltonic diction, even experimenting (rather successfully at times) with the music of proper names as in this catalogue of the celestial beauties: ‘Menaca, Misracayshie, Mullica/Rumbha, Nelabha, Shela, Nolinie/Lolita, Lavonya and Tilottama—/Many delightful names.’ There is also an unsuccessful attempt to secure a larger thematic dimension to this story of personal love, by the introduction in the closing stages of the poem of an inconclusive discussion of the question whether Pururavas has failed in his kingly duty to his country by opting for reunion with Urvasie in heaven. The elaborate epic machinery has the look of an intruder in this narrative with its essentially romantic ethos; and the best parts of the poem are those which offer a lyrical evocation of intense love, with all its agonies and ecstasies.

Love is also the central theme of ‘Love and Death’, a poem of about 1100 lines of blank verse based on an ancient Hindu legend with a remarkable resemblance to the Greek legend of Orpheus and Euridice. It is the story of Ruru, son of the rishi Bhrigu, and his beloved Pramadvara (called ‘Priyamvada’ by the poet, since he thought this would be ‘more manageable to the English tongue’), the daughter of the celestial nymph, Menaka. Priyamvada dies of snake* bite and is carried to the nether world of Death. Ruru, braving heavy odds, finds his way into this region and brings her back. Here again an essentially lyrical narrative is unsuccessfully sought to be given an epic colouring. Ruru’s descent into the nether world obviously recalls Homer, Virgil and Dante and there are the inevitable Miltonic similes, inversions and Latinized diction. Sri Auro- bindo’s claims for the poem are far more modest than those by some of his admirers. In a letter, he observes, ‘For full success it (the poem) should have had a more faithfully Hindu colouring, but it was written a score of years ago (1899) when I

had not penetrated to the heart of the Indian idea and its traditions, and the shadow of the Greek underworld and Tartarus with the sentiment of life and love and death which hangs about them has got into the legendary framework of the Indian patala and hells.'

Of the three longer poems, 'Baji Prabhou' (a more correct transliteration, to the Maharashtrian ear, would have been 'Prabhu') is, on the whole, the most successful, in fulfilling its limited. purpose of spirited narration of military heroism. As the Author's note on the poem points out, 'this poem is founded on the historical incident of the heroic self-sacrifice of Baji Prabhou Dcshpande, who to cover Shivaji's retreat, held the pass of Rangana for two hours with a small company of men against twelve thousand Moguls [sic]. Beyond the single fact of this great exploit there has been no attempt to preserve historical accuracy.'33While a creative artist is certainly entitled to take liberties—even great liberties—with historical fact, the poet's apparently hazy acquaintance with the story of Baji (known to every school boy in Baroda State where Sri Aurobindo lived at the time) has unfortunately made him miss the crucial point in the episode, thus affecting its very artistic potential. He makes his hero hold back the enemy until Shivaji returns from Raigurh in 'two brief hours'. Apart from the fact that this would have been an impossible feat in pre-aviation days, since Raigurh is more than a hundred miles from Rangana, the reasons for Shivaji's dash to Raigurh and back are left obscure, thus robbing Baji's heroic stand of any weighty purpose. In actual fact, Baji's task was to contain the enemy in the Rangana pass until Shivaji, fleeing from besieged Panhala to Vishalgad (about sixty miles away) reached the safety of the fort. (The pass was only a few miles away from Shivaji's destination). Immediately upon doing so, he was to fire the cannon and Baji died with the reassuring boom of the cannon making sweet music in his ears. (The poet has also confused the Moghul with the Adilshahi forces, which were actually pursuing Shivaji here—but that is a detail which should make only the historian wince more). Sri Aurobindo's hero dies fighting, but without earning the satisfaction of knowing that he has ensured the safety of. his master. This one flaw apart, 'Baji Prabhou' is a stirring narrative of battle in virile blank verse which has something of the energy and vigour of 'The Battle of Maldon', with some evocative description of the ragged Deccan landscape and many rousing rhetorical flourishes.

With his classical scholarship, Sri Aurobindo had a constant fascination for the quantitative metre. Obviously undaunted by Tennyson's denunciation of 'barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters', and contrary to accepted opinion,

he held that ‘the freedom of the use of quantitative verse for the creation of new original rhythms would be enough to add a wide field to the large and opulent estate of English poetry. His two most ambitious efforts in quantitative hexameters are ‘Ilion’ and ‘Ahana’. Of the proposed (and inevitable) twelve books of ‘llion’, an epic entirely on the Homeric pattern, the poet was able to complete only eight and a part of the ninth, totalling about 5000 lines. Set against the background of the Trojan War, the poem centres round the clash between Achilles and the Amazonian Queen Penthesilea. In addition to many Homeric characters, the poet also puts the entire epic machinery into operation, including catalogues of armies, descriptions of battle, long debates and the intervention of supernatural agencies, etc. To have sustained all this—and that too in a difficult metre— almost but not quite, to the bitter epic end (even Sri Aurobindo faltered, when actually in sight of his goal of twelve books) is indeed a tour de force. The one thing sadly lacking is the living force of the poet’s own voice (which is heard unmistakably in ‘Savitri’), there being too much of Homer and too little of Sri Aurobindo in ‘llion’.

In ‘Ahana’, Sri Aurobindo has attempted an even more ambitious technical feat, viz., a long poem in more than 250 rhymed hexameter couplets. Ahana is the Divine Dawn who descends into the world and is greeted by the ‘Hunters of Joy’, ‘the Seekers of Knowledge’ and ‘the Climbers in quest of Power’. She takes pity on Man and finally assures him, ‘Thou shall not suffer always nor cry to me, lured and forsaken.’ She invites him to ‘follow the dance I shall teach thee'; this is the Divine Dance of Delight, symbolized in the Ras of Krishna’s Brindavan. While the ordinary reader is likely to find the long- and opulent descriptions and the even longer rhetorical speeches in spacious hexameters frequently overpowering, the initiated will not fail to realise that ‘Ahana’ is, in many ways, a prologue to ‘Savitri'. The central theme of the descent of the Divine to the earth, the symbolism of ‘Dawn’ and the allegorical figures like ‘the Hunters of Joy', etc. distinctly anticipate ‘Savitri'.

In fact, the entire poetic career of Sri Aurobindo may be seen as a long and arduous preparation for the writing of hismagnum opus, ‘Savitri’ (first definitive edition, 1954). In the mystical short poems of the early and middle periods he had expressed bis intimations of divinity briefly in the lyric mode; the longer narratives—‘Urvasie’, ‘Love and Death’ and ‘Baji Prabhou’—had all shown him to be preoccupied with the theme of death and separation and the different ways to neutralize these negative forces in human life. In the first two of these poems and in 'Ilion'he had trained himself in the epic mode. All these lessons learned

earlier contributed to the making of ‘Savitri', an ambitious epic of 23, 813 lines, in twelve books and forty-nine cantos, on which the poet worked for fifty years and more, though a part of the poem remained incomplete at the time of his death. Originally written as a simple legendary verse narrative in two parts and eight books, the work was continuously revised by the poet almost till the end of bis days and shaped into an epic of humanity and divinity, of death and the life divine. Sri Aurobindo himself describes it as ‘a sort of poetic philosophy of the spirit and of life,’3* and ‘an experiment in mystic poetry, spiritual poetry cast into a symbolic figure.’**

‘Savitri’ is a retelling of the well-known legend of prince Satyavan and Savitri, his devoted wife, who rescues him from Death, narrated in about 7C0 lines in the Mahabharata, and is a story of pure love conquering death. Sri Aurobindo makes no substantial changes in the outlines of his rather uncomplicated narrative, so far as the external action is concerned; but he invests the major characters with a symbolism all his own and also adds a new dimension of a highly complex inner action to the original. Thus, Aswapathy’s yoga is only briefly mentioned in the original; Sri Aurobindo expands it to fill slightly less than half the poem. Similarly, Savitri’s penance, described equally briefly in the Mahabharata story, is developed into a yoga which takes the poet 5,000 lines to expound. The final confrontation between Savitri and Death is also expanded more than tenfold, so as to enable the poet to present his spiritual message.

Both the main aim and the poetic strategy of ‘Savitri’ are indicated in the sub-title, ‘A legend and a symbol’. The ancient Hindu legend has been made here a vehicle of Sri Aurobindo’s symbolic expression of his own philosophy of Man’s realization of the ‘life divine’ on this earth. The symbolism has'been explained by Sri Aurobindo himself.37 Savitri is ‘The Divine Word, daughter of the sun, goddess of the Supreme Truth, who comes down and is born to save’; Satyavan is ‘the Soul carrying the Divine Truth of Being within itself, but descended into the grip of death and ignorance’; and Aswapathy, Savitri’s father, who does penance for eighteen years is ‘the concentrated energy of spiritual endeavour’ that helps man ‘to rise from the mortal to the imm'drtal planes’. Sri Aurobindo thus sings, not of ‘Arms and the Man’, but of the Spirit and the Woman incarnate as Truth. His epic recounts how Man (Aswapathy) through arduous spiritual endeavour succeeds in breaking through the barriers of mortal nature and finally compels the Divine (Savitri) to descend on to this earth to save the human soul (Satyavan) which is the prisoner of mortality from death.

For an epic of such immense length (it is twice as long as Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained put together and the only epic longer than it is Kazantzakis's Odyssey, a Modern Sequel), 'Savitri'has a well-planned structure. Its twelve books are divided into three parts. The poem begins in medias res describing the day on which Satyavan is to die, but Part I comprising the first three books is devoted mainly to an exposition of Aswa- pathy's spiritual quest, cast in the form of a retrospective narration. His yoga involves both descent into Night and ascent through carefully mapped out stages to the World Soul till he gains Supreme Knowledge. Not content with personal salvation and yearning to secure the Divine descent on to the earth, he prays to the Divine Mother, who responds and promises that 'one shall descend and break the iron law/Change Nature's doom to the lone Spirit's power.' Thus reassured, Aswapathy returns to the earth.

Part II (Books IV to VIII) narrates the story of Savitri's birth and upbringing, her search for her life-mate, her insistence on marrying Satyavan ('I know that thou —only thou art he') in spite of Sage Narad's warning that the youth is doomed to, die within a year, and her brief but happy married life till the fateful day of Satyavan's death. Book VIII describes Savitri's yoga for fortifying herself for her coming encounter with Death. Her quest is for total self-realization, which alone can give her the power to defy Death. Quite as arduous as that of her father, this quest, also recounted in equally carefully marked out stages, is described allegorically in terms of a long and difficult journey. At last, in the last chamber of a mystic cave, Savitri meets her 'secret soul':'They rushed into each other and grew one.'Two more realizations follow: that her secret soul is supracosmic, and that she can achieve a superior consciousness and defeat the forces of Negation by suffering the world's sorrow. Armed with this realization Savitri returns to her daily routine, awaiting that last meeting with death. At the end of Part II, we are thus again back to the fateful day on which the action of the epic begins.

Part III (Books IX to XII) describes the struggle between Savitri and Death, who siezes the dead Satyavan's soul, as predicted. In the long debates between the two, Death, the 'dark- browed sophist' employs various strategies including casuistry, intimidation and blandishments, but Savitri refuses to accept defeat. Finally, upon Savitri's claim that she herself is part of the Divine Truth, Death challenges her to prove it by showing her form as Truth. As she does so, refulgent in all her divine glory, Death, utterly demoralized, frantically implores Night, Hell and the Inconscient for support, but in vain. As he panics and flees,

Satyavan returns to life. In Book XI, Savitri finds Death himself now transformed into a Being of Light. A final trial, however, still awaits her. A voice from her own heart tempts her by suggesting that now that she has conquered Death, she and her husband need not return to the earth at all, but accept individual bliss in the higher world, since there is no guarantee that the whole of mankind can achieve what she has done. A celestial voice asks her four times to make up her mind. Refusing to be tempted, Savitri is firm in her resolve to return to the earth, 'to change the earthly life to life divine'. The Supreme now reassures her that her choice is right—that, in fact, it is His own choice. In a long speech, He tells the youthful couple that they represent God's dual power—Savitri the 'Force' and Satyavan 'the soul/operating on earth to divinise it'. In the concluding book, Savitri and Satyavan return to 'the manyvoiced human world' in the evening, while Night 'in her bosom nursed a greater dawn*. It is noteworthy that the actual action of the epic takes place on a single day, as in James Joyce's Ulysses, all the rest being cast in the form of retrospective narration.

As this outline indicates, 'Savitri' is not just another imitative and stale exercise in the western epic mode; it is an utterly unconventional, highly original and deeply philosophical Hindu epic in which Sri Aurobindo has 'metred the rhythm-beats of eternity'. It is clearly an epic with a difference—a bold experiment in the epic genre. Unlike the traditional epic, it has very little action in it and most of what happens in it takes place on the symbolic plane, in the regions of inner reality. Instead of the usual epic canvas crowded with characters, it contains hardly half a dozen characters in all and the major figures are all symbolic. 'Savitri' is thus an 'inner epic', an epic of the soul and the Oversoul. Nor is it, like Toru Dutt's ballad, a simple retelling of an ancient Hindu myth. It is a distillation of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Integral Yoga, according to which 'God must be born on earth and be as Man/Tbat Man being human may grow even as God.' Furthermore, its central thesis is in line with modern thinking about the evolution of Man and human consciousness. It has surprisingly close affinities to modern theories such as Bergson's idea of the elan vital and creative evolution and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's vision of a future, when Man graduating into a superior consciousness will grow into more than Man. 'Savitri' is thus an exciting and prophetic vision of a glorious future, not a dull recital of a dead past.

The metre of 'Savitri' is also an equally bold departure from established poetic practice. The poem is written in 'blank verse without enjambment (except rarely)

each line a thing by itself and arranged in paragraphs of one, two, three, four or five lines (rarely a longer series), in an attempt to catch something of the Upanishadic and Kalidasian movement, as far as that is a possibility in English.'38 As Sri Aurobindo adds, 'You can't take that as a model—it is too difficult a rhythm-structure to be a model.'39 The obvious danger in the use of end-stopped blank verse in a poem of such dimensions is that of stiffness and rigidity in rhythm and there are passages in which the poet does pay the expected penalty. But it has often gone unnoticed that Sri Aurobindo secures considerable variety and flow of rhythm in a number of ways such as frequent modulation, changes in ordering of the line-units, alterations in pace by the admixture of Latinized and simple diction, constant shifts in the position of caesura in individual lines and consequent variations in texture. In fact, his technique is similar to that of Pope's heroic couplets in these respects and like Pope he too frequently achieves the epigrammatic quality time and again as in lines like 'To see her was a summons to adore.'

The diction and imagery of 'Savitri' are manifestly influenced by Miltonic and Romantic models—the obvious models available to Sri Aurobindo when he started writing the poem. The poem abounds in abstract, Latinized diction, Keatsian double adjectives and typically Romantic imagery. This has often led the prejudiced critic to dismiss it summarily as a totally derivative poem. Closer scrutiny reveals that the diction of the poem often attains a stark simplicity when occasion demands, as in Savitri's rejoinder to Death, 'I am, I love, I see, I act, I will.' And as for all those abstract words, the poet obviously needs them, not because he wants to out-Milton Milton, but because he has to deal with things of the spirit. Again, those who pigeonhole the imagery of the poem as totally 'romantic' strangely ignore the great variety of images in 'Savitri', some of which are'modern' in the best vein of poetry in the age of technology: for instance, the universe is an 'ocean of electrical energy' and 'Dark beings' come 'televisioned from the gulfs of night'. Surely, a poet who talks of the 'calculus of Destiny' and the ?

Mystic Morse of God' cannot be labelled a cringing camp-follower of Milton and Keats.

Other charges usually levelled at 'Savitri' are that it is too long, repetitious and vague. Mere length can surely be no flaw in an epic, the art of which consists in 'deliberate amplification'and only the casual reader and the careless critic will complain of repetition, in view of the sharply defined outlines of the entire

narrative. In fact, though the motif of quest is repeated.

Aswapathy's yoga is clearly differentiated from that of Savitri in its various stages. And one strongly suspects that those who complain of vagueness in the narrative have simply not cared to read the detailed accounts of the journeys of Aswapathy and Savitri which are visualised in extremely vivid, concrete terms. To those who find the poem totally lacking in human interest (one recalls a similar complaint against Paradise Lost) the poet has already given an answer in his subtitle, 'a legend and a symbol'. And as already noted, those apt to dismiss 'Savitri' as another traditional exercise in 'weak-kneed spiritual poetry' have strangely shut their eyes to Sri Aurobindo's world-view and its urgent contemporary relevance.

It is, however, not easy to assess 'Savitri' as a work of art, in view of the poet's claim that there is 'a general overmind influence'40 in the poem, and that the entire work, including the corrections, came from a higher source. This has naturally led some of his admirers to regard the poem purely as'a revelation',41 and surely no critical evaluation is at all possible under such conditions. If it is permissible to try to evaluate this kind of 'overmind' poetry by using the obviously limited tools of the present day critical mind—and of one individual mind with all its numerous inadequacies, in particular—one may notice several possible limitations. Even the most devout admirers will have to concede that the poem does have ups and downs of creative excellence inevitable in a composition of such huge proportions. Thus, the incomplete Book VIII ('The Book of Death') is easily the weakest part of the epic, where both thought and style suffer. In Book V ('The Book of Love') where the emphasis is clearly on the human rather than the symbolic aspect of the characters of Savitri and Satyavan, there is a definite lack of immediacy; and in the inordinately long speech of of the Supreme at the close of Book XI ('The Book of Everlasting Day') the poem totters perilously on the edge of the gulf between philosophical poetry and versified philosophy. A few portions are so dense that they remain obscure to any but the most devout; nor are passages wanting where the end-stopped blank verse has become flat-footed and the authentic accents of Sri Aurobindo have been drowned in echoes from his models.

'Savitri' is thus a major epic but not a perfect poem. It is however, an audacious attempt to pour God's wine which is perpetually new—into the age-old epic bottle, transforming the receptacle itself in the process. With all its limitations—and they are many—it remains a landmark in Indian English poetry. The first

major poetic voice in the annals of Indian English verse, Sri Aurobindo is a poet of varied achievement in lyric, narrative and epic modes.

Sri Aurobindo invites comparison with another prominent contemporary, who was actually his senior in age, but whose work in English began much later. Rabindranath Tagore (1861- 1941), hailed by Mahatma Gandhi as 'The Great Sentinel', was one of those versatile men of his Age, who touched and enriched modern Indian life at several points. Poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, composer, painter, thinker, educationist, nationalist and internationalist—such were the various roles that Tagore played with uniform distinction during his long and fruitful career. In his poetry (as in his work in the forms of drama and the short story), Tagore presents a case of literary bilingualism which is perhaps without a parallel in literary history. With the exception of a solitary poem —'The Child'(1931)—and a few verse epigrams originally written in English, he wrote in Bengali, and creatively translated some of his work into English with such remarkable success that his very first effort won him the Nobel Prize for literature and to this day he remains the only Indian English writer to win this distinction. Grandson of Prince Dwaraknath Tagore, who was an associate of Rammobun Roy, and son of Maharshi Debendra- nath, a saintly Brahmo Samaj leader, Rabindranath, born in a rich and cultured family, had little formal schoqling, but his sharp poetic sensibility manifested itself very early. The semi-mystical experience (described in his Bengali poem, 'The Awakening of the Waterfall') at the age of twenty-one, when, as he stood watching the sun rise, 'all of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my .eyes and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy swelling on every side,'42 perhaps provides the key to Tagore's major poetry of which, as he himself said, the chief theme was 'the relation between the finite and the infinite.'43 As a young man, his work as manager of the family estates in North Bengal involved frequent visits in a house-boat on inland water-ways to the countryside. This brought opportunities for introspection, contemplation of Nature in her changing moods and close acquaintance with rural life and character, all of which provided a secure base for most of his work both in verse and prose.

Tagore's career as an Indian English poet began by sheer accident. In 1912, on the eve of his departure to England for medical treatment, he tried his hand at translating some of his Bengali poems into English. The manuscript, taken to England, was lost in the Tube Railway, retrieved by Tagore's son Rathindranath, and came later to be rapturously hailed by William Rothenstein and W.B. Yeats.

The rest is history. Gitanjali (1912) took the literary world of London by storm and was followed in quick succession by The Gardener (1913) and The Crescent Moon (1913). The award of the Nobel Prize came in the same year. More collections followed: Fruit-Gathering (1916), Stray Birds (1916), Lover's Gift and Crossing (1918) and The Fugitive (1921). By this time Tagore's reputation in the English-speaking world had already suffered a disastrous decline. Only two piore volumes in English appeared: Fireflies (1928) and the posthumously published Poems (1942) of which all but the last nine were translated by Tagore himself.

The task of the assessment of Tagore as an Indian English poet is extremely difficult owing to a number, of factors. First, his literary reputation in the English-speaking world has'swung to the two opposite extremes of temporary adulation and unthinking condemnation; and what is even more puzzling is that the most vociferous of his latter-day detractors—W.B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, for instance—were themselves his gushing admirers earlier. Secondly, Tagore's own view of his English verse is highly ambivalent. He writes to his niece, 'I did not undertake this task in a spirit of reckless bravado; I simply felt an urge to recapture, through the medium of another language, the feelings and sentiments which had created such a feast of joy within me in past days.'44And again, in another place, he declares, Iwas possessed by the pleasure of receiving anew my feelings as expressed in a foreign tongue. I was making fresh acquaintance with my own heart by dressing it in other clothes.' At the same time, he also tells his niece, 'That I cannot write English is such a patent fact that I never had even the vanity to feel ashamed of it. If anybody wrote an English note asking me to tea, I did not feel equal to answering it. Perhaps you think that by now I have got over that delusion, but in no way am I deluded that I have composed in English.'48 It is difficult to reconcile this with what Tagore has said earlier to his niece in the same letter. Furthermore, Tagore's Bengali critics—naturally specially privileged—usually find themselves compelled to judge his English verse only in comparison with the Bengali original, and thus prejudge the issue of the real artistic worth of Tagore's English poetry (which they generally declare to be inferior to the Bengali version). It is manifest that a just and fair assessment of Tagore as an Indian English poet is possible only when none of these factors is allowed to colour one's judgement. Tagore's English verse must be evaluated solely on the strength of the English text before us, both as regards content and form, and every other consideration must be held irrelevant.

The central theme of Gitanjali, Tagore*s finest achievement in English verse, is

devotion and its motto is, ‘I am here to sing thee songs.’ (Poem No. xv). These songs, firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian saint poetry, yet reveal a highly personal quest for the Divine, characterized by a great variety of moods and approaches. In his heart, the poet has ‘cut a path where fall Thy feet.’ Tagore sees God as ‘unbroken perfection’, as the giver of ‘simple great gifts', ‘infinite gifts’ which ‘come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass and still thou pourest and still there is room to fill.’ But on occasion, He is also the ‘King of the fearful night’, armed with the ‘mighty sword, flashing as a flame, heavy as a bolt of thunder.’ He is everywhere, the light of his music ‘illumines the world’; ‘every moment and every age, every day and every night, he comes, comes, ever comes.’ He is not to be found in the temple; ‘he is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the pathmaker is breaking stones.’ Hence, deliverance is not for the poet in renunciation; for one need not give up this world, itself a beautiful creation of God, in order to reach Him (this is one of the key ideas in all Tagore’s work). Hence again, mortality is no tragedy, for Death is only God’s servant and messenger, and when he arrives, the poet can say, ‘When I go from here let this be my parting word, that what I have seen is unsurpassable’ (lines which were reportedly quoted by Wilfred Owen to his mother upon going to the War) The poet adds, ‘In this playhouse of infinite forms I have had my play and here have I caught sight of Him that is formless.’ But Tagore’s pilgrimage is not entirely a comfortable pilgrimage of joy. There are moments of despair and frustration too, in it. At one place, the poet laments, ‘He came and sat by my side but I woke not. What a cursed sleep it was, O miserable me!. . .Alas, why are my nights all thus lost?’ He also ruefully realizes that he is a prisoner, who forged his own chain ‘very carefully’; and at another place he watches helplessly as ‘they break into my sacred shrine, strong and turbulent, and snatch with unholy greed the offerings from God’s altar.’ Pitifully, he prays to God to ‘strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.’ Tagore’s final cry, however, is: ‘Like a flock of homesick cranes flying night and day back to their mountain nests let all my life take its voyage to its eternal home in one salutation to thee.’

The hundred and odd pieces in Gitanjati, bound by the cen- tral thread of the devotional quest, exhibit a great variety of form also—a feature surprisingly ignored by those who Hhve hastened to accuse Tagore of monotony. Apart from the fact that they vary substantially in length, according to idea and mood, they also range from a brief lyric cry (No. XLV) to dramatic episode (No. L); and from allegory (No. LXIV) to rhetorical flourish (No. XXXV). The style too shows a corresponding variety of expression. In moments of lyrical intensity it

takes wing, propelled by rhythmical repetition, alliteration and assonance, as in ‘Have you not heard his silent steps? He comes, comes, ever comes’; and ‘Light, my light, the worldfilling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light.’ It, however, can also move appropriately nearer to the no man’s land of poetic prose, when a strong narrative element demands it, as in: 'I had gone a-begging from door to door in the village path, when thy golden chariot appeared in the distance like a gorgeous dream and I wondered who was this King of all kings. Above all, whatever the mode of expression, there is always a verbal control, a precision of imagery and an unmistakable sense of disciplined rhythm as in Whitman at his best, though the tone is far quieter, the harmonies more muted and the general impression one of delicacy and grace rather than energy and force.

The Gardener mostly presents Tagore, the poet of love. Possibly influenced by Browning of whom be was a great admirer, Tagore exhibits a Browningesque variety and complexity in his love poetry, though his setting, unlike that of the British poet, is invariably rural and feudal. Like Browning, Tagore too is capable of both the subjective and objective approaches, and can offer both a direct outpouring of emotion and the poetry of situations, of which the very first piece in the Gardener (The dialogue between the Servant and the Queen) is a fine example. Furthermore, unlike most love poets (and here his resemblance to Browning is specially marked), Tagore is able to present both the male and the female points of view in love. For the lover in Tagore, Love has many facets. It can be an intense and eager longing, an all-enveloping passion (‘Like a bird losing its way I am caught’), a force which compels total self-effacement even in a male (‘If you would have it so, I will end my singing.’) It is felt as a debilitating influence (‘Free me from the bonds of your sweetness, my love’); but it is fulfilment also (‘for a few fragrant hours we two have been made immortal’). In a moment of acute introspection, love is also seen as an evanescent spiritual essence that eludes human, grasp (‘I try to grasp the beauty; it eludes me, leaving only the body in my hands. Baffled and weary I come back’—a thought that is strongly reminiscent of Browning’s ‘Two in the Campagna’). For the Tagore woman too, love has many moods and many voices. It is shy, timid and unspoken on the one hand (‘For very shame I could not say, “she is I, young traveller, she is I” ’) and capricious and self-willed on the other (Isharply chid him and said “Go” ... I weep and ask my heart, “why does he not come back?”). It involves both frustration (‘Your path lies open before you, but you have cut off my return’) and complete self- surrender ('But the young Prince did pass by our door, and I flung the jewel from my breast

before his path'). In form and style The Gardener makes no further advance; on the other hand, there are already tell-tale signs of a tendency to a general slackening in rhythm, a relaxing of verbal discipline, a loss of spontaneity and freshness and occasional lapses in taste (e.g. 'saved from the shivering shame of the shelterless', LVI).

The Tagore magic is, however, still strong enough in The Crescent Moon, the chief motif in which is childhood. Poetry of childhood is of two kinds: it may either offer the outsider's— the adult view of the child, or the insider's—the child's point of view. Tagore attempts both with frequent success. Looking at the child with adult eyes, Tagore mostly gives us the typically romantic view of childhood, inevitably lapsing on occasion into sheer namhy-pambiness. At the same time, in a piece like 'On the Seashore' ('On the seashore of endless worlds children meet' —an echo of which appears in Hart Crane's poem, 'The bottom of the sea is cruel')48 he spontaneously invests the everyday picture of children playing on the seashore with a cosmic and symbolic significance, producing one of his most memorable poems. The 'insider' pieces reveal a true understanding of the child mind as in 'The Wicked Postman' ('Mother dear. . . Haven't you got a letter from father today?... I myself will write all father's letters. ... I shall write from A right up to K'); 'Superior' ('Mother, your baby is silly! She is so absolutely childish'); and 'Twelve O' clock' ('If twelve O' clock can come in the night, why can't the night come when it is twelve O' clock?'). It must, however, be noted that instances are not wanting, where the poet descends to the level of a clever prettiness also. There is a greater variety of situation here than in The Gardener, and a subdued, quiet humour is a new feature of style.

The later collections— Fruit-Gathering, Lover's Gift and Crossing and The Fugitive show a distinct decline in quality. Each, with its mixed fare, lacks the unity of theme of the earlier works. It is also clear that Tagore has, by now, become not only repetitive but stale and has very little new to offer by way of thought, mood or technique. Mostly gone too are the trenchancy of expression, the superb verbal control and the severe rhythmical discipline of the Gitanjali (an occasional flash like 'Rebelliously I put out the light in my house and your sky surprised me with its stars'—Lover's Gift, xxiii—only serves as a sad reminder of how much has irretrievably been lost). Only the Last Poems reveals glimpses of a new development. Written in declining years and often from the sick-bed, some of them are frightening records of a grim struggle with pain, sorrow and disillusion, of a mind which at certain moments is not so sure of all that it had comfortably believed in earlier, though Tagore's basic ideas remain the same.

The two collections of free verse epigrams— Stray Birds and Fireflies have undeservedly suffered neglect in the backwash of the general decline in Tagore's reputation in the West. Some of these chips from Tagore's poetic workshop are memorable utterances of an alert, reflective mind steeped in Hindu thought and at the same time keenly aware of the problems of the modern age. Apart from the delicate sensibility and the command of sharply visualized imagery of his best poetry, these epigrams often reveal a gift for ironic observation which has had little scope elsewhere in his verse.

'The Child'—the only published poem of considerable length Tagore wrote directly in English (the Bengali version,ShishuTirtha was written later)—was directly inspired by a performance of the Oberammergau Passion play in Germany in 1930, though the'leader'in the poem was perhaps modelled on Gandhi. It was written at the request of a German film company which wanted from him a script for a pageant of Indian life, though the film was never produced. This is a rather conventional allegory in which 'the Man of Faith', who leads the toiling and suffering multitudes on a long and arduous pilgrimage, is killed during the night by his despairing and impatient followers. They are later shocked at what they have done and panic, but the spirit of the victim leads them at dawn to a hut where a mother sits on a strawbed with a 'babe on her lap'. The poem concludes with the chorus, 'Victory to Man, the new-born, the everliving.' The crude symbolism, garish colours and general wordiness of 'The Child' stand in sharp constrast with the subtler effects of The Gitanjali.

Tagore's verse in English (as that in his mother tongue) is essentially lyrical in quality, though unlike in Bengali, it is not the song-lyric that he attempts here. (But at least one of the Gitanjali pieces has successfully been set to music—No. LXV was once sung by Dame Isabella Thorndike.) His subjects are the elemental subjects of all lyrical poetry—God, Nature, Love, the Child, Life and Death, and he brings to his treatment of them the born lyric poet's simplicity, sensuousness and passion. His is a poetry steeped in the Indian ethos, because he sings with the Upanishads in his bones. His basic ideas are mostly from this source: God is no remote Absolute for him but is an entity embodying sat, chit and ananda; and the universe is a joyous expression of God's play; evil is but part of the Infinite Perfection; the finite world and the body are both real and good, and human love a step to divine; man must remain close to Nature for Nature is a manifestation of the Divine; all misery arises out of self-will and self-love and the antidote to these is universal brotherhood. As Jawaharlal Nehru puts it, 'He was in line with the rishis, the great sages of India, drawing from the

wisdom of the ancient past and giving it a practical garb and meaning in the present. Thus, he gave India's own message in a new language in keeping with the yugadharma, the spirit of the times.'*

Tagore's style, at its very best, skilfully controls the pliant rhythms of free verse combining 'the feminine grace of poetry with the virile power of prose.'*1 It is a style that derives its strength from the subtly controlled tension between its easy,' colloquial idiom and stark simplicity on the one hand, and the antique flavour of archaisms like 'thee* and 'thou* and the strange colourfulness of the feudal imagery of king and prince, chariot and sword, garland and gold, on the other. Tagore is, of course, a very unequal poet. His fatal fluency often led to repetition and verbosity, sentimentality and vacuity. But this should not eclipse the shining authenticity of The Gitanjali. At his best, Tagore remains a poet with a delicate sensibility deeply Indian in spirit.

Younger than both Sri Aurobindo and Tagore, Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), however, won recognition in England much earlier. Daughter of a Bengali educationist settled in the former princely State of Hyderabad, Sarojini Naidu, nee Chatto- padhyaya, was a precocious child and started writing poetry at a very early age. Sailing to England when sixteen, she studied at London and Cambridge for three years. Here her poetic talent developed under the influence of the Rhymers' Club and the encouragement given by Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse. Rightly finding in her early verse 'the note of the mocking bird with a vengeance', Gosse advised her 'to set her poems firmly among the mountains, the gardens, the temples, to introduce to us the vivid population of her own voluptuous and unfamiliar province; in other words, to be a genuine Indian Poet of the Deccan, not a clever, machine-made imitator of English classics.'*2 On her return to India in 1898, she married Dr. Govindarajulu Naidu —an inter-caste and interprovincial marriage, which met with initial opposition from her parents. Her first volume of poetry. The Golden Threshold (1905) was followed by The Bird of Time (1912) and The Broken Wing (1917). Meanwhile, social reform and the freedom struggle had begun increasingly claiming her energies, and thereafter she wrote poetry only sporadically. Her collected poems appeared in The Sceptred Flute (1946). Feather of the Dawn, a small collection of lyrics written in 1927, was published posthumously in 1961. In the Gandhian age she became one of the foremost political figures of her generation (she was President of the Indian National Congress in 1925) and won fame as a leading orator. She continued to be active in public life after Independence also and was Governor of Uttar Pradesh when she died.

Sarojini Naidu's lyric art has been strongly influenced both by British romanticism—especially of The fin de siecle variety, and Persian and Urdu poetic modes, with their characteristic opulence. The century and a quarter of lyrics brought together in The Sceptred Flute are rather unsystematically grouped under eleven mutually overlapping sub-sections, the most singnificant of which are 'Folk Songs', 'Songs of Love and Death', 'Songs of the Springtime' and a sequence of love-lyrics entitled 'The Temple'. The folk-songs mostly take the form of dramatic lyrics in which the speakers represent groups of Indian folk plying their traditional occupations—e.g. 'Palanquin-Bearers', 'Wandering Singers', 'Indian Weavers' etc. Some of the pieces in a latter section entitled 'Indian Folk Songs' follow a similar strategy. Here are also songs celebrating traditional Indian mythology, legends and history which reveal the poet's catholicity of sympathy and secular outlook. A Hindu Brahmin domiciled in Muslim Hyderabad, she sings of both Krishna and Allah and Radha and Gulnar, with equal zest. Love is naturally one of her favourite subjects and her handling of this age-old theme is marked by a variety of approach, mood, and technique. While, in 'A Rajput Love-song', she recreates a dramatic situation against a typical Rajasthani back-drop, in 'A Love Song from the North' and 'A Persian Love Song', she employs the conventions of Hindi and Persian love poetry, respectively. 'The Temple' is easily one of the most remarkable sequences in Indian English poetry. Tracing the progress of love from 'The Gate of Delight', through 'The Path of Tears', ultimately to 'The Sanctuary', where it culminates in mystical self-surrender, it treats its subject with sensitivity and charm. The true-blue romantic that she is, she also revels in the 'pleasure of being sad' and designates herself an 'unwilling priestess' to the God of Pain, performing his 'inexorable rites'. 'How shall I cherish thee,' she asks, 'O precious pain?' A mind like this needs must be 'half in love with easeful death'. Hence, like Emily Dickinson, 'the blind, ultimate silence of the dead' and 'the mute and mystic terror of the tomb' always fascinate her. In a weak moment, she pleads with Death: 'Tarry awhile, O Death, I cannot die/Till all my human hungers are fulfilled'; but being deeply grounded in Hindu philosophy, she is reassured by the thought that 'Life is a prism' of God's light, and Death 'the shadow' of His face. Her 'Coromandel Fishers' too refuse to panic when caught in a sea-storm, because they believe that 'He who holds the storm by the hair will hide in His breast our lives.'

The 'Songs of Springtime' contain some of Sarojini Naidu's most characteristic work. Here she finds 'the clue/To all the vernal joy', which her response to the colourful Indian scene with its gulmo ars and sirisas, champak and lotus buds,

and koels anddhadikulas evokes. Her nature poetry is lighted up by her zestful and uninhibited joy in beauty, especially of spring, her favourite season. She sings, 'O let us fling all care away and lie alone and dream/'Neath tangled boughs of tamarind and molsari andneem/And bind our brows with jasmine sprays and play on carven flutes/To wake the slumbering serpent-kings among the banyan roots.' Like the Romantics, she regards Nature as a refuge from the cares of human life, though unlike Wordsworth she is hardly a Nature-mystic. Nor is a Keatsian, sensuous apprehension'of Nature her strong suit, though she does evoke the tropical magnificence of the Indian landscape as in 'The earth is a fire like a humming-bird's wing/And the sky like a king-fisher's feather.* She is at her weakest in her occasional and patriotic poems—all those songs, sonnets and odes addressed to India, Tilak and the rest. These pieces seldom rise above the level of commonplace sentiment and conventional expression and on the whole ofTer flashy rhetoric rather than authentic poetry—a surprising feature of the art of one whose patriotism was beyond question.

Sarojini Naidu's finest lyrics have a perfect structure and an exquisite finish, and she handles various metres and stanza- forms with consummate ease. To her, as to Rilke, 'singing was being.' Of all the Indian English poets of her generation, she has perhaps the finest ear and her mastery of,word-music is indubitable (e g. the line: 'The serpents are asleep among the poppies'). It is true that her diction and imagery often run into conventional romantic grooves (her lines are cluttered up with too many 'golden lamps of hope" and 'rapturous notes', etc.) but those who are tempted, on this account, to dismiss her entire work as a mere carbon copy of British romanticism ignore her evocative and original use of imagery drawn from the Indian scene (in her lyrics, night descends 'like a black panther from the caves of sleep' and the white river is 'curved like a tusk') which makes for unmistakable freshness.

The meagreness of her total poetic output after her early burst of song is one of the mysteries of Sarojini Naidu's poetic career and the reasons which brought her poetic career to an untimely end are not yet clear. Perhaps, giving to public life what could have gone to poetry, she failed to grow as an artist. Her verse, at its worst, suffers from sentimentality and vagueness; and occasionally the compulsions of rhyme appear to dictate terms to both emotion and logic. Her weaker lyrics seem precariously poised on the brink of sloppiness, and she has rightly been accused of much cloying sweetness and a lack of intellectual fibre. A committed romantic, she denied herself all-sided self-expression. This explains the curious fact that though she possessed a sharp wit and a fine comic

sense (of which even Mahatma Gandhi, whom she once campared to Micky Mouse, was a victim) she nowhere allowed it to function in her poetry, which remains totally denuded of the ‘high estate of laughter’.

By the standards of modern poetic taste, Sarojini Naidu’s work is bound to appear hopelessly outdated; nevertheless, it remains both historically significant and intrinsically important. By winning recognition in England, she brought prestige to Indian English writing long before Tagore received the Nobel Prize; and her best poetry is not just a faded echo of the feeble voice of decadent romanticism, but an authentic Indian English lyric utterance exquisitely tuned to the composite Indian ethos, bringing home to the unbiased reader all the opulence, pageantry and charm of traditional Indian life, and the splendours of the Indian scene.

Sarojini Naidu’s younger brother, Harindranath Chattopa- dhyaya (1898—) is a poet also cast, though somewhat less rigidly, in the romantic mould. Far more prolific than his better- known sister, he has, during the half-century between 1918 when his first collection of lyrics—The Feast of Youth—appeared and Virgins and Vineyards (1967), published numerous volumes of verse, the more significant of which are The Magic Tree (1922), Poems and Plays (1927) and Spring in Winter (1955). Such fatal fecundity must result in unevenness, and Chattopadhyaya’s better poems have been engulfed in a mass of middlings. He is essentially a short distance runner, and his occasional attempts at the long poem, like ‘The Garden of Isolation’, and the sonnet sequence ‘In Memoriam’ in Poems and Plays are hardly successful. His themes are the staple of all romantic poetry—nostalgia, melancholy, passion for beauty, the changing moods of love, idealism and humanitarian compassion (which in his later verse takes on Marxian overtones). Full of direct echoes from Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Browning and Swinburne, his verse, unlike that of Sarojini Naidu, seems to find an individual voice only occasionally. An accomplished metrist. he has a sure command of rhythm and rhyme (when once challenged to find a rhyme for the word ‘month’ which is supposed to have no word that rhymes with it, he came out with: ‘This has been for me a very busy month/My work has gone up to ‘n’ plus oneth’).53Though capable of the singing note at will, he is, on the whole, lessof a singer than his sister; but his style sometimes attains a greater trenchancy than hers (e.g. ‘The rich responsibility of the seed/Full of some future tree’) and unlike her he can also surprise us with a sudden Hash of wit, as when he compares God and the self to two hands of the clock which meet ‘once in every hour’; or hears Noon, the ‘Mystic dog’ utter ‘loud barks of light’.

Chattopadhyaya’s later verse has shed most of the early lushness and exuberance and shows an increasing capacity for abstract thought and more controlled expression. Unfortunately, he has not yet been able to organise these later insights firmly enough to produce major poetry.

Of minor talent, Indian English poetry has indeed never felt a dearth. Among the many practitioners of verse whose work began during this period was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) whose collected poems appeared much later, in 1947. For the ringing tones of his militant voice, however, the other harmony of prose proved a far more effective medium. Joseph Furtado (1872-1947), author of Poems (1901), A Goan Fiddler (1927), Songs in Exile (1938) and Selected Poems (1942, rev. ed. 1967), was probably the first Indian English poet to use pidgin English for comic purposes (e.g. ‘Sly rogue, the Old Irani/Has made a lakh . . . /By mixing milk with pani'/ ‘Wouldn’t mind a little majah', etc.). Among other writers of verse may be mentioned Raj Lakshi Debi (The Hindu Wife or the Enchanted Fruit, 1876), Jitendra Mohun Tagoie (Flights of Fancy, 1881), T. Ramakrishna (Tales of Ind and other Poems, 1896); Nizamat Jung (Sonnets, 1917; Islamic Poems, 1935; Poems, 1954), A.M. Modi (Spring Blossoms, 1919); Ananda Acharya (Snow-birds, 1919; Arctic Swallows, 1927; Samadhi Poems and Autumn Rains, 1956); Roby Dutta (Echoes from East and West, 1909; Poems, 1915); R.B. Paymaster (Navroziana or the Dawn of a New Era, 1917); P. Seshadri (Sonnets, 1914;Champak Leaves, 1923; In the Temple of Truth, 1925); A.F. Khabardar (The Silken Tassel, 1918); N.V. Thadani (The Triumph of Delhi and other Poems, 1916;' Krishna’s Flute and Other Poems, 1919; He Walked Alone, 1948); and M.B. Pithawalla (Sacred Sparks, 192Q; Links with the Past, 1933).

Prose

The Indian renaissance of the nineteeth century produced prose of many types of which, as in the earlier period, the two most prominent were historical-political and religious-cultural prose; and understandably, what was earlier only a thin trickle has by now become a steady and even flow. The prose was prompted by the twofold impulse of the re-discovery of the Indian past and a strong awareness of the problems of the day. Biography, autobiography, belles-lettres and criticism still remain areas comparatively sparsely cultivated.

Prose of Thought:

As in the earlier period, Bengal and Bombay continue to dominate the scene, though now, at least in the beginning, Bombay, the birth-place of the Indian National Congress, leads the field. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917),'The Grand Old Man of India', was one of the earliest in a long line of freedom-fighters who shaped Indian history before Independence.

A founder- member of the London Indian Society, Member of the Royal Commission and Member of the British House of Commons, Dadabhai Naoroji bearded the British lion in its own den. In his Poverty of India (Parts I & II, 1873) and Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India (1901), the burden of his argument is that British administrative and economic policies are undermining the real interests of India which can only be properly served by giving Indians fair representation in the government of their own country. His numerous speeches have been collected in Essays, Speeches, Addresses and Writings (1887) and Speeches and Writings (1916). The contrast between his Address as President of the second session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta in 1886 and his Address at the twentysecond session held at the same place in 1906 reveals the change that came over his political thinking during the span of a generation. In the earlier Address he had observed, 'The people of England were sincere in their declaration made more than half a century ago that India was a sacred charge entrusted to their care by Providence, and that they were bound to administer for the good of India, to the glory of their own name, and the satisfaction of God.' In the later speech he declared, 'The British people would not allow themselves to be subjected for a single day to such an unnatural system of government as the one which had been imposed upon India for nearly a century and a half... Self-government is the only and chief remedy.'

Two of Dadabhai Naoroji's most illustrious pupils at the Elphinstone Institute, where he taught early in his career, were V.N. Mandlik and R.G. Bhandarkar. Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik (1833-89), a leading lawyer and a stickler for punctuality (once when he had to appear in a murder case in Poona but missed the train, he is said to have ordered a special train and reached his destination in time) he was a nominated member of both the Bombay Legislative Council and the Imperial Legislative Council in Calcutta. He founded and edited the weekly Native Opinion (1864-71) and wrote a standard manual of Hindu Law (1867). His Writings and Speeches were edited by N.V. Mandlik- in 1896. Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837-1925), the 'Nestor of Indologists' in whose name the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute was founded in 1917, was one of the greatest orientalists of his age, besides being a leading religious and social reformer and educationist. While his Report on the Search for Sanskrit Manuscripts (6 vols, 1879-91) is a monumental collection of source material, his Early History of the Deccan (1884) and A Peep into the Early History of India(1890) are the earliest significant works on Indian history by an Indian. His Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systemsappeared in 1913, and his Collected Works (4 volumes) in 1927-33.

Hailed as 'Rishi Ranade' by Srinivasa Sastri, Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901) was a gentle colossus of the late nineteenth century. A scholar with virtually encyclopaedic interests, he was a patriot, a social and religious reformer and a thinker, who deeply influenced the intellectual life of his age. His Rise of the Maratha Power (1900) is, like Bhandarkar's histories, a pioneering effort which laid the foundations of historical research in Maharashtra. Making use, for the first time, of Maratha chronicles, it sought to link firmly the rise of the Marathas with the social and religious resurgence in Maharashtra during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and also boldly rehabilitated Shivaji. The only other work of Ranade published in his own lifejtime was Essays in Indian Economics (1898) which amply justifies his description as the 'Father of Indian Economics'. Three collections of his speeches and writings published later are Religious and Social Reform (1902),Miscellaneous Writings (1915), and The Wisdom of a ModernRishi (1942). Deeply grounded in the Hindu tradition, Ranade's mind had, at the same time, been enriched by avid study of modern western thought; and it is this synthesis of the East and the West that is the chief characteristic of his world view. A theist in religion, a moderate in politics and a liberal in social thought, he 'brought back life to Maharashtra, which had become a cold lump of flesh and bones', as Tilak, who had often crossed swords with him, said in a well-known obituary notice in Marathi in the Kesari. Another

eminent judge, like Ranade, Badruddin Tyabji (1844-1906), was a Moderate leader, who presided over the third session of the Indian National Congress in 1887. An enlightened Muslim, he advocated national integration which, he declared, did not militate against the preservation of Muslim values. There are copious extracts from his speeches and writings in his Life by G.A. Natesan (n.d.). In bis brief career, Kashinath Trim buck Telang (1850-93) crowded much hectic activity in diverse fields such as law, journalism, politics, social reform, education, orientology and the development of vernacular literature. A founder-member of the Indian National Congress and the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bombay, Telang was one of the most effective public speakers of his day. On his speech on the Revenue Jurisdiction Bill at a public meeting in Bombay in 1876, the editor of the Bombay Gazette made the comment: 'No Englishman can appreciate the flexibility of the .English language till he had heard it spoken by an educated and naturally clever native of India.'64' Of his Select Writings and Speeches (2 vols. n.d.), the most outstanding are the essays on the Ramayana and the Bhagavadgita in which Telang establishes the antiquity of these Hindu scriptures and refutes the charge that they had borrowed certain elements from Greek and Christian writings. A fellow jurist, N G. Chandavarkar (1855-1923) was a Moderate Congress leader and a social reformer. More interesting than his Speeches and Writing? (ed. L.V. Kaikini, 1911) is his autobiography, A Wrestling Soul (1955). Two prominent Parsi contemporaries of Ranade were Sir Pherozeshah Merwanjee Mehta (1845-1915) and Sir Dinsha Edulji Wacha (1844-1936). 'Ferocious Mehta', an imperious personality, was the 'uncrowned king of Bombay' for well over a generation. In politics, however, his role was that of a gentle Moderate, like Ranade. 'I accept British rule, as Ranade did, as a dispensation so' wonderful . . . that it would be folly not to accept it as a declaration of God's will,' he said in his address as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the twentieth session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in 1904. His Speeches and Writings appeared in 1906, and Some Unpublished and Latest Speeches and Writings edited by J.R.V. Jeejeebhai in 1918. In Mehta's case, as in Dr. Johnson's, the man was greater than his works. Wacha, though older by an year, played the second Addle to Mehta. Though hardly as powerful a speaker as Sir Pherozeshah, he was as active in politics and civic affairs and was a more copious writer. Apart from biographies of Premchund Roychund (1913) and J.N. Tata (1914) he wrote a volume of reminiscences, Shells from the Sands of Bombay: being my recollections and reminiscences(1360-75) (1920). His Speeches and Writings were published by Natesan, Madras (n.d.).

The era of moderate politics ended with the rise of Bal Gangadhar ('Lokamanya'=revered by the people) Tilak (1856*1920), the 'father of the Indian unrest'. Infusing a new spirit of militancy into Congress activities, he drew the lower middle class into the freedom struggle. His English speeches, collected in Writings and Speeches (1922) and Towards Independence. Samagra Lokamanya Tilak, Vol. VII (1975) reveal a rugged, aggressive and blunt personality, disdaining stylistic graces and relying exclusively on unvarnished logic, forthright argument ard precise and clear presentation in expressing itself. The other side of Tilak—the erudite scholar and Indologist—is revealed in The Orion: Researches into the Antiquity of the Vedas (1893) and The Arctic Home of the Vedas (1903). Though his attempts here to stretch the date of the Vedas back to mid- fifth century B.C. have not received support from modern scholars, these are certainly no amateurish efforts, Tilak's learning being beyond cavil. His Gitarahasya (1915; English translation, 1935), a boldly activist interpretation of the Bhagavadgita was written in Marathi. Tilak's lieutenant, N.C. Kelkar (1872-1947) lacked both his master's virility and his charisma, but had a better appreciation of aesthetic values as seen in his writings collected and edited by his son, K.N. Kelkar in Pleasures and Privileges of the Pen (1929).

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Tilak's younger contemporary, was the ablest disciple of Ranade and was acknowledged by Gandhi as his political guru. His Speeches (1908; 1916) and Speeches and Writings: 3 Vols, (1962) are characteristic of an earnest and upright, and gentle and cultured soul, wholly dedicated to his country's cause. His ideal is summed up in the following words from the Manifesto of the Servants of India Society, which he founded in 1905: 'Public life must be spiritualized. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side.' A Moderate in politics, Gokhale believed in negotiation and compromise, adjustment and persuasion and set for himself heroically high standards of probity. His prodigious memory, patient industry, careful preparation, balanced and fair presentation, sweet reasonableness in argument and mellifluous voice together made him an outstanding speaker. Lord Curzon, speaking in the House of Lords after Gokhale's death declared that 'the Indian statesman would have obtained a position of distinction in any parliament in the world, even in the House of Commons.' H.A. Fisher found his use of English 'exact and brilliant and entirely free from the redundancy and magniloquence which is sometimes imputed to Indian eloquence.'

In Bengal, the editorship of the Hindoo Patriot came after the death of Hurish

Chunder Mukherji in I860 to Kristo Das Pal (1834-84), who headed the paper with great distinction for almost a quarter century. Writing in Concord in 1887, G.A. Stacks, editor of the Calcutta Review observed, 'The old race of native writers who were masters of pure, polished and idiomatic English appears to have died out with- K.D. Pal '* According to the Englishman, 'as a speaker he stood far ahead of any of his countrymen, and his utterances were in many respects superior even to those of his colleagues whose mother- tongue was English, and whose training had been entirely British.'88 His Speeches and Minutes 1867-1881, edited by Ramchandra Palit, were published in 1882. Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-84), under whose energetic leadership the Brahmo Samaj movement spead (but also split later), started the fortnightly, Indian Mirror, in 1861. An impressive public speaker, he lectured widely, mostly on religious subjects, both in India and England. His lectures, models of Victorian rhetoric, have been published in Lectures in India (1901); The New Dispensation or The Religion of Harmony, (Vol. I, 1903, Vol. II, 1910); and Discourses and Writings (1904). Sen emphasized the essential unity of all religions ('The grammar of modern theology must be condemned by every scientific man as bad grammar. It makes no mention of the copulative conjunction. The disjunctive ''or" reigns supreme, the copulative "and" finds no place') and the need for social reform in India. His message is, 'India, absorb England! Asia, assimilate Christian Europe.'

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94), renowned Bengali novelist and author of one of the earliest Indian English novels, wrote several essays in English, including 'On the origin of Hindu Festivals' (1870), 'Bengali Literature' (1871), 'The Study of Hindu Philosophy' (1873) and 'Vedic Literature' (1894). His spirited defence of Hinduism in Letters on Hinduism appeared in print in 1940, long after his death. Womesh Chunder Bonner- jee (1844-1906?), first president of the Indian National Congress (1885), established the London India Society in 1865, which later merged into the East Indian Association. His speeches are collected inLife, Letters and Speeches of W.C. Bonnerjee (1923) edited by K.L. Bandopadhyaya. Of the three notable Ghoshes of the period (apart from Manmohan Ghose and Sri Aurodindo) Rashbihari Ghosh (1845-1921) and Lalmohan Ghosh (1849-1909) were Moderate Congress leaders. In his Welcome Address at the Calcutta Congress of 1908, Rashbihari declared that England 'came not as a conqueror but as a deliverer with the ready acquiescence of the pebple to heal and settle, to substitute order and good government for disorder and anarchy.' His Speeches were published in 1919 and Lalmohan's (2 vols.) in 1883-84. Motilal Ghosh (1847-1902) founded the well-known newspaper, Amrit

Bazar Patrika in 1868. His Speeches and Writings appeared in 1935. Another Moderate Bengali leader, Ambica Charan Mazumdar (1850-1922) wrote Indian National Evolution—A Brief Survey of the Origin and Progress of the Indian National Congress (1915).

Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), whose poetry has already been considered, was an administrator with wide experience. Keenly aware of the political and economic problems of India, he brought his vast knowledge and experience to bear upon them in scholarly studies like The Peasantry of Bengal (1875), A History of Civilization in Ancient India (3 Vols:1889), Famine and Land Assessment in India (1900) and The Economic History of India (2 Vols, 1902 and 1904), which has been hailed as 'the first history of a colonial regime written from the point of view of the subject of a colonial empire. It contains, in essence, a preview of what came later to be called the economics of colonialism.'5* Dutt's topics are ably researched, his analysis acute and his presentation well-documented; and he shows a remarkable forthrightness in the expression of his views. In criticizing British policies, he declares, 'I cannot and will not put fetters on my tongue.' Dutt is also a pioneer in both the literature of travel and literary history. In fact, his first published work was Three Years in Europe: 1869-1871 (1872, revised and enlarged ed., 1895), a travelogue marked by a keen sense of place and an eye for picturesque detail. Rambles in India: 1871-95 (1895) employs a similar strategy. His The Literature of Bengal (1879, rev. ed. 1895) is a survey, the concluding chapter of which ('General Intellectual Progress in the Nineteenth Century') is one of the earliest notable attempts toassess the impact of western ideas on Indian life and thought.

Dutt had a burning passion to achieve something worthwhile in his lifetime; a line he often used to quote was: 'life isn't a game; once lost, we play again'.*0 In spite of his own misgivings about writing in English, Dutt's pioneering efforts in several genres prove that he did not altogether fail his ideal. Dutt's friend, Surendranath Banerjea (1848-1925) was acclaimed by his age as perhaps its most powerful orator in English. Dismissed from the Indian Civil Service for a technical breach of administrative norms, he realized that he had suffered because 'I was an Indian, a member of a community that lay disorganized, had no public opinion and no voice in the councils of their Government'; and pledged himself to the political uplift of his people. He convened the first National Conference in 1883, which became the forerunner of the Indian National Congress. One of the founding fathers of the Congress, he presided twice over its deliberations and was an outstanding moderate leader eclipsed

only with the rise of Gandhi. His Speeches 1880-1908 (6 vols., 1890-1908) and The Trumpet Voice of India: Speeches of Babu Surendranath Banerjea, Delivered in England in 1909 (1919) declared 'self-government within the empire as our goal and constitutional and lawful methods as the only means for its attainment'. In his autobiography, A Nation in Making: Being the reminiscences of fifty years of public life (1925), he claims 'to have had a high patriotic purpose', viz. to trace the growth of the national movement and to do justice to the early builders of the nation. More of a public than a private document, A Motion in Making is an apologia for Moderate politics Though often long-winded and magniloquent (his Presidential speeches at the Congress Sessions at Poona (1895) and Ahmedabad (1902) run to 91 and 106 pages respectively), at his best Surendranath Banerjea was a master of the impassioned utterance. Another Bengali leader who faded away after the rise of Gandhi was Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932) of the once celebrated radical trio called 'Lal-Bal-Pal (i.e. Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and B.C. Pal). He wrote both on politics (Nationality and Empire, 1916; Indian Nationalism: Its Principles and Personalities. 1919) and religion (Introduction to the Study of Hinduism, 1908). The two volumes of his Memoirs of My Life and Times appeared in 1932 and 1951 respectively, and a collection of his writings and speeches in 1958. Pal's younger contemporary, Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925), obeying what was almost an unwritten law of the age, plunged into the freedom struggle and created so strong an impact that he came to be known as 'Deshabandhu' (friend of the nation). He wrote both lyrical verse and prose in Bengali; his English orations (Speeches) were published in 1918.

It was another trio—this time a purely Bengali one—which produced the most noteworthy prose of the period. It comprises Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. As in the case of his verse, Rabindranath's career as a writer of English prose began years after he had already established a name in his mother tongue. Here again, a firm distinction must be made between his prose writings in Bengali translated by others into English and those written originally in English or translated into English by Tagore himself. The autobiographical works, My Boyhood Days and Reminiscences, belong to the first category and have therefore no place in this survey. Tagore's prose writings in English were delivered as lectures. The earliest was Sadhana (1913) (not to be confused with the Bengali journal by the same name which was brought out from 1891 to 1895). In these lectures delivered at Harvard University in the year in which he was to win the Nobel Prize for literature, we have a clear formulation of Tagore's philosophical position. He begins with a consideration

of the relation of the individual to the universe; discusses the age-old problem of evil, and indicates the way to the realization of the Infinite, through intermediate stages such as realization in love, in action and realization of beauty. Tagore ends with a reiteration of the noo-dualistic faith: ‘Thou dwellest in me and I in Thee’. Most of the Sadhana lectures were ‘either adaptations or elaborations of his earlier Bengali work, Dharma and the Santiniketan sermons.’

A conducted lecture-tour in the U.S.A. in 1916 yielded two more collections of speeches: Personality (1917) and Nationalism (1917). Personality touches on various subjects including the relationship between Man and Art, Man and Woman, Man and Nature and Man and God; and Tagore’s educational ideas are expressed in the lecture, ‘My School’. As in Sadhana, Tagore’s basic position here also is non-dualistic: ‘The one cry of the personal man has been to know the Supreme Person.* In Nationalism, the three points of reference are the West, Japan and India respectively. Tagore makes a distinction between society (a ‘spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being’) and nation (a ‘political and economic union of people’) and argues that before the British conquest Indian social life functioned undisturbed by political changes. The imperialistic ‘nationalism’

Of the West has destroyed this fabric by ruthless political suppression and economic exploitation of the land. Predatory nationalism has given Western man mental and material power at the cost of inoral strength, and is sure to destroy itself one day. Hence both Japan and India must guard against the temptation to ape the West in the name of modernization; for ‘true modernism is freedom of mind, not slavery of taste.’ Tagore’s warning to Japan not to 'lose her own soul’ while learning from the West (which did not exactly endear him to that country then) was proved prophetic by the Second World War. For Tagore, the real problem of India is not political but social: ‘Let our civilization take its firm stand upon its basis of social co-operation and not upon that of economic exploitation and conflict.* Nationalism sparkles with some of Tagore’s most eloquent prose when he denounces western imperialism and its dangers. The ten lectures collected in Creative Unity (1922) do not add much by way of subject-matter or ideas, with the exception of a perceptive analysis of the East-West relationship in the essay. ‘East and West’. Tagore argues that the real reason why ‘the tvain’ do not meet is because the West ‘has not sent out its humanity to meet the man in the East, but only its machine.’

The Religion of Man (1930) comprises the Hibbert lectures delivered in Oxford

at Manchester College in May 1930. The chief theme here. is ‘the idea of the humanity of our God or the divinity of Man, the Eternal’. 'My religion’, Tagore declares, ‘is in the reconciliation of the Super-personal Man, the universal human spirit, in my own individual being.' While Tagore here again mainly restates the Vedio-Upanishadic position, the most interesting portions of the book are the autobiographical passages in which he traces the growth of his own religious opinions, characterizing his religion as ‘a poet’s religion’, and talks about his educational thinking which led to the establishment of Santiniketan.

Man comprises two lectures delivered at the Andhra University, Waltair in 1937. These somewhat loosely argued discourses by the ageing writer touch upon various issues including the basic duality of man’s nature, the essential unity of all religions, the advaita doctrine and the distinct hope of the arrival of the Supreme Man. The same note of hope was struck in Tagore’s last public utterance in prose, Crisis in Civilization (1941) which was translated from his Bengali original, Sabhyatar Sankat. Tagore’s prose in English reveals him as an internationalist and a humanist preaching the gospel of universal harmony between Man and Man, Man and Nature, and Man and the Divine. While his thought, which has its sources in the Upanishads, the Gita, Buddhism, and Vaishnavism, is clearly derivative, there is an unmistakable ring of personal conviction in his words. They spring from a mind to which these age-old thoughts are not merely traditional truisms learnt by rote but living truths felt in the 6lood. Tagore’s prose is remarkable less for qualities of precision and logical argumentation than for its frequent spells of impassioned, semi-poetic utterance.

Firmly grounded, like Tagore, in the Indian ethos, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) spoke with less charm and poetry but with more virility. Born Narendra Datta, Swami Vivekananda came under the spell of the noted mystic, Ramakrishna Parama- hansa at the age of eighteen. Blessed, initiated and trained by him, Vivekananda founded, after his master’s death, the Ramakrishna order of monks in 1886. His wanderings all over India during 1888*1892 and what he observed of the misery and degradation around him, confirmed him in his sense of mission. In December 1892, he spent three days in meditation on a rock off the coast at Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip of India (the spot where the Vivekananda memorial stands now). He is said to have had a spiritual experience here, during which he was bidden to take India’s message to the West and to work for the uplift of bis motherland. Sailing for the U.S. A. in May 1893, he attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. Here, in the Art Institute Building, on Monday, 11 September, 1893, at the fag end of the day and after

repeated requests from the chairman, Vivekananda rose to make a brief, extempore speech (unlike the other delegates who delivered prepared addresses) beginning with the historic words, ‘Sisters and brothers of America’. In the words of Romain Rolland, it ‘was like a tongue of flame. Among the grey wastes, of cold dissertation it firjd the souls of the listening throng. When he woke up next morning, the obscure Indian monk found himself a celebrity. For the next three years, this ‘Hindu hurricane’ as the Americans described him, overran practically the entire United States, spreading the message of Hinduism; and later, lectured in England also, before returning to India in 1897. After another whirlwind tour from Colombo in the south, to Almora in the north, he established in 1898 the wellknown Ramakrishna Math at Belur, where he died in 1902. Vivekananda was a man with a two-fold mission. He wished to bring home to the West the true nature of Hinduism (‘I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East,’ he said); and he aspired to work for the uplift of India. His Complete Works (Vols. I to VIII, 1907-1951) mostly consist of the spoken word. [Selections from Swami Vivekananda (1944; rev. ed., 1975) is a representative anthology). In his lectures abroad, Vivekananda stresses the essential unity of all religions and the need to eschew sectarianism and fanaticism, and looks forward to the day when ‘great men shall arise and cast off these kindergartens of religion and make vivid and powerful the true religion, the worship of the Spirit by the Spirit.’ He finds this universal faith in AAwaita Vedanta, which for him is ‘the most scientific religion’ and ‘the fairest flower of philosophy and religion’ in the world. He also elucidates the principles of Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Raja yogas. Bold as his message to the west is, that to his own countrymen is ‘bolder still’. The burden of his lectures in India is the current degradation of the country, and its causes and cure. The principal causes according to him are the fossilization of its thought-processes as a result of India’s medieval insularity; superstition and obscurantism (‘Our religion is in the kitchen, our God is in the cooking pot and our religion is, “Don’t touch me, I am holy.’’ ’); the devaluation in the status of woman; bad education, and the crippling diffidence of the modern Hindu Vivekananda advocates, a clear-cut programme of reform: India must rediscover her true religion, Adwaita in its pristine purity.

She must steer clear of both the Scylla of old superstitions and meaningless taboos of orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European materialism. Shedding all their diffidence, Indians must stand forth, strong and self-reliant. 'What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel’; ‘Behold and fear not... We have to become Abhih, fearless’; we must ‘work, this is the time.. .for life is

short.’ Indulging merely in carping criticism is a negative attitude. ‘The time has come for the re-building, the re-constructing. . . . The house has been cleansed; let it be inhabited anew. The road has been cleared. March ahead, children of the Aryas.’ The name ‘Hindu’ is now a term of opprobrium; we must make it ‘the highest word that any language can invent.’ Our women, now weak, passive and dormant, must be given their rightful place in society and our present-day education which is entirely soulless must be. made a ‘manmaking’, ,‘life-building’ education. It must be on ‘national lines’ and 'through national methods as far as practical.’ Resurgent India has a great mission: ‘Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life, he declared.' In more than one lecture he tells his countrymen, 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.’

Most of Vivekananda’s speeches were delivered extempore, and not a little of their appeal was derived from his dominant personality which exuded a sense of both tranquillity and power. His principal assets were his large glowing eyes, the spontaneity and sincerity of his utterance, his low, earnest delivery which made his words singularly impressive, and his voice ‘rich as a bronze bell’* and ‘grave without violent contrasts but with deep vibrations that filled both hall and hearts ’ Vivekananda’s thought can hardly be said to be strikingly original, its sources being clearly in the Hindu religious and philosophical tradition. He also claimed that in all he spoke he was inspired by his master. But as in the case of Tagore, the reader gets an unmistakable impression that the traditional message is being rediscovered by one who has actually lived his life in its effulgence.

Vivekananda’s scholarship is sound, his argument generally logical and precise, and his style athletic and forceful. Though it has a striking rhetorical power, it carries no trace of any straining after effect. ‘My ideal of language’, he once said, ‘is my master’s language, most colloquial and yet most expressive.” Like all great religious teachers he makes apt use of story and parable and a noteworthy feature is his use of analogies drawn from science, as when he compares the struggle of the individual soul to attain union with the Divine with that of a bubble of air in a glass of water to join the mass of air outside. Above all, the fact that the force of Vivekananda’s words comes through after three quarters of a century after his death shows that his speeches continue to pulsate with life, though much water has flowed down the Ganga since that day in July 1902 when his mortal remains were consigned to the flames at Belur Math. Perhaps the most effective interpreter of Indian thought to the world, Vivekananda is a prophet with an imperishable -message to his own countrymen.

Unlike the spoken word of Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo who, early in his career, had come under the Swami's influence, produced an enormous and varied mass of prose writings on religious, metaphysical, occult, social, political, cultural and literary subjects. His earliest prose writings were a series of anonymous contributions to the Bombay journal, Induprakash Induprakash94, entitled 'New Lamps for Old'. These nine essays are fiery political propaganda, advocating the kind of radical politics to which Sri Aurobindo subscribed in his youth. The series of articles on Bankimchandra Chatterjee also published in the Induprakash in 1894 represent his earliest notable attempt at literary criticism. Of his writings during 1902 and 1906 when his political work was carried on in secret, only Bhavani Mandir survives. This is a fervent celebration of the feminine principle incarnate as Goddess Bhavani. The unsigned articles in the Bande Mataram in 1906 also deal with current politics. After his acquittal in the Alipore conspiracy case in 1909, Sri Aurobindo started the Karmayogin, 'a weekly review of national Religion, Literature, Science, Philosophy etc.', which ran for one year. Prominent among the essays to appear here were 'A System of

National Education', and 'The National Value of Art'. Soon after his arrival at Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo founded the monthly Arya (1914-21), in which most of his later prose writings initially appeared. The Arya aimed at presenting 'asynthetic philosophy which might be a contribution to the thought of the new age that is coming upon us.' The .variousseries of essays first published here and subsequently issued in book form broadly cover three areas: Religion and metaphysics, social, cultural and political issues and literary criticism. To the first category belong works such as Essays on the Gita(1928), The Life Divine (1939-40), Heraclitus (1941) and The Synthesis of Yoga (1948). Unlike some other noted commentators, Sri Aurobindo does cot attempt a new interpretation in his Essays on the Gita. He tries to recapture the 'essential and living message' of the Gita, 'that in it which humanity has toseize for its perfection and its highest spiritual welfare.' Nevertheless, his characterization of the triune (knowledge-devotion- works) way of the Gita as the means by which one can rise outof one's lower into one's 'supreme spiritual nature' is in keeping with his world-view in The Life Divine. Heraclitus is an illuminating comparative study of the Greek philosopher and Vedic-Upanishadic thought.

The Life Divine is easily the crown of Sri Aurobindo's writings in prose. This massive treatise of more than a thousand pages has for its central theme 'the affirmation of a divine life upon earth and an immortal sense in mortal existence.' It argues that man's highest aim is the manifestation of the divine in

himself and the realization of God within and without. Human existence is a sort of refraction of the divine existence in inverted order of ascent and descent. The Divine descends from pure Existence through the play of Consciousness-Force and Bliss and the creative medium of Supermind into cosmic being. Man ascends from Matter through a developing life, soul and mind and the illuminating medium of Supermind towards the divine being. The knot of the two, the higher and the lower hemispheres, is where mind and supermind meet with a veil between them. 'The rending of the veil is the condition of the divine life in humanity; for by that rending, by the illuminating descent of the higher into the nature of the lower being, and the forceful ascent of the lower being into the nature of the higher, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind, the soul realize its divine self in the all- possessing, all-blissful Ananda, life re-possess its divine power in the play of omnipotent Consciousness-Force, and Matter open toits divine liberty as a form of divine Existence.' The goal of human evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo, is 'fullness of being, fullness of consciousness, fullness of life.' Human evolution' must lead inevitably towards an evolution in the Knowledge, a self-finding and self-unfolding of the Spirit, a self-revelation of the Divinity in things in that true power of itself in Nature which isto us still a Super nature.' The Life Divine is an ambitious metaphysical statement the sheer magnitude of which appears to be as forbidding as the abstruseness of its frequently repetitive argument. Yet, in its vastness of conception, the sweep of itsintricate thought-structure, its penetrating vision, its bold insights and the uniform dignity and elevation of its style it has no equal in the history of Indian English prose. The Synthesis of Yoga, even longer than The Life Divine, is a complementary work, expounding in detail the strategy to be employed in achieving the goal set forth in the previous work. More practical in spirit than The Life Divine. The Synthesis of Yoga considers the existing systems of Yoga advocated by various thinkers in the past, notes the advantages and difficulties of each, and advocates an 'Integral Yoga', which radically differs from all these. While each of them involved the individual's ascent to the world of the spirit leading to personal salvation, 'integral yoga' aims at ascent to the Supermind only to make it descend to this earth for the salvation, not of an individual but of the entire human race.

The series of essays on cultural, social and political issues published serially in the Aiya have been collected in The Renaissance in India (1920), The Foundations of Indian Culture (1953), The Human Cycle (originally entitled The Psychology of Social Development) (1949), The Idea! of Human Unity (1919; revised ed. 1950) and War and Self-determination Cl920; revised ed. 1962).

While Foundations of Indian Culture is a spirited defence of the Indian tradition against the amateurish attack by William Archer in India and the Future (1917), The Renaissance in India is one of the most perceptive analyses of the nature of the Indian resurgence in the nineteenth century. In The Human Cycle Sri Aurobindo traces the evolution of social man from barbarism to the present rationalist state of civilization and posits a 'society founded upon spirituality' in future. The Ideal of Human Unity and War and Self-determination were written at the time of the first World War. After exposing the inadequacies of the then current notions of state, nation and empire, Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the 'the necessity and inevitability of some kind of world-union ... a federationof free nationalities.'

The Arya essays on literary criticism have been collected in The Future Poetry (1953) to which Sri Aurobindo's letters on poetry, literature and art were added in the Centenary Library Edition (Vol. IX, 1971). The questions discussed here are the nature, constituents and techniques of poetry, the spirit and the development of British poetry, assessment of individual poets, and Sri Aurobindo's idea of the poetry of the future as the 'mantra' or 'self-effective language'. The most remarkable feature of Sri Aurobindo's literary criticism is that he studies poetry in general and British poetry in particular, not by employing second-hand tools borrowed from Western critics— the bane of much Indian English criticism, but as one steeped in ancient Indian literature and aesthetics and at the same time at home with the European tradition as well. This enables him to adopt a comparative approach and makes his survey of British poetry refreshingly original. His ideal of poetry is, by and large, in tune with the romantic one, and his defence of English classical metres is unlikely to receive wide support. He also appears to be mostly unaware of the poetic revolution ushered in by Eliot and the later Yeats. (In one of his letters, he declares as late as 1943 that contemporary English poetry 'has not yet produced anything very decisive, great or successful.'66 But his taste is catholic enough to make him eulogize Whitman as 'the most Homeric voice since Homer.' With all its limitations, The Future Poetry remainsfan impres

sive achievement in an area where the paucity of excellence is painfully evident. Sri Aurobindo's numerous other letters on diverse topics ranging from religion to science and literature to Ashram life have been collected in many volumes. The short poetic essay, The Mother (1928), celebrating the 'divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence* in her four forms representing 'Wisdom, Strength, Harmony and Perfection' is notable for its lyrical fervour. The last of

Sri Aurobindo’s prose writings, eight essays entitled The Supramental Manifestation, first appeared in the Quarterly, Bulletin of Physical Education, in 1949-50. There are also a host of other essays on Sanskrit, Greek and Bengali literature, translations, speeches notes and aphorisms now brought together ip the exhaustive Birth Centenary Library Edition. Sri Aurobindo’s style is Protean and shows itself capable of diverse tones and effects such as irony and satcasm in the New Lamps for Old and Bande Mataram essays, forensic skill in The Renaissance in India, elevation in The Life Divine and even playful banter in some of his letters to his disciples. In sheer amplitude and variety Sri Aurobindo has no equal among writers of Indian English prose. As compared to the Bombay and Bengal presidencies, northIndia produced fewer figures of national stature during thisperiod. Among the most outstanding were Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946), Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), and Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928). Malaviya, twice president of the Indian National Congress (1909 and 1916) was an oriental scholarwith distinct orthodox leanings, which made him a Hindu Mahasabha leader later His speeches have been collected in Speeches and Writings (1919). Motilal Nehru, over shadowed by his illustrious son, Jawaharlal, was a prominent leader of the Swarajya Party. A selection of his speeches has appeared under the title, A Voice of Freedom (1961) edited by K.M.Panikkar and A. Pershad. Lala Lajpat Rai, the last of the celebrated trio Lal-Bal-Pal to be considered, was one of thegreatest leaders of the Punjab. A public worker with an inclusive vision, he espoused several causes such as politicale mancipation, religious, social and educational reform and socialism (of which he was one of the pioneers in India). He founded and edited the English paper, The People, and wrote several books including Young Indip (1917), and The Political Future of India (1918). His The United States of America: A Hindu's Impressions and a Study (1916) is an interesting account of his sojourn in the U.S.A., where he picked up his socialist ideas. Muslim political thought from North India is represented by Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-98), whose role in the reawakening of his people has already been considered. His Causes of the Indian Revolt (1858) was translated into English by Colvin and Graham in 1873 and his Writings and Speeches were edited by Shan Mohammed in 1972. In contrast with Badruddin Tyabji, the Moderate leader from Bombay, Syed Ahmed Khan, argued that the interests of the Muslims would be best served by remaining aloof from the Indian National Congress. Ameer Ali (1849-1928), author of The Spirit of Islam (1891) and A Short History of the Saracens (1916) was the first Indian Muslim to become a High Court Judge and member of the British Privy Council. He advocated a rediscovery of the basic principles of Islam and its former glory.

In the South, the first noteworthy name is that of Maharaja Sir Rama Varma of Travancore (1837-84), one of the earliest of enlightened Indian princes. Interested in the study of science, history and literature, he wrote both in Malayalam and English. A frequent contributor to the Madras Athenaeum in which he published a 'Political Sketch of Travancore' (1856), Rama Varma wrote in the Indian Statesman open letters with the heading 'Topics For Mr. F.N. Maltby' (The British Resident of Travancore) in 1858-59. These letters, which appeared under the nom de plume 'Brutus', caused quite a sensation in those days.** The Maharaja's Dewan, Raja Sir T. Madhava Rao (1828-91) was a brilliant administrator, who wrote regularly after his retirement in 1882 in Madras newspapers under the pseudonyms. 'Native Thinker' and 'Native Observer'. His Three Addresses appeared in 1884 and his pamphlet, 'Hints on the Training of Native Children, by a Native Thinker' in 1889.

Among the prominent political figures in the south then was Sir S. Subramania Iyer (1842-1924), called the 'grand oldman of South India'. His Speeches and Writings (1918) have been edited by D.V. Gundappa. M. Veeraraghavachariar(1857-1906) founded The Hindu in 1878 and S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar (1859-1923), who acquired it in 1905, made it one ofthe most influential English dailies in India. Sir P.S. Sivaswami Iyer (1864-1946) was a noted liberal leader. A Great Liberal:Speeches and Writings of Sivaswami Iyer, edited by K. Nilakantha Sastri appeared in 1965.The most renowned of the Southern Moderate leaders was V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946). A disciple of G K. Gokhale, hewas known as 'the silver-tongued orator of the Empire'. The Birth Centenary edition of his Speeches and Writings (2 Vols.) appeared in 1969. A representative selection is The Other Harmony (1945). Sastri's biographical studies include Life and Times of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta (1945), My Master Gokhale(1946) and Thumb-nail Sketches (1946), which consists of brief pen-portraits of Dadabhai Naoroji, Tilak, Gandhi and other political figures. Sastri's speeches reiterate the typical Moderate faith in the British connection. In a speech in London in 1921 he even called the British empire 'the greatest temple of freedom on this planet and hoped that it would be said of England that she 'took charge of a people divided from her by colour, by race and by culture. She fitted them for the tasks of the empire, and when the time was ripe she gladly admitted them to be full and equal partners in the glory of the empire and the service of humanity. Sastri's Lectures on Ramayano delivered in 1944 (included in Speeches and Writings, Vol. II) have worn better than his political orations. He treats the Hindu epic not as a religious but an essentially human document. His remarkable success as an orator was due to his

melodious and well-modulated voice, his fluent and finely articulated delivery, his purist's sure choice of words and his perfect control of sentence structure. Sastri's art as a biographer has received surprisingly scant attention. In his biography of Pherozeshah Mehta, Sastri protests against the Indian biographer's passion for lionizing and declares, 'Let our sense of human values be robust. Let us be to our children in the pages of biography and autobiography no better and no worse than they see us in everyday life.' Practising what he preached, Sastri draws his portraits with warts and all. While admiring Mehta and Surendranath Banerjea, he observes that Sir Pherozeshah was a 'great' man but hardly a 'good* one; and comments on Surendranath s love of flattery, his gullibility and the superficiality of his ideas. Like all successful biographers, Sastri also has an eye for the telling detail and the human idiosyncrasy. He notes the great Gokhale's childlike habit of clapping his hands in his lighter moments, his passion for playfully 'betting on all occasions and sundry', and his love of sweets; and Sir Dinsha Wacha's squeaking voice.Sarojini Naidu, whose poetry has already oeen considered, was also one of the most noted orators in an age abounding in accomplished platform speakers. ' Her speeches have been collected in Speeches and Writings (1919). What set her distinctly apart was the bardic quality that gave wings to her words. As Harindranath Chattopadhyaya puts it, 'Her extraordinary oratory poured through her like music, silver shot with gold, cataracting from summits of sheer inspiration.'"7Though much of the magic of this impassioned utterance is inevitably lost in cold print, enough of it survives in the process to indicate its quality. Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) the distinguished Indo-Sinhalese scholar, the spirit of whose work vindicates his own rhetorical query, 'Can wc think of India as complete without Ceylon?', must legitimately find a place among Indian English prose writers. The son of a Sri Lankan Tamil father and an English mother, Coomaraswamy was trained as a geologist and worked as Director, Minerological Survey of Ceylon for sometime before embarking on the study of Eastern art. For a number of years he was keeper of Indian and Muhammedan Art and Research Fellow in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. He was a prolific writer and the bibliography of his publications comprises about a thousand items, including books, pamphlets, and articles on art, religion, metaphysics, language and culture. Among his principal works are Me Aie Gal Sinhalese Art (1908), Essays in National Idealism (1909), Art and Swadeshi (1911), Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon (1913), Introduction to Indian Art (1913J, Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism (1916), Rajpur Painting (1916), The Dunce of Shiva (1918), History of Indian and Indonesian Art(1927), A New Approach to the Vedas (1933), The Transformation of Nature in Art (1934), The Bugbear of Literacy (1943), Why

Exhibit Works of Art? (1943) reprinted as Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art (1956) and Figures of Speech or Figures of Thought? (1946). His numerous articles cover, apart from art, diverse topics such as ‘Some Pali Words’, ‘Symbolism of Archery’, ‘Indian Coins’, ‘Sati’, ‘The Shadow-Play in Ceylon’ etc.Coomaraswamy began as a critic of oriental art, but he soon came to believe that ‘Art history is the history of the spirit’. This led him to a deep study of Hindu religion and metaphysics and the entire oriental culture and tradition which he then related effectively to modern eastern civilization and its problems. One of the pioneers of a just evaluation of Hindu and eastern art, he demolished several prejudices and misconceptions regarding the nature, aims and techniques of oriental art held by earlier critics like Ruskin, Birdwood and Fergusson, and showed how Hindu and Buddhist art was a meaningful expression of the Indian ethos. Another signal contribution of his was his discovery of Rajput painting. A firm believer in the doctrine that the greatest art was rooted in life, he found this art perfected in ancient Indian civilization at its height. He ascribed the degradation of modern India to its neglect of its own ancient art, culture and tradition, and warned his countrymen, ‘Before we can have India, we must become Indians.’ A scathing critic of modern industrial civilization, he denounced it as one with ‘exaggerated standards of living and depreciated standards of life.’ He diagnosed the modern malaise as due to the divorce of art from life and life from its perennial concerns and pleaded for a world civilization based not on competition and conflict but on mutual understanding and. cooperation. His ideal man was to unite the virility of the West with the serenity of the East thus to become ‘a citizen of the world’ in the ‘profoundest sense’. Coomaraswamy wrote a compact and muscular prose full of energy and vigour. His numerous, apt and annotated foot-notes are not intended as an exhibition of his- vast scholarship but as ramifications and clarifications of his ideas. He is occasionally apt to take a rather starry-eyed view of the oriental tradition and pre-Indus- trial life; and some of his theories regarding Rajput painting and Mughal art have been disproved by later scholars. Nevertheless, his importance as an ambassador of Indian and oriental art, thought and tradition cannot be over-estimated; and his stature as a thinker and a sage is perhaps yet to be fully measured. His trenchant criticism of modern life and civilization and his passionate concern for the abiding values make him a prophet whose words are of urgent relevance to the bur man condition today.Biography , Autobiography, Travel Books, Essays and Criticism Apart from Srinivasa Sastri’s biographical studies (which, chronologically, come later), this period produced a number of biographies of various kinds. These include lives of ancientprophets and sages like Ameer Alt’s Life of Muhammad (1873), Manmath Nath Dutt’s Prophets of

Ind. (2 Vols., 1894), Khetrapal Chakravarti's Life of Sri Chaitanya (1897) and Sisir Kumar Ghose's Lord Gauranga: Life of Krishna Chaitanya of Nadia (2 vols., 1897-8); political biographies like T. Rama Row's Biographical Sketches of the Rajahs of Venktagiri (1875) and W.E. Dhanakoti Raju's Queen Empress Victoria (1887); collections of brief sketches of the lives of modern Indians like Ram Gopal Sanyal's A General Biography of Bengal Celebrities (1889), Sohrabji Jahangir's Representative Men of India (1889), Samuel Sathianadhan's Sketches of Indian Christians (1896) and C. Paramaswaran Pillai's Representative Indians (1897) , full-length biographies of modern Indians like Lights and Shades of the East: or A Study of the Life of Baboo Haris Chander by Framji Bomanji (1863); Memoir of the Late Hon'ble Justice Onooucool Chunder Mookerjee by Mohindranauth Mookerjee (1873), two studies of Kristo Das Pal by Ram Coomar Dey (1886) and Nagendra Nath Ghose (1887) respectively; two studies of Behramaji M. Malabari by Dayaram Gidumal (1888) and R.P. Kakaria (1896), respectively; and R.P. Paranjpye's Life of G.K. Gokhale (1915) andLife of D.K. Karve (1915).As regards autobiography, besides works like SurendranathBanerjea's A Nation in the Making and N.G. Chandavarkar'sA Wrestling Soul which have already been mentioned, an early notable attempt is Abdul Latif Khan's A Short Account ofmy Public Life (1885).Among travel books, perhaps the earliest notable effort isBolanath Chandra's The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts ofBengal and Upper India (2 Vols., 1869). Chattrapati Rajaramthe Maharaja of Kolhapur's diary of his- brief sojourn inEurope ending in his untimely death appeared in 1872 under the title, Diary of the Late Rajah of Kolhapur. R.C. Dutt's Three Years in Europe (1872, 1895) and Rambles in India (1895) have already been considered. More diverting owing to the strong admixture of comedy in them are the travelogues ofBehramji Merwanji Malabari, the Bombay poet, social reformer and editor of East and West and Indian Spectator. He is less remembered to-day for his writings on social and political reform like Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India(1887) and The Indian Nation (1894) than for two delightful travel books in the manner of Mark Twain. The twentysix pieces inGujarat and the Gujaratis (1882) are an engaging medley of description, character-sketches, comic incidents, anecdotes and social criticism. Malabari's comedy takes various forms including satire, irony, parody, wit and humour. He reveals himself to be an extremely shrewed observer of men and manners, whether in characterizing Broach as 'a henpecked town' ('hen-pecked by the river', her husbands 'henpecked by their wives , and her officials 'hen-pecked by their mistress, the Bombay Government'), or parodying the darbar customs of Baroda State. His sketches of the village barber and the small town pleader and their ways are uproariously funny. Beneath this

varied comedy there is a persistent undertone of social criticism also, exposing the British bureaucrat's apathy during a famine, the over-zealous ways of the white missionaries and the obscurantism of Hindu, Muslim and Parsi priests. The Indian Eye on English Life or Rambles of a Pilgrim Reformer (1891), an account of Malabari's visit to England is a much less successful book, though it has its own comic felicities. The description here is far more, generalized, with fewer characters and incidents (the sketch of the London Policeman is outstanding). The social reformer in Malabari comes out when he admires the self-reliance and the spirit of English women, though he is shocked by their generally bad teeth and their refusal to nurse their babies. Some other travel books of the period are P.C. Mazoomdar's Sketches of a Tour Round the World (1884); Bhagvat Sinh Jee the Thakore of Gondal's Journal of a Visit to England in 1883 (1886); Sambhu Chandra Mukerji's Travels and Voyages between Calcutta and Independent Tipperah (1887); G. Parama- swaran Pillai's London and Paris through Indian Spectacles (1898), and T. Ramakrishna Pillai's My Visit to the West(1915).Nagesh Wishwanath Pai's Stray Sketches in Chakmakporefrom the Notebook of an Idle Citizen (1894), though not exactly a travel book, is similar in conception and strategy to Malabari's Gujarat and Gujaratis. The 'notebook' comprises thirty six pen-portraits or various Indian types including the 'Irritable Sahib', the 'Mithaiwalla', 'Medicos of the Street', the 'Parsi girl,' the 'Pooranik', etc. Pai's sketches certainly compare unfavourably with Malabari's since his humour is rather heavy- handed, his persistent, trite moralizing being an additional irritant. Another early collection of essays is A. Madhaviah's Thillai Govindan's Miscellany (1907), which discusses in a serious vein subjects like the position of women and caste.There was hardly any critical writing of note in the earlierperiod. Now, with the spread of English education, criticismin various areas slowly begins to appear. The earliest treatisesconcern the arts in India and Sanskrit literature. Prominent examples are two studies of Indian music: Hindu Music (1873) by Loka Nath Ghose and Yantra Kosha: A Treasury of MusicalInstruments of Ancient India (1857) by Sourindra Mohan Tagore,who also wrote Bharatiya Natya Rahasya: A Treatise on HinduDrama (1878) and Dramatic Sentiments of the Aryans (1883). R.G. Bhandarkar's The Critical, Comparative and Historicalmethod of Enquiry as applied to Sanskrit Scholarship and Philosophy and Indian Archaeology (1888) is a pioneering methodological attempt. Among the earliest critical studies of the ancient Sanskrit epics are C.V. Vaidya's The Mahabharata: ACriticism (1905), The Riddle of the Ramayana (1906) and EpicIndia or India as described in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana(1907). K. Narayanaswami Aiyar's The Puranas in the light ofModern Science (1916) employs an

interesting approach. B.K. Sarkar's Love in Hindu Literature (1916) is a noteworthy thematic study.Along with Sanskrit, literature in the several Indian languages also begins to be studied critically Prominent examples are Ramesh Chunder Dutt's The Literature of Bengali 1879; revised and enlarged ed.. 1895;) D.C. Sen's History of theBengali Language and Literature (1911); and Folk Literatureof Bengal (1920); v.s.C. Pillai's History of the Tamil ProseLiterature (1904); C. Ramakrishna Rao's Vemana, the TeluguPoet and Saint (1914); and K. M. Jhaveri's Milestones in Gujarati Literature (1914).

Studies of Indian English and Anglo-Indian writers too make their earliest appearance—these include two books on B.M. Malabari—G.A. Natesan's Behramji M. Malabari: A Sketch of his life and an Appreciation of His Work (1914) and Jogendra Singh's B.M. Malabari: Rambles with the Pilgrim Reformer (1914); Jogendra Nath Gupta's Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt (1911); G.A. Natesan's Mrs. Sarojini Naidu: A Sketch of her Life and an Appreciation of Her Works (1914); and two studies of Rabindranath Tagore—B.K. Roy's Rabindranath Tagore: The Man and His Poetry (1915) and K.S.R. Sastri's Sir Rabindranath Tagore: His Life, His Personality and Genius (1917); P. Seshadri's An Anglo-Indian Poet: John Leyden (1912) and Anglo-Indian Poetry (1915) and S.M. Mitra's Anglo-Indian Studies (1913) are among the earliest appraisals in this area.

British literature also starts engaging the attention of Indian English critics. One of the earliest specimens is the nineteen page preface in English written by M.M. Kunte of Poona to his long poem in Marathi, Raja Shivaji (1871). This piece deals with critical issues such as the nature of poetry, the antinomies between Science and Literature and the Classical and the Romantic and generally echoes contemporary Victorian critical opinion on these problems, though the author's analysis of the aesthetic taste of the Marathas is an attempt at independent critical enquiry. Ramchandra Ghose's A Synopsis of English Literature (1896) is a workmanlike .survey. Brajendranath Seal's New Essays in Criticism (1903) deals with the Romantic movement with special emphasis on Keats. R.V. Subba Rao's Othello Unveiled (1906) and Hamlet Unveiled (1909) are probably the earliest appreciations of Shakespeare; Ramaraya Mohanraya wrotea brief brochure, Shakespeare the Artist, in 1914. Harendra Coomar Mukhapadhyaya, who enjoys the distinction of earning the first Indian Ph.D. in English for his thesis on the origins of the English Novel in 1918 had earlier published his study The Supernatural in Scott in 1917.

Drama

Indian English drama dates from 1831, when Krishna Mohan Banerji wrote The Persecuted or Dramatic Scenes Ulustralive of the present state of Hindoo Society in Calcutta. In his preface, Banerji claims that ‘inconsistencies and the blackness of the influei tial members of the Hindoo community have been depicted before their eyes. They will now clearly perceive the wiles and tricks of the Bramins [sic.] and thereby be able to guard themselves against them.’ This somewhat crude presentation of the conflict in the mind of a sensitive Bengali youth between orthodoxy and the new ideas ushered in by Western education remained a solitary dramatic effort, not only in Bengal but also anywhere in India for more than a generation. Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the poet, translated three of his own Bengali plays into English: Ratnavali (1858)—a version of Harsha’s well-known Sanskrit play, Sermista (1839) and -Is This Called Civilization?(1871). Another play of his, Nation Builders, was published posthumously in 1922. Ramkinoo Dutt’s Mani pur a Tragedy (1893) completes the all too brief tale of Indian English drama published in Bengal in the nineteenth century. In fact, even in Bengal—the fountain-head of most forms of Indian English literature—drama in English failed to secure a local theatrical habitation, in sharp contrast to plays in the mother tongue (both original and in the form of adaptations from foreign languages); and the appetite for plays in English could more conveniently be fed on performances of established dramatic successes in English by foreign authors. For instance, the first Bengali play to be staged (27 November, 1795) was an adaptation of a musical farce—The Disguise by Jodrell; and the Hindoo Theatre established by Prosannakumar Tagore on 21 December 1831 staged portions of Julius Caesar** Owing to the lack of a firm dramatic tradition nourished on actual performance in a live theatre, early Indian English drama in Bengal, as elsewhere in India, grew sporadically as mostly closet drama; and even later, only Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya produced a substantial corpus of dramatic writing.

Between 1891 and 1916, Sri Aurobindo wrote five complete and six incomplete verse plays. Of these, the earliest are two fragments written during his student days in London: The Witch of Uni: A Dream of the Woodlands (1891) and Achab and Esar(n.d.). To the Baroda period (1893-1906) belong The Viziers of Bassora—A Dramatic Romance, Perseus the Deliverer, Rodogune and three fragments: The Maid in the Mill: Love Shuffles the Cards, The House of Brut and The Birth of Sin (which appeared as a poetic dialogue in Collected Poems

and Plays, 1942). Prince ofEdur (a revised version of The Prince of Mathura) was written in 1907, While Eric: A Dramatic Romance and Vasavadutta are assigned to the period between 1912 and 1916. All the five complete plays, with the exception of Perseus the Deliverer, were published years later, between 1957 and 1960, Perseus the Deliverer having been first serialized in Bande Mataram, Calcutta, in 1907 and also included in the Collected Poems and Plays (1942). All the eleven plays have now appeared in the Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library Edition, Volumes 6 and 7—Collected Plays and Short Stories: Parts I and 11 (1971).

The two early fragments— The Witch of Ilni and Achab and Esar—already indicate Sri Aurobindo's abiding fascination for Elizabethan drama. The Viziers of Bassora, based on a story from The Arabian Nights shows how a pair of young lovers are reunited after a series of trials, through the benevolence of Haroun AlRasheed, Caliph of Bagdad. The contrast between the 'good' Vizier and the 'bad' is the mainspring of the action. Entirely Elizabethan in conception and structure, the play is clearly modelled after Shakespearian comedy. The disguised Caliph controlling the destinies of his st Sjects recalls the Duke in Measure for Measure; Fareed, the bad Vizier's deformed son is a compound of Caliban and Richard III; and Balkis and Ajebe are Arabian versions of Beatrice and Benedick. Perseus the Deliverer which, in the author's own words, is 'a romantic story of human temperament and life-impulses on the Elizabethan model' is a more substantial play, which tries to use the ancient Greek legend of Perseus and Andromeda to represent the evolution of the human mind from a primitive conception of a vengeful deity towards the idea of a godhead full of grace and compassion. But the message of the play is all but drowned in persistent and loud Shakespearian echoes in character, incident and even dialogue. This is also true of Rodogune,Sri Aurobindo's only tragedy. Set in ancient Syria, the play is a representation of a fratricidal conflict arising out of a love-triangle, and is perhaps.the roost derivative of all Sri Aurobindo's dramatic creations. Of the fragments. The Maid in the Mill is a comedy with Spain as the background and The House of Brut a tragedy of unbounded egoism, set in ancient Britain; while The Birth of Sin centres round Lucifer. Prince of Edur, which also remained incomplete, draws on Rajput history, and deals with the romantic motif of a usurper's daughter falling in love with the rightful heir in disguise. It is again love that resolves the political conflict inEric, the setting for which is Norway. Aslaug, the sister of Swegn, a rebel earl, comes to slay Eric, the King of Norway, but stays to fall in love with the intended victim. Vasavadutta is a variation on the same theme. Based on a story in the

Kathasaritsagara, it shows how Vvtsa Udayan, the king of Cowsambie, captured through treachery by Chunda Mahasegn, the king of Avunthie, neatly turns the tables on his captor by capturing the heart of Vasavadutta, Chunda Mahasegn's daughter.

An interesting feature of Sri Aurobindo's plays is their variety of period and locale, ranging from ancient Greek times to medieval India and covering diverse lands including Iraq, Syria, India, Spain, Britain and Norway. The two characteristic Aurobindoean themes in the plays are the idea of human evolution in Perseus the Deliverer and love as a benevolent force destroying evil and conflict and making for harmony and peace in The Viziers of Bassora, Prince of Edur, Eric and Vasavadutta.However, only committed disciples will maintain that these themes have been realized in the plays with the same amount of creative power as has gone into the making of Savitri and The Life Divine. Modelling his plays exclusively on late Victorian pastiches of Shakespearian drama, Sri Aurobindo unfortunately imposed crippling limitations on his drarpatic talent, while inSavitri he boldly experimented with age-old epic conventions. In the large whispering gallery resounding with Shakespearian echoes which his plays in the main appear to be, Sri Aurobindo's distinctive voice is scarcely heard as effectively as in the other forms. It is sad that even in handling purely Indian material in Prince of Edur and Vasavadutta,' the dramatist could not throw off the yoke of Shakespeare, with the result that his characters seem to think, soeak and act less like authentic Indians than like Elizabethan personages in Indian garb. In spite of some scenes of dramatic tension, stray passages of poetic beauty and a few moments of bright wit and humour in the comedies, the drama of Sri Aurobindo is perhaps hardly in the same class as his major poetry and prose.

In examining, the plays of Rabindranath Tagore, a distinction has once again to be made, as in the case of his verse, between translations done by the author himself and those produced by others. This unfortunately excludes the better-known plays such as The Post Office (translated by Devabrata Mukher- jee) and The King of the Dark Chamber (translated by K.C. Sen). Nevertheless, there remain almost a dozen plays done into English by Tagore himself. These include Chitra (1913), The Cycle of Spring (1917; translated with assistance from C.F. Andrews and Nishikanta Sen), and Sacrifice and Other Plays (1917). All these appear in the Collected Poems and Plays (1936). Red Oleanders, translated by Tagore himself from his Raktakarabi in Bengali was first published in the VisvaBharati Quarterly in 1924. Tagore's own translation of his Natir Puja

appeared in the same journal in 1927, thus predating the one by Marjorie Sykes in 1950.

Since, while translating from his original Bengali, Tagore made extensive changes in the text (as in the case of his verse also), these plays are virtually redone in prose, rather than being simple translations. Thematically, the plays fall into two broad groups: thesis plays and psychological dramas. In the first group may be included Sanyasi, The Cycle of Spring, Chitra, Malini.Sacrifice, Natir Puja and Red Oleanders. To the second belong The King and the Queen, Kacha and Devayani, Kama and Kuntiand The Mother's Prayer.

In Sanyasi and The Cycle of Spring, the central thesis is the celebration of life. The ascetic in Sanyasi runs away from the orphaned girl who clings to him, in the fear that she will ensnare him into attachment to this world. In .the end, he realizes when it is too late, that his affection for her cannot be rooted out; when he returns, she is dead. In The Cycle of Spring, the middle* aged king, afraid of the approach of old age, is convinced by the poet, who stages a symbolic play before him, that change being the law of life, the secret of happiness is joyous acceptance. Chitra is a dramatic sermon on the theme of true love. Arjuna, the Pandavn prince, spurns the homely Chitra, daughter of the king of Manipur. Later, when transformed into a beautiful damsel by a boon from the god of love, she approaches him again, he is infatuated with her. In the end, she resumes her original form, and Arjuna learns the lesson that true love transcends mere physical beauty. In Malini, Sacrifice and Notir Puja (‘The Court Dancer’s Worship’) religious fanaticism is exposed. Princess Malini, a devotee of Buddhism in a Hindu kingdom, is denounced by orthodoxy, but her transparent sincerity saves her, and Kemankar, her principal accuser himself meets a just retribution. The same motif appears in Sacrifice, where the orthodox priest, Raghupati, resists the liberal King’s plans to abolish the practice of sacrifice, until the priest’s own son, Jai- sing immolates himself on the altar. Srimati, the Buddhist dancer in a Hindu court in Natir Puja is compelled, on pain of death, to commit sacrilege by dancing before a Buddhist shrine. She makes her dance an act of worship, thus inviting death. (At the same time, the limitations of Buddhism too are pointed out by Queen Lokesvari in the play.) Red Oleanders is a symbolic presentation of the triumph of humanistic values over soul-killing Mammonism. Nandini, the spirit of joy, love and beauty destroys the tyrannical regime in Yaksha Town, which has reduced ifs citizens to gold-digging slaves, though she herself dies in the process.

An interesting feature of the psychological plays is Tagore's insight into the feminine mind. In The King and the Queen, the spirited Sumitra boldly admonishes the King, who, lost in his pleasures, neglects his subjects. She tries to enlist the help of her brother, a neighbouring monarch, in breaking the power of the King's officials, who are all foreigners; but both she and her brother perish in the ensuing political holocaust. While the political allegory is obvious, it is the brave Queen who dominates the play. In Kacha and Devayani, Devayani finds all her hopes frustrated when she realizes that her playmate Kacha has only gratitude to offer her but no love and lays a curse on him which practically defeats his very purpose in having come to her father for his training,

Two contrasted manifestations of maternal love are presented in Kama and Kunti and The Mother's Prayer. On the eve of the Mahabharata War, Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, reveals to Kama the secret that he is her son, hoping that this would induce him to join the Pandavas; but the high-souled Kama refuses to be tempted. In The Mother's Prayen, Gandhari steels her heart and requests her husband to renounce their wicked son, Duryodhana who has engineered the exile of the Pandavas through sheer trickery; and when her prayer is rejected, she prophetically forecasts the terrible day which will bring retribution to all her sons.

Tagore's English plays have a compact and neat structure, though their originals in Bengali often followed the loose Elizabethan model. This is so because in his translations, Tagore subjected his texts to rigorous condensation, as a result of which the English versions possess an economy which the originals mostly lack, though experts have noted that much complexity and richness have been lost in the process. Tagore's principal characters tend to be symbolic and allegorical in the thesis plays and archetypal in the psychological dramas, and often attain a certain universality. His setting is invariably non-realis- tic, being either puranic or legendary or feudal or patently symbolic, and the dialogue, time and again attains a true poetic flavour as inKarna and Kunti. Tagore's drama, firmly rooted in the Indian ethos in its themes and characters and eminently expressive of his deepest convictions in creative terms, is comparable at its best, with the modern imaginative drama of W.B. Yeats and Maurice Maeterlinck.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya began his career as a dramatist with Abu Hassan (1918), a light fantasy in prose and verse His Poems and Plays (1927) contain seven verse plays on the lives of Indian saints: Pundalik, Saku Bai, Jayadeva, Chokha Mela, Ekanath, Raidas and Tukaram. The poetic quality of these plays is

superior to their dramatic virtues. Five Plays (1929) are in prose and are strongly coloured by the author's socialist sympathies. The Window and The Parrot are glimpses into the lives of the poor and The Coffin and The Evening Lamp, ironical sketches of two young romantics. The Sentry's Lantern is a symbolic expression of the hope of the dawn of a new era for the poor. There is an uncomfortable alliance between symbolism and realism in these plays. For their general air of artificiality, their wooden and crudely allegorical characters with their conventional stances and long, propagandistic speeches are equally responsible. The Sleeper Awakened (n.d.) is an allegorical satire on the evils of modern civilization and The Saint: A Farce (1946) an expos6 of pinchbeck holiness, in which an opium-addict is mistaken for a holy sage. Kannoppan or the Hunter of Kalahari, a 'lyric play' on the theme of the right of a lowly hunter to enter a temple, appeared in 1950. Siddhartha: Man of Peace (1956), an ambitious effort in eight acts, is a dramatization, in verse and prose, of the life of the Buddha. Loose in construction and generally poor in dramatic values, it is a rather undistinguished work on a distinguished subjects Chattopadhyaya's plays fail owing to both his inability to create living characters speaking in an individual voice and to work out his themes in viable dramatic terms. Their best claim to remembrance is a few passages of rich romantic verse.

Apart from the plays of Sri Aurobindo, Tagore and Chatto- padhyaya, there are only stray efforts during the period like Sarath Kumar Ghose's The Prince of Destiny (1910); Kedarnath Das Gupta's Calif for a Day (1916) and Bharata (with Margaret G. Mitchell) (1918) and Dhan Gopal Mukherji's Layla-Majnu (1916).

As compared to Bengal, the story of early Indian English drama in Bombay is much briefer. Though the first theatre in Bombay, The Bombay Amateur Theatre, was built in 1776, dramatic activity was almost exclusively limited to performances by visiting European touring companies. With the rise of modern drama in Marathi and Gujarati heralded by Annasaheb Kirloskar's epoch-making production of Shdktmtal in Marathi in 1880, the vernacular stage soon posed a formidable challenge to English drama. The only available examples of Indian English drama in Bombay during the nineteenth century are C.S. Nazir's verse playThe First Parsi Baronet (1866), and D.M. Wadia's The Indian Heroine (1877), based on the events of 1857. And P.P. Meherjee'sDolly Parsen (1918) is the only other effort of note before 1920.

Madras began later than Bombay but soon surpassed it in playwriting. The

Madras Dramatic Society, which encouraged amateur European theatricals, was founded in 1875. The Oriental Drama Club followed in 1882 and the first Indian amateur dramatic society in South India, The Sarasa Vinodini Sabha, was founded by Krishnamacbary of Beliary in 1890. The most productive of the Madras dramatists of the period was V.V. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1871-1954), author of Blessed in a Wife (1911),The Point of View (1915), Wait for the Stroke (1915), The Bricks Between (1918), etc. Two collections of his plays entitledDramatic Divertissements (2 Vols.) appeared in 1921. His Rama Rajya (1952) is a later play on the theme of ideal Kingship and Government. Though he lias tried his hand at the thesis play in The Bricks Between and historical drama in At Any Cost,Aiyangar is at his entertaining best in light comedies with a farcical touch, dealing with South Indian urban middle class life, likeVitchu's Wife and The Surgeon-General's Prescription. None of the other Madras playwrights was equally active. Among these were P.V.R. Raju [Urjoon Sing or the Princess Regained (ISIS) and Lord Likely (1876)]; Krishnam- macharya [Dasaratha or The Fatal Promise (1901)]; J. Vira- bhadra Rao [Mani and Ratna (1911)]; A. Srinivasacharya [Harischandra or The Martyr to Truth(1912)]; Krishna Iyer [Lord Clive(1913)]; S. Ranga Iyer [77ie Hanging Doctor(1913)]; A.C. Krishnaswamy [The Two Twice-borns(1914)] R.S. Narayanaswami Aiyar (Scenes from Social Life: Varasulka 1915)]; J.S.R. Sarma [Srintad Ramayana /: Balakanda(1916)]; T.B. Krishnaswamy [Nur Jehan (1918); Satya or The Altar of Love (1919)]; and K.S. Ramaswami Sastri (Harischandra(1918); Droupadi(1939)].

This brief chronicle of the growth of early Indian English drama mqy be concluded with a mention of what is perhaps the only known Indian English play to come from North India during the period: Death or Dishonourby an anonymous author published in Dehra Dun in 1914.

Fiction

Though its growth in later years far exceeded that of most other forms, fiction was actually the last to arrive on the Indian English literary scene. The earliest fictional efforts—tales rathe, than novels proper—appeared in journals. Kylash Chunder Dutt's A Journal of 48 hours of the Year 1945 was published in The Calcutta Literary Gazette on 6 June 1835. In this literary fantasy, the author narrates the story of an imaginary unsuccessful revolt against the British rule a hundred years later. Cast in the same mould, Shoshee Chunder Dutt's Republic of Orissa: Annals from the pages of the Twentieth Century appeared in theSaturday Evening Hurkaru on 25 May 1845. Set in the second decade of the twentieth century, this fantasy depicts a British defeat leading to the establishment of a democratic republic in Orissa. Bankim Chandra Chatteijee's (1838-94) first and only novel in English, Rajmohan's Wife was serialized in the Calcutta Weekly, The Indian Field in 1864, though it appeared in book- form only in 1935. (In this version, the first three chapters are translated from the author's later Bengali version by B.N. Banerji, since the English original could not be traced; the rest constitutes the author's serialized English text). This is a rather melodramatic tale of the trials of a typical, long-suffering Hindu wife, Matangini, at the hands of her husband, Rajmohan, who is a bully, the setting being an East Bengal village in the late nineteenth century. Sketchy and lacking in adequate character- motivation, the novel compares most unfavourably with this author's later masterpieces in Bengali. An interesting feature of style is the liberal use of Indian words, creating local colour. A fifteen page fragment comprising the English translation, in Bankim Chandra's own handwriting, of his Bengali novel, Devi Chaudhurani(1869) has also survived.

From the sixties up to the end of the nineteenth century, stray novels continued to appear mostly by writers from the Bengal and Madras presidencies, with Bombay, strangely enough, lagging far behind. (Some of these novels were, however, published not in India, but in London). And there are no novelists with a sizable output to their credit. A majority of these novels are social and a few historical, and their models are obviously the eighteenth and the nineteenth century British fiction, particularly Defoe, Fielding and Scoit. An interesting development is the surprisingly early appearance of women novelists, though' female education took a long time to spread. Novels by as many as three women novelists appeared before the turn of the century. Toru Dutt's unfinished novel, Bianca or The Young Spanish Maiden, a romantic love story set in England

(Calcutta, 1878); Krupabai Satthianadhan's Kanuila, A Story of Hindu life (Madras and Bombay, 1895), and Saguna: A Story of Native Christian Life (Madras and Bombay, 1895)—both thinly veiled exercises in autobiography; and Shevantibai M. Nikambe's Ratanbai. A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife(London, 1895).

Among the novels to be published between 1864 and 1900 were Ram Krishna Punt's The Boy of Bengal (London, Philadelphia, 1866); Tarachand Mookerjea's The Scorpions or Eastern Thoughts (Allahabad, 1868); Lal Behari Day's Govinda Samanta, or The History of a Bengal Balyat (London, 1874)—revised and enlarged version published under the title, Bengal Peasant Life (London, 1908); Gowry, an Indian Village Girlby an anonymous author (Madras, 1876); Ananda Prosad Dutt's The indolence (Calcutta, 1878); Shoshee Chunder Dutt's The Young Zamindar (London, 1883); Trailokya Nath Das's Hirimba's Wedding (Midnapore, 1884); Mirza Moorad Alee Beg's Lalun, the Beragun, or, The Battle of Panipat (Bombay, 1884); Sanjihi Mull's The Interesting Story of Prince Poorun (Delhi, 1886); M. Dutt'sBijoy Chand: An Indian Tale (Calcutta, 1888). aad Lt. Suresh Biswas: His Life and Adventures (Calcutta, 1900); Kamarupa and Kamalatha (Calcutta, 1889) by an anonymous author; Yogendranath Chattopadhyaya's The Girl and Her Tutor (Bhagalpur, 1891); and B.R. Rajam Iyer's fragment of a religious novel. True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastri (serialized in Prabuddha Bharata,1896-98; published in book form, London, 1925).

With the turn of the century, novelists with a somewhat more substantial output began to appear. Romesh Chunder Dutt, whose verse and prose have already been considered, translated two of his own Bengali novels into English: The Lake of Palms: A Story of Indian Domestic Life (London, 1902) is a realistic novel of social reform with widow re-marriage as one of its themes; while The Slave Girl of Agra, an Indian Historical Romance (London, 1909) is set in the Mughal period. A fellow- Bengali, Sarath Kumar Ghosh, wrote a fantasy. Verdict of the Gods (N.Y., 1905; later published under the title, 1001 Indian Nights: The Trials of Narayan Lal, London, 1906), and ThePrince, of Destiny: The New Krishna (London, 1909), a novel about an enlightened Rajput prince of the later nineteenth century, which is of interest as one of the earliest fictional attempts to deal with Eastwest relationship, an oft-repeated theme in the Indian English novel.

Two prominent Madras contemporaries of these novelists from Bengal were A.

Madhaviah and T. Ramakrishna Pillai. After an early effort—Satyananda (1909)—a slight work, Madhaviah ' wrote Thillai Govindan [London, 1916; first published pseudony- mously as A Posthumous Autobiography edited by Pamba (1908)]. This is an absorbing account, probably autobiographical, of the mental development of a contemporary south Indian Brahmin youth. Under the impact of western education he loses his faith but in the end his rediscovery of The Gita brings him peace. The novel contains some authentic vignettes of south Indian village and urban life. The same author's Clarinda (Madras, 1915) is a historical romance dealing with the career of a woman Christian convert of Tanjore. Among Madhaviah's later novels were Nanda, the Pariah who overcame Caste (Madras, 1923) and Lt. Panju—A Modern Indian (Madras, 1924). T. Ramakrishna Pillai wrote two historical romances a la Scott. Padmini (London, 1903) is a love story in which the heroine, a village maiden, prefers a poor but high-souled lover to an aristocratic usurper. In A Dive For Death (London, 1911), the chivalrous hero, a poor, obscure youth loved by a princess, dives from a cliff to save an enemy he has vanquished, survives to be united to the princess and is finally discovered to be a long-lost prince.

Of the four novels of Sirdar Jogendra-Singh, who hailed from the Punjab, the first three were published in London and the last in Lahore. Nur Jahan, The Romance of an Indian Queen (1909) is a historical novel of the Mughal age; Nasrin, An Indian Medley (1911) is a realistic study of decadent aristocratic life in North India; and Kamla (1925) and Kamni(sic) (1931) are social fiction.

Apart from these prominent novelists, there are again stray novels by many writers mostly from the Bengal and Madras presidencies, with Bombay and the north bringing up the rear; S. T. Ram's Cosmopolitan Hinduani (Lahore, 1902); M. Venka- tesiya Naidu's The Princess Kamala or The Model Wife (Madras, 1904); L.B. Pal's A Glimpse of Zanana Life in Bengal (Calcutta, 1904); S.M. Mitra's Hinaupore; A Peep Behind the Indian Unrest—An Anglo-Indian Romance (London, 1909); S.B. Banerjea'sThe Adventures of Mrs. Russell (London, 1909); Balkrishna's The Love of Kusuma: an Eastern Love Story (London, 1910); B.K. Sarkar's Man of Letters (Calcutta, 1911); M.M. Munshi's Beauty and Joy (Surat, 1914); Svarna Kumari Ghosal's (nee Tagore) historical romance, The Fatal Garland (N.Y., 1915); T. R. Krishnaswamy's Selma: A Tale of the Times of Old (Madras, 1916); T.K.. Gopal Panikkar's Storm and Sunshine (Calicut, 1916); Srinivasa Rau's Varanasi: The Portuguese Ambassador (Bezwada, 1917); and C. Parthasarathy's Sangili Karuppan: or The Wheel of Destiny: (Vellore, 1920), a south Indian romance.

The story of the early Indian English short story is even shorter. The first short story collections appeared as late as 1885:Realities of Indian Life: Stories Collected from the Criminal Reports of India (London, 1885) by Shoshee Chunder Dutt and The Times of Yore: Tales from Indian History (London, 1885) by Shoshee Chunder Dutt and Sourindra Mohan Tagore. Shoshee Chunder Dutt's Bengaliana: A Dish of Rice and Curry and other Indigestible Ingredients (1892) contains two long tales— 'The Reminiscences of a Kerani's Life' and 'Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny of 1857' and a number of short stories. Apart from P.V. Ramaswami Raju. the author of The Tales of Sixty Mandarians (London, 1886) and Indian Fables (London, 1887), there are only two more short story writers with a collection each to their credit, until the turn of the century: Khetrapal Chakravarti [Sarala and Hingana—Tales Descriptive of Indian Life (Calcutta, 1895)] and Samuel and Kamala Satthia- nadhan [Stories of Indian Christian Life (Madras, 1898)]. B.R. Rajam Aiyar's 'Miscellaneous Stories', which appeared in The Prabuddha Bharat a during 1896-98, are included in his Rambles in the Vedanta (1905). They are mostly mythological tales retold.

At the beginning of the twentieth century we have the first Indian English short story writer with a considerable literary output Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi lady educated in Britain, became the first woman advocate in Calcutta in 1924. All her four collections were published in London: Love and Life Behind the Purdah (1901); Sunbabies: Studies in the Child Life of India (1904);Between the Twilights: Being Studies of Indian Women by one of Themselves (1908); and Indian Tales of the Great Ones among Men, Women and Bird-People (1916). These studies of mostly Hindu and occasionally Parsi life in both princely and plebeian circles are a mixed collection of stories, anecdotes and character-sketches. They are generally sympathetic in tone, with an undercurrent of social reform and are narrated in a leisurely, Victorian manner. Sorabji's reminiscences of her life appear in India Calling (1934) and India Recalled (1936). Among other short story collections of the period are S.S. Bose's Humorous Sketches(Allahabad, 1903); S.M. Natesa Sastri's Indian Folk Tales (Madras, 1908), S.B. Banerjea's Tales of Bengal (London, 1910) andIndian Detective Stories (London, 1911); Prabhat Chandra Mukherji's Stories of Bengali Life (translated by the author and Miriam S. Knight, Calcutta, 1912) Shovona Devi's The Oriental Pearls: Indian Folk-lore (London, 1915); Dwijendra Nath Neogi's Sacred Tales of India (London, 1916); A. Mad ha-' viah's Short Stories by 'Kusika' (Madras, 1916); and Sunity Devee's Bengal Dacoits and Tigers (Calcutta, 1916), The Beautiful Moghul Princesses (Calcutta and London, 1918), and The Rajput Princesses(London, n.d.).**

This survey of the period between the Great Revolt of 1857 and the first country wide Non-cooperation movement of 1920 has show,: how these sixty-odd years produced a number of mature works in Verse and prose, though drama was yet to establish a tradition and fiction still remained in swaddling clothes. The Indian resurgence, which had already borne considerable fruit by now, was to receive an unprecedented momentum in the 1920s, when the star of Tilak set and the sun of Gandhi rose on the Indian horizon.

CHAPTER 4 The Gandhian Whirlwind: 1920-1947

The winds of change blowing steadily across the Indian subcontinent during more than a half century after the Great Revolt of 18S7 had left tell-tale marks on the political and social geography of the country. The end bf the First World War—a watershed in European history—proved to be an equally significant period in Indian life, when the Gandhian whirlwind began to sweep over the length and the breadth of the land, upsetting all established political strategies and ushering in refreshingly new ideas and methods which shook Indian life in several spheres to the core. As Nehru puts it, ‘Gandhi... was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths.’1

The tempo of political agitation was admirably kept up after the War by Tilak, who emerged from temporary retirement after his release from prison in 1914, rejoined the Congress, and founded the Home Rule League in 1916; and also by Mrs. Anne Besant, whose own All India Hdme Rule League was established in 1917. Meanwhile, Gandhi, fresh from his Satyagraha triumph in South Africa had returned to India in 1915. After undergoing a year’s probation prescribed by his guru, Gokhale, Gandhi tested successfully his new weapon of nonviolence in the Champaran campaign against the exploitation of the tenants of the Indigo-planters in 1917, the Kaira Satyagraha against unjust land assessment demands during the famine of 1918 and the Ahmedabad Labour dispute in the same year. In 1919, agitation against the Rowlatt bills led to the Jallianwala Bagh slaughter which remains as black a blot on the British escutcheon as the notorious Bibighar massacre of 1857 is on the Indian. As a result of it, ‘a scar was drawn across IndoBritish relations deeper than any which had been inflicted since the Mutiny.’2 By this time Gandhi’s leadership had already assumed an all-India character; and it was almost symbolic of the fact that an age had ended and another begun, when on the day Tilak died in Bombay (i.e , 1 August, 1920), Gandhi launched the first country-wide Non-Co-operation Movement. Though it petered out soon, the movement created an unprecedented awakening, the most important feature of which was that it had converted Indian nationalism ‘from a middle class movement to a mass emotion.’2 The movement proved to be ‘a baptism of fite which initiated the people into a new faith and new hope, and inspired them with a new confidence in their power to fight for freedom.'* .

Ten years later, Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience movement in 1930, which differed substantially from the earlier Non-co-operation movement, though the goal remained the same. ‘The |first was passively, the second was actively, revolutionary. The first hoped to bring government to a standstill by withdrawing from the administration; the second sought to paralyse the government by mass performance of specific illegal acts.’2 Among these acts, the one that captured the imagination of the people most was the illegal making of salt. Gandhi’s twenty-four day march, with seventy-nine chosen followers, from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi to break the Salt Law in March 1930 electrified the entire civilized world. Ridiculed at first as an irresponsible act of an eccentric who had somehow persuaded himself to believe that ‘the King Emperor could be unseated by boiling sea-water in a kettle,’ the Salt Satyagraha roused India to action as never before. Another ten years later came the third and last Satyagraha campaign of 1940 which, after the historic ‘Quit India’ resolution of 9 August 1942, led to violent underground revolutionary activity, while Gandhi and his lieutenants languished in jail. Soon after the end of World War II, the politicaland economic imperatives of the day compelled Britain to concede independence to India on 15 August, 1947.

The entire period of near three decades of the Gandhian age was one of far-reaching changes not only in the political scene but. in practically all areas of Indian life also. In the political sphere, while the great ipass-awakening generated an all-pervading national consciousness which facilitated the assumption of a distinctive national identity after independence, a disruptive force was the continuing growth of Muslim separatism culminating in the creation of Pakistan in 1947. Apart from an all too brief period of Hindu-Muslim unity at the time of the Khilafat agitation in 1919, the march of,events during these three decades led inexorably to partition and its holocaust. Muslim separatism, which had grown stridently vocal after Jinnah’s assumption of the presidentship of the Muslim League in 1934, became increasingly strengthened during the ’forties and after the spectacular success of the League in the 1946 elections, partition had become virtually inevitable.

In the social sphere, the Gandhian movement led, among other things, to an unprecedented awakening among women, who responded whole-heartedly to Gandhi’s call. ‘This was unique in the entire history of India, the spectacle of hundreds of women taking part in political mass movement, picketing of liquor shops, marching in demonstrations, courting jails, facing lathi charges aqd bullets.’* As Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, herself a worthy representative of the

Woman of the Gandhian age, puts it, ‘Women with pale eyes and blushing cheeks, they who had been gently nurtured behind silken curtains, women who had never looked upon a crowded street,, never beheld a strange face ... flung themselves into the blinding glare of day, unshaded and unprotected.... They faced perils and privations with a happy light in their eyes and a spring in their limbs. Almost overnight their narrow domestic walls had given away to open a new wide world in which they had a high place.’7 The groundwork for this transformation bad been laid, at least in part, by the pioneering work done in the field of female education and emancipation by organizations such as the Bharat Stri Mandal—the first women’s organization on an all- India basis—founded in 1910 by Saraladevi Chaudhurani; D.K. Karve’s Women’s University established in 1916; the Women’s India Association of Madras (1917) and many other similar efforts.

The rise of a strong Youth movement was another not -ble result of the Gandhian upsurge, and was a clear indication of how the entire social structure was being stirred by the new forces at work. Another indication of this is provided by the awakening among the depressed classes. Religious reform movements like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj had already made a plea for equal rights to the untouchables; and in 1906 the Depressed Classes Mission Society was founded in Bombay. The Congress under Gandhi made the uplift of the untouchables an important part of its programme. The All India Harijan Sevak Sangh was founded by Gandhi in 1932 and significant acts of legislation towards the amelioration of the lot of the untouchables were undertaken by the Congress government which came to power in the provinces in 1937. In B.R. Ambed- kar the scheduled castes found a doughty champion from among their own ranks. He established the All India Depressed Classes Federation and the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, besides launching agitations like the Mahad Satyagraha for the right of use of water-tanks.

In the economic sphere, the period of the First World War saw a rapid development of Indian industries, and, soon after the Russian revolution, Marxist ideas reached India. The All India Trade Union Congress was founded in 1920. After the economic depression of 1929-33, the Second World War gave a further impetus to the growth of Indian industries. As a social historian puts it, ‘In spite of its insufficient and unbalanced character, industrialization played almost a revolutionary role in the life of the Indian people. It led to the consolidation of the unified national economy which evolved in India as a result of the introduction of capitalist economic forms in agriculture by the British

government, penetration of India by the commercial forces of the world and spread of modern transport during the British rule. . . . Further, it brought into existence modern cities which became the centres of modern culture and increasing democratic social life and from which all progressive movements, social, political and cultural, emanated.'8

Indian English literature of the Gandhian age was inevitably influenced by these epoch-making developments in Indian life. A highly significant feature is the sudden flowering of the novel during the 'thirties, when the Gandhian movement was perhaps at its strongest. It is possible to see the connection here if one remembers that by this decade, the nationalist upsurge had stirred the entire Indian society to the roots to a degree and on a scale unprecedented earlier, making it acutely conscious of the pressures of the present in allfields of national life; and it is

out of this consciousness that fiction, in Lionel Trilling's words, 'for our time the most effective agent of the moral imagination', emerges. Fiction, as Hazlitt puts it, is constituted of 'the very web and texture of society as it really exists' and hence finds a fertile soil in a society in ferment. The work of K.S. Venkataramani, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao would not perhaps have been possible had the miracle that was Gandhi not occurred during this period. In fact, it was during this age that Indian English fiction discovered some of its most compelling themes: the ordeal of the freedom struggle, East-West relationship, the communal problem and the plight of the untouchables, the landless poor, the down-trodden, the economically exploited and the oppressed. Other forms of writing, with the exception of prose, however, do not seem to keep pace with the great strides the novel took during this period; and that this should be so is an apt illustration of the fundamental irony of literary history which demonstrates time and again how the processes of literary creation can be understood upto a certain point beyond which the logic of critical analysis begins to flounder. Thus, while the novel flourishes (to be followed by the short story soon), Indian English poetry unaccountably fails to register any signal gains, though bliss it was for a poet in the Gandhian age to be alive, as the example of poetry in many Indian languages of the period (like the fiery lyrics of Kusu- magaraja in Marathi, for instance) conclusively demonstrates; and drama with a few exceptions continues to be the Cinderella

it was earlier. Only prose—especially political prose—shows that continuing vitality which had already produced a number or notable works during the earlier

periods as well.

Prose

As in the previous decades, political prose inevitably continues to predominate during the Gandhian age also. The pride of place here naturally goes to Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1943). Born in a higher middle class Vaisya family of traders turned administrators, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had an upbringing in which the example of his upright father, the influence of his devout mother and the impact on his sensitive and earnest mind of ancient Hindu legends, such as those of Harischandra, the votary of truth, Sravana, the model of filial devotion and Rama were important shaping factors His adolescence, the story of which he has told with ruthless honesty in his autobiography, was marked by a sharp conflict between his quest for self-improvement and an equally strong temptation to transgress the family code of conduct by experimenting with meat-eating, smoking and petty theft. After an undistinguished school career, he spent three years in England (1888-91), studying law. Here apart from an initial, unsuccessful attempt to become an English gentleman', the only significant development in his life was his association with the London Vegetarian Society, which profoundly affected his views on diet; and he showed perfect indifference to the great intellectual ferment which England witnessed during the 1890s. Unable to make a mark as a lawyer on his return home, he sailed for South Africa in 1893, in search of his fortune and discovered his life's philosophy instead. His encounter with the severe racial discrimination practised by the whites against the Indians there— a traumatic experience of which he himself had the bitter taste more than once—turned the shy and diffident brief-less barrister, into a brave fighter against injustice and a confident leader of men. Besides, his world-view developed under the influence of the New Testament, The Gita, Ruskin's Unto This Last, Thoreau's essay on 'Civil Disobedience', Edward Carpenter and Tolstoy. He soon put into practice his political, social and economic theories by launching Satyagraha movements and making experiments in community living. The story of how, within five years of his final return to India in 1915, he became the undisputed leader of the Congress and ultimately led his country to freedom through a series of Satyagraha compaigns has already been told. His death by a Hindu fanatic's bullets in 1948 ended one of the most significant epochs in modern Indian history. Gandhi's English writings fall into three periods. To the brief early London period (1888-91) belong the London Diary,a chronicle of his sojourn in London, written at the age of nineteen, and ten brief essays contributed to The Vegetarian and The Vegetarian Messenger on

subjects like ‘Indian Vegetarians’,‘Foods of India’ and ‘Some Indian Festivals’. To the aftermathof this period may be ascribed the Guide to London written probably during 1893-94 after his return to India. This essay of 55 pages is a rather colourless document based on Gandhi’ sown experiences in London. None of these early writings is marked by any literary distinction. The South African period (1893-1915) reveals Gandhi blossoming out as a disputationist, journalist and author. In the pamphlets, ‘An Appeal to Every Briton in South Africa' (1895),‘The Indian Franchise’(1895) and ‘Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa’ (1896), Gandhi argues vigorously for the amelioration of the lot of the South African Indians. The Indian Opinion (published in Gujarati and English; 1903-14) was the first of the journals launched by him. Gandhi’s first major work, Hind Swaraj appeared in its columns in 1909. Originally written in Gujarati, it was translated by the author himself into English in 1910. Hailed by John Middleton. Murry as ‘one of the spiritual classics of the world’ and ‘the greatest book that has been written in modern times’9 and by Gerald Heard as ‘one of those books about which may be said that they are not so much books as great natural phenomena,’10 Hind Swaraj is a dialogue in twenty chapters between the Reader and the Writer on the problem of Indian Independence. The main thrust of Gandhi’s argument is that true Indian freedom would consist of not merely political emancipation from the British rule but freedom from the bondage of the modern Western machine civilization which, according to him, has poisoned the springs of Indian culture. He singles out for attack the railway system, the professions Of law and medicine and Western education as powerful agents of this corruption. In achieving this freedom, the importance of purity of means and the efficacy of passive resistance of which Swadeshi is a prerequisite are also emphasized. Gandhi concludes by saying that he bears ‘no enmity towards the English, but towards their civilization’ and that his life ‘henceforth is dedicated’ to striving for the Swaraj of his definition. DinA Swaraj is a seminal work, the first direct statement of the Gandhian doctrines of soul-force, passive resistance, nonviolence and purity of means. The extremist criticism of the railway system, lawyers and doctors and British Parliamentary democracy is easily the weakest part of the argument. It was perhaps this that made Gokhale consider Hind Swarajas a ‘crude, hastily conceived book’, which the author would withdraw ‘after he had spent a year in his homeland’,11 though as late as 1938 we find Gandhi maintaining that he saw ‘nothing to make me alter the views expounded in it.’ Today, the present state of both Western civilization and Indian culture underscores the essentially prophetic nature of Hind Swaraj.

During the thirtythree years of the Indian period (1915-48), Gandhi ran the two well-known journals, Young India (1919-32) and Harijan (1933-48), and all his writings henceforth appeared here in serial form. Most of these were written originally in Gujarati and were translated, not by the author, but by others into English, though the translation was mostly revised at places by Gandhi. It is therefore a moot point whether, unlike Hind Swaraj, they can legitimately form part of Indian English literature. Among these, his autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth (Vol. I, 1927; Vol. II, 1928; translated by Mahadev Desai) is easily the most outstanding. Essentially a spiritual manual as its title indicates, it is also an absorbing human document, agonizingly frank and unflinchingly honest in its self-portraiture. Satyagraha in South Africa (1928), Discourses on the Gita(Gandhi's interpretation in the light of his own theories of non-violence and non-attachment, 1930) and From Yeravada Mandir(letters expounding his teachings, written from prison; 1932) were translated by V.G. Desai. Later writings include Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place (a blueprint of a comprehensive political, social, economic and cultural programme, 1941; revised ed., 1945) and Key to Health (a reworking of the ideas in his Guide to Health in Gujarati, 1906; translated by Sushila Nayar; 1948). Apart from these, there are many historic speeches in English, like the Benaras Hindu.University Speech of 1916, the speech at the Trial of 1922 etc., and several articles in the two journals, including a scathing review of Miss Mayo's notorious book, Mother India. An indefatigable and prompt correspondent, Gandhi has also left behind a large number of letters in English.The Collected Works edition, begun in 1958, already has more than 75 volumes and is yet to be completed, having brought the story upto the end of 1940 only. The Selected Works (6 vols.) came out in 1968.

Gandhi's writings are a mine of stimulating thought on political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual issues. He was no erudite scholar, by no means an original thinker with a razor- sharp mind, nor a brilliant theoretician. But solidly grounded in the ancient Indian tradition, he possessed a profound moral earnestness which enabled him to rediscover the ethical values of this tradition; and with his convictions supported by similar trends in ancient and modern Western thought, he boldly applied his findings to the political and social realities of colonial India. As he himself declared, 'I have presented no new principles, but tried to restate old principles'; and Ihave nothing new to teach the world. Truth and non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to experiment in both on as vast a scale as Icould do.'* A basic element in Gandhi's political thought was his faith in the right of every country to evolve a system

best suited to its genius; and in India's case it was what he called Ramraj, i.e. 'sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority'. The 'Swaraj' of his dreams was self-government based on adult franchise, to be attained by 'educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority'. It recognized 'no race or religious distinction*, nor was it 'isolated independence' but 'healthy and dignified independence' making for fruitful international co-operation. This 'Swaraj' could only be attained by the practice of purely nonviolent means.

Social reform was for Gandhi only an inevitable part of the struggle for true Swaraj. He believed that 'social re-ordering and political Swaraj must go hand in hand'. His social ideal was 'an equalization of status,' with class distinctions being abolished. He championed the cause of women's freedom, denouncing child marriage, the dowry system and enforced widowhood. He opposed birth-control by artificial means and advocated self-control and voluntary chastity instead. A stern critic of the evil of drinking, he said that Puma Swaraj (complete independence) was impossible of attainment by people who were slaves of intoxicating drinks and drugs. He found the British system of education in India defective in that it was 'based on a foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous culture'; it ignored 'the culture of the heart and the hand', and confined itself 'simply to the head'. Its use of a foreign medium was another great drawback. He advocated free, compulsory and self-supporting education through the mother tongue—basic education which taught dignity of labour and led to character-building—and prescribed craft-centred training at the lower level and education related to 'national necessities' at the higher.

In the economic sphere, Gandhi totally rejected the concept of the 'economic man', and refused to divorce economics from ethics. He preached 'sarvodaya' (the good of all)—'ethical socialism' which was to be achieved through decentralization of industry, the establishment of rural communities composed of small, manageable units co-operatively knit together, swadeshi and khadi-spinning and the implementation of the Tolstoyan doctrine of 'bread labour'. He advocated the voluntary acceptance of the idea of 'trusteeship' by the capitalists in order to prevent the economic exploitation of the weaker sections of society.

Gandhi's ethical and religious philosophy was shaped by the Upanishads, the Gita and the New Testament and Vaishnavite and Jaina ideals. He subscribed to (he traditional Hindu doctrine of Varnaskrama dhartna but regarded the varnas as 'a healthy division of work and not a rigid caste system. Hence untouchability

for him was ‘a plague which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat.’ He characterized God as ‘Truth and Love’ and religion as ‘the permanent element in human nature’ which tried to establish ‘the true correspondence between the Maker and itself’. Hence, 'there is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness,’ he declared. The only path to Truth was non-violence which was ‘the first article’ of his ‘faith’ and ‘the last article’ of his ‘creed’. He held non-violence to be ‘the law of the human race and ‘infinitely better and superior to brute ‘force’. It was not the last resort of the coward but the first (and the only one) of one armed with love, charity and moral strength. It was a power which could be wielded equally by all, by individuals as well as nations, provided it was used in the right spirit. The sanctity of means was all-important in achieving any end and hence non-violence in its purest form was the sovereign weapon in achieving freedom. He alone who put his faith in Truth and nonviolence fearlessly in action was the true practitioner of Satyagraha.

During the thirty years that have elapsed since Gandhi’s death, many of his ideas have been put into practice with remarkable success, both in India and abroad. Some of them like ‘Panchayat Raj’ have been implemented by the Government, while Vinoba Bhave’s land-gift movement of the 1950s revived the Gandhian magic for a time. Outside India, Martin Luther King in the U.S A , and Danilo Dolci in Sicily have employed the principle of non-violent resistance in the social sphere with spectacular results; and the idea of trusteeship in industry has also roused some interest. Some of Gandhi’s tljeoriek like voluntary self-control in sexual relations and his general view of industrialism may appear to be utopian now, but there is no denying the enduring vitality of his world-view, which continues to be relevant to the modern world in several ways, today also.

Gandhi had once wished that his writings should be cremated with his body. ‘What I have done will endure, not what I have said or written,’ he declared. He had thus no desire to be counted among writers. His purpose in writing was ‘to propagate my ideas.’ Yet, a mind with a significant world-view held with such passionate moral conviction could not but be capable of a distinctive individual voice. His own view of art and literature was strongly influenced by the moralistic ideas of Tolstoy and Ruskin. He believed that ‘all true art must help the soul to realise its inner self,’ and once observed that ‘the only poem that the masses need is invigorating food.’ He regarded journalism as a sacred mission devoted to the pursuit of truth and social service. ‘I cannot write in anger or malice or even idly, cannot write to excite the passions,’ he said. A newspaper was for him essentially a ‘views-paper’. Speaking about the Indian opinion, he

claimed, ‘Icannot recall a word in these articles set down without thought or deliberation, or a word of conscious exaggeration or anything merely to please.’ In contrast to the opulent rhetoric of earlier stalwarts like Surendranath Banerjee and Pherozshah Mehta, Gandhi used a spare and simple, transparent and energetic style which eschewed all oratorical flourishes and communicated with the directness of an arrow hitting its mark. His early style of the London period is expectedly drab and colourless, for it is the expression of a diffident man wholly unsure of himself; but the transformation which his character and career underwent in South Africa lent a new vigour to his style without taking away its basic simplicity. With maturity also came a gift for homely analogy (e.g. his description of the charkha as ‘not a new invention (but) a re-discovery, like the discovery of its own mother by a strayed child’); a happy knack of coining memorable phrases like ‘Himalayan blunder’, ‘Satanic Government’, ‘poem of pity’ (description of the cow) and ‘Drain Inspector’s Report’ (apropos of Miss Mayo’s attack on India), and a Puckish sense of humour (e.g. ‘The woes of Mahatmas are known only to Mahatmas’). Gandhi’s place among modern Indian English prose writers is as distinctive as his role in the life of modern India has been.

From the vast mass of political writing of various shades of thought produced by men in public life who were Gandhi’s contemporaries, old and young, only a few works stand out as of more than merely topical interest. Among the authors of these are prominent associates of Gandhi like Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru; critics of Gandhism such as Subhash

Chandra Bose, M.N. Roy, V.D. Savarkarand B.R. Ambedkar; and socialists like Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia and Ashok Mehta. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (1879-1972), outstanding Congress leader, who occupied important positions in public life including those of Chief Minister of Madras, Central Minister and Governor General of India, was noted for his independence of mind throughout his long and distinguished career. A fearless dissenter, he had the courage to urge the acceptance of Pakistan in principle at a time when the very idea of partition was anathema to the Congress, and after Independence, he became a stern critic of the Nehru government and founded the Swatantra Party in 1956. The preservation of individual liberty and the encouragement of free enterprise, the reduction of State control to a desirable minimum, faith in the efficiency of d arma in regulating individual conduct in society and revulsion at the rapid corrosion of moral values in postIndependence India were some of the ideas he stressed in his articles in the Swarajya, the organ of the Swatantra Party.

Among his earlier writings, C ats Behind Bars (1931) and Jail Diary (1941) are notable. His retelling of the Mahabharata (1951) and the Ramayana (1957), translated from his own Tamil original substantially by himself has won popular appreciation; and hisCollected Speeches were published in 1948. Rajaji's Speeches (Vol. I-II) appeared in 1958. Rajaii who loved English to the point of characterizing it as the gift of the goddess Saras- wati to India' wrote a lucid and firm prose, wiry like the man himself and totally devoid of flabbiness.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), the political heir of Gandhi, was one of the greatest leaders produced by the 'Third World' in modern times. Prime Minister of India for seventeen years, he played an impressive role in international politics, though his Anal years were clouded by the debacle caused by the Chinese invasion of 1962. Only son of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal, as a child and an adolescent, gave little evidence Of his future greatness. Educated at Harrow and Cambridge in England, he returned to India in 1912, an undecided young man dominated by a strong father. Meeting Gandhi for-the first 'time in 1916, Jawaharlal soon drew closer to him and found his mission. The challenge of the Non-Cooperation movement brought out his latent abilities and his rise in the Congress organization and public estimation was rapid. Twice president of the Congress, he was jailed seven times for political activity. In addition to his British education, his tours in Europe in 1926-27 and 1936-38 helped him acquire an international perspective, which he, among his peers in the Congress, possessed to the fullest extent. With the advent of Independence in 1947, he became Prime Minister of India and died in harness in 1964.

An avid reader, Nehru was a tireless public speaker and a prolific writer. His first book, Soviet Russia (1928) is a collection of sixteen articles comprising 'some random sketches and impressions* of Russia after his visit there in 1927. Nehru views Russia as India's great neighbour from whose political, economic and social experiments many valuable lessons can be drawn. Letters from a Father to his Daughter (1930) consists of thirtyone letters written by him in 1928 to his ten year old daughter, and makes a rapid and readable account of the early history of the world from the making of the earth to the writing of the Ramayana and theMahabharata. Glimpses of World History (1934), is more ambitious in scope. Comprising letters written to his daughter from prison during 1930-33, the book is a survey of world history from the beginnings of civilization to the nineteen thirties. Hardly a systematic history in the academic sense, it is yet a fine specimen of the historic vision. Though written without the help of research tools, it nevertheless shows remarkable accuracy. Unlike most European

historians whose accounts of world history usually concentrate heavily on Europe, Nehru takes a larger view and builds his narrative round the theme of the development of human civilization on earth. ‘History teaches us’, he says, ‘of growth and progress and of the possibility of an infinite advance for man.’ The book gives ample evidence of Nehru’s secularism, his scientific temper and his socialist sympathies. An Autobiography(1936) is easily the crowning achievement of Nehru as a writer. Written at the age of fortyfive, it is a literary expression of a man at the height of his powers' In his preface Nehru describes the book as ‘a sketchy, personal and incomplete account of the past’, but the Autobiography does present a vivid picture of both the man and his milieu. Many facets of Nehru's complex personality are revealed here—his scientific outlook, his aversion to organised religion, his admiration for Marxism and his fervent nationalism always balanced by a sharp awareness of the larger forces in world history and their effect on India. An appealing aspectof the book is the number of glimpses it offers of Nehru’s rich emotional and imaginative nature and his keen aesthetic sense. In prison, he once nurses a sick puppy with care, and in Dehra Dun Gaol, the sight of the towering Himalayas soothes his ‘fevered mind’. The range and variety of quotation in the book reveals a man well read in several disciplines. Nehru’s transparent sincerity, his objectivity and sense of fair play and his capacity for unflinching self-analysis are obvipus ip the Autobiography, as, for instance, when he characterizes himself as ‘a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place every where, at home no where,’ and declares towards the close, ’Perhaps what I have written is not so much an account of what I have been but what I have some times wanted to be or imagined myself to be.’

Not less vivid than the portrait of the man is the picture of his milieu. The book is also a living record of the eventful course of Indian history for well over a generation, unmistakably offering the impression of time constantly on the march, of events taking shape and changes materializing—in short, a strong sense of history on the anvil. This picture is all the more vivid because the narrative is -filled with many pen-portraits of people wh ch reveal Nehru’s shrewd understanding of human nature (theAutobiography disproves the charge frequently levelled against Nehru that he did not understand people and was rather gullible in his personal relationships); his ability to capture the essential elements in his subject's character; his use of small and concrete details and interesting anecdotes and his judicious mixture of irony and sympathy. The two outstanding pen- portraits are easily those of his father and Gandhi and the perceptive comparison between the two in Chapter XVIII is one of the finest of

its kind in Indian English literature. In contrast with these father-figures which evoke Nehru's eloquent admiration, persons like Shymji Krishnavarma and Mahendra Pratap reveal his sharp ironic sense, tempered by understanding.

The paradox of the Autobiography is that though an extensive work, it remains a partial portrait, like the autobiographical narratives of Gandhi and Benjamin Franklin. It does not cover the last and most significant twenty five years of his life, when the sphere of his activity expanded immensely. Furthermore, even the narrative of the years actually covered leaves many things unsaid. In spite of a few moving personal references, Nehru, on the whole, appears to practise a characteristically British reserve, and perhaps no reader can finish the book without wishing for a more personal document. Nevertheless, by virtue of its sincerity and vividness and its manifest historical and literary importance, the work indubitably ranks among the major autobiographies in world literature.

The Discovery of India (1946) was written in 1944 during his last internment at Ahmednagar fort. His aim here is to write about the past, as he had done previously,'by bringing it in some relation to my present day thoughts and activities.' He asks himself the question, 'What is my inheritance? To what am I an heir?' and answers the question by declaring: 'There is a special heritage for those of us of India... something that is in our flesh and blood and bones, that has gone to make us what we are and what we are likely to be.' 'The thought of this particular heritage and of its application to the present' makes Nehru survey the annals of his country from the Indus Valley Civilization to the nineteen forties. As in his earlier historical works, what Nehru attempts here is not a scholarly history but a vision of the past seen through the eyes of one imbued with a lively historical sense. Nehru's passionate love of India and his faith in the destiny are tempered by a constant awareness of the cross-currents of world history; and his commitment to the values of democratic socialism, secularism and humanism is as firm as ever. He concludes by telling his countrymen that their pride in their ancient culture and tradition should not be 'for a romanticized past to which we want to cling.' We must co-opetate with other races and nations in common tasks, and must, while remaining 'true Indians', 'become at the same time good internationalists and world citizens.'

Numerous collections of Nehru's speeches, essays, press statements, letters etc. have been published from time to time. These include Recent Essays and Writings: on the Future of India, Communalism and other subjects (1934); India and the World(1936); Eighteen Months in India (1936); The Unity of India:

Collected Writings 1937-1940 (1941); Before and After Independence (Collected Speeches. 1922-1950) (1950); A Bunch of Old Letters (1958) and Independence and After (Collected Speeches: 1946-1964) Vols. I-V (1949-1965). Eleven Volumes of the Selected Works (1970) edited by S. Gopal have appeared so far,

Nehru's political thought was shaped by diverse and at times conflicting influences, including his early training in science, rationalism, the British liberal tradition, Fabian socialism, Marxism and Gandhism. Both before and after Independence, he visualised a secular, democratic and socialist society as the goal before India, and inveighed against bigotry, obscurantism, exploitation, regimentation and corruption in public life. In the economic sphere he advocated planned development, a mixed economy and rapid industrialization on a large scale. Never losing sight of the broader international perspective even during the days of the national freedom struggle, he became, after Independence, the foremost exponent of the doctrines of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and a spokesman of a viable political philosophy for developing countries. While his critics argue that a dreamy idealism, a lack of firmness and a fatal tendency to temporize rendered Nehru largely ineffectual in implementing his programe, it will be universally conceded that he placed before his country socio-political ideals designed to set it on the high road to modernity.

Nehru's prose is a just reflection of the man—sincere and idealistic, urbane and cultured, vigorous yet graceful—a man endowed with a clear and sharp (though perhaps not an original) mind, strong emotions, a feeling for beauty and a keen comic sense. His style is totally free from the periodic ponderousness of many of the nineteenth century Indians. His prose steers clear of their heavy latinized diction, their deliberately balanced and complex sentence-structure, and their magniloquence. His diction is, by and large, simple, but he has a sure feeling for the apt word and the incisive phrase which gives his writing a remarkable trenchancy of expression: e.g. his description of Independence as a 'tryst with destiny' and of Gandhi as 'often the unknown stared at us through his eyes.' Among Indian masters of English, Nehru is undoubtedly one of the most outstanding.

The chief works of other notable associates of Gandhi include Vallabhbhai Patel's (1875-1950) For a United India: Speeches(1948) and On Indian Problems (1949); Pattabhi Sita ramayya's (1880-1959) Gandhism and Socialism (1936) and History of the Indian National Congress Vols. I and II (1935, 1946);

Rajendra Prasad's (1884-1963) India Divided (1946) and Speeches(several volumes, 1952-62); (his Autobiography was translated from Hindi in 1957); K.M. Munshi's (1887-1971) I Follow the Mahatma (1940); J.B. Kripalani's (1888-1982) The Gandhian Way (1945); A'K. Azad's (1888-1958) Speeches (1956) and India Wins Freedom India Wins Freedom 1952) Why the Village Movement (1936) and Gandhian Economic Thought (1951); R.R. Diwakar's (1894—) Satyagraha: Its History and Technique (1946); Morarji Desai*s(l896—) Selected Speeches (1956), The Story of My Life (Vol. I-II, 1974, III, 1979); G. Ramachandran's (1904—) A Sheaf of Gandhi Anecdotes (1942); The Man Gandhi (1943) and Gandhigram: Thoughts and Talks of G. Ramachandran (1964), and U.R. Dhebhar's (1905—) Lectures on Gandhian Philosophy (1962). [Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Ganga and other works have been rendered into English by others.]

A prominent Congress leader who rebelled against Gandhi and Gandhism was Subhash Chandra Bose (1897-1945), whose brave attempt to achieve Indian independence through armed struggle by organizing the Indian National Army in East Asia in 1943-45 is one of the brightest chapters in the history of modern India. His Important Speeches and Writings were edited by J.S. Bright in 1946. The first volume of his Complete Works (Pub. Division, Govt, of India) appeared in 1980. His autobiography Indian Pilgrim (1948) was translated From the Bengali original by S.K. Bose. A Fellow Bengali politician, Manavendra Nath Roy (Narendranath Bhattacharya) (1886-1954) had an eventful career. Starting as a terrorist, he became a friend and associate ofLenin in Russia and was the Founder ofthe Communist Party of Mexico. After a brief flirtation with the Indian National Congress, he founded the Radical Democratic Party in 1940, and launched the New Humanism movement

in 1948. A prolific writer, Roy produced no less than sixtyfive books and about Forty pamphlets. His creed of Radical Humanism, expounded in Mew Humanism: A Manifesto (1947) claimed to be 'a logical integration of the knowledge about the various aspects ofexistence, showing how it is in the nature ofman to be rational and moral and therefore capable oF building a Free, harmonious and just social order.'Roy's was a bold attempt to blend Marxism with humanist ethics. His autobiographical writings such as Fragments of a Prisoner's Diary (1941), My Experience in China(1949) and Memoirs (1964) are no less interesting. B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), the chief architect of independent India's constitution and the most outstanding leader produced by the scheduled classes was a stern critic of the Gandhian approach to the

problems of the untouchables as in What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouch- ables (1945). He wrote extensively on political, economic and religious subjects. His selected speeches have been edited by Bhagwan Das in Thus Spake Ambedkar (1963). The first volume of his Writings and Speeches appeared in 1979.

The Hindu Mahasabha, Founded in 1907, was equally critical of Gandhism and especially of the Congress approach to the Muslims. The preservation of the territorial integrity of India and of Hindu religion and cultural values were its chief ideals. These are clearly enunciated in the wiitings of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966) (Hindu Rashtra Darshan, 1949, etc.). [His The Story of My Transportation for Life (translated from Marathi, 1950) is a moving account of his twelve year incarceration in the dreaded Andaman jail]; and in Shyam Prasad Mookerjee's (1901-1953) Awake, Hindustan (1944).

Bhai Paramanand's (1874-1947) The National Movement(1936) has been translated From the Hindi original by LalChand Dhavan.

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1938), M.A. Jinnah (1873-1948) Maulana Muhammad AM (1878-1931), and Maulana Abdul Ala Maudoodi (1903—). Iqbal, Urdu Poet and religious philosopher, tried to reinterpret ancient Islamic thought with a view to demonstrating its universality as well as its essential modernity. His message of dynamism and action to Indian Muslims made him the prophet of Pakistan. His Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam first appeared in 1930 and was reissued as Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, with an additional chapter in 1934. Speeches and Statements of Iqbal was published in 1944.Discourses of Iqbal (1979) is a recent compilation edited by Shahid Hussain Razzaqi in Lahore, Pakistan. It is a capital stroke of irony that Jinnah, sometime secretary to Dadabhai Naoroji and friend of Gokhale, was a liberal leader, until the advent of Gandhi..His Writings and Speeches (1918) gave no indication that Pakistan was less than thirty years away. Muhammad AM, prominent Khilafat leader, tried to strike an uneasy balance between a fervent nationalism on the one hand and ardent Pan Islamism and Muslim revivalism, on the other. His My Life: A Fragment (1942) and Select Writings and Speeches (1941). were edited by Afzal Beg. Maulana Maudoodi, founder of Jamat-e-Islami and author of Nationalism and India (1938) offered the medieval ideal of

the Islamic State as an alternative to political nationalism.

In addition to the early writings of M.N. Roy (already considered), Indian Communist thought is well represented in S.A. Dange's (1899—) Gandhi and Lenin (1921) and India From Primitive Communism to Slavery (1949), and G. Adhikari's (ed.)Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India (Three vols., 1926-79). Prominent among socialist leaders were Acharya Ngrendra Deva (1889-1936), whose Socialism and the National Revolution was edited by Yusuf Meherally in 1946 and Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902-1979), who later spearheaded the movement against the Congress government in 1974-75. Narayan has written extensively on socialism, Sarvodaya and his ideology of 'total revolution'in Towards Struggle: Selected Manifestos, ed. Yusuf Meherally (1946), Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy ed. S. Prasad (1964) and Total Revolution, Vol. I-1V ed. by Brahmanand (1978). Two handy selections are Towards Revolution edited by G.S. Bhargava and U.N. Phadnis (1975) and The Challenge of Nation Building edited by Brahmanand (n.d.). Narayan's Prison Diary-1975 (1977) is also a highly appealing document. Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-1967), another outstanding socialist leader, was the enfant terrible of Indian politics. His early essays appeared in The Congress Socialist (1934-37), though his Aspects of Socialist Policy (1952) and Marx, Gandhi and Socialism(1962) were published after Independence. Ashok Mehta (1911—) who co-authored The Communal Triangle in Indiawith Achyut Patwardhan (1905—) also wrote Democratic Socialism(1951) and Studies in Asian Socialism(1956). S.M. Joshi's (1904—) speeches have appeared in Socialist's Quest for the Right Path (1970).

Among those of the Liberal-Moderate persuasion some of whose works were published during this period may be mentioned R.P. Paranjpye (1876-1966), who wrote The Crux of the Indian Problem (1931) and Rationalism in Practice (1936), and whoseSelected Writings and Speeches were edited by B.M. Gore in 1940; and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar (1879-1966). Selections from the Writings and Speeches of Sachivottama Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, Diwan of Travancore Vol. I-II, edited by P.G. Sahasranama Iyer appeared in 1944-45.

Journalism

During Pre-Independence days, journalism was inevitably an effective arm of the nationalist effort and the ranks of journalists included men like Tilak, Gandhi, Subhash Chandra Bose and Motilal Ghosh. Among other distinguished

editors and journalists may be mentioned Sachchidanand Sinha who edited the Hindustan Review (1899), The Searchlight (1918) and The Indian Nation (1931); Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, editor of The Hindu from 1905 to 1923; his equally able son, Kasturi Srinivasan, who continued his father's tradition (1934-59), and

B. Shiva Rao, who served The Hindu for thirty years; K. Nata- rajan, editor of the Indian Social Reformer from 1892 to 1940; G.A. Natesan, who edited the Indian Review from 1900 to 1947; C. Y. Chintamani (hailed by Srinivasa Sastri as 'The Pope of Indian Journalism'), who presided over the destinies of The Leader from 1909 to 1913 and 1926 to 1941 and wrote Indian Politics since the Mutiny (1946); Kalinath Ray, editor of The TribUne from 1917 to 1944; Pothan Joseph, associated with various newspapers including The Bombay Chronicle, Swarajya, Hindustan Times and The Indian Express, and whose column 'Over a Cup of Tea' was deservedly popular; K. Rama Rao and M. Chalapathi Rau, successive editors of The National Herald started by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1938; Khasa Subba Rau, who founded The Swatantra and The Swarajya; S.A. Brelvi, editor of The Bombay Chronicle (1928-49); S. Sadanand, founder and editor of the Free Press Journal (1930-53); A.D. Mani, editor of the Hitavada(1936-73); Devadas Gandhi, editor, Hindustan Times (1940-58), and Durga Das, joint editor, Hindustan Times (1944-57). G.V. Kripanidhi, editor, Indian News Chronicle (1947-50) and Frank Moraes, editor The Times of India (1950-57) and The Indian Express (1958-72) donned the chief editorial mantle after Independence, though they had considerable experience in the field earlier. The Modern Review (est. 1907) and The Aryan Path (est. 1929) have been journals mainly devoted to ideas and values, while Prabuddha Bharata (est. 1896), and Vedanta Kesari (est. 1914) specialize in spiritual discourse.

History

While politics inevitably claimed much attention, history, which is 'past politics', continued to be analysed and interpreted. The steady efforts of Jadunath Sarkar (1870-1953), which ranged over four decades resulted in impressive studies in the Moghul and Maratha periods. These include The History of Aurangzeb, (Vols. I-V. 1912-24), Shivaji and His Times (1919) and The Pall of the Mughal Empire (Vols. I-IV, 1932-50). Some other notable contributions are H.C. Ray Chaudhari's Political

History of Ancient India (1923); S.N. San's Administrative System of the

Marathas (1923), Military System of the Marathas(1927) and Eighteen Fiftyseven (1957); K.P. Jayaswal's Hindu Polity (1924); Bal Krishna's Shivaji The Great (Vol. 1-IV, 1932-40); A.S. Altekar's Rashtrakutas and Their Times (1934); K.A. Nilakantha Sastri's The Cholas (Vols. 1 & If, 1935, 1937); Radhakumud Mookerji's Hindu Civilization (1936); G.S. Sar- desai's New History of the Marathas (Vols. I-HI, 1947) and Main Currents of Maratha History (1948); K.M. Panikkar's A Survey of Indian History (1947) and Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of Asian History: 1498-1945 (1953); and R.C. Majumdar's Corporate Life in Ancient India (1918-22). Majum- dar's History of the Freedom Movement in India (Vol. Mil, 1962-63) and the ambitious History and Culture of the Indian People (Vol. I-XI, 1951-69) edited by him came much later.

Religious and Philosophical Prose

The most notable writer of religious and philosophical prose of the period is easily Sarvepally Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), a teacher of philosophy who rose to be President of India. Born in an orthodox South Indian Brahmin family, Radhakrishnan grew up as a boy at Tiruttani, a well-known religious centre; and his studies at Christian institutions like the Lutherian Mission High School, Tirupati, the Voorhees College, Vellore and Madras Christian College encouraged him to study critically the Hindu faith in which his birth and upbringing had grounded him solidly. At the same time, he also felt the impact of Vivekananda's thought and eloquence. His M.A. dissertation on The Ethics of the Vedanta (1908) was a spirited reply to the Western charge that the Vedanta had no room for Ethics. In another early work, The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore (1918), Radhakrishnan found support for his own views on Hindu ethics and the extremely complex doctrine of Maya, in the poetry of Tagore. Radhakrishnan's first major work, The Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy (1920) was his earliest attempt to examine Western philosophical thought. Here he argues that the implicit pluralistic theism in the thought of many modern western philosophers demonstrates the influence of religion on philosophy. Indian Philosophy (Vols. I-II, 1923, 1927) is Radha- krishnan's magnum opus. As a comprehensive and thorough, systematic and readable account of Indian philosophical thought it hardly has an equal. The Hindu View of Life (1926) is a forceful vindication of Hinduism as a way of life, an attitude marked by breadth of vision and tolerance, and refutes the popular notion that it is only a rigid set of out-moded doctrines and hoary superstitions. Kalki or the Future of Civilization (1929) emphasizes the perils of mechanization and

standardization in the modern technological civilization and pleads for a world order based on harmony of the spirit. In An Idealist View of Life (1932) Radhakrishnan states the fundamentals of his own personal faith. After considering the modern challenge to religion and modern substitutes for religion, he examines the nature of religious experience and its affirmations from the Idealist view-point. East and West in Religion (1933) is a contrastive study of oriental and occidental values and Eastern Religion and Western Thought (1939) a fervent plea for toleration. His.later works include Religion and Society (1947), The Principal Upanishads (1953), and Religion in a Changing World (1967). Three series of his Occasional Speeches and Writings (1952-56), (1956-57), (1959-62) have been published and President Radhakrishnan's Speeches and Writings appeared in 1965. Recent paperback collections of speeches and writings includeRecovery of Faith (1967), Religion and Culture (1968), The Present Crisis of Faith (1970). Our Heritage (1973), The Creative Life (1975), Living with a Purpose (1976) True Knowledge (1978) and The Pursuit of Truth (1979). Radhakrishnan : An Anthology(1952) is a representative selection edited by A.N. Marlow.

Radhakrishnan's chief achievement is the recognition he won in the western world for Indian philosophy as a major system of thought. Like Vivekananda, he was an effective interpreter of Indian thought to the west, but an interpreter who stood on Vivekananda's shoulders and enjoyed all the advantages of that position. The burden of his own world-view is the necessity of faith as a solution to the confusions of the modern age, a faith both in God and Man and a faith rational and tolerant. Radhakrishnan's scholarship, buttressed up by his phenomenal memory, is profound and accurate, and makes for his frequent use of apt quotation. A fluent and impressive speaker, he has a style with a distinct rhetorical cast; yet it is resourceful enough to be capable of both sonorous grandeur and trenchant simplicity, and periodic opulence and epigrammatic brevity. He has been accused of interpreting all Indian systems of thought in the light of his own idealistic monism, and also of offering an inadequate interpretation of Buddhist thought. There are also occasions when his smooth succession of sweet-sounding words and phrases almost appears to smother both argument and logic; nevertheless, he remains a major bridge-builder between two cultures, a thinker whose basic ideas have urgent relevance to problems of modern civilization and a distinguished Indian master of English.

Among other signfiicant works on religion and philosophy may be noted P.V. Kane's monumental History of Dharmasastra(Vol. I-V, 1930-62), S. N.

Dasgupta’s History of Indian Philosophy (Vol. I-V, 1922-55), R.D. Ranade’s A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy (1926), and Mysticism in Maharash'ra (1930); M. Hiriyanna’s Outlines of Indian Philosophy (1932) andThe Essentials of Indian Philosophy (1949) and T.L. (Sadhu) Vaswani’s Gita : Meditations (n.d.).

Biography and Autobiography

Biography and autobiography have always been forms in w hich Indian English literature is rich. Of the numerous biographies of public men written during the period, a few stand out by! their literary excellence. These include H.P. Mody’s Sir Pherozshah Mehta : A Political Biography (1921); N.C. Kelkar’s Landmarks in Lokmanya's Life (1924); P.C. Ray’s Life and Times of C.R. Das (1927); R.P. Masani’s Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India (1939) and D.K. Roy’s Among the Great(1947).

The authobiographers include men and women from different walks of life. Apart from the autobiographies already considered, mention may be made of memoirs by public men like D.K. Karve’s Looking Back (1936) and N.C. Banerji’s At the Cross-Roads (1950). Autobiographies by revolutionaries include

Barindrakumar Ghose's The Tale of My Exile (1928), In Andamans: The Indian Bastille (1939), by B. K. Sinha, who was an associate of Bhagat Singh, and Leaves from My Diary (1946) by General Mohan Singh of the I.N.A.

Among autobiographies by writers the earliest is Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s Caste and Outcaste (1923), which describes his boyhood in India and his visit to Japan and sojourn in the United States of America. Here, as in his novels, Mukerji’s picture of India is nostalgically romantic. Mulk Raj Anand’s Apology for Heroism (1946) is a much more objective analysis and remains a valuable aid to the understanding of his fiction. R.K. Narayan’s My Days was to appear much later, in 1974. Journalist K. Subba Rao’s Revived Memories was published in 1933.

Other autobiographers include men of God: Swami Ramdas (In Quest of God, 1923); Purohit Swami (An Indian Monk, 1932) and Sitanath Tattvabhushan (Autobiography, 1942); a scientist (P.C. Ray: Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist, 1932; andAutobiography, 1958); an educationist, who was also a minor

writer (G.K. Chettur : The Last Enchantment, 1933); a railway official (Bhola Singh : How to Climb the Service Ladder, 1933), and a jurist (Chimhnlal Setalwad: Recollections and Reflections : An Autobiography, 1946).

Of the six women autobiographers, two are Nehru's sisters: Vijayalakshmi Pandit's So l became a Minister and Prison Daysappeared in 1936 and 1945 respectively. Her The Scope of Happiness: A Personal Memoir was published years later, in 1979. Krishna Huthee Singh wrote With No Regrets (1944) and We Nehrus (1968). The other four are : Sunity Devi, the Maha- rani of Cooch Behar (The Autobiography of an Indian Princess, 1921); Cornelia Sorabji, whose India Calling (1935) and India Recalled (1936) have already been mentioned earlier; the novelist Santha Rama Rau (Home to India, 1945, and Gifts of Passage, 1961) and Isvani, a Khoja Muslim, who writes about her girlhood and youth in The Brocaded Sari (N.Y., 1946—also published under the title, Girl in Bombay, London, 1947).

Literature of Travel and Essays

Among travel books may be mentioned A.S.P. Ayyar's An Indian in Western Europe(Vol. MI, 1929): Lal Mohan's Travels in the Punjab (1934); Mrs. C. Kuttan Nair's A Peep At Europe(1937); S. Natarajan's West of Suez: An Account of a Visit to Europe(1938); K.A. Abbas' Outside India (1939), from which chapters on the U.S.A. were later published as An Indian Looks at America (1943), and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya's Japan, its Weakness and Strength (1943) and America, the Land of Superlatives(1946). Aruna Asaf Ali's Travel Talk (1941) is a collection of newspaper articles which combines an account of the author's peregrinations with reflections on the politics of the day.

Some notable collections of essays are K.S. Venkataramani's humorous sketches ('My Grandmother', 'My Neighbour* etc.) inPaper Boats (1921) and reflective pieces (which are less successful) in The Next Rung (1928); S.V.V's (S.V. Vijaya- raghavachariar, 1878-1950) Soap Bubbles, More Soap Bubbles, Chaff and Grain, The Holiday Trip, The Marriage etc., most of which appeared in the Hindu during the nineteen twenties and the thirties, revealing at places (as in 'An Elephant's Creed in the Court') a keen eye for the ridiculous (his Mosquitoes at

Mambalam (1958) is in the same vein); N.K. Gupta's disquisitions on Aurobindoean thought in The Coming Race (1931) andTowards a New Society; Iswara K. Dutt's And All That (1931); D.F. Karaka's Oh l You English (1935),

ironic sketches of British life; Banaji Wadia's Random Thoughts and Reflections (1937), F. Correia Afonso's witty and readable Plain Living and Plain Thinking(1940) (his Bread upon the Waters: Selected Speeches and Writings appeared in 1968); Humayun Kabir's Of Cabbages

and Kings (1941); N.G. Jog's Onions and Opinions (1942) and Amarnath Jha's Occasional Essays and Addresses (1942).Literary and Art Criticism

A mere trickle in the early years, criticism now becomes a steady, though still a rather narrow, stream. A contributory factor is the growth in the number of Indian universities and the increasing implementation of the Ph.D. programme, though not all Ph.D. dissertations (fortunately or otherwise) found a press. Criticism of Sanskrit and Prakrit in particular registers some impressive performances, including N.K. Siddhan- ta's The Heroic Age of India (1929); Krishnamachariar's History of Classical Sanskrit Literature (1937); P.G. Sahasra- nama Iyer's comparative studies—Tragi-comedy in English and Sanskrit Dramatic Literature(1933) and The Description of Seasons in English aid Sanskrit Literature (1942): R.K. Yajnik's The Indian Theatre (1933), D.R. Mankad's Types of Sanskrit Drama (1936); R V. Jagirdar's Drama in Sanskrit Literature (1947); Iravati Karve's Kinship Terms and Family Organization as found in the Mahabharata (1944) and S.M. Katrc's Some Problems of Historical Linguistics in Indo-Aryan(1944) and Prakrit Languages and Their Contribution to Indian Culture (1945). S.K. De's History of Sanskrit Poetics (1923, 1925, rev. ed. 1960) and V. Raghavan's The Number of Rasas (1940) and Studies on Some Concepts of Alamkara Sastra (1942) are notable theoretical discussions.

Criticism of literature in the Indian languages has also developed considerably, most of the Indian languages being represented. Among such studies are Rambabu Saksena's A History of Urdu Literature (1927); Mohan Singh's A History of Punjabi Literature: 1100-1930 (1931); P. Sen's Western Influence in Bengali Literature (1947) and Modern Oriya Literature(1947); K.M. Munshi's Gujarat and Its Literature (1935); G.C. Bhate's History of Modern Marathi Literature (1939); R. Narasimha- charya's History of Kannada Literature (1940): P.T. Raju's Telugu Literature (1944); K.R. Pisharoti's Kerala Theatre (1932) and M.S.P. Pillai's Tamil Literature (1929).

Criticism of English literature, however, continues to remain sporadic. Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period seem to receive the most attention. Here we have Amarnath Jha's Shakespearean Comedy and other Studies (1930); V.K.

Ayappan Pillai's Shakespeare Criticism from the Beginning to 1765 (1932); Ranjee Shahani's Shakespeare Through Eastern Eyes (1932); C. Narayana Menon's Shakespeare Criticism: An Essay in Synthesis (1938); M. Bhattacharya's Studies in Spenser (1929) andKeats and Spenser (1944) and B. Rajan's Paradise Lost arid the Seventeenth Century Reader (1947). The eighteenth century does not yet appear to interest the Indian scholar; the Romantics are rather surprisingly meagrely represented in Amiyakumar Sen's Studies in Shelley (1937) and the Victorians in Sudhindra Nath Ghose's Rossetti and Contemporary Criticism (1928). The few studies of twentieth century literature include Amiya Chakra- varty's The Dynasts and the Post-War Age of Poetry (1938), A.C. Bose's Three Mystic Poers: A Study of W.B. Yeats, AE and Rabindranath Tagore (1945); K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Lytton Strachey: A Critical Study (1938) and Bhavani Shankar's Studies in Modern English Poetry (1939). American literature has attracted a solitary critic: V. Ramakrishna Rao's Emerson, His Muse and Message appeared in 1938.

Bhupal Singh's A Survey of Anglo-Indian Fiction (1934) clubs together British writers on Indian subjects with Indian English writers, whose works begin to be studied increasingly during this period. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's pioneering surveys—Indo Anglian Literature (1943) and Indian Contribution to English Literature (1945) appeared before Independence, though his comprehensive Indian Writing in English was to be published later in 1962. The first substantial critical survey of Indian English poetry is Lotika Basu's Indian Writers of English Verse (1933). More selective is Mulk Raj Anand's The Golden Breath: Studies

in Five Poets of New India (1933) which includes a consideration of Tagore, Sarojini Naidu and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. Harihar Das's Life and Letters of Toru Dutt (1921) is an early appreciation, while Manjeri S. Isvaran's Venkataramani, Writer, and Thinker(1932) is an assessment of fellow writer. D.P.Mukerji's Rabindranath Tagore: A Study appeared in 1943. Two studies of Sri Aurobindo by disciples are K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Sri Aurobindo (1945) and K.D. Sethna's The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo (1947).

Theoretical criticism still remains a neglected area, though the few examples found indicate considerable potentialities: V.K. Krishna Menon's A Theory of Laughter with special Relation to Comedy and Tragedy (1931); P.K. Guha's Tragic Relief (1932); B.S. Mardhekar's Arts and Man (1940) and Two Lectures on an Aesthetic of Literature (1944); Humayun Kabir's Poetry, Monads and

Society (1941); and K.P. Srinivasa Iyengar’s On

Beauty (Five Lectures) (1945).

Notable examples of art criticism are G.H. Ranade’s Hindustani Music (1938), P. Sambamoorthy’s South Indian Music (Vol. I-IV, 1941), Mulk Raj Anand's The Hindu View of Art (1933), K. Khandalavala’s Indian Sculpture and Painting (1938), Nihar Ranjan Ray’s Maurya and Sunga Art (1945) and Ragini Devi’s Nrityanjali: An Introduction to Hindu Dancing (1928).

Poetry

Unlike prose, the poetry of this period gives no evidence of any new major voices, the most significant verse being produced by earlier poets like Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, who had consolidated their reputation before the advent of the Gandhian age. In fact, as already pointed out, it is surprising that the impact of the Gandhian whirlwind produced no outstanding poetry of any kind, though numerically the poetic scene remains as thickly populated as earlier.

These writers of verse may conveniently be considered in two groups- practitioners of religious, mystical, philosophical, reflective verse, including the disciples of Sri Aurobindo, and poets mainly in the Romantic-Victorian tradition, who have a wider range of themes and who occasionally also try, rather halfheartedly, to 'experiment with modernism. The two groups are obviously not mutually exclusive, since the romantic banner flutters equally prominently over the heads of the poets of the first group also.

To the school of Sri Aurobindo belong K..D. Sethna (The Secret Splendour (1941), Punjalal (Lotus Petals, 1943), Nolini Kanta Gupta (To The Heights, 1944), Nirodbaran (Sun-Blossoms, 1947) and Nishikanto (Dream Cadences, 1947). Their verse faithfully echoes the master in theme and sentiment, diction and imagery, but hardly succeeds in transmuting the echo into individual voice. Of the writers of religious-philosophical verse in general, J. Krishnamurti is one of the most notable, albeit for reasons not predominantly literary. A child prodigy, a protege of Annie Besant and' sometime head of the international organization, the Order of the Star of East, he enjoyed a considerable following. His The Search (1927) and The Immortal Friend(1928) contain religious musings in free verse in which the poetic accent is less authentic than the message. This must also be said of Swami Paramananda's The Vigil (1923), Swami Ram Tirtha's Poems of Rama (1924), and T.L. Vaswani's Quest (1928). Brajendra Nath Seal's The Quest Eternal (1936) is an ambitious attempt to 'transcribe basic philosophical ideas in forms of pure poetry' and to apply 'the synthetic vision' to the pageant of 'universal history'. The three phases of the quest are Ancient, Medieval and Modern, represented by a Greek priest, a medieval knight and a modern wanderer respectively. Each quest is intended to be a presentation of the imaginative apprehension of 'the Soul of an age.. .its universe- idea and its God-consciousness, viewed from the standpoint of the

living problems of today.' The long poem employs a variety of metres ranging from double-rhyme stanzas to free verse, the diction and imagery being almost uniformly Romantic-Victorian. The Quest Eternalis The Testament of Beauty of Indian English poetry, and even like Bridges' poem, it can hardly be said to have negotiated the difficult leap from perfectly unimpeachable versified philosophy to major philosophical poetry. The same is true of K.S. Venkataramani's On the Sand-Dunes (1923), in which the serious philosophical reflections in free verse seldom attain the higher regions of felt thought.

Those who derive their light mainly from the sun of British Romanticism form a much larger group, many of them being academicians of note. G.K. Chettur (1898-1936) published five collections of verse including Sounds and Images (1921), The Temple Tank and other Poems (1932) and The Shadow of God (1934). The Sonnet was his favourite plot of ground and he tried to till its exhausted soil with unavailing application. His brother, S.K. Chettur (1905-1973), brought out a solitary collection: Golden Stair and other Poems (1967). Armando Menezes (1902 -) experimented with the mock-epic in The Fund (1923) and satire inThe Emigrant (1933) before he found his lyrical voice in Chords and Discords (1936), Chaos and Dancing Star (1946) and The Ancestral Face (1951). His Selected Poems appeared in 1969. The opening poem of this representative selection, 'Ode to Beauty', is suggestive of the thematic preoccupationa of the poet. Though capable of both a delicate lyrical note as in 'Aspiration' and genuine wit as in 'Chairs', he has not been able to sustain these at the highest level of creativity; but his sense of rhythm remains unerring throughout. V.N. Bhushan's (1909-51) eight verse collections between Silhouettes (1928) and The Far Ascent(1948) are, in spite of their bustling enthusiasm, uniformly marred by romantic cliches and Victorian moralising. He has a better claim to our remembrance as an early champion of Indian English literature, who edited three representative anthologies: The Peacock Lute (1945) (poetry), The Moving Finger (1945) (critical essays), and The Blazing Shrine (1946) (one-act plays). Manjeri S. Isvaran (1910-68), better known as a short story writer, published ten slender collections of verse, the first of which was Saffron and Gold and Other Poems (1932) and the last The 'Neem is a Lady (1957). The sources of his inspiration are obvious from his own description of his poems in his preface to Catguts (1940) as 'sparks in the emotive blood', and in his last col'ection he advises the poet 'to put into your head/Some heart' ('To a Highbrow Poet'). He occasionally achieves a cameo effect in lyrics like 'Dewdrop, Teardrop'; but his taste is so unsure that he allows himself an echo like 'Little pigeons/Beating in the void their ridiculous wings in vain'. Similarly,

after describing a widow watching the traffic (her eyes are like ‘twin balls of fire’), he informs us in all possible seriousness that the husband was ‘a kindly cheerful fuss/Alas, he died under a bus’ (‘At the Window’). Obviously out of tune with the poetic revolution ushered in by Eliot and Pound, he complained as late as 1957 that modern poetry is ‘wrought like a lock’ and its key‘cast into the middle of the sea’ (‘The Poet and His Public’). His refusal to come out of his romantic cocoon spelled the end of Tsvaran’s poetic development. P.R. Kaikini’s (1912—) nine verse collections from Flower Offerings: Prose poems on Truth, Beauty and Nature (1943) to Poems of The Passionate East (1947) reveal an enthusiastic but psittaceous eclecticism. His verse sports numerous echoes from ' the Romantics, Tagore, T.S. Eliot (e.g., ‘Nocturne’), the poets of the 1930s (e.g., ‘The Millionaire') etc. The result is mostly clever pastiche, rather than a strong, individual utterance, notwithstanding the assurance with which Kaikini handles language. Humayun Kabir’s Poems (1932) and Mahatma and Other Poems (1944) are consistently marred by conventional imagery and faded diction. A poet who employs the phrase ‘sands of time’ as late as 1944 (‘Mahatma’) only reveals how completely out of aesthetic step he is with his times.

Among other writers of verse of the period may be mentioned K.S.R. Sastry (The Epic of Indian Womanhood, 1921; The Light of Life, 1939), N.M. Chatterjee (Parvati, 1922; India and Other Sonnets, 1923); A. Christina Albers (Ancient Tales of Hindustan, 1922; Himalayan Whispers, 1926); D. Madhava Rao (Madhavi-Lata, 1923); S.L. Chordia (Seeking and Other Poems,1925; Chitor and other Poems, 1928); M.U. Malkani and T.H. Adavani (The Longing Lute, 1925); M. Krishnamurti (Songs of Rose Leaves, 1927; Love Sonnets and Other Poems, 1937), Uma S. Maheshwer (Among The Silences, 1928; Southern Idylls, 1939). J.R.P. Mody (Golden Harvest, 1932; Verses, Grave and Gay, 1938), Nilima Devi (The Hidden Face, 1936); Subho Tagore(Peacock Plumes, 1936; May Day and other Poems, 1945), Bal- doon Dhingra (Symphony of Love, 1938; Comes Ever the Dawn,1941), S R. Dongerkery (The Ivory Tower, 1943), Fredoon Kabraji

(A Minor Georgian's Swan Song,, 1944), H.D. Sethna (Struggling Heights, 1944), and Serapia Devi (A Book of Beneficent Grief and Other Poems, 1945; Rapid Visions, 1947).

Drama

As for poetry, for drama also this is, on the whole, a rather lean period, though the actual number of plays written is by no means small. As in the earlier period, there are only a handful of playwrights who engaged themselves in sustained activity, the rest remaining content with a contribution or two each.

A.S. Panchapakesa Ayyar (1899-1963) wrote half a dozen plays, the first of which was In the Clutch of the Devil (1926) and the last The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity (1942). Two collections of his plays are Sita's Choice and other Plays(1935) and The Slave of Ideas and Other Plays (1941). Ayyar's themes are overtly reformistic. In Sita's Choice, the young widow of a consumptive old man finds fulfilment in a bold remarriage to a reformist youth, though the author is tactful enough to pack the couple ofT to distant Iraq after the wedding. The Slave of Ideas has a rather melodramatic plot built round the clash between a young lawyer with spiritual leanings and his materialistic wife, culminating in her infidelity, which he avenges by murdering her. Ayyar tries to invest the melodrama with ethical and social purpose by posing questions such as forgiveness of wrongs and rights of women. The ungodly and superstitious practices involving witchcraft and ritualistic murder current in contemporary rural South India form the central motif in In The Clutch of The Devil. The allegory in the The Trial of Science for the Murder of Humanity is evident from the title itself In Ayyar's plays plot and characterization are both subordinated to the message', which is often couched in stilted dialogue.

Thyagaraja Paramasiva Kailasam (1885-1946) who wrot e both in English and Kannada (and sometimes mixed the two up, himself calling the result 'Kannadanglo' in his Kannada plays) was a remarkable man—scientist, linguist, sportsman, wit, actor, playwright and bohemian. Trained as a geologist, he resigned from Government service at the age of thirtyfive, remaining for the rest of his life both 'unemployed and unemployable', in his own words. His punning version of his own name 'Typical-assam' and his witty self-description 'a black spot in a white house' are well-known. Kailasam published four English plays in his life time. A fifth, taken down by a friend from the playwright's recitation, was published posthumously; and it is reported that he had composed and recited to friends (a usual practice with him) almost a dozen plays which he never, actually committed to paper. Of the three plays in Little Lays and Plays (1933), The Burden and Fulfilment are one-act plays in prose. The former shows

Bharata’s reaction to the sudden news of his father’s death, Rama’s banishment and his own consequent elevation to kingship. The ethical problems posed by these cataclysmic developments are suggested effectively. In Fulfilment, the single incident of Krishna’s failure to persuade young Ekalavya, the archer, from joining the Kauravas, which leads him to stab the youth to death, is made to raise funda

mental questions about life and death, good and evil, and means and ends. Finally, Krishna who firmly believes that the high end justifies low means, emerges as a mysterious dixine figure in whose hands, foe and friends alike are only puppets. A Monologue: Don't Cry, the third play in the collection is a slight work.

It is a conventionally allegorical presentation of the sorrows of Woman, whose life from childhood to youth is shown to be an odyssey of loss, culminating in widowhood.

Kama or The Brahmin’s Curse (1946) is the only full length play in verse and prose published by Kailasam in his life time. As the sub-title, ‘An impression of Sophocles in five acts’ indicates, the play is built round the idea of a fatal curse: in this case, the curse of the guru he has deceived, which dogs Kama to the end of his days. The play ends with another curse which is a capital stroke of tragic irony. Aswatthaama, bent on avenging Kama’s mortal wound, curses the house of Pandu, without realizing that Kama himself is a scion (though illegitimate) of that very house. The play is almost a Mnhabharata in miniature, depicting some prominent /incidents in the epic, though Kailasam takes many liberties with the original. In spite of its sub-title, Kama is more Elizabathan than Greek in spirit and expression. Keechaka (1949), available in the version reportedly prepared from Kailasam’s' recitations makes a bold departure from mythological stereotypes by projecting the lascivious Keechaka of legend as a noble hero truly in love with Draupadi and Bhima as the villain of the piece. Plays which Kailasam never wrote down but partly composed orally and recited (some times spontaneously) to friends from time to time reportedly included Bhisma's Last Night, The Fear (on Markandeya), The Torture (on Harischandra), The Vow (on Dronacharya and Drupada), The Remorse (on Rama and Sita), Abnegation (on Bhima), Trishanku and Renuka.

Kailasam chooses his subjects from ancient epics but does not rest content with merely copying the original. He brings a challengingly individual approach to

bear upon the mythological personages he portrays. A champion of the underdog, he exalts the lowly forester Ekalavya at the cost of Prince Arjuna; sides with Keechaka, who is no match for the mighty Bhima and ennobles Kama, glossing over all his Tailings. Furthermore, he handles his plots in such a way that his plays come to have an apex of ethical import, though unlike Ayyar he does not resort to machine-made moralising. A born actor himself [he once mockingly gave himself the title, Vidhava-abhinaya-Visarada (skilled in playing the widow's role) apropos of his acting in his Kannada plays] he has a sure sense of the theatre. But a total proneness to sentimentality dogs almost all his plays, espe-cially Karna (the hero repeatedly weeping on his own shoulder and calling himself, 'poor, poor Anga!'), and the ghost of Shakespeare haunts his theatre as disastrously as it did Sri Aurobindo's. Thus, Bharata's mental conflict in The Burden is couched in terms of Hamlet's and Kama's speech in the assembly echoes Antony's oration. Kailasam's greatest weakness, however, is ironically enough, his style, though he had an excellent command of the language. His exuberance makes both his prose and verse equally rhetorical and pseudo-poetic. The dramatic verse, needlessly riddled with archaisms like 'forsooth' and 'list' lacks both the fluency of Sri Aurobindo and the rhythmical grace of Harindranath Chatlopadhyaya, and the prose sounds occasionally as if it were an unconscious parody of euphuism, as in 'Blessings, my budding bowman. But you will never bloom into a better until you better the bearing of your body whilst at bow-craft' (Bhisma to Arjuna in The Purpose). It is also a pity that, like Sarojini Naidu in her poetry, Kailasam too gave no expression to his sharp comic sense in his English plays, though his Kannada writings are naturally the richer for it.

Bharati Sarabhai's (1912—) two plays— The Well of The People (1943) and Two Women (1952)—show a distinct impact of Gandhian thought and the first one, in special, is easily one of the most typical products of the Gandhian age. The reviewer who began his review of the play with 'Well, well, well,' certainly allowed his critical sense to be smothered by his wit, for The Well of the People is one of the very few successful Indian English plays. Based on a true story published in Gandhi's Harijan, it is a verse play about an old widow who, becoming lame and unable to go on a pilgrimage to Benaras and have a dip

in the sacred Ganga, decides to spend her money in getting a well dug for the untouchables in her village, instead. She says, 'I may not see Benaras, God does not/Push a sick vessel like this body to/Each port of earthly pilgrimage.. ./But my soul, my free swan, can bring inland/On a small well, with water pure as

Mother Ganga, the merit lost.' The play is an effective dramatisation of how during the Gandhian age a new social awareness fused itself with the age-old religious consciousness, thus leading to a resurgence of the spirit. Appropriately cast in the mould of the imaginative drama of Maeterlinck, Yeats and Tagore, The Well of the People employs symbolic characters. The old woman herself is India, 'she is you, you and all of us', and the choruses of the women, the peasants and the Gandhian workers have also an obvious symbolic purpose. It is in style — that weakest link in the chain of Indian English drama—that the play is at its strongest. Sarabhai's verse, unaffected and energetic, eschews poeticisms and makes frequent use of speech rhythms. Colourful Indian imagery is used but without the slightest trace of self-consciousness.

Two Women is, however, a sad anti-climax. The two women in this prose play are Anuradha, a typical Hindu wife unhappily married to a westernized husband, and her friend Urvashi, an unattached singer and dancer. They both decide to renounce the world and go to the Himalayas; but Anuradha comes to know that her husband is afflicted with a mortal disease and realizes that the Himalayas will provide only escape but no peace, and Urvashi falls in love and feels that her life is now fulfilled. The two women finally accept the message of the Gitc that the only way to moksha is doing one's duty in one s station in life in a calm, unattached manner. The form of realistic prose drama was hardly suitable for a theme of this nature and (he long speeches by characters in 'poetic prose' (e.g. 'staring at us like a sea-bird, young and still, whitened, huddled in the background': Urvashi's description of Darshan) appear out of tune with the social setting.

Of Joseph Mathias Lobo-Prabhu's more than a dozen plays, some like Mother of New India : A Play of the Indian village in three Acts (1944) and Death Abdicates (1945) appeared before Independence, though his Collected Plays was published in 1956. All the six plays in this volume betray the author's weakness for melodrama and play after play sports guns, poison, accident, suicide, and murder. Apes in the Parlour deals with the theft of a precious stone from a temple by a cinema actress who is then murdered. In The Family Cage, the tragic theme of leprosy is treated in an unconvincing manner, with all kinds of coincidences tying the action into knots, until finally the protagoinst is suddenly declared cured. Flags of the Heart, is a sentimental presentation of love thwarted by caste, with a dash of terrorism deepening its already garish colours. In Winding Ways, all the talk of the 'Christian ethic of love' and the 'Hindu ethic of detachment* rings hopelessy false, since it is tagged on to a creaking plot

built on the hoary device cf a guilty secret in the past. Love Becomes Light, which sports the same device, opens with a revealing stage direction: ‘Roshan has a pistol which he fires frequently to punctuate his conversation.’ The last play, Dog’s Ghost: A play for Non-vegetarians reads like a completely unintentional burlesque of Gandhian non-violence. The protagonist has run over a pariah dog and seeks to expiate his sin by confessing to the murder of his sister, who, he suspects, has been killed by his brother-in-law. Lobo-Prabhu's characters are paste-board and his dialogue is full of poeticisms and play upon words.

Curiously enough, quite a few writers who won their reputation in other forms of writing are also seen to have tried their hand at drama, though with no conspicuous success. The first published work of the novelist, Sudhindra Nath Ghose was Colours of a Great City : Two Playlets—The Defaulters and And Pippa Dances (1924). He has also left a number of unpublished plays, including Antigone and A Leap Year Comes But Once in Four.11 V.N. Bhusan’s Samyukta and Mortal Coils appeared in 1930 and 1934 respectively, and Armando Menezes’ social comedy, Caste in 1938. R.K. Narayan’s own dramatization of his short story : ‘The Watchman’ was published under the title The Watchman of The Lake (1940) and it is also on record that K.R., Srinivasa Iyengar wrote two plays : Suniti and Her Spouse or The Storm in a Tea-cup (1942) and The Battle of the Optionals (1943).

Some of the other plays published include P.K. Bosu's Conrad and Leonora (1921) and Rustum and Zulekha (1921); V. Narayanan’s Where God is Not and other Playlets (1933); Shridhar Pande’s Plays (a collection of three plays, 1935); Hemchandra Joshi’s Plays for the Young (1936) and Cupid in Slums, God on the Pavement and Twin Souls (all n.d.); Abdul Mi's The Land of Twilight (1937) and Two Plays—The Rebel and The Imperialist (1944); R.S. Fyzee’s Invented Gods (1938) and Daughter of Ind (1940); D.M. Borgaonkar’s Image Breakers (1938) and One Act Plays (1957); Imam Sayed Mehdi’s Scenes from Indian Mythology (1940) and Scenes from Islamic History (1940); Sivananda Saraswati Swami’s Brahmacharya (1940); Divine Life (1943), Radha's Prem (n.d.) and Saint Alavander or The King's Quest of God (1947); Balwant Gargi’s The Vulture and other Plays (1941) and The Knife (1971); A.S. Raman's The Daughter, Drona and The Gardener (all translated from his Telugu original by the author, 1943) and Charity Hospital (1944); Baldoon Dhingra’s For Heaven is Here (1944) and The Awakening (1945); P.A. Krishnaswamy’s Kailash (1944) and The Flute of Krishna (1950); Mrinalini Sarabhai’s The Captive Soil (1945)

and Vichaar(1970); Purushottam Trikamdas's Sauce for the Goose (1946) and Oh, Hell (1947) and Avyaktananda Swami's Ten Short Plays(1947). As for single plays by stray authors, their number is large enough to preclude even the courtesy of inventory treatment, the right place for them being a standard bibliography.

Fiction

The Novel

As already noted, the Indian English novel of the period was deeply influenced by the epoch-making political, social and ideological ferment caused by the Gandhian movement. The fiction of K..S. Venkataramani (1891-1951), chronologically one of the earliest novelists of the period, is a copy-book example of this. His first novel, Murugan, The Tiller (1927), contrasts the careers of two young south Indian friends— Kedari, a flashy materialist finally ruined by his own chicanery, and Ramu, an introvert, whose spirit of public service brings him spectacular rewards after an unpromising beginning. The novel ends with Ramu's founding of an ideal rural colony on Gandhian principles to which he retires with his repentant friend. Artless in technique, Murugan, The Tiller with its one-dimensional characters is more of a tract than' a novel. The impress of Gandhism is even stronger on Venkataramani's second novel, Kandan, the Patriot: A Novel of New India in the Making (1932). Set against the background of the Civil Disobedience movement of the nineteen thirties, the novel tells the story of Kandan, an Oxford-educated Indian youth, who resigns from the Indian Civil Service to plunge into the freedom struggle and finally succumbs to a police-bullet. Unfortunately, Venkataramani's story is far more contemporary than his fictional technique. His hero has a prophetic dream before he dies and makes a long speech of patriotic exhortation on his death-bed; Ponnan, the Governmet spy is suddenly revealed to be the long-lost brother of the beautiful Kamakshi (He had been kidnapped by bear- dancers as a boy!), and chapter XIV opens with: 'Kind reader, we have to go back a little.'

A.S.P. Ayyar, the dramatist, was a member of the Indian Civil Service and could hardly write a Gandhian novel with impunity. His clever solution was to go back to ancient Indian history (he was a historian by training) and that this was a deliberate strategy is indicated by a remark in his introduction to his second novel, Three Men of Destiny (p. vii). 'Nothing is more appropriate in the present glorious renaissance period of Iqdia, when Eastern and Western ideas are stirring the people into various kinds of political, artistic and religious expression peculiarly their own than depicting the story of the time when India first came into violent contact with the greatest and most civilized nation in Europe then, the Greeks.' Ayyar's first novel, Baladitya (1930) is set in fifth century India and narrates the story of the defeat of the invading Huns by Baladitya, the King of

Magadha and Yasodharman, the King of Mahakosala. It is a sprawling chronicle with about seventyfive characters and Ayyar's penchant for social reform (also revealed in his plays) punctuates the narrative with frequent homilies on the evils of the caste system, pseudo-religiosity etc.Three Men of Destiny (1939) is cast in the same mould. The three men are Alexander the Great, Chandragupta Maurya, the Indian emperor and Chanakya, his Brahmin Prime Minister, the background being Alexander's invasion of India in the fourth century B.C., and its aftermath. The list of characters comprises 145 men and 18 women. Ayyar later split this large novel into two parts and published them separately with some revision as The Legions Thunder Past (1947) and Chanakya and Chandragupta(1951). Ayyar's fictional technique, like Venkataramani's, is totally unaifected by twentieth century models.

A fellow Tamil, Krishnaswamy Nagarajan (1893—) wrote two novels which stand head and shoulders above the work of both Venkataramani and Ayyar. Athavar House (1937) is a Gals- worthian family chronicle dealing with an old Maharashtrian Vaishnava Brahmin family settled in the south for generations. The action, spread over almost a generation, covers the economic vicissitudes in the life of the joint family, the ferment of the Gandhian age, the stresses and strains of complex family relationships and the inevitable clash between orthodoxy and new ideas. An authentic picture, drawn with great understanding and sympathy, of a social phenomenon now fast vanishing from the Indian scene, this joint family chronicle is one of the best of its kind in Indian English fiction. In a later novel, Chronicles of Kedaram (1961), Nagarajan seasons his realism with a sharp sense of irony. This is a picture of life in a Coromandel coast town during the nineteen thirties drawn by an insider who tempers his intimate knowledge with an objectivity more to be expected of an outsider. The manners and morals of the small town set, its petty religious feuds (in one of which Gandhiji himself has to mediate), the little storms in its tiny social tea-cups, the flutter in its dovecotes caused by the Gandhian whirlwind and the inevitable inroads made by reform into conservativism—are all evocatively brought out.

The m ost significant event in the history of Indian English fiction in the ninteen thirties was the 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 stature that they revealed, each in his own characteristic way, the various possibilities of Indian English fiction. Mulk Raj Anand (1905—), the eldest of the three, has also been the most prolific.

Born in Peshawar (now in Pakistan), in a Hindu coppersmith family, Anand has narrated the story of his upbringing in the autobiographical Apology for Heroism (1946). ‘I grew up,’he says, ‘like most of my contemporaries, a very superficial, ill-educated young man, without any bearings,’13 since the education of those days glorified western culture at the expense of the Indian tradition. Two critical illnesses during early years had given the boy a reflective turn of mind which was counterbalanced by his native Punjabi realism and activism. Participating in the Gandhian movement while at college, he suffered a brief imprisonment. He sailed for England for doing research in philosophy in 1924; there, he became intrested in the study of Indian art and also came in touch with avant garde movements and left wing politics and even joined the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. On his return home, he founded in 1946 the art magazine Marg, which he continues to edit. Endowed with apparently inexhaustible energies, Anand is an indefatigable traveller and is actively associated with numerous literary and cultural associations both in India and abroad, besides engaging himself in social work.

Anand’s fiction has been shaped by what he himself calls ‘the double burden on my shoulders, the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of my Indian past.’14 To his Indian past, however, Anand’s attitude is ambivalent. On the one hand, he is indignantly critical of the deadwood of the hoary Indian tradition—its obscurantism and fossilization; on the other, as his lifelong interest in ancient Indian art and the intuitive understanding of the Indian peasant mind in his writings indicate, he is equally aware of its finer and enduring aspects as well. And it is mainly from the European tradition that Anand derives his fervent socialist faith and his vision of a modern egalitarian society. Anand’s numerous novels form a fictional chronicle in which his eclectic humanism and his humanitarian compassion for the underdog are persistent themes.

Both these themes receive perhaps their best fictional treatment in Anand's first novel, Untouchable (1935), which describes an eventful day in the life of Bakha, a young sweeper from the outcastes’ colony of a north Indian cantonment town. This particular day brings him his daily torments and more but in the end it also suggests three alternative solutions to his problem: A missionary tries to persuade him to embrace Christianity; he listens to Gandhiji, who advocates social reform; and he also hears of mechanized sanitation as the only answer possible. The novel ends with Bakha 'thinking of everything he had heard, though he could not understand it all.’ Anand’s treatment of his theme here is remarkably objective and restrained, which saves the book from the lush

sentimentality which mars some of his later novels. Unsparing in its realism, Untouchable is also structurally the least flawed of all Anand's novels. Apart from the long harangue on modern sanitation at the end, the entire narrative is a thing of perfect unity and finish.

In his two chronicles of coolies— Coolie (1936) and Two Leaves and a Bud (1937), Anand turns to the lot of another class of the under-privileged. The range and scope of his fiction have now widened and his canvas expanded, and there is also an orchestration of themes which are barely hinted at in Untouchable-themes such as the contrast between rural and urban India and race-relations. Coolie is the pathetic odyssey of Munoo, an orphaned village boy from the Kangra hills, who sets out in search of a livelihood. His several roles, including those of a domestic servant, a coolie, a factory worker and a rickshaw-puller, take him to various places from Bombay to Simla, until swift consumption brings his struggles to an untimely,end. The novel is an indignant comment on the tragic denial to a simple peasant of the fundamental right to happiness. Munoo and his fellow coolies are exploited by the forces of industrialism, capitalism, communalism, and colonialism. With its constantly shifting scene, its variety of characters from ill classes of society and its wealth of eventful incident, Coolie has an almost epic quality. However, in his crusading zeal, Anand neglects Munoo's inner development altogether, and in the last part of the narrative relies excessively on chance. Humanitarian compassion distorts action and character even more disastrously in Two Leaves and a Bud, though the novel has its better points. The locale here is a tea-plantation in Assam to which Gangu, a poor Punjabi peasant, is lured by fabulous promises. Compelled to work in unhygienic conditions and starved, he is shot dead by a British officer, who tries to rape his daughter. Anand tries to be objective by showing how the British attitude to the Indian can be both imperialistic as in the case of Reggie Hunt or liberal as in that of Dr. de la Havre, but on the whole, the impression is unavoidable that Gangu is presented as a veritable Indian Job in order that the author's thesis can be proved. The one saving grace of the novel is the imaginative description of the plantation scene.

A luckier Punjabi peasant is the protagonist of the ambitious trilogy—The Village (1939), Across the Black Waters (1941) and The Sword and the Sickle (1942). The first novel in the series

offers a realistic picture of life in a typical Punjabi village in early twentieth century seen through the eyes of young LalSingh, who is an insider turned

outsider, as he is a rebel against all the village mores which he finally escapes by running away. Across the Black Waters, which shows Lal Singh joining the army and fighting in Flanders in the first World War, is perhaps the only major war novel in Indian English literature, inviting comparison with All Quiet on The Western Front and The Red Badge of Courage. It has the same open-eyed honesty and deep compassion. The last volume of the trilogy however, comes as a sad anti-climax. The Sword and the Sickle is an extremely confused book. It shows LalSingh returning home from a German prison, hobnobbing with Communists and ending up in prison again. In his picture of both Communism and Gandhism Anand resorts to cheap irony (the Communists especially are shown to be a crowd of clowns), thus depriving LalSingh's quest of any possible seriousness.

The Big Heart (1945), on the other hand, is undoubtedly one of Anand's better efforts, though marred at the end by compulsive preaching. Ananta, the young coppersmith, called 'Big Heart' owing to his generosity, aggressively champions the machine and modernity in a traditional society and finally pays the price with his life. The novel has perhaps a special niche in the heart of its creator, since it presents an intimate picture of a segment of society to which Anand himself belongs; and Ananta is perhaps the best realized of Anand's heroes. As in Untouchable, the entire action takes place on a single day and but for a similar, gratuitous harangue in the end, the novel has a taut structure.

The Big Heart was Anand's last novel before Independence. One would have thought that Anand with his keen interest in contemporary social and political problems should have found the immediate post-Independence scene an exciting and reward* ing artistic challenge. But on his return to India for good in 1945, Anand had suffered a nervous breakdown as a result of a personal tragedy. It was perhaps this that made him turn inward and escape into the past rather than confronting the immediate present. His first utterance after Independence was Seven Summers (1951), an engaging fictional account of his childhood and the first of a long projected series of autobiographical novels with Krishan Chander as the protagonist. Another attempt to achieve a personal catharsis was The Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953), in which the hero has a nervous breakdown. This controversial novel, admired by a few of Anand's critics but attacked by many others, is a pathological study of a neurotic Maharaja. It is clear that Anand does not know his prince and the prince's milieu as intimately as he knows his Punjabi peasant, and is relying on well-worn stereotypes. The mad Maharaja's excesses (of which the titillating title gives ample promise) are

as odious as the contrived plot with its inevitable tiger-hunt, juggler show, egg-eating contest (and even discussions of Indian philosophy) is theatrical. Above all, it is almost comic to see the champion of the down-trodden weeping over the downfall of a Maharaja.

Fortunately, Anand returned to his peasant in The Old Woman and the Cow (1960). The 'cow' is Gauri, a simple peasant girl forsaken by her husband and actually sold to a rich merchant by her mother, whose logic is reminiscent of that of Hardy's peasants: 'It was a choice between my Gauri and my cow.' Gauri escapes, becomes self-reliant and is transformed into a veritable tigress. This is a neat reversal of the age-old Sita myth in the modern contest. Unfortunately, here also Anand blots his artistic copy-book by resorting to direct statement through his mouthpiece, Dr Mahindra, Gauri's benefactor.

Anand's next two novels are slight works, showing how he has never been able to sustain his art at a consistently high level.The Road (1963), is a rehash of the Untouchable theme, adding little that is new by way of thought or insight, and TheDeath of a Hero (1964) a short novel on a Kashmir freedom fighter again reveals how Auand resorts to mere conventionalities when he is cut off from his native Punjab scene. In the 'seventies, Anand returned to the autobiographical vein, which he first exploited inSeven Summers. Morning Face (1970; Sahitya Akademi award, 1972) and Confession of a Lover (1976), like Seven Summers,are parts of a long fictional autobiography reportedly planned, in seven volumes. Morning Face covers the period of the hero's school days and adolescence, and the storv of the growth of Krishan Chander's mind — especially his sharpened political awareness—isevocatively told. An interesting aspect of the novel is the number of characters and situations from Anand's fiction reappearing in it. Though it lacks the freshness of the much shorter Seven Summers, Morning Face is an authentic document of the revelation of a mind and its

milieu. In Confession of a Lover, Krishan Chander goes to college, has an unsuccessful love affair with a young married Muslim girl, dabbles in poetry, journalism and politics and at the end leaves for England. As one watches Krishan Chander grow up, one feels that his sensitivity, amounting almost to morbidity at times, and his uninhibited self-love—qualities rather engaging in the child and the adolescent—are increasingly less so in the youth. The story of Krishan Chander and Yasmin has its tender moments but seems to move dangerously close to the world of romantic conventionalities, especially when

the hero indulges in not infrequent rhetoric.

The strength of Anand's fiction lies in its vast range, its wealth of living characters, its ruthless realism, its deeply felt indignation at social wrongs, and its strong humanitarian compassion. His style, at its best, is redolent of the Indian soil, as a result of his bold importation into English of words, phrases, expletives, turns of expression and proverbs drawn from his native Punjabi and Hindi. A tendency to slip into easy sentimentality and lose artistic control, a weakness for preaching, and a frequent insensitiveness to the nuances of expression, which often makes him write in a footloose, frenzied and even slipshod manner, have made his work extremely uneven, though his total fictional achievement, with all its limitations, remains impressive enough.

The art of Rashipuram Krishnaswamy Narayan (1906—) offers an interesting contrast to that of Mulk Raj Anand. Narayan's delicate blend of gentle irony and sympathy, quiet realism and fantasy stands poles apart from Anand's militant humanism with its sledge-hammer blows and his robust earthiness. A Tamil who has spent the major part of his life in the quiet city of Mysore, Narayan is the son of a school master. Except for brief stints of working as a school master and a newspaper correspondent, he has devoted himself exclusively to writing—a rare phenomenon- in modern Indian literature. Narayan's little dramas of middle class life are enacted in Malgudi, an imaginary small town in South India which comes to be felt as a living ambience in his fiction. His first novel, Swami and Friends (1935), is a delightful account of a school boy, Swaminathan, whose name, abridged as 'Swami' gives a characteristically Narayanesque, ironic flavour to the title, raising expectations which the actual narrative neatly demolishes. Swami's story is that of the average school boy with its usual rounds of pranks and punishments, but Narayan tells it with such good-humoured

banter and understanding of a 'boy's will' that he recaptures all the freshness of boyhood days. What one misses, however, is that sense of the pathos and pain of growing, of passing time that one unmistakably gets in a much more complex chronicle of childhood like the first part of L.P. Hartley's Eustace and Hilda trilogy. Narayan's art is still content to skim on the surface

in The Bachelor of Arts (1937), the story of Chandrari, a sensitive youth caught in a conflict between the western ideas of love and marriage instilled into him by his education and the traditional social set up in which he lives. His frustration drives him to become a sanyasi for a time, after which he returns home to find

that a traditional, arranged marriage is not, after all, an imposition. Narayan makes us smile gently at Chandran’s adolescent gropings, but is careful to enlist our sympathies for him. The novel, however, leaves us with the feeling that the author has made no attempt to probe the real implications of the conflict.

The Dark Room (1938) is Narayan’s only attempt to write in a fictional register totally unsuited to his talent-a wholly serious tale of silent suffering and abject surrender. The victim is Savitri (the name recalls the archetypal constant wife of Hindu legend) who, finding her husband infatuated with a working woman, leaves him and the children only to realize that a traditional, middle class Hindu wife is all but helpless, cut off from home. She pockets her pride and returns defeated to her unrepentant husband. It is difficult to sympathize with any of the three main characters here. Savitri is too spineless to become a tragic figure, her husband is a cad and Shanta Bai, the ’other’ woman remains a shadowy figure. The upshot is not a powerful drama of emotional crisis but a little storm in a small domestic tea-cup, more than slightly cracked. The Dark Room is by no stretch of the imagination an Indian version of The Doll's House. The English Teacher (1946; issued in the U.S.A. as Grateful to Life and Death), Narayan’s last novel before Independence, clearly demarcates the areas of his strength and weakness, by neatly dividing itself into two halves of equal length. The first half is a charming prose idyll centred round ‘The Angel in the House’, bringing out both the poetry of the daily routine when youth and love preside over the little middle class home of Krishnan, a young college lecturer, and the comic irony of the petty problems of the daily business of living. At the end of part I, the young wife, Susila dies. On the second half the only verdict possible is the one in Pope’s well- known epigram, ‘On one who made long epitaphs’: ‘one half will never be believed’. Krishnan establishes connection with the spirit of his dead wife and resolves to devote the rest of his life to a children’s school. Narayan’s imagination being certainly not of the type which can effortlessly make the supernatural natural, this tame exercise in spiritualism is hardly convincing.

Narayan’s art reached its maturity after Independence, when he was finally able to enlist his good-humoured irony as a firm ally of serious moral concern in three novels: The Financial Expert (1952), The Guide (1958) and The Man-eater of Malgudi(1962). Before he did this, however, he tried an unsuccessful experiment in another direction in Mr. Sampath (1949). This is an extravaganza dealing with the making of a mythological film. During the shooting of the climactic scene, there are strange developments totally outside the official scenario, when Ravi, the young artist, who has fallen in love with the actress

Shanti, tries to carry her off. The action is crowded with eccentrics and the entire narrative has an obviously farcical colouring. This is somewhat of a strain on Narayan's art, which is more at home .in administering delicate ironic thrusts.

But this experiment with extravaganza was not altogether a waste. It becomes a minor but useful motif in The Financial Expert. The rise and fall of Margayya ('the way-shower', a name rich in irony) is a revealing study of the cash nexus in modern life. Margayya, an obscure middleman, who ekes out a living by sitting in front of a bank and helping villagers with their loans, is humiliated by the Bank Secretary. Shaken by this humiliation like Thomas Sutpen in Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom, he fasts and worships Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth for forty days, and his luck turns. Getting hold, of a pornographic book by Dr. Pal, an eccentric sociologist, he prints it, and with the proceeds embarks on a money-lending career which flourishes beyond his wildest dreams. The inevitable crash then comes, ironically enough, through Dr. Pal himself. The end shows a chastened but by no means broken Margayya preparing to resume his first humble occupation. This ironic reversal brings home to him the age-old lesson that prosperity and peace do not always go together. The element of fantasy—represented by Dr. Pal, the unworldly scholar, the 'old Man of Madras', who claims he is 'only God's agent', and the episode of Lakshmi-worship—is made firmly subservient to the central theme and thus kept well within safe artistic limits.

The Guide (1958; Sahitya Akademi award, 1960) is easily Narayan's finest novel. Nowhere else is his irony sharper or more firmly wedded to the moral imagination, nor has his technique been subtler. As in The Financial Expert, the central theme is ironic reversal, but not only is the irony multiple here; it also piles comic complication upon complication until finally the pyramid collapses, crushing the hero to death. 'Railway Raju', a tourist guide, has an affair with Rosie, the unhappy wife of an unwordly scholar and makes her a successful professional dancer; but is jailed for forgery, trying to prevent a possible reconciliation between her and her husband. Mistaken for a sadhu upon his release, he is prompted both by necessity and vanity to play the part well, resulting in many ironic developments, until finally the saint's halo becomes a deadly noose when he is compelled to die fasting, to bring rain to a drought-stricken village. The ending is charged with a Hawthornian ambiguity. Raju's last words are: 'it's raining in the hills,' but whether the fake sadhu's genuine ordeal has really brought rain or not is left vague. Raju's transformation from a railway 'guide' into a half-reluctant and half-purposeful guru is worked out

through a neatly woven pattern of ironic complications, but the irony is not a simple blend of the comic and the tragic. It raises many disturbing questions about human motives and actions, compelling us to ponder problems such as appearance and reality, the man and the mask, ends and means. Of all Narayan's novels The Guide teases us into thought to an,extent no other novel of his does. Narayan's fictional technique is also at its subtlest in The Guide. The narrative alternates between the past and the present, 'swinging backward and forward' as Rosie does when she dances, thus emphasizing how Raju's present is inexorably rooted in his past. The blend of the omniscient and the autobiographical methods of narration endows the story with a double perspective. The novel, which opens with Raju in the ruined village temple about to be reverentially accepted as a sadhu ends in the same locality with his enforced death, thus giving the tale a perfectly rounded, circular structure.

In The Man-eater of Malgudi (1962), Narayan's moral concern is expressed through a re-telling, in a modern context, of the ancient Hindu fable of Bhasmasura, the Rakshasa (demon) who, granted by Siva the boon of reducing to ashes anyone he touched on the head, was finally tricked by Vishnu (disguised as a beautiful damsel) into touching himself to death. The modern Bhasmasura is Vasu, the taxidermist, a selfish, godless bully who, as he waits to shoot the temple elephant, accidentally kills himself when he slaps at a mosquito buzzing near his forehead. To Vasu's demon, his friend Nataraj, the timid printer and ineffectual angel is an excellent foil. The significance of Vasu's just end is underlined by Sastri, Nataraj's assistant and an eminent representative of the average man: 'Every demon carries within him, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self- destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected movement. Otherwise what b to happen to humanity?' Comedy is provided by the usual group of eccentrics—this time a poet busy composing an epic on Krishna in monosyllabic verse and a retired forest officer engaged in compiling an Anthology of Golden Thoughts from world literature. The irony of the title, which suggests a hunting yarn and presents a moral fable instead is plain.

None of the remaining novels of Narayan comes up to the level of his three major works, for one reason or another. InWaiting For the Mahatma (1955), a novel dealing with the Gandhian freedom struggle, Narayan, trying to do too many things at once, only succeeds in telling a conventional love story ending in the union of Sriram, a typical, weak-willed Narayan hero and Bharati, a Congress volunteer and a determined young girl. If Narayan's main aim here was to depict the freedom struggle of 1942, his picture is neither representative

nor evocative. Sriram's sudden conversion into a freedom fighter is unconvincing, because he is so obviously interested in Bharati and not in Bharat-mata (Mother India). Certain touches in episodes like Gandhiji's visit to Malgudi, the chaos after Gandhi's arrest etc., raise hopes of a total ironic vision, but this stance is not kept up consistently, and when the scene shifts from Malgudi to Delhi, Narayan no longer appears to be on sure ground.

The same lack of a hard, central core mars The Vendor of Sweets (1967), which continues the Gandhian motif. Jagan, the sweet-vendor, who is a Gandhian, finds his only son, Mali lured away by the West. Mali returns from the U.S.A. with a halfAmerican and half-Korean girl (to whom he is not married) and has plans for devising a novel-writing machine, making the frustrated Jagan renounce the world. Is Narayan's aim here to portray the clash of generations or to deal with East-West confrontation or to examine the efficacy of Gandhism in the modern world? The action of the novel raises all these issues but fails to add up to a coherent fictional statement.

The Painter of Signs (1976) followed after nine years of silence and added little to Narayan's reputation. Here again is a narrative of human relationship which fails to attain that extra dimension of significance which Narayan's major work possesses The relationship tetween Raman, the young, unattached sign-painter and 'Daisy' of the Family Planning Centre goes through vicissitudes, finally leaving Raman sans both his aunt (who, disapproving of the match, goes on a pilgrimage) and would-be wife. Expectations of an artistic use of an ancient Indian parallel as in The Man-eater of Malgudi are raised when Raman himself mentions the King Santhanu-Ganga story as Daisy starts laying down conditions on which she would marry him, but this is the last one hears of it. The Raman-Daisy relationship, which recalls that between Sriram and Bharati in Waiting for the Mahatma, is presented equally unsuccessfully. Daisy's changing reactions are not always adequately motivated and Raman's self-declared rationalism remains an unproved assertion. The novel makes us wonder whether the halcyon days of The Guide and The Man-eater of Mulgudi are now over. The signs are all there, in The Painter of Signs.

Narayan's fiction is imbued with a strong 'sense of place'. His setting, Malgudi, develops from novel to novel but always possesses a genius locus which gives reality to his men and women. Narayan is no poet and cannot give us what Henry James called the 'aroma of the meadows and lanes' in Hardy, but he certainly makes real to us the 'ankle deep' dust in Anderson Lane and the

raucous noises in the market. Like Arnold Bennett, Narayan relies more on keen observation and steady accumulation of small details than on evocative description. He has no great heroes and heroines —only local nobodies and local eccentrics, and his style habitually wears a deliberately drab air so that the thrusts of his insistent irony are felt all the more sharply. It is out of its depth only when the author expects his words to take wing or catch fire. Narayan's fiction consistently creates a credible universe observed with an unerring but uniformly tolerant sense of human incongruity; but gains in stature when, at his best, he is able to hitch the waggon of his ironic action to the star of moral imagination.

Raja Rao (1908—)** the youngest of the trio, hails from an ancient South Indian Brahmin family, which counts among its ancestors Vidyaranya Swami, perhaps the greatest teacher of the philosophy of non-dualism after Sankaracarya. Part of Rao's childhood was spent with his grandfather, who was spiritually inclined and this fact becomes significant when one considers the concern with spiritual values that characterizes this novelist's work. Deeply influenced by sages like Pandit Taranath of the Tungabhadra Ashram and Sri Atmanand Guru of Trivandrum, Raja Rao's passionate attachment to the Indian ethos has, curiously enough, been actually strengthened by his long exile from India since 1929 when he sailed for France to do research on the mysticism of the West. For the last fifty years, except for periodic visits home, of long or short duration, he has been abroad, though he moved from France to the U.S.A. in 1965.

Unlike Anand and Narayan, Raja Rao has not been a prolific novelist, having written just four novels beginning withKanthapura (1938), which is perhaps the finest evocation of the Gandhian age in Indian English fiction. It is the story of a small South Indian village caught in the maelstrom of the freedom struggle of the nineteen thirties and transformed so completely in the end that 'there's neither man nor mosquito' left in it. In this little village situated high on the ghats up the Malabar coast, the most important event has traditionally been the ploughing of the fields at the first rains. In 1930, the harvest reaped is the Gandhian whirlwind. Raja Rao offers ho dreamland vision of the freedom struggle. In fact, the initial reaction of Kanthapura to Gandhian thought is one of bored apathy. But young Moorthy, the Gandhian, who knows that the master-key to the Indian mind is religion, puts the new Gandhian wine into the age-old bottle of traditional Harikatha (legendary narrative of God) and thus indoctrinates the Kanthapurans. There is also no runaway victory for Gandhism in the village, for the forces of orthodoxy and conservatism arestrong. The

struggle is even harder for the simple, illiterate village women who don't understand the why and the wherefore of it all, and only know that the Mahatma is right in the tradition of the Hindu avatars. They have their moments of temptation, cowardice and backsliding but still hold out to the bitter end, until Kanthapura is a deserted village. Kanthapura is thus a brilliant attempt to probe the depths to which the nationalistic urge penetrated, showing how, even in the remote villages, the new upsurge fused completely with traditional religious faith, thus rediscovering the Indian soul.

Like its sensibility, the form and style of Kanthapura also belong to the living Indian tradition. In his Foreword, which has now become a classic, Raja Rao wrote, '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 narrative technique of the novel offers the required justification. The narrator is an old grandmother, who tells the story in the garrulous, digressive and breathless style of the Indian purana or the Harikatha, mixing freely narration, description, reflection, religious discourse, folk-lore, etc. Like Anand, Rao also boldly translates Indian words, phrases, expletives, and idioms—in this case from his native Kannada—into English and uniformly brings a touch of a poet to his style.

Kanthapura was Rao's only novel before Independence. The

long silence that followed made many believe that the novelist was now an 'extinct volcano'. And then came The Rope and the Serpant (1960; Sahitya Akademi award, 1963), perhaps the greatest of Indian English novels. The book, which took ten years in shaping itself, is a highly complex and many-sided novel, being at once the tragic story of a marriage of minds which drift apart; the spiritual autobiography of a learned, sensitive, and imaginative modern Indian intellectual, as also a saga of his quest for self-knowledge and self-fulfilment; a memo

rable presentation of the prime values of both the East and the West and a drama enacting their mutual impact; a sustained piece of symbolism and a re-creation of a valuable ancient Hindu myth; a fictional statement of the philosophy of Sankara's nondualism; and a conscious attempt both to create a truly Indian novel with its roots firmly embedded in native tradition and to forge an Indian

English style which expresses its complex vision adequately and authentically.

The Serpent and the Rope, which has a strong autobiographic colouring, is the story of Ramaswamy, a young Hindu, who goes to France to do research in history, meets and marries Madeleine, a lecturer in history, but they soon drift apart gradually as Ramaswamy comes to realize the gulf between the Indian and Western conceptions of love, marriage and family— particularly after he meets Savithri, a Cambridge-educated and militantly modern girl, who is yet Indian to the core. Madeleine finally withdraws not only from Ramaswamy but also from the world; and he realizes that his love for Savithri, far from being of the kind that would find fulfilment in physical union, is actually an instrument of achieving the higher Love, the ultimate union of the soul with God. The novel ends with Ramaswamy setting out to go to his Guru, who alone can destroy his ego and make him fit for the great consummation.

The themes of true love and marriage thus lead to the larger theme of the quest for self-knowledge suggested in the title, ‘The Serpent and the Rope’. The analogy, taken from Sankara- carya, illustrates the doctrine that just as the rope is often wrongly taken to be the serpent, the limited self is often regarded as the individual soul, which is only an aspect of God. One realizes that the 'serpent’ is really only a rope, when one who knows points this out; similarly, upon being initiated by the Guru, one realizes that Jiva (the individual soul) is one with Siva. The Serpent and the Rope is a truly philosophical novel in that in it the philosophy is not in the story—the philosophy is the story.

The novel also contrasts oriental and occidental worldviews in respect of basic issues such as sex and marriage, society, religion, learning, and death. It is possible to argue that Ramaswamy looks at India through rose-tinted spectacles (a typical expatriate reaction) but glues his eyes to a microscope while examining the limitations of western culture. But the fact remains that few Indian English novels handle this theme on so vast a scale and with such authenticity of experience as The Serpent and the Rope does.

The Serpent and the Rope is rich in an array of meaningful symbols. Apart from the symbolism of the title, the two epigraphs from Sri Atmananda Guru (Rao’s own guru): 'Waves are nothing but water; so is the sea’ and Paul Valery’s line, La mer, la mer, toujours recommenc'ee both use the ocean as a symbol, though in different ways. For Atmananda Guru (as for Rao) the identity of the wave and the sea is that between the jiva and Siva; but Valdry, who opts for the human

world, asks the waves to break the huge white roof of the ocean. Similarly, the name ‘Savithri’ is obviously symbolic, indicating both the sun and that paragon of wifely devotion, the Savitri of ancient Hindu legend, who rescued her husband Satyavan from death. Savithri’s role in the novel is the same—to bring enlightenment to Ramaswamy and save him from dying into a purely worldly life. Savithri further represents the eternal Feminine Principle also symbolized in the novel by the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in London, which forms a significant episode.

The form of The Serpent and the Rope shows a successful blend of Indian and western modes. The inspiration for the novel partly came from Rilke’s The Notebooks of Matte Laurids Brigge,17 and another western parallel is the novel of spiritual quest—Pater’s Marius the Epicurean, for instance. The autobiographical method of narration is a characteristically modern western fictional technique. Typical Indian elements are the essentially ‘puranic’ structure of the novel, blending story, philosophy and religion; the interspersing of the narrative with verses as in the Sanskrit form, campu, and pithy dialogue on philosophical questions as in the Upanishads. The novel also tries to graft some features of the rhythms of Sanskrit speech on English; and the style, frequently sonorous, repetitive and swift has an unmistakably Indian colouring which is further deepened by the use, as in Kanthapura, of bold importations from Indian speech into English.

The Serpent and the Rope is a diffuse and garrulous book, and Ramaswamy’s parade of learning, his intellectual arrogance and his bouts of self-pity can be irritating, while Rao’s tremendous linguistic resource can occasionally turn into sheer verbal jugglery, which brings diminishing returns with every new metaphysical hair meticulously split as in ‘Meaning is meaningful to meaning’. But with all its limitations, The Serpent and the Rope is a dazzling performance by any fictional standard. Its philosophical profundity and symbolic richness, its lyrical beauty and descriptive power, and its daring experimentation with form and style make it a major achievement. Few Indian English novels have expressed the Indian sensibility with as much authenticity and power as The Serpent and the Rope has.

The Cat and Shakespeare (1965; an earlier version called The Cathad appeared in 1959) is another attempt at philosophical fiction, though in a new direction altogether viz., metaphysical comedy. The author himself has called it ‘a book of prayer’, but it is a strange prayer to a strange god, a prayer in which the solemn

chants of devotion are mingled with loud guffaws of laughter. Reverence and irreverence, fantasy and reality, mysticism and Mammonism, the past with its age-old philosophy and the present of the global war—are all mixed together in this brief, teasing fable.

On the simple narrative level the novel is an uproariously funny story (of deep philosophical import, though) of a cat and two clerks—one, Ramakrishna Pal, the narrator, is an innocuous little man, who loves the beautiful Shanta and dreams of building a big house; the other, his neighbour Govindan Nair, is a genial soul and a man built on a large scale, whose philosophy of life is that one should surrender oneself completely to the supreme energizing principle in the universe which he symbolically calls ‘Mother Cat'. The two clerks—especially Nair— undergo several surrealistic adventures including cat-worship in the corrupt Rationing Office where Nair works, the sudden death by heart-failure of his boss when the cat sits on the unfortunate man’s head and the trial of the cat in a court of law. At the end, Nair is his old hatppy self, in spite of all that has happened (including the death of his son), while Ramakrishna Pal fulfils his ambition of building his house; and in the symbolic finale, he follows the cat up the stairs and is vouchsafed a mystic experience. We leave him listening to ‘the music of marriage’, i.e. in a state of illumination.

That this comic extravaganza has a sound philosophical foundation is indicated by the epigraph drawn once again from Atmananda Guru: ‘There is the .scent and the beauty (form) of a flower. But who knows what a flower really is?’ This points straight to the central theme of the book—the affirmation of the Ultimate Reality behind all appearance. Nair’s symbol of the cat is drawn from Ramanujacarya’s (11th century) philosophy of Modified Non-dualism, according to which Man can save himself not through knowledge, but through self-surrender. After Ramanuja’s death, this doctrine came to be interpreted in two different ways called the ‘monkey-theory’ (markata- nyaya) and the ‘cat-hold theory’ (marjara-nyaya). According to the first, the human spirit should actively strive to seek union with God, like the young monkey clinging desperately to its mother; the second school holds that Man’s surrender is so total as to involve complete dependence on the Divine as in the case of the young kitten lifted by the scruff of the neck by the mother-cat. Both Paland Nair are examples of the cat-hold theory in operation and Nair’s career illustrates that extreme aspect of the theory which holds that the pardoning God loves the sinner even more than He does the pure. The Mother-cat is also the Feminine principle, symbolized in Shanta and her

daughter Usha too.

The addition of Shakespeare to the title was an afterthought (the first version was called simply The Cat) but several significant suggestions such as 'the Mousetrap'in Hamlet, Nair's parody of the ‘To be or not to be’ soliloquy and his style which is described as a mixture of ‘The Vicar of Wakefield and Shakespeare’ and the general Shakespeare enigma of which Arnold’s ‘Others abide the question: Thou art free’ is an effective statement link up the cat and the Bard. There are also other symbols such as Pai’s white house with its three stories indicating three states of being; the three colours of the Ration Card suggestive of the three gunas; the sea, again representing the Infinite Reality; the wall over which Nairand the cat are always jumping, representing the barrier of mere Appearance etc. The form of the novel is again composite, a blend of the beast fable, the rogue story and the parable, and the dialogue frequently has an IJpanishadic flavour.

In spite of its rich philosophical content and its delightful comedy, The Cat and Shakespeare is not the assured success thatThe Serpent and the Rope is. The book moves at once on different levels and the gap is sometimes so wide as to defy any but the specialist reader. Furthermore, the earlier novel was solidly grounded in a most human and meaningful Hindu myth— The Savitri legend; The Cat and Shakespeare rests only on a symbol drawn from the animal world and used on an abstract philosophical level.

Comrade Kirillov (1976), Raja Rao’s most recent novel, has a curious publishing history. Originally written in English— (perhaps a rather early work), it was first published in French in 1965, and the English version represents the revised text. A long short story rather than a novel, the book reads like an extended character-sketch. Kirillov is actually Padmanabha Iyer, an Indian intellectual, his Russian appellation being after the dedicated fanatic by that name in Dostoevsky’s Possessed. Kirillov’s self-description is: ‘Anonymous my name, logic my religion; Communism my motherland.’ Set in the nineteen thirties and forties in London, the novel mainly comprises the garrulous Kirillov’s opinions on Communism, the British, the

War, the Indian freedom struggle etc.,— all viewed through expectedly bright red spectacles. He marries Irene—a Czech girl, who shares his convictions, and on her death leaves for Moscow, landing in Peking when the novel ends. The narrator, for the most part, is ‘R’, who is later identified with Raja Rao himself

(there is a delightful piece of self-debunking on p. 118). Kirillov is viewed with good-humoured irony as a professed Communist who is yet very much an Indian at heart. Part of the narration is by excerpts from Irene's diary but they don't seem to add much by way of a different perspective. There are suggestions of the East-West theme of The Serpent and the Rope in the picture of the Kirillov-Irene relationship, and the persistent irony in the earlier part recalls the comic vein in The Cat and Shakespeare, but it is clear that in Comrade Kirillov Rao has very little new to say. Kirillov hardly emerges as a living figure, because the putative complexity of his character is only reported but not realized in effective fictional terms through meaningful incident or symbolic presentation.

Raja Rao's fiction obviously lacks the social dimension of his two major contemporaries. Not for him the burning humanitarian zeal of Anand, nor Narayan's sure grasp of the living minutiae of the daily business of living. Their easy fecundity has also never been his. But in no two novels of his does Rao strike the same fictional chord. The fervent nationalism of Kanthapura offsets the cool irony of Comrade Kirillov; and the serious philosophical speculation in The Serpent and the Rope is tonally far different from the heady mixture of farce and philosophy in The Cat and Shakespeare. Within his brief corpus of writing Raja Rao has crammed things which could have been, with a little clever housewifery, neatly spread out into a dozen novels and more. But even with his small output, his oosition as perhaps the most 'Indian' of Indian English novelists, as probably the finest painter of the East-West confrontation, as symbolist, stylist and philosophical novelist, and as an original voice in modern fiction, undoubtedly remains secure.

Apart from the work of Anand, Narayan and Rao quite a considerable amout of fiction was produced during the period, much of it in a minor vein. An interesting phenomenon is the number of Muslim novelists, most of whom wrote evocatively about life in Muslim households. Twilight in Delhi (1940) by Ahmed Ali (who became a Pakistani national after Partition) aims, according to the author, at depicting 'a phase in our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes.' Ahmed Ali's picture of the middle class Muslim family of Mir Nihal and its relationship with other Muslim families in early twentieth century Delhi is indeed drawn with painstaking attention to detail; but it is a moot point whether 'the decay of a whole culture' has adequately been depicted. While subjecting the life of the Mir Nihal family to microscopic scrutiny, the author has not related it to the larger forces in the composite Hindu-Muslim

world outside meaningfully enough. The rising tempo of the nationalistic upsurge is mentioned, but is not woven firmly enough into the pattern of the action, which remains severely limited to the domestic plane. Nor does Mir Nihal emerge as a major figure whose death, at the end, would signify the passing away of a whole culture. Ali's Ocean of Night (1964) is another nostalgic study of Muslim society, depicting this time the decadent aristocracy of Lucknow between the Wars. The plot centres round the romantic motif of a courtesan flouting her professional code to seek true love, only to find that she is a prisoner of the system. Ali has captured the spirit of leisurely Lucknow life admirably in the novel Iqbalunnisa Hussain's Purdah and Polygamy: Life in an Indian Muslim Household (1944) offers an equally intimate picture of a traditional Muslim mercantile household seen through sensitive feminine eyes and naturally all the richer in minutiae for it. In Humayun Kabir's Men and Rivers (1945), the East Bengal (now Bangla Desh) riverside scene affected by the changing moods of the river Padma and their impact on the lives of the fisher- folk are depicted with all the authenticity of an insider. But his plot creaks with too many romantic joints—a love-triangle making bosom friends sworn enemies; lovers suddenly discovering that they are children of the same mother, etc.

Two other Muslim novelists have chosen their characters from both Muslim and Hindu circles. In Aamir Ali's Conflict (1947), the entire action concerns a Hindu family, showing how Shankar, a village boy, comes to Bombay for higher education and gets caught in the agitation of 1942. Unfortunately, Ali's picture of rustic life, his hero's adjustment to urban surrounds ings and his initiation into the freedom struggle remains largely superficial. His two later novels Via Genera (1967) and Assignment in Kashmir(1973) move on the international plane and are products of his experience of working as a diplomat. K.A. Abbas's numerous novels include popular film-scripts also. Among his less insubstantial books, Tomorrow is ours: A Novel of the India of Today(1943) espouses several causes, including nationalism, Leftism and denunciation of fascism and untouchability. The protagonist Parvati devotes her dancing talents to the Indian People's Theatre and her doctor-husband goes off to China to tend the war-wounded. The novelist, too busy maintaining his Leftist stance, allows the action to be cluttered up with conventional twists and turns. Inquilab: A Novel of the Indian Revolution (1955) is a more ambitious work, offering a panorama of the Indian political scene during the nineteen twenties and thirties. The plethora of characters and incidents allows little more than reportage, the realism of which is severely jolted by the unnecessarily romantic ending, where the protagonist

Anwar is suddely discovered to be the illegitimate soh of a Hindu merchant.

Among the remaining novelists, special mention must be made of Dhan Gopal Mukherji (1890-1936). His novels of jungle and rustic life which won great popularity in the West, going through several editions, include Kari, the Elephant (1922), Hari, the Jungle Lad (1924), Gay-Neck, the Story of a Pigeon (1927), The Chief of the Herd (1929) and Ghond the Hunter (1929). While Mukherji's jungle lore is authentic and his knowledge of the animal world in special is considerable, many of these novels appear to have been written with an eye on the foreign reader to whose vision of exotic India they seem primarily to cater. For instance,Ghond the Hunter begins as an authentic study of a village on the jungle border but soon becomes a travel book, the village boy Ghond being dispatched to Kashmir, Agra and Delhi so that the author may get a

chance to describe these places. (One must however concede that there is an excellent description of the Tajmahal in the novel.) The poor hero is even made to pass a night in a Ladakh village, ignoring the advice of its panicky residents, who have abandoned their homes, so that the landslide which obligingly occurs during the night could be described at first hand. Mukherji's autobiographical novel. My Brother's Face (1926) is a far more memorable book. Here, the narrator—a thinly veiled portrait of the author himself—returns to India after twelve years spent in the West and notices the altered face of his native land where he finds 'the best of seventeenth century at war with the best of the twentieth.*

Other novels of the period include C.S. Rau's Hie Confessions of a Bogus Patriot (1923). J. Chinnadurai's Sugirtha (1929); Ram Narain's Tigress of the Harem (1930); H. Kaveribai's Meenakshi's Memoirs—A Novel of Christian Life in South India (1937) ; V.V. Chintamani's Vedantam or the Clash of Traditions (1938) ; Shankar Ram's The Love of Dust (1938); D.F. Karaka's Just Flesh(1941—perhaps the only novel by an Indian set wholly in the West and containing only British characters); There Lay the City(1942—a love story set in Bombay during World War II), and We Never Die (1944); C.N. Zutshi's Motherland (1944); Purushottamdas Tricumdas's Living Mask (1947) and N.S.Phadke's own translations from his Marathi originals— Leaves in the August Wind (1947) and The Whirlwind (1956)— both set against the background of the Ouit India Movement of 1942.

The Short Story

Like the novel, the Indian English short story too came into

its own during the Gandhian age. The most notable contribution here is by the leading novelists, though there are also

writers who devoted themselves exclusively to this form. T.L.

Natesan, who wrote under the pen-name' Shankar Ram, is an early

example. His stories in The Children of Kaveri (1926) and

Creatures All (1933)—a selection from both the books appeared

under the title The Ways of Man (1968)—deal mostly with

rustic life in Tamil Nadu. Most of the stories are artless, and some sentimental like ‘Blood is thicker than water/ which presents a motherless boy persecuted by his step-mother. Many others rest upon shaky conventional motifs like an estrangement between two near and dear ones, finally ending in reconciliation (e.g ‘When one wound can heal another’); and some animal stories like ‘The Rajah’s Last Hunt’ are almost naive. Shankar Ram’s heavy-handed didacticism is writ large in crude titles such as ‘When punishment is a Boon,’ and in most tales incident is far more important than character. But Shankar Ram-recaptures the village scene evocatively and his literal translation of rustic nicknames like ‘Barrel-nose Grandpa’ and ‘spider-leg’ anticipates Raja Rao’s effective use of this device

in Kanthapura.

Like Shankar Ram, almost all the notable short story writers

of the period (with the exception of Mulk Raj Anand) are

from South India. A.S.P. Ayyar, the novelist and playwright,

published three collections of stories: Indian After-Dinner Stories (1927), Sense in Sex and Other Stories (1929) and The Finger of

Destiny and Other Stories (1932), besides retelling ancjent Indian legends in books like Tales of Ind (1944) and Famous Tales of India (1954). As in his plays, Ayyar's constant theme in his stories is social reform, and especially the plight of woman in traditional Hindu society, which a character de scribes as a 'woman-eating monster'. His women include young widows, who successfully re-marry in the teeth of opposition; young girls married by their parents to old men for money; abandoned or persecuted wives; victims of the dowry system or of the absence of birth control, etc. His titles, like Shankar Ram's, are often stridently didactic: e.g. 'Right to Happiness' and 'The Ways of Providence'. Ayyar's characters are mostly drawn in monochrome and both in conception and execution his stories are little more than anecdotage.

Many of S.K. Chettur's stories in Muffled Drums and Other Stories (1917), The Cobras of Dhermashevi and Other Stories (1937), The Spell of Aphrodite and Other Stories (1957) and Mango Seed and Other Stories (1974) seem to be based on material collected during his official tours as a member of the Indian Civil Service. Village feuds, murders and local /egends about serpents, ghosts and omens are his staple themes, and he seems to have a special fascination for fantasy and the supernatural as in 'The Spell of Aphrodite' in

which Venus herself comes out of the ocean to lure an imaginative youth to his death. Chettur, however, hardly possesses the kind of imagination which can successfully accomplish ‘a willing suspension of disbelief’ in bis readers. But he is a good raconteur and his narrative technique is far more sophisticated—especially in bis later work—than that of Shankar Ram and Ayyar. He uses a variety of narrative modes including the autobiographical method, the device of the observer-narrator, and the epistolary method. His brother, G.K. Chettur, produced a solitary collection, The Ghost City and Other Stories (1932)—an interesting exercise in anecdotage distinctly inferior in quality to the verse of this author.

Two other writers who have a single collection each to their credit are the novelists, K.S. Venkataramani and K. Nagarajan. In his preface to Jatadharan (1937), Venkataramani characterises his work as 'sketches rather than short stories’ and confesses, ‘Almost unconsciously I find I develop a didactic tail which my compassion for all life refuses to clip.’ Many of his heroes are products of the Gandhian ferment, like Jatadharan in the story by that title, who gives up his job to become a teacher in a village; and in ‘Illumination’ a briefless but ambi

tious lawyer is consoled by his wife who preaches to him the Gita doctrine of working without desiring the fruit of action. Venkataramani’s dialogue is often over-ornate as in his novels, but he sometimes makes use of apt Indian analogy as in ‘In those spacious days, the salt and Abkari departments went together like sisters on a festive occasion.’ Of the dozen tales in Nagarajan’s Cold Rice (1943), some obvidUsly draw upon the author’s experiences as a Government pleader and read like court cases dressed up for narration, while others are anecdotes. His art is seen to better advantage in the roomy form of the

novel.

The most productive of Indian English short story writers,

Manjeri Isvaran, the poet, has not yet received the recognition

due to him, since most of his books are now out of print. He is the author of The Naked Shingles (1941), Siva Ratri (1943), Angry Dust (1944), Rickshawallah (1946), Fancy Tales (1947), No Anklet bells for her (1949), Immersion (1951), Painted Tigers (1956) and A Madras Admiral (1959). Isvaran’s keen interest in

the form is revealed in his attempt to discuss the theory of the short story in some of his prefaces. In the preface to A Madras Admiral, he says, ‘A Short Story can be a fable or a parable, real or fantasy, a true presentation or a parody, sentimental or satirical; serious in intent or a light-hearted diversion; it can be any of these, but to be memorable it must catch the eternal in

the casual, invest a moment with the immensity of time.’ Not all Isvaran’s stories successfully ‘catch the eternal in

the cashal’; some of them are pure anecdotes and some like

‘That Moan’ and ‘War Memorial’ are unabashed tear-jerkers.

There are, at the same time, many stories which present illuminating glimpses into human psychology and these stories are

remarkable for the variety of character and situation they present.. In ‘No anklet bells for her’, a poor, ragged girl observes

her own reflection in the polished surface of a car parked on

the road and instinctively starts dancing only to be recalled to

harsh reality by the scolding of her mother. ’Sympathy’ shows

the middle-aged mother of a young widowed girl herself assuming voluntary widowhood, though her puzzled and angry

husband is very much alive. ‘Consummation’ and ‘Revelation’ are sensitive studies in the minds of a youthful couple on

their wedding night; ‘Passage Money’ exhibits the embarrassing plight of a father, who has failed to notice that his daughter has attained womanhood; and in ’Angry Oust’, a retired

Muslim soldier re-employed as a peon to a European officer

suddenly dreams for a moment that he is the Great Mughal

himself, as he dozes outside his master's door.

Isvaran is also far more successful than some of his contemporaries in his treatment of fantasy and the supernatural. In

‘Dance of Shiva’, he makes a sceptical Englishman see the

great god’s dance of destruction in a dream and his language is

certainly adequate for the challenge here. ’Painted Tigers’

shows a Muslim youth, Karim, made up as a Muharram tiger,

tearing at the neck of his rival, Umar. The old legend that Umar’s ancestor was born with a tiger-paw mark on his shoulder and the fact that Karim is a lover of Umar’s wife together make for an excellent blend of fantasy and psychology. In ‘Immersion’, a long short story, the ghost motif is harnessed to both pathos and irony. The ghost of a young wife raped by a cartman while the couple is on a pilgrimage has its tevenge, when it later suddenly confronts the cartman, who is crushed to death underneath the over-turned cart. Ironically enough, the

husband does not come to know the truth at all.

Isvaran, like S. K. Chettur, employs a variety of narrative

strategies, including the observer’s point of view and the use of

journals and letters. His besetting sin is the irritatingly leisurely

mode of narration he often indulges in, and his fatal habit of

prolonging the story even after the point has been made. A

flowery style which aids and abets his innate sentimentality is

another of his liabilities. But his finest studies in human psychology are generally powerful enough to rise above most of

his limitations.

Apart from Isvaran, the most signal contribution to the

short story of this period came from the three major novelists—

Anand, Narayan and Raja Rao. Copious in output like Isvaran,

Mulk Raj Anand has brought out seven collections of short stories so far. The Lost Child and Other Stories (1934); The Barber's

Trade Union and Other Stories (1944); The Tractor and the Corn

Goddess and Other Stories (1947); Reflections on the Golden Bed

and Other Stories (1953); The Power of Darkness and Other

Stories (1959); Lajwanti and Other Stories (1966); and Between

Tears and Laughter (1973). Anand has also retold traditional

Indian tales in his Indian Fairy Tales (1946) and More Indian

Fairy Tales (1961). A representative selection is Selected Short

Stories of Mulk Raj Anand edited by M. K. Naik (New Delhi,

1977); The Selected Stories (Moscow, 1955) is now out of print.

Anand’s aims and methods are explained at length in his prefaces.

In the preface to Indian Fairy Tales, he observes: ‘Although Ihave

taken in much new psychology into my writing

of the short story, I have always tried to approximate to the

technique of the folk tale and the influence of these fairy stories

has always been very deep on my short fiction.’ In his preface to Selected Stories, he adds, 'While accepting the form of the folk tale, specially in its fabulous character, I took in the individual and group psychology of the European conte and tried to

synthesize the two styles.’

Anand’s short stories are wide-ranging in mood and tone.

First, there are stories of ‘lyric awareness’ (to use his own

phrase) like ‘The Lost Child’ a parable in which the traumatic

experience of a child separated from its parents in a country

fair symbolizes a universal human plight; and ‘Birth’ which

presents a young, simple, peasant woman in an advanced state

of pregnancy. She feels assured that the goddess Kali is by her

side as she finds the birth-pangs starting, when she is on her.

way to work, alone and nervous. In contrast to these imaginative tales, there are starkly realistic studies of men and women

crushed by overwhelming forces. Among these are ‘Lajwanti’,

the story of a helpless rustic girl persecuted by her in-laws; and

‘Old Bapu’ and The Cobbler and the Machine’ —sketches of

two unfortunate outcastes. Another prominent group is that of

stories of strong social awareness revealing Anand’s acute understanding of the complex social forces at work in modern India.

‘The Power of Darkness’ and ‘The Tractor and the Corn

Goddess’ demonstrate the inevitable clash between tradition

and modernity in our country today; and feudalism and capitalism are pilloried in ‘A. Kashmir Idyll’ and ‘The Price of

Bananas’ respectively Stories such as ‘A Pair of Mustachios’,

‘The Barber’s Trade Union* and ‘The Liar’ provide pure fun

seasoned with farce, while.subtle studies in psychology like

‘The Tamarind Tree’ and ‘The Thief’ strike a different note

altogether.

The range and variety of Anand’s short stories are evinced

not only in mood, tone and spirit but also in locale and characters, form and style. While both the village and the city get

almost equal representation, the men, women and children that

move through these narratives come from different strata of

society. The forms Anand draws upon are the fable, the parable,

the folk-tale, the bardic narrative and sometimes even the well- made story; and his style can be in turn lyrical and satirical,

light-hearted and indignant. As in his novels, he makes an almost aggressive use of a great variety of Indianisms. His chief weaknesses are an occasional failure of sensibility which can make him lachrymose and crude and a tendency to write in a verbose—and sometimes even slipshod—manner. In his finest stories like ‘The Lost Child’, however, there is an admirable

control of both the material and the expression

R.K. Narayan’s career as a short story writer began almost

a decade after Anand’s, with Cyclone and Other Stories (1943),

Dodu and Other Stories (1943) and Malgudi Days (1943). His

subsequent collections are An Astrologer's Day and Other Stories (1947), Lawley Road and Other Stories (1956), and A Horse

and Two Goats (1970). Gods, Demonsand Others (1964) is a

retelling of well-known ancient Hindu legends. Narayan’s most

chracteristic note in his short stories is a gentle irony. Ironic

reversal is sometimes made to throw light on human psychology, as in ‘The Doctor’s Word’, in which, a physician, noted for his ruthless truthfulness, tells a lie to save his best friend, who is on his death-bed; in ‘Missing Mail’, a thoughtful postman withholds a letter bearing the news of a relation’s death, so that the marriage in the family may proceed without a hitch; and ‘A Horse and Two Goats’ is a first class comedy of international misunderstanding. An unlettered Indian goatherd thinks that the American visitor to his village wishes to buy his two goats, whereas the tourist is actually bargaining for the big clay horse in the village of which he wrongly thinks the goatherd is the owner. Here is a competition in single-minded simplicity on two different cultural planes. In some other stories, the irony arises out of comic complications creating predominantly humour of situation. ‘Engine Trouble’ explains the strange plight of a man who wins a road engine in a lottery—a prize which proves to be a white elephant; finally nothing less than an earthquake solves his problem, in ‘The Magic Beard’, a beard (which proves lucky) makes a man a prosperous beggar-organizer, but disaster strikes when he shaves it off, without anticipating the consequences. Narayan's attempts at tragic irony, as in ‘Isvaran’ (a college student who has failed repeatedly passes at last in

second class and goes mad at this sudden shock of pleasant surprise) are not equally successful, nor are his exercises in the supernatural like ‘Level Crossing’ and ‘Accident’ even adequate. And the humour in some of the animal stortes like ‘The Flavour of Coconut’ is rather heavy-handed. A few stories are purely character-sketches and they reveal Narayan’s keen eye for eccentricity. ‘Uncle’, ‘Annamalai’ and 'Breath of Lucifer’

are excellent examples.

Narayan’s stories are uniformly compact and are told in his

usual seemingly artless style. He sometimes uses the ‘Talkative

Man’ as narrator in the manner of Wodehouse and except in

‘Uncle’s Letters* where the epistolary mode is employed, he

does not attempt any radical experiments in narration. The

thematic interconnections between some of Narayan’s stories

and his novels are interesting ‘The Regal’, ‘A Hero’ and

‘Father’s Help’ are stories of boyhood exploits which could

very well have fitted into Swami and Friends; ‘The White

Flower* employs the horoscope motif much in the same way

The Bachelor of Arts does; the situation in ‘The Seventh House’

has close affinities with The English Teacher and ‘Four Rupees’

repeats The Guide theme on a different level and with a happy

ending. Though Narayan's stories are always readable, they are

perhaps not as significant an achievement as his major novels.

What one misses, even in the best of them, is that transformation of irony from a simple stance into a meaningful vision of

life which is unmistakably effected in The Guide and The Maneater of Malgudi.

True to his characteristic lack of fecundity. Raja Rao has

published only a dozen stories which are collected in The Cow

of the Barricades and Other Stories (1947) and The Policeman

and the Rose (1978), which is actually only a revised version

of the earlier collection, containing all but two of its stories and

adding three more. Nevertheless, these dozen stories exhibit

considerable thematic and formal variety.

‘The True Story of Kanakapala, Protector of Gold’ is a

retelling of an ancient legend about a snake-motif handled by

many Indian English writers; but Raja Rao succeeds best because

he rightly tells the traditional tale in the traditional manner. 'A Client' is a slight anecdote about a youth caught by a

raarriige broker and the picture of the village bania in ‘The Little Gram Shop’ is realistic, but hardly rises above the typical. It is not in these stories that we see the real Raja Rao, as in the remaining three groups of stories. The first is that of the ‘Gandhian Stories’, ‘The Cow of the Barricades’, ‘Nar- siga’ and ‘In Khandesh’. Gauri, the temple cow in the, first of these stories dies of a policeman’s bullet during the freedom riots and thus saves the lives of many in the village. ‘Narsiga’ is an evocative picture of how the national consciousness generated by the freedom struggle impinges on the mind of a small, illiterate, rustic orphan, though in that process ancient myth and legend get inseparably mixed with Gandhi’s life and character, as Narsiga imagines the great man ‘going in the air’ like Rama, ‘in a flower-chariot drawn by sixteen steeds’. ‘In Khandesh’ recaptures the commotion caused by the Viceroy’s special train as it passes by a village. Of the three studies of women, ‘Javni’ and ‘Akkayya’ are memorable presentations of the traditional Hindu widow and her bleak life. Though Javni belongs to a low class and Akkayya is a Brahmin, they both share

the inexorable futility of tradition- bound Indian widowhood in the same measure. The immediacy of both these studies is hardly present in the same degree in a later story, ‘Nimka’, a rather colourless portrait of a Russian

emigre in Paris.

The latest and perhaps the most characteristic of Rao's

stories are the two metaphysical narratives: ‘India: A Fable’

and.‘The Policeman and the Rose’—stories which obviously

belong to the period of The Serpent and the Rope and The Cat

and Shakespeare. The theme of ‘India: A Fable’ is indicated by

the epigraph: ‘Non-duality alone is auspicious.’ Here the

encounter of the narrator (who is identified with the author)

with a small French boy in Luxembourg park in Paris is full

of symbolic overtones. The boy who dreams of the Arabian

desert with its oases and camels (romantic illusion as a means

of escape from the waste land of the present) is told by the

narrator about the India of the forests and the Ganges (the

Reality) with its elephants and goddesses. The theme of the

Feminine Principle as a guide to the Ultimate Realization is

stressed in the repeated references to Queen Anne of Austria, the boy’s mother and nurses and marriage. The fact that the West is represented by a small boy and East by a thoughtful adult is perhaps suggestive of the author’s evaluation of the relative spiritual development of the two societies. The symbols in ‘The Policeman and the Rose’ are even more intricate. The central theme is obviously the quest for self-realization and the symbols are drawn from Non-dualism. The ‘policeman’ who arrests every man at birth is the ahamkara (ego-sense) of the

limited individual self and the ‘red rose’ is the Rajo-guna, the passions of the mind. Man can ultimately shake off. the ‘policeman’ only when he surrenders the red rose to the Lotus of Truth, which the narrator, like the hero of The Serpent and the Rope locates at the feet of his guru in Travancore. The reverberating symbolism in both these stories makes them brief but memorable metaphysical documents in fictional form with

out a parallel in the field of the Indian English short story. Of ft.A. Abbas’s four short story collections, the first appeared in

the year of Indian Independence: Rice and other Stories (1947), the

others being Cages of Freedom and other Stories(1952),

One Thousand Nights on a Bed of Stones and Other Stories

(1957) and The Black Sun and Other Stories (1963). Most of

these stories are strongly coloured by Abbas’s militant Leftism,

and not a few carry the tell-tale marks of his journalistic and

film-world experience, both in conception and technique. In only

a few stories like ‘Sparrows’ and ‘Sardarji’ is Abbas able to

rise above sheer leftist propaganda or slick film-script writing,

making the discerning reader wish he had done so oftener. Some of the other story collections of the period are: Santa

and Sita Chatterjee’s Tales of Bengal (1922), M.V. Venkata- swami’s Heeramma and Venkataswami or Folk Tales From India

(1923); Shyam Shrnker’s Wit and Wisdom of India: A Collection

of Folk Tales (1924); P. Padmanabha Iyer’s Indian Tales (1924);

Muhammad Habib's The Desecrated Bones and Other Stories

(1925); G. Shiva Rao’s (pseud. S.V. Gulwadi) The Optimist and

Other Stories (1925); M.P. Sharma’s Awakening (1932); N. Rama-,

bhadran’s Kettle Drums (1933); Ramabai Trikannad’s Victory of

Faith and Other Stories (1935); Do wan Sharar’s Hindu Fairy

Tales (1936) and Eastern Tales (1944); A.V. Rao’s The Man in the Red Tie and Other Stories (1942) and Glamour and Other Stories (1950); T.K. Venugopal’s Tales of Kerala (1943); Ela Sen’s Darkening Days: Being Narratives of Famine-stricken Bengal(1944), and Humayun Kabir’s Three Stories (1947).

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CHAPTER 5 The Asoka Pillar: Independence and After

With the attainment of Independence on 15 August 1947 began a new era of challenges and changes in Indian life. During the first twenty-five years of its independence the nation underwent experiences which would have all but shattered a country with less inner strength and latent resilience. But not only did India face her challenges with at least some degree of adequacy, she was also able to register not a little progress in many areas of national life.

In the political sphere, the first traumatic experience at the birth of the new nation was that of Partition. The lack of adequate preparation and safeguards when the country was hastily partitioned into India and Pakistan led to a communal carnage of unprecedented proportions resulting in 600,000 deaths and 8.5 million refugees. Along with this, there was also the problem of the more than five hundred princely states covering an area of approximately 7,000 square miles, which had become technically independent with the lapse of British paramountcy. They could, by refusing to merge with the Indian Union, have plunged the country into political chaos but for Sardar Patel, who effected their integration with the Union mostly by persuasion and where necessary, even by force. The question of the integration of the other small foreign possessions in India was also solved by negotiations in the case of the French settlement and by direct action in that of Portuguese Goa. The political map of the country was further re-drawn with the creation of linguis- tic states in 1956. Not less than three brief but eventful wars were fought during this period: the encounter with China in 1962 and the wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, the latter resulting in the dismemberment of Pakistan and the creation of Bangla Desh. With the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964 an age appeared to have ended. More recent events including the clamping of the Emergency in 1975 and the resurgence of democratic forces in the elections of 1977 followed only two years later by the break-up of the Janata Party and the triumphant return of the Congress rule have revealed both the unmistakable vitality of Indian democracy and its equally obvious areas of vulnerability.

I n the economic sphere, the most significant developments were the implementation of a number of Five Year Plans; the inception of large industrial

projects in the public sector and multipurpose river schemes; agrarian reforms in which Vinoba Bhave's ‘Bhoodan’ movement of the nineteen fifties played a role —brief and not entirely successful and yet typical of the

Indian ethos; Community Development Projects and the nationalization of Life Insurance and banks. It is true that in spite of the resulting economic development, the gap between the haves and the have-nots has actuallywidened instead of getting bridged, owing to various factots such as the failure to check the growth of population, inadequacies of planning, bureaucratic inefficiency, popular apathy etc. This has led some foreign observers like David Selbourne1to take an excessively pessimistic view of the Indian situation, but the fact remains that there has been a vast and at least not totally unsuccessful experiment in economic regeneration through purely democratic means, which, with all its numerous shortcomings, has fen parallels in modern history. And the Atomic implosion of 11 May, 1974 has opened up exciting possibilities of developmen in the years to come.

The sweeping changes in the political and economic spheres were matched by a virtual transformation in the social scene. Traditional social inequalities were sought to be removed (though less in actual practice than in theory) by progressive measures such as the Untouchability Offences Act of 1955 and numerous schemes for the uplift of the Scheduled and Backward Castes and Tribes. The Hindu Code Bill, which superseded the traditional personal laws of the Hindus, was a revolutionary measure which sought to improve the position of women. In education, there were notable quantitative gains at all levels, the percentage of literacy rising by 75% between 1951 and 1971, though continuously falling standards and growing student indiscipline proved to be a chronic malaise, worsened by the lack of a purposive educational policy. But the most disturbing phenomenon on the socio-political scene has been the steady erosion of the idealism of the days of the freedom struggle, the new gods of self-aggrandizement and affluence having rather too easily dethroned those of self-less service and dedication to a cause.

One far-sighted decision taken at Independence was that India should remain a member of the British Commonwealth. This ensured that while the political bondage to Britain was destroyed, the cultural bonds not only remained secure but actually became even stronger. As a result of this, there was an increased interest in the study of English language and literature in India after Independence, in spite of the vigorous and eminently justified efforts at the

development of regional languages and literatures, and the inevitably gro wing importance of Hindi. In fact, English readership has continued to be far larger than even that for Hindi. The continuity and growth of Indian English literature thus remained assured even after Independence. Nor did this literature fail to gain from the general climate of Governmental patronage to art and literature. For instans^, the prestigeous Sahitya Akademi awards started covering Indian English literature from the year I960. A further impetus to its growth and popularity was provided by English journals in India, some already flourishing and others newly started. During the early years of Independence, C.R. Mandy, the new editor of The Illustrated Weekly of India began encouraging the publication of fndian English verse and fiction and thus provided a much-needed forum for this literature. Quest (now New Quest) which did a similar service, started publication in 1955, and there have been several other journals which publish both creative and critical writing. These include Indian Literature, Indian Writing Today, The Literary Criterion, The Literary Half- Yearly, The Writers Workshop Miscellany, Poetry India, The Poet, Indian Verse, Litter it, Minimax. The Indian Literary Review, Tenor, The Indian Journal of English Studies and many others. There is now also a journal exclusively devoted to Indian English literature viz., The Journal of Indian Writing in English, (est. 1973), and another devoted to reviews alone: The Indian Book Chronicle (est 1976). And books by Indian English writers have been made easily accessible to the common reader in cheap popular editions, such as Writers Workshop flexibacks, and Orient and Sterling Paperbacks etc.

Commenting on what he calls 'the relative stagnation of all the arts in India', in the mid-sixties, George Woodcock wrote:

'India is going through a vast and lengthy social revolution and periods of revolution are usually accompanied by a retreat towards conservatism in the arts (e.g. Neo-classicism in the French revolution and the Empire; the dull realism in Russia in the early nineteen twenties, the sterility of the Cromwellian interregnum). Even intellectuals at such times become preoccupied with action and life, in its perilous flux, seems more fascinating than art, its transmutation. The artist dwindles into a recorder, or, at best, an embellisher, rather than a creator. ... We may well have to wait until a less socially conscious generation, for India to produce writers who will do justice to the absorbing variety of her land and life.'

There could not be a more mistaken reading of the literary situation in post-

Independence India and it is all the more astonishing that it should have come from one who knew his India so well. Actually, the writer in Independent India, whether in English or in the regional languages has, far from dwindling into a 'recorder' or an 'embellisher', has provided ample evidence of increased creative vigour and capacity for experimentation. As far as Indian English literature is concerned, novels like The Serpent and the Rope and The Guide (both of which appeared after Independence) and All About H. Hatterr (1950), the poetry of Ezekiel, Ramanujan and Kamala Das and the prose of Nirad Chaudhuri are conclusive proof of this freshness and virility. The right parallels here are not, as Woodcock suggests, the French or the Russian Revolution or the Cromwellian interregnum. An appropriate analogue is to be found in modern West African literature, which also was a product of a newly found nationalist spirit. As Arthur Ravenscroft puts it, 'Their (The Africans') literary achievements have enriched the English language and helped to keep it a supple artistic medium, at a time when much metropolitan writing in Britain and the United States has become jaded and dehumanised and merely cynical.'3 This could be said with equal justice of the best modern Indian English literature also.

It is possible to argue that the rightful assumption of a recognized national identity after 1947 has proved a great gain for the Indian English writer. It has given him greater self- confidence, widened his vision and sharpened his faculty of self- scrutiny. Nor could conditions to function in have been more congenial. Interest in Indian English literature has grown tremendously both in India and abroad, thus making possible a much larger readership than it could claim at any time earlier. In spite of some early and hasty attempts to circumscribe the role of English in post-Independence India, the importance of this world-language for a nation which had after centuries regained its legitimate place in international councils came to be increasingly recognized, and this provided a further impetus to the study of English language and literature. Indian English literature has naturally benefited by this development, as also by the increasing attention won abroad by Indian art and culture after Independence. The post-Independence Indian scene with its curious criss-cross of rapid socio-political changes in a country where tradition still remains a strong force has presented a stimulating spectacle, which has naturally evoked a variety of reactions from its writers, including nostalgic idealization of the immediate past of the days of the freedom struggle, a strong desire to re-discover one's roots in the ancient Indian ethos as also to examine this ethos afresh in the light of westernization, and satirical comment both on the darker side of the freedom movement and its aftermath and the decline of values in all spheres of life in the present.

As a total result of these developments, important gains were registered especially in fiction, poetry and criticism. Fiction, already well-established, grew in both variety and stature; poetry, shedding its anaemic romantic uncertainties became, at its best, vigorous and truly modern; and soon after the publication of K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Indian Writing in English (1962), works of Indian English writers began to be studied in depth both in India and abroad, thus providing the right critical climate in which this literature could examine itself and identify the sources of its own strength and weakness.

Poetry

It is in poetry that the post-Independence period witnessed the most crucial developments. In the fifties arose a school of poets who tried to turn their backs on the romantic tradition and write a verse more in tune with the age, its general temper and its literary ethos. They tried, with varying degrees of success, to naturalize in the Indian soil the modernistic elements derived from the poetic revolution effected by T.S. Eliot and others in the twentieth century British and American poetry. The Indian English romantic tradition is not however yet completely extinct and in fact; paradoxically enough, its finest product was to appear immediately after Independence: Sri Aurobindo's Savitri was published in its final form in 1950-51, apart from his Last Poems(1952), More Poems (1953) and the epic Ilion (1957), all of which appeared posthumously during this period. The school of Aurobindo is also seen to be active as in the earlier period, rather pantingly trying to follow in the giant footsteps of the master. The chief poets of the school include Dilip Kumar Roy (Eyes of Light, 1948), Themis (Poems, 1952), Rdmen (The Golden Apocalypse, 1953), Prithvi Singh Nahar (The Winds of Silence, 1954), Prithvindra N. Mukherjee (A Rose-Bud's Song, 1959) and V. Madhusudan Reddy (Sapphires of Solitude, 1960) The verse of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar in Tryst With the Divine (1974).Mytrocosmographia Poetica (1976) and Leaves from a Log (1979) and that of V.K. Gokak in Song of Life and Other Poems(1947), In Life's Temple (1965) and Kashmir and the Blind Man (1977)

also reveals the strong influence of Sri Aurobindo. Their most characteristic note is one of quiet and sometimes insightful rumination. Among other writers of romantic verse may be mentioned Adi K. Sett (The Light Above the Clouds, 1948; Rain in My Heart, 1954), B.D. Sastri (Tears of Faith, 1950), K.R.R. Sastri (Gathered Flowers, 1956), Barjor Paymaster (The Last Farewell and other Poems, 1960); Trilok Chandra (A Hundred and One Flowers, 1961); Rai Vyas (Jai Hind, 1961); and P.V.B. Sharma(Morning Buds, 1964).

By the fifties, the 'new poetry' had already made its appearance. In 1958, P. Laland his associates founded the Writers Workshop in Calcutta which soon became an effective forum for modernist poetry. The Workshop manifesto described the school as consisting of /a group' of writers who agree in principle that English has proved its ability, as a language, to play a creative role in Indian literature, through original writings and transcreation.' The Workshop

‘Miscellany’ was to be ‘devoted to creative writing’, giving ‘preference to experimental work by young and unpublished writers’. The first modernist anthology was Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry (1958) edited by P. Lal and K. Raghavendra Rao. In a somewhat brash Introduction the editors condemned ‘greasy, weak-spined and pur-

ple-adjectived “spiritual poetry” ’ and ‘the blurred and rubbery sentiments of.. .Sri Aurobindo’ and declared that ‘the phase of Indo-Anglian romanticism ended with Sarojini Naidu.’ They affirmed their faith in ‘a vital language’ which ‘must not be a total travesty of the current pattern of speech,’ commended ‘the effort to experiment,’ advocated a poetry that dealt ‘in concrete terms with concrete experience,’ and emphasized ‘the need for the private voice,’ especially because we live in an age that tends so eiasily to demonstrations of mass-approval and hysteria.’

The first of the ‘new’ poets to publish a collection was Nissim Ezekiel (1924—), easily one of the most notable postIndependence Indian English writers of verse. His A Time to Change appeared in 1952, to be followed by Sixty Poems (1953),The Third (1959), The Unfinished Man (1960), The Exact Name (1965) and Hymns in Darkness (1976). A major shaping factor in Ezekiel’s poetry is that he belongs to a Bene-Isracl family which migrated to India generations ago. Thus substantially alienated from the core of the Indian ethos, Ezekiel is acutely aware of this alienation being accentuated by the fact that he has spent most of his life in highly westernized circles in cosmopolitan Bombay. With Marathi (on his own admission) as his ‘lost mother tongue’ and English as his ‘second mother tongue’, Ezekiel’s quest for integration made for a restless career of quick changes and experiments including ‘philosophy/ poverty and poetry’ in a London basement room, and attempts at journalism, publishing and advertising —and even a spell of working as a factory manager—before he settled down as a university teacher in his ‘bitter native city’.

The alienation theme is thus central to Ezekiel’s work and colours his entire poetic universe. This explains his early fascination for Rilke, though he learnt his poetic craft from Eliot and Auden, whom he frequently echoes in his early verse. ‘A refugee of the spirit’ in search of his ‘dim identity’, which in different moods appears to him to be either a ‘one man lunatic asylum’ or ‘a small deserted holy place’, Ezekiel experiments with three different solutions to his problem. The easiest way out is a protective assumption of easy superiority expressing itself in surface irony as in his ‘Very Indian’ poems ‘in Indian English’, in which the

obvious linguistic howlers of Indian students are pilloried with metropolitan snobbishness. In a more generous mood, he gives himself the testimonial of being ‘a good native’ and tells himself (perhaps more loudly than is necessary) ‘I cannot leave this island/I was born here and belong.’ Then despair takes over and he ruefully accepts his failure (in Rilke’s words) ‘to weave himself more closely into things’ and confesses, ‘My backward place is where I am.’

But at his best Ezekiel does succeed in creating something more than minor verse out of his alienation as in ‘Night of the Scorpion’, which is one of the finest poems in recent Indian English literature. Here, the tale, which lies in the sting, is told by an observer, who is neither flippantly ironical nor antisepti- cally detached; on the contrary, he invests the poem with deep significance by trying to understand the Indian ethos and its view of evil and suffering, though he makes no claim to sharing it.

Another persistent motif is an obsessive sense of failure, leading to agonized bouts of self-doubt and self-laceration, revealing the poet ‘in exile from himself.’ This has strongly coloured Ezekiel’s poetry of love and marriage also. Art and the artist is yet another theme to which the poet, who goes with ‘a Cezanne slung round his neck', returns time and again. In.Jamini Roy, the painter, he finds an ideal which he himself has failed to attain—an artist who‘travelled, so he found his roots,’ an urban artist who rediscovered the ‘law’ of folk art, with impressive results. The metaphysical theme touched upon occasionally in the earlier verse (Ezekiel was once a student of philosophy, one remembers) is specially stressed in the recent Dymns in Darkness, though the poet makes no serious attempt to find ‘a final formula of light’ and concludes rather tamely that ‘Belief will not save you/Nor unbelief.’ There are also a number of bird and animal poems which remind one of Ted Hughes, though the British poet’s hairy-chested toughness gives place here to quiet musing on problems of poetry and existence.

Ezekiel’s poetry reveals technical skill of a high order. Except in his later work where his choice of an open form sometimes makes for looseness, he has always written verse which is extremely tightly constructed. His mastery of the colloquial idiom is matched by a sure command of rhythm and rhyme. A happy use of cool understatement (e.g., ‘A certain happiness would be to die’) and a lapidary quality have made him one of the most quotable poets of his generation (e.g. ‘Home is where we have to gather grace’). Though hardly a poet with the shatter- ingly original image, he employs the extended metaphor effectively in poems like ‘Enterprise.’

When he is writing below his best, Ezekiel occasionally lapses into faded romanticism (e.g., ‘tumult of despair’) or indulges in cleverness (e.g., ‘Pretence, to pretend, I pretend’), but except when he deliberately adopts the ironic mode, his verse generally maintains a studied neutrality of tone, which suits his natural stance of the alienated observer. It is, however, in the overtones as in -‘Night of the Scorpion' that Ezekiel gives intimations of a talent which is certainly capable of major poetic utterance.

Towards the end of the ’fifties, Dom Moraes (1938—) the first of the ‘new’ poets to win recognition in England, appeared on the scene (His first book won the Hawthornden Prize in 1938). Son of Frank Moraes, the well-known Indian journalist, Dom Moraes lived in England for many years, having adopted British citizenship in 1961, He has studiedly disowned his Indian heritage repeatedly. 'I am Indian by birth, but I have lived in England since I was a boy and I hold a British passport. The historical accident of British rule in India worked on my family so that I lived an English life there and spoke no Indian language. ... So English was my outlook, I found I could not fit in India. When eventually I came to England, I fitted in at once.’* Again, ‘In Europe I had positive emotions; in India I sank into the dream in which my whole country was sunk.’5 He has also produced the certificate of Verrier Elwin who reportedly told him, ‘You are a very English person. Your reactions aren’t Indian.’* Nevertheless, it is impossible to think of Dom Moraes as anything but an Indian English poet and The Penguin Companion to Literature rightly describes him as an ‘Indian Poet’.7 Born in a Goan Christian family, Moraes, an only son, had an excruciatingly troubled and insecure childhood and adolescence during which his mother’s frequent bouts of insanity were a persistent nightmare, as his autobiography, My Son's Father, reveals. The varied repercussions of this traumatic experience and his attempts to come to terms with them in adult life form the driving force behind his verse in A Beginning (1957), Poems (1960) and John Nobody (1968). His Poems 1955-1965appeared in 1966 and his Collected Poems in 1969. Deeply influenced by Dylan Thomas and the surrealistic school, Moraes’s is a highly personal poetry with a persistent confessional tone and its recurring themes are loneliness and insecurity from which escape is sought either in the erotic fantasies of a febrile imagination or the self-probing of a tortured soul. His verse often creates a haunted world in which classical, Christian, medieval and fairy tale myths are mixed and dragons and dwarfs, Cain and the unicorn, the tombs of Mycenae and Christ come together. He finds himself ‘unloved and forlorn’ and his fate is to ‘seem/unreal to myself.’ When his quest is imbued with an urgent intensity, Moraes writes memorable poems like ‘The Visitor’ in

which there is a fruitful exploration of the poet's own psyche (e.g., 'I shall be he whom you will never find/Except in me'). His love poems can be incandescent but sometimes also lapse either into metaphysical conceit (e.g., 'The high/Mountain of her body that I was to climb') or romantic cliches (e.g., 'I have furnished my heart to be her nest'). His imagery has a strong sensuous quality (e.g., 'the curds/Of sea'—an image, by the way, which, in spite of all his protestations to the contrary, so obviously stamps him as an Indian English poet) and of all his contemporaries he has perhaps the finest ear for the rhythms of modern English. What never fails in Moraes's verse is the easy, refined and controlled fiow of language. Moraes has not published a new collection of verse for almost a decade now and appears to have turned to prose. Though he would have us believe that 'I have dropped my root and struck,* his verse has shown little evidence of any startling development consequent upon the reportedly successful transplantation, since he became a British citizen almqst a generation ago.

During the nineteen sixties, several prominent 'new' poets appeared, the earliest of whom was P. Lal (1929—). Born in the Punjab, Purushottam Lalmigrated to Calcutta with his parents at the age of one. Educated in this city, Lalnow teaches English there. His verse collections include The Parrot's Death and Other Poems (1960), "Change!" They Said (1966), Draupadi and Jayadratha and Other Poems (1967), Yakshi from Didarganj and Other Poems (1969), The Man of Dharma and the Rasa of Silence (1974) and Calcutta: A Long Poem (1977). His Collected Poems appeared in 1977. He has also published creative translations of The Bhagawad Gita (1965), The Dhamma pada (1967) and Ghalib's Love Poems (1971). His verse 'trans

creation* of The Mahabharata of which more than 110 slender volumes have so far appeared is an ambitious project begun in 1968.

Lal's early verse, 'Vocal/ In times of beauty', is full of 'apples and birds', 'white roses and bees' and 'dew filigree- ing the grass'. He is also fascinated by the sound of words. 'The melodic pattern ... is to me all-important,' he declares in his preface to the Collected Poems (e.g. 'The ... bee/.. . silent upon the incessant aftemoon/Distils its summer share of ecstasy'). This verse has, at its best, the delicacy and charm of Sung landscape painting. With "Change", They Said, the poet is seen to enter a world of increasing awareness of social realities and life's sorrows, and passes from 'An Encounter with God in a Rose Garden'to'The Refugees at Sealdah station' and the 'Middle class deploring/Economic

disparity/. ... In the strangulated bus’. However, these later perceptions have not yet firmly crystallized.

Of Lal'stwo long poems, The Man of Dharma and the Rasa of Silence traces Yudhisthira’s passage ‘through the spectrum of the eight rasas till he arrives at. . . the rasa of silence.’ Lalis obviously attempting here a poetic statement about the

modern human condition, making a symbolic use of a well- known figure from the Mahabharata, and the theory of rasa from Sanskrit aesthetics. However, the symbolism is vague and the attempted re-classification of rasas unconvincing. The style is cluttered up with stale romantic adjectives like ‘puissant’ and ‘radiant’—a feature surprising in a poet who had earlier berated all romantic claptrap. Calcutta fails for different reasons. The poet’s vision of his ‘broken city’ with its shocking contrasts has actually turned out to be rather fragmentary and casual. The various characters like Mervyn D’ Mellow, Deben- dranath Basu, etc., are not fully realized and the section of Mother Teresa—‘the essential witness figure’, which is supposed to be the ‘cohering centre’ of the poem fails to be organically connected with the rest. The prose essay on Calcutta which forms the ‘Interlude’ further destroys all hopes of poetic unity. Lal'searly work still remains his best, while his contribution as a pioneer, popularizer and effective champion

of the new poetry is undeniably substantial.

Adil Jussawalla’s (1940—) first book of verse, Land's End (1962) contains poems‘written in England and some parts of Europe.’ Unlike Dom Moraes, however, Jussawalla chose to return to India after a sojourn of more than dozen years in England and has since published another collection, Missing Person (1974). Jussawalla’s usual strategy in Land's End is to project a clearly visualized situation and then comment on it, bringing out either the personal or social or existential significance latent in it. The sight of a tree shedding its leaves in autumn makes him pray: ‘So let my thoughts/Mottled, stale and yellow/Be swept into some gutter in the eye’; And the memory of hymn-singing at school recalls the ‘ragged sweeper urchins’ outside who ‘gazed mutely/At our singing.’ His setting is western here and so is his framework of reference, which includes Achilles and Virgil, Rodin and Van Gogh, ‘Your Ladies of Brussels’ and ‘furious Cossack children’. Even the Tamil waiters in a London restaurant in ‘The Waiters’ are made to ‘stand aloof’ from the poet.

The exile's return, his recapitulation of his foreign experience, his reaction to his native scene and his continued quest for selfknowledge form the chief themes of Missing Person. The poet's conscious involvement with the Indian ethos is clear from the fact that Achilles is now set in juxtaposition with Vidura and 'a gigantic Shiva thrust* accompanies 'a Black and Decker drill'. As his aeroplane hovers over Santa Cruz airport, the poet feels that 'the poor, invisible/Show ms my place; that in the air/With the scavenger birds, I ride.' In spite of quite a few telling insights like these, Missing Person, however does not quite add up to a completely unified poetic testament, the total effect being that of a sensitive talent not yet fully under artistic control.

The most outstanding poet of the sixties is easily A.K. Ramanujan (1929—) another exile who, unlike Jussawalla, has not chosen to return, and continues to teach Dravidian Linguistics at the University of Chicago. His first volume, The Striders (1966) won a Poetry Book Society recommendation. Relations followed in 1971. He has aiso translated into English poetry in Tamil and Kannada in The Interior Landscape (1967) and Speaking of Siva (1972) respectively. Ramanujan has said, 'English and my disciplines (linguistics, anthropology) give me my "outer" forms—linguistic, metrical, logical and other such ways-of shaping experience, and my first thirty years in India, my frequent visits and field trips, my personal and professional preoccupations with Kannada, Tamil, the classics and Folklore give me my substance, my "inner" forms, images, symbols.'8 His poetry thus draws its sustenance from his intense awareness of his racial burden, his Hindu heritage. 'Imust seek and will find/My particular hell in my Hindu mind' is his motto. This awareness does not, however, lead to blind acceptance, for the poet is equally alive to both the strength and the deficiencies of his racial ethos. He admires its vision of unity of all life as in 'Christmas', which stresses the impossibility of knowing 'leaf from parrot/Or branch from root/Nor ... that

trec/From you or me'; and he notes its great absorbing power by picturing a typical joint family in 'Small-scale Reflections on a Great House'. At the same time, he does not fail to notice its inability to satisfy completely the modern mind, which cannot reconcile itself easily to the presence of elemental evil in life (e.g. 'The Hindoo: he reads his Gita and is calm at all events'). He pillories the cowardice that may pass for gentleness (e.g. 'The Hindoo: he doesn't Hurt a Fly or spider either') and the patient equanimity which may degenerate into sheer hcartlessness (e.g. 'The Hindoo: The Only Risk'). He deprecates its uncritical acceptance of tradition and its neglect of the individual, as when he describes how the ancient Tamil poets praised the river in flood and 'The new poets still

quoted/ The old poets, but no one spoke/ln veise/Ot the pregnant woman/drowned.'

Occasionally, Ramanujan also tries to juxtapose ironically the ancient Hindu ethos with the situation of the modern Hindu as in 'Some Indian uses of History on a Rainy Day' and contrasts the Hindu and Western world-views as in 'Christmas'.

The 'ancient hands' at the poet's 'throat' include the ancestors of his persona too. While the Tamil epigraph to Relationsstates that 'living/Among relations/Binds the feet,' Ramanujan's persona finds his entire anatomy 'bred in an ancestor's bone', His self-portrait is that 'of a stranger/Date unknown/Often signed in a corner/By my father.' 'Ancestral crocodiles and tortoises' haunt his imagination. This makes for a poetry in which memory plays a vigorous, creative role. It is not 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' but recollection emotionalised in un-tranquil moments that is the driving force behind much of Ramanujan's poetry. Time and again, 'a hood/ Of memory like a coil on a heath' unfolds itself in his mind. This memory is fruitfully creative when it attempts an almost total recall of sensuous childhood impressions of fear, sorrow or death as in 'Snakes', 'Breaded Fish' and 'The Opposable thumb'; and also when recollection takes on an ironic flavour as a childhood impression recalled years later and properly understood from the vantage ground of adulthood suddenly yields a surprisingly new significance (e.g. 'History').

Owing to Ramanujan's obvious preoccupation with motifs of ancestral heritage and memory, his few love poems have not received the attention they deserve. His attempt to square 'the ancient circle/of you and me' is fascinating in its varying moods. His lover complains that he cannot recall the face and the words of his absent beloved, though his memory is cluttered up with all kinds of footling details. 'Love Poem for a Wife!* is a revealing comment on how an unshared childhood separates a devoted couple and 'Still Life' is a celebration of love as an abiding presence. These love poems are remarkable for their quiet but deep emotion, their fineness of perception and their treatment of the unusual in one of the most basic human experiences.

In poetic technique, of all his contemporaries, Ramanujan appears to have the surest touch, for he never lapses into romantic cliche. His unfailing sense of rhythm gives a fitting answer to those who hold that complete inwardness with language is possible only to a poet writing in his mother tongue. Though he

writes in open forms, his verse is extremely tightly constructed. He can also surprise us with a startlingly apt adjective as in ‘the naked parting of her hair’ or blend image and word music perfectly as when he describes snakes as ‘writing a sibilant alphabet of panic/On my floor.’

While his technical accomplishment is indisputable and his thematic strategy exactly the right one for a poet in his situation, one is not so sure that during the dozen years and more that he has been writing, Ramanujan has fully exploited the opportunities his material offers him. His articulation of the Hindu ethos has so far produced (with a few notable exceptions) poetry of the periphery and not the centre of the Hindu experience. His poetry of memory gives us much that is of human interest but remains, on the whole, severely restricted to the social plane of experience alone, seldom attempting higher or more more subtle evocations; and the love poems are only a small handful. A later poem like 'Prayers to Lord Murugan’ even reveals a curious uncertainty in his reaction to Hinduism. Perhaps Ramanujan has yet to come fully to terms with his heritage and is still feeling his way. Meanwhile, he has effectively demonstrated to his contemporaries the supreme importance of having roots and has also shown glimpses of the vitality 4he work of a poet acquires when he succeeds even partially in this attempt.

A fellow Tamil and and an artist equally urgently concerned with his native heritage is R. Parthasarathy (1934—), a poet acutely conscious of the complex relationship between ‘the hour glass of the Tamil mind’ and ‘the exact chronometer of Europe*. ‘There is something to be said for exile,’ he declares, ‘you learn roots are deep.’ Parthasarathy has told the story of his poetic development with remarkable objectivity in his essay, ‘Whoring After English Gods.’* He began as a young and hopeful poet ‘hypercritical of everything Indian’ and convinced that ‘England would be my future home. And the English language will help me to belong there’—a hope shattered by his sojourn in England. He returned with ‘a new understanding of myself and India.’ The pendulum then swung to the other extreme. He thought that his ‘prolonged and tempestuous* affair with the English language was over and that he had ‘settled down with Tamil.’ He even declared, ‘I now firmly believe that I should not write poems in any other language but Tamil.’ Fortunately, Parthasarathy returned to his first love and published Rough Passage (1977). His poetry illustrates the truth of his statement: ‘English forms a part of my intellectual, rational make-up, Tamil of my emotional, psychic make-up. .. The situation itself is poetry.’)10 Written over a period of fifteen years (1961-75), Roug

Passage is a poem in three parts dealing with the theme of identity exposed to two cultures. The poet himself explains his strategy thus: ‘ “Exile”, the first part, opposes the culture of Europe with that of India, and examines the cpnsequences of British rule on an Indian, especially the loss of identity with his own culture and, therefore, the need for roots. Against the turmoil of non-relationship, personal love holds forth the promise of belonging, and the second part, “Trial”, celebrates love as a reality here and now. “Homecoming”, the third and final part.. . explores the phenomenon of returning to one’s home.'11

The actual ‘achieved content’ of Rough Passage, however, leaves one wondering whether the poet has, in fact, accomplished all this in the poem. The long period over which the work was written and the constant revisions to which the poet himself has testified are perhaps responsible for a general effect of disjointedness. While it has many evocative passages, it is doubtful whether the poem succeeds in projecting an integrated vision of a whole country’s culture in transition. Rough Passagefails to be a national odyssey, but remains an evocative record of a highly sensitive Indian’s personal peregrination, which is also an eventful journey within. Precision and economy are the hallmarks of Parthasarathy’s poetic technique. Though he complains of his tongue being ‘in English chains’, he manipulates the ‘chains’ with remarkable adroitness. His penchant for domestic imagery (e.g., ‘mother’s turmeric days’, ‘rice-and- pickle afternoons’) again underscores his unceasing concern for roots—a concern which holds out the promise of far more substantial work in future.

Gieve Patel’s (1940—) first book, Poems appeared in 1966, and his second, How Do you Withstand, Body in 1976. A member of the small Parsi community, Patel is an ‘outsider’ like Ezekiel and is equally conscious of the fact (e.g., ‘The ambiguous Fate of Gieve Patel, he being neither Muslim nor Hindu in India*), but this has not produced a feeling of rootlessncss in his case. A strong sense of compassion establishes, for him some kind of a bond between himself and the under-privileged— a leprous woman (in ‘Nargol’) or the ’brown whores’ of Bombay (in ’Tourists at Grant Road’) or domestic servants (in ‘Servants’) for example—and sets his nagging social conscience working. Being a medical practitioner by profession, Patel is all too familiar with pain, disease and death and tries to talk about them with clinical detachment, which cannot, however, completely obliterate his deep human sympathies (e.g. 'Post-Mortem Report’). Patel’s is mostly ‘situational’ poetry. He begins with a concrete real life situation [e.g. the poet watching the celebration of a Hindu festival ('Naryal Purnima’); ‘Grand Parents at a Family Get-Together’ etc.] which triggers off his personal

response. He has little use for image and metaphor (rather surprising in a poet who is also a painter) and generally expresses himself in a bare, spare, colloquial style, allowing himself only the services of a deflating irony as a counter weight to his compassion. In his more recent work, Patel appears to make lesser use of the situational strategy, choosing a more directly reflective style but has not yet mastered the new mode.

In contrast with Patel, Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (1947—) writes a poetry in which the image is all-dominant. He is the author of b aratmata: a prayer (sic) (1966), Woodcuts on Pape. (1967), PomesjPoems/Poemas (1971), and Nine Enclosures (1976). Mehrotra has described himself as ‘not an Indian poet but a poet writing a universal language of poetry, of feeling, of love, and hate and sex.’12His true affinities are with Surrealist poetry. In Mehrotra’s poetic world pyramids come and knock at the gate; a skull contains rivers; the rose has bones which sprout feathers; the ‘torn skin dances’ and ‘a naked man/ a Flat-eye goat upon his back/Runs up the steps of sunset.’ In this forest of symbols, with its tangled undergrowth of images, we find the poet groping about, trying to express his response to the modernman’s predicament in a world of debased values— a struggle not always successful, though it is quite in keeping with Mehrotra’s poetic creed according to which a poem comprises ‘games, riddles and accidents. . .and the poet'creates as many accidents as he can.’13The early satire, bharatmata is a much simpler but a less challenging work. Mehrotra’s footloose style recalls Whitman and Hart Crane, but unlike these poets at their best he has not yet achieved completely integrated expression.

Another poet in whom Whitmanism and Surrealism appear to meet (with Tagore forming a third ingredient) is Pritish Nandy (1947—), a prolific writer who has produced more than a dozen collections including Of Gods and Olives (1967), The Poetry of Pritish Nandy (1973) and Tonight This Savage Rite (1977), within a decade. Nandy*s verse gives the impression of wild energy and verbal belligerence only occasionally amenable to discipline a verse of which nimiety is at once a source of power and a weakness. His imagination seems to be obsessed with urban violence and horror, death and sex, and brings together Aphrodite and Shakuntala, Shehnai strains and ariettas, raktakarabis and hyacinths. His most characteristic form is prose-poetry in which he achieves a stirringly incantatory quality in poems like ’Calcutta, if you must exile me.’ On occasion, he is also capable of a controlled intensity of compassion, as in ‘Near Deshapriya Park They Found Him at last,’ though his verse far too often appears to be perched on the brink of sheer rhetoric.

The nineteen seventies witnessed the arrival of K.N, Daruwalla, Shiv K. Kumar, Jayanta Mahapatra and Arun Kolatkar. Keki N. Daruwalla (1937—), one of the most substantial of modern Indian English poets, has so far published Under Orion (1970),Apparition in April (1971) and Crossing of Rivers (1976). He is a police officer by profession and this fact is not without significance in understanding his response to men and matters. The words of one of the most famous police officers in fiction are relevant here. Georges Simenon's Inspector Maigret observes, 'We see. . . all sorts of men and women in the most unbelievable situations at every social level. We see them, we take note, we try to understand. . . our job is to study men. We watch their behaviour.'14 Daruwalla too observes the Indian scene with a trained eye but cannot, in spite of his training, remain absolutely detached. Though he declares, 'Between my pity and contempt/I find no difference,' the difference to him is unmistakably there. He is determined to avoid the 'maudlin mud' of sentimentality, but deprivation and misery, disease and death move him acutely, often making his satire 'drip with bile and acid'. Daruwalla brings a combination of these attitudes to bear on his view of the rioting mob, the tub- thumping politician, 'Evangelical Eva' and 'Rotarian Renu', the Maulvi who dies of tongue cancer, the leper at the Taj, the ledge-walker, the epileptic woman, the bandit chief and many others. His view of religion—whether his own, the Zoroastrian, or Hindu—is characterized by a modern'scepticism tempered by a lively human curiosity as in his vignettes of Benaras, 'the octopus city' in 'The Water Front'. Daruwalla's favourite images are those of violence (the gun goes off on many pages), disease (e.g., The Taj is 'domed leprosy', rain is 'arthritic' and the river 'dark as gangrene') and fire (a by-product of his Parsi heritage, after all?). In his latest work, Daruwalla appears to be moving from acute perception of the social scene to a more inward kind of poetry, which, however, is yet to take on the incisiveness of his earlier verse.

Shiv K. Kumar (1921 —) is a senior academic who published his first volume Articulate Silences (1970) when on the threshold of fifty. This was followed by Cobwebs in the Sun (1974), Subterfuges (.1976) and Woodpeckers (1979). His work reveals a mastery of both the confessional mode and ironic comment. In the poems of the first type, he often successfully subjects intensely felt emotion to a neat ordering of notations of intimate personal details, creating patterns out of 'nerves.. . / Twisted, knotted and tortured'. His persona sometimes takes a dark view of love (e.g., 'Loving you/Is like walking on trecherous ice'), sex (e.g. 'lashing our diabetic bodies/Into a semblance of orgasm') and marriage (e.g., 'We wear each other/Like soiled underwear'), but is also occasionally capable of

more delicate perceptions as in ‘A man should come to his woman whole—/ Not when the mind is a perverted sunflower/Tutning to darkness,’ as also of the quiet domestic idyll as in ‘My little Daughter*. In contrast to this, poems like ‘Cambridge Revisited’, ‘Kovalam Beach’ and ‘A letter from New York’ reveal a talent for expertly pillorying human inadequacies. A much travelled poet, Kumar lias a foreign setting for many of his poems, while his references to the ‘Hegelian dialectic’ and 'Leibniz’s monad’ and his use of phrases like ‘eidolons of proration’ and ‘gynous truth’ are typical of the university don. But he is also full of witty sallies, as for instance, ‘the thigh is the limit’ and ‘To hoot down hourly/Our routine loves/Till death do not us part’; and his verse always moves with a seemingly casual but assured gait.

Jayanta Mahapatra (1928—), another academic, began his career with Close the Sky, Ten by Ten (1971) and has since published Svayamvara and Other Poems (1971) A Rain of Rites (1976) Waiting (1979), Relationship (1980, Sahitya Akademi Award, 1981) and The False Start (1980). Mahapatra’s poetry is redolent of the Orissa scene and the Jagannatha temple at Puri figures quite often in it. His most characteristic note is one of quiet but often ironic reflection mostly concerning love, sex and sensuality in the earlier poetry and the social and political scene in some of the later poems. His style has an admirable colloquial ease, punctuated by thrusts of striking images as, for instance, his lean-to opened like wound’ and ‘the one wide street/Lolls out like a giant tongue.’ His muted brooding occasionally results in extremes of either excessively cryptic statement or verbal redundancy and in weaker moments he is seen echoing other poets, as in the Eliotesque ‘mornings/Like pale yellow hospital linen’; but his better work indicates a poetic voice which promises to gather strength in the years to come.

Arun Kolatkar (1932—) is that rare phenomenon among modern Indian English poets—a bilingual poet, writing both in English and in his mother tongue (Marathi, in this case) His shorter poems in English are still uncollected, but his long poem,Jejuri appeared in 1976 and won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize. Many of Kolatkar’s shorter poems, like Meh- rotra’s, present a dark, surrealistic vision in which his persona’s ‘loin has bared its teeth’; the cat ‘knows dreaming as an administrative problem’; and a hag ‘devours oranges/In self- defence.’ In Jejuri, the technique yields better results. The thirty-one short sections of the poem describe a visit to Jejuri, a famous temple near Pune. The poet’s impressions of the temple are juxtaposed with those at the railway station at the end. The surrealistic similarites startlingly disclose how at both the places (and

no two places could be more dissimilar) there is the same blind faith in ossified tradition and the establishment, the same exclusiveness and the same dilapidation and general deadness. The penultimate section, 'Between Jejuri and the Railway station' presents an experience which provides a sharp contrast: 'A dozen cocks and hens in a field of Jawar/ In a kind of a harvest dance.' This is obviously a vision of primeval vigour and the joy of life sadly missing both from the temple (i.e., religious tradition) and the railway station (machine civilization). The poet is generally sceptical and ironic, though moments of sympathy (as when he encounters an old beggar woman and a teenage wife) do break in. The poem opens with a journey (to Jejuri) and closes with the return journey in the offing, thus suggesting the motif of a quest.

Jejuri is hardly an Indian Waste Land (as some of its admirers seem to claim), since it lacks both the impressive social and religious dimensions and the complexity of that modern classic, but it is certainly an experiment in a fruitful direction already indicated by A.K. Ramanujan—viz., a serious attempt by a modern Indian English poet to review his ancient heritage. Jejuri could have been a far more substantial achievement had the poet's vision been less fragmentary and had he not remained content with scratching the surface of the problem.

Women poets form a sizable school in modern Indian English literature and the most outstanding work, expressive of what Mary Erulkar has trenchantly called 'the bitter service of womanhood', is by Kamala Das (1934—), a bilingual writer like Kolatkar. A distinguished author in her mother tongue, Malayalam, Kamala Das has published three books of verse in English: Summer in Calcutta (1965), The Descendants (1967) and The Old Playhouse and Other Poems (1973). The most obvious (and to the casual reader colourful) feature of Kamala Das's poetry is the uninhibited frankness with which she talks about sex, referring nonchalantly to 'the musk of sweat between the breasts', 'the warm shock of menstrual blood,' and even 'my pubis'. But a closer reading proves that this is not just a cheap exercise in stretching 'my two-dimensional/Nudity on sheets of weeklies,' nor a wanton display of 'thighs and sighs', nor yet merely a case of 'from bed to verse'. Kamala Das's persona is no nymphomaniac; she is simply 'every woman who seeks love'; she is 'the beloved and the betrayed', expressing her 'endless female hungers', 'the muted whisper at the core of womanhood'. She may 'flaunt... a grand, flamboyant lust', but in her heart of hearts she remains the eternal Eve proudly celebrating her essential femininity. If she lets her 'mind striptease' and finds that 'I must extrude/Autobio- graphy,' those are

only attempts to understand and articulate ‘what I was and by learning, to learn to grow.’

The persona’s experience, according to Kamala Das herself (as explained in her autobiography, Kfy Story) evidently derives from a traumatic frustration in love and marriage, compelling the victim to ‘run from one/Gossamer love to another,’ sadly realizing that ‘Love became a swivel-door/When one went out, another came in.’ The result is confessional poetry obsessively mulling over love, sex and the ‘body’s wisdom’. Several faces of Eve are exhibited here —woman as sweetheart, flirt, wife, woman of the world, mother, middle-aged inatron—and above all, woman as an untiring seeker of the nature of the psychological processes behind both femininity and masculinity. Love too appears in several roles such as a 'skin-communicated thing’, an overpowering force, an escape, a lorging and a hunger resuming in satiety. Kamala Das's generally sex-dominated poetry has unfortunately obscured her few but sensitive poems which evoke childhood memories of the ancestral home in Kerala.

Many of Kamala Das’s love poems have a Browningesque dramatic quality. Like Browning’s women, her persona too sees herself in different situations against a concrete background, reacting to ‘incidents in the development of the soul’. The intensity of her utterance sometimes results in a lack of verbal discipline, and her constant harping upon sex cannot escape the law of diminishing aesthetic returns. She has her moments of romantic claptrap and sentimentality also (e.g., ‘O Krishna, I am melting, melting, melting’), but the total impression Kamala Das’s poetry produces is one of a bold, ruthless honesty tearing passionately at conventional attitudes to reveal the quintessential woman within.

While there are more than thirty modern women poets with more than one collection each to their credit, the work of few of them possesses the individuality and power of Kamala Das’s verse. Monika Varma’s (1916—) six volumes including Dragonflies Draw Flame (1962), Past Imperative (1972) and Alakananda (1976) often reveal an acute responsiveness to nature, but she succumbs too easily to poetizing, and her sense of diction is sometimes so unsure that she writes a line like ’bivouac of bulrushes bordering the brackish pool’. Gauri Deshpande’s (1942—) three collections—Between Births (1968), Lost Love (1970) andBeyond The Slaughter-house (1972) show a similar sensitiveness to the changing moods of nature, while some of her love poems recreate the drama of man-woman relationship as evocatively as Kamala Das

though on a much more limited scale and in a less challenging manner. Some of her lyrics are, however, marred by tear-mongering (i.e., ‘If only I’d die’). Mamta Kalia’s (1942—) verse in Tribute to Papa (1970) and Poems (1978), on the other hand, has a refreshingly astringent quality. She can talk about love, marriage, family life and society with irony and wit (e.g. ‘Give up all hope/Ye that enter the kingdom of Government service’), but she has not been able to sustain this mode effectively enough. Suniti Namjoshi’s (1941—) is a talent in a similar mould. Her books include Poems (1967), Cyclone in Pakistan (1971) and The Jackass and the Lady (1980). Her poem, ‘Benefits’ echoes Sarojini Naidu’s ‘If you call me I will come’ and wryly adds,‘Together we’ll make/Many bastards.’ In her Myth in a Metal Mirror (n.d.) Tilottama Rajan cleverly experiments with both verse inspired by painting and modern sculpture and typographical effects, without however achieving much cogent poetic communication.

Among women poets who have published more than one volume each (mostly under the Writers Workshop imprint) are Meena Alexander (The Bird's Bright Wing; Without Place); Roshen Alkazi (Seventeen Poems; Seventeen More Poems); Margaret Chatterjee (The Sandalwood Tree; Toward the Sun); Mary Ann Dasgupta (The Peacock Smiles; The Circus of Love)', Leela Dharmaraj (Selected Poems, Slum Silhouette)-, Ketaki Kushari Dyson (Sap-wood; Hibiscus in the North); Lakshmi Kannan (The Glow and the Grey; Impressions); Anna Sujatha Modayil (Crucifixions; We the Unreconciled); Gauri Pant (Weeping Season; Staircase 17);Lila Ray (Entrance; The Flowering Heart); Lalitha Venkateswaran (Declarations; Tree-Bird); Indira Devi Dhanrajgir (The Yearning and other Poems, Partings in Mimosa), and Sunita Jain (Man of My Desires, Beneath the Frost).

Notable among those with a single collection each so far are Mary Erulkar (Mandala 25); Ira De (The Hunt and Other Poems); Tapati Mookerji (The Golden Road to Samarkand); Malathi Rao (Khajuraho and Other Poems), Bhanumathi Srinivasan (C— Flat) and Eunice de Souza (Fix).

The number of minor poetic voices among the men is even larger. The more prolific of those published by the Writers Workshop are: Lawrence Bantleman (Kanchanjanga; New Poems); Deb Kumar Das (The Winter Bird Walks, Through a Glass Darkly); Brooks Frederick (Rocket to the Moon; Frank Sinatra Sing To Me Again); Paul Jacobs (Sonnets; Swedish Exercises);Ruskin Bond (It Isn’t Time That’s Passing; Lone Fox Dancing); Rakshat Puri (Poems; Nineteen Poems); S.C. Saha (The Unseen Bird; The Other Side); S. Santhi (Lamplight in

the Sun; Whispers

Near a Niagara); S. Mokashi-Punekar (The Captive; The Pretender); K.D. Katrak (A Journal of the way; Diversions by the Wayside); M.K. Kaw (An Oasis of Solitude in a Sahara; Look Closely at Om) Sukanta Chaudhuri (Poems, The Glass King) and Srinivas Rayaprol (Bones and Distances; Married Love). Suresh Kohli, whose Devil's Epicure (1969) appeared under the Writers Workshop imprint has also published Target for a Kiss (1972).

Those with a solitary collection each against their names sc far include, among very many others, R de L Furtado (The Oleanders); K. Raghavendra Rao (Poems); M.R. Bhagwan (Poems); M.P. Bhaskaran (The Dancer and the Ring); Stanley F. Rajiva (The Permanent Element), Michael Daniels (Split in Two), Dhruvakumar Joshi (Ash-Flowers: Poems 1970-1976) and Vilas Sarang (A Kind of Silence).

Poets whose work has mostly appeared independently of the Writers Workshop are fewer in number. Among these are Keshav Malik (Rippled Shadow, Storm Warning); Satya Dev Jaggi (Homewards; The Moon Voyagers and Other Poems)', Syed Ameeruddin (What the Himalaya Said', Bells of Reminiscences)', R. Rabindranath Menon (Straws in the wind; Shadows in the Sun) T.V. Dattatreyan (Silver Box, Mail Box and Other Poems), Karan Singh (Welcome, the Moonrise) O.P. Bhagat (Another Planet), Dilip Chitre (Travelling in a Cage), O.P. Bhatnagar (Feeling Fossils, Angles of Retreat) and I.K. Sharma (The Shifting Sand Dunes). G.S. Sharat Chandra's April in Nanjangud and Once or Twice have both appeared abroad; his first collection,Bharata Natyam Dancer and Other Poems (1966) was published in India.

The fecundity of post-Independence Indian English poetry is thus amazing, but the quality of its minor verse does not match its abundance of output. A large part of the verse written during recent years is merely clever and frequently offers only slick verbal concoctions in the putative modernist style which is no more authentic than the imitative romanticism of the earlier periods. Surprisingly enough, in spite of their professed modernity, some of these versifiers are seen unashamedly ‘bleeding barren tears’. There are others who are banal only in a contemporary way. Freed from the restraints of metre, rhyme and form (which their predecessors were compelled to obey) they seem to disregard the inevitable compulsions of rhythm, intelligibility and sometimes even grammar. Fortunately from this versified chaos the work of more than a dozen poets stands out by

virtue of its unmistakable authenticity, significance and power.

Fiction

The Novel

Post-Independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age. The tradition of social realism established earlier on a sound footing by Mulk Raj Anand is continued by novelists like Bhabani Bhat- tacharya, Manohar Malgonkar and Khushwant Singh, who made their appearance during the nineteen fifties and the early ’sixties; while the experimental novel with a specific Indian orientation of which Raja Rao’s Kanthapura was an early example also flourishes, though with inevitable individual variations, in the hands of Sudhin Ghose, G.V. Desani and M. Ananta- narayanan. And the fiction of B. Rajan illustrates the strains of both realism and fantasy. A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists among whom the leading figures are Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. By the end of the ’sixties and in the early ’seventies newer voices are heard, the most striking of them being Arun Joshi anjl Chaman Nahal.

The earliest of the social realists of the period is Bhabani Bhattacharya (1906—), a novelist strongly influenced by Tagore and Gandhi, while both his fictional theory and practice show his affinity with Anand. Bhattacharya believes that ‘Art must teach, but unobtrusively, by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach, but only by virtue of its being a vehicle of truth. If that is propaganda, there is no need to eschew the word.’1® He is convinced that ‘a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society’s point of view.’10 While each of Bhattacharya’s novels has an unmistakable social purpose, only occasionally does he succeed in achieving a ‘vivid interpretation’ of life, his chief weaknesses being a tendency to rest content with presenting too neat aod machine-made contrasts and to settle for easy romantic solutions.

Bhattacharya’s first novel, So Many Hungers (1947), published within a few months of Independence, is one of his better efforts, though not totally free from his characteristic weaknesses. Set against the background of the ‘Quit India’ movement and the Bengal famine of the early forties, the novel deals with the theme of exploitation —political, economic and social. The 'so many hungers* of the title are those for political freedom (in the case of India); for imperial

expansion (in the case of the axis powers); for money (in the case of the capitalists who create an artificial food scarcity by hoarding rice), for food (in the case of the starved Bengali poor); for sex (in the particular case of the sex-starved soldier who rapes the destitute rustic girl Kajoli and in general, of those who frequent the Calcutta brothels, now unusually well-stocked with needy starvelings); for human dignity and self-respect (in the case of Kajoli, who rejects the brothel), and the hunger as a spiritual weapon employed by the freedom-lighters who go on a hunger strike in jail, 'Devata' even undertaking a fast unto death. Of these several hungers, the novelist has succeeded best in dealing with the hunger for food, and the scenes depicting the havoc wrought by the famine among the rural poor in Bengal constitute some of the finest examples of social realism in Indian English fiction. However, Bhattacharya, like Anand, is sometimes tempted to indulge in gratuitous authorial comment; and the final solution to Kajoli's problem appears to be totally unrealistic. She decides to earn her living, not by bartering her body but by selling newspapers—as if a young and defenceless girl could ply the latter trade in the concrete jungle of Calcutta without being forced into the former, sooner or later. The other major characters in the novel—Samarendra', the capitalist; his father, 'Devata', a Gandhian figure; and young Rahoul, the patriotic scientist—remain consistently onedimensional figures, thus reducing the total effect of the depiction of the other 'hungers'.

Music for Mohini (1952) moves on two levels. On the personal level, it is the story of Mohini, a 'city-bred, village-wed girl'and her adjustment to her new life-style. On the social plane, the narrative presents an attempt to 'connect culture with culture. . .Our old Eastern view of life with the new semiwestern outlook'—an attempt to wed the 'horoscope' with the 'microscope'. The narrative suffers on both the levels owing to a confused and superficial presentation of the issues involved, and hence the novel fails both as a domestic drama of marital adjustment and a cultural statement of the East-West encounter. Mohini's husband, Jayadevts sought to be presented as a happy combination of the best of the Indian tradition and western thought, but remains a shadowy figure. The vivid realism of the scenes depicting the Hindu marriage at its various stages beginning with the 'bride-showing' is characteristic of the author, but the 'music' of the title ultimately turns out to be the commonplace strains of an organ-grinder.

In He Who Rides a Tiger (1952)—easily Bhattacharya's finest novel—many serious questions are posed through an absorbing narrative of ironic reversal. 'A

wail from the bowels of Bengal* like So Many Hungers, the novel tells the story of Kalo, a poor blacksmith, who, jailed for stealing a bunch of bananas (the magistrate's question to him is, 'Why did you have to live?') vows revenge on society. He poses as a holy brahmin, who has been vouchsafed the miraculous vision of a Siva idol, and thrives on the fraud, until he discovers the age-old truth that he cannot dismount the tiger of his own creation without ruining himself; but dismount he must, in the interest of mental peace. There is an intricate criss-cross of themes here such as appearance and reality, the haves and the have-nots, and religious hypocrisy. The thematic similarity with Narayan's The Guide is plain, though in contrast to Narayan's unsullied realism, Bhattacharya allows himself a romantic touch in the final scene of the exposure where the crowd spontaneously supports Kalo (one wonders whether the superstitious mob wasn't more likely to condemn him for sacrilege). He is also tempted to make Kalo his mouthpiece at times, but the narrative, moving at a tiger's pace, flosses over many such flaws.

This is exactly what fails to happen in A Goddess Named Gold (1960), a slow-moving allegorical exercise, in which a fake magic talisman raises great expectations which are finally frustrated. The demands of the crudely presented parable have also hamstrung Bhattacharya's talent for realism here.

Shadow From Ladakh (1966), which won the Sahitya Aka- demi award in 1967, appears to fail for a different reason. The presentation of a surface contrast between two ideologies here is further marred by that age-old romantic device of the daughter of one adversary duly falling in love with the other. A topical novel set against the background of the Chinese invasion of 1962,Shadow From Ladakh contrasts the Gandhism of Satyajit Sen of Gandhigram with the scientism of Bhashkar, Chief Engineer of Steeltown. The two girls in Bhashkar's life—Satyajit's daughter, Suraita, and Rupa, the half-western girl—are compared to the spinning wheel and the turbine respectively. The narrative, which ends with a dubious compromise (Steel- town will postpone its take-over of Gandhigram) can hardly be stated to have done justice to its avowed theme.

In A Dream in Hawaii (1978), Bhattacharya returns to the theme of East-West encounter, this time in Hawaii, 'no better meeting ground of East and West.' The encounter is abortive, because while the East with all its spirituality has not yet completely mastered the flesh, the West continues to remain commercialised and confused. Swami Yogananda, who discovers in the end that he has not still risen above his love for Debjani represents the East; and the two Americans—Dr.

Swift, the organizational man, who wants to use Yogananda as a tool in founding a flourishing spiritual centre, and Dr. Gregson, the champion of the permissive society—are intended to reveal two facets of modern American culture. It is certainly heartening to And Bhattacharya resisting the temptation to accept a readymade solution at the end, though the Americans in the novel appear to be uniformly ‘flat* characters.

Bhattacharya’s Action has been translated into more than a dozen European languages. His sense of situation and mastery of the narrative mode, the realism of his locale, his judicious use of Indianisms (never overdone as in the case of Anand) and his easily identiAable character types have perhaps created a picture of India which Ats in admirably with pre-conceived foreign notions about this country. It is however, a moot point whether except in So Many Hungers and He Who Rides a Tiger, he has created Action which will really endure.

Unlike Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar (1913—) is a realist who believes that art has no purpose to serve except pure entertainment. ‘I do strive deliberately and hard to tell a story well,’ he declares; ‘I revel in incident. . . I feel a special allegiance to the particular sub caste among those whose caste- mark I have affected, the entertainers, the tellers of stories.’17 While in Bhattacharya’s Action, women characters, on the whole, come to life better than the men, Malgonkar’s is a male

dominated world in which women seem to be little more than instruments of masculine pleasure. Malgonkar's novels are neatly constructed and entertainingly told narratives which, however, present a rather limited view of life and human nature seen through the eyes of a hard-boiled man of the world for whom there is little to admire and respect in human nature—a man for whom love is mostly equated with sex and the flesh and its appetites are more real than the finer perceptions of the mind and the heart and the larger concerns of human life. His flat, cliche-ridden style serves his simple artistic needs admirably. It is only when he adopts a broader view of things as in The Princes that he is able to rise above his self-imposed restrictions.

A retired Indian army officer, Malgonkar began his novelis- tic'career with Distant Drum (i960); a story of army life with a wealth of engaging detail—an area in which apart from Anand’s Across the Black Waters, Indian English fiction is singularly poor. Malgonkar’s hero, Kiran, is a somewhat idealized picture of a young, pre-Independence army officer, brave, spirited and with just

the right amount of rebelliousness in his make-up which enables him to cut a dash without incurring very serious consequences. Kiran sows his wild oats as a young soldier is obviously expected to, before he marries Bina, much against the wishes of her father.

The title and the epigraph af Combat of Shadows (1962) are from the Bhagavad Gita: ‘Desire and aversion are opposite shadows. Those who allow themselves to be overcome by their struggle cannot rise to a knowledge of reality.’ The moral issues indicated here are, however, nowhere in evidence in the action and the characters in the novel. The story centres round Henry Winton, the young British Manager of an Assam Tea Garden, a weak and self-centred man convinced early in life of the advantages that accrue ‘if you eased upon your sense of values.’ He is morally responsible for the death of an Indian Shikari and also engineers the death of a Eurasian who is having an affair, with his wife (to complicate matters, Winton himself has had an affair with the girl the Eurasian loves) and ultimately pays for both these deaths with his own life. The narrative makes it abundantly clear that the ethical questions involved are far less important to the novelist than the exigencies of a fast-moving tale with a picturesque finale. Malgonkar’s picture of the British officials, the Eurasians and the labourers on the Tea estate shows him adopting a totally ‘pucka sahib’ attitude reminiscent of Kipling and John Masters.

The Princes (1963) is indubitably Malgonkar’s best novel, since here, for once, he goes beyond his self-avowed role as a story-teller. His grandfather was a minister in a princely state and hence, Malgonkar’s involvement with what he deals with in the novel was perhaps deeper than what the demands of a merely readable story would require. The result is a memorable picture of the troubled times of the merger of the princely states into the Indian Union, with special reference to the small state of Begwad. The narrator is Abhayraj, the Crown Prince of Begwad, an insider-outsider, who views the entire merger drama as both actor and spectator. As a youth firmly rooted in the age-old aristocratic tradition and yet aware of the new democratic values, he is an admirable foil to his father, the Maharaja who is a perfect representative of the feudal order. The sympathies of Abhayraj and the author are obviously with the feudal past (Malgonkar’s pucka sahib stance remains unaltered) and hence the new democratic order is certainly not fairly represented by the vengeful and cowardly Karamchand, the untouchable boy, who becomes a minister. While this manifestly limits the objectivity of the picture, Malgonkar's depiction of the feudal way of life is scrupulously fair. He reveals both its strength and its

limitations. Its representative, Maharaja Hiroji, is a manly man, who calmly courts death when all is lost; at the same time he has all the vices of his class and he is clearly made out to be an anachronism in the modern world. Malgon- kar tells his story entertainingly as usual, but his (unconscious?) awareness of the issues at stake gives his narrative a larger dimension, and makes it a successful political novel.

This transformation fails to occur in A Bend in the Ganges (1964), an ambitious novel the setting for which is Partition. The title and the epigraph are drawn from the Ramayana: ‘At a bend in the Ganges, they paused to take a look at the land they were leaving’; but as in Combat of Shadows, the serious thematic overtones in the original are completely smothered in a narrative of brutal violence in which it is difficult to sympathize with any single major character—whether Gian the shifty Gandhian youth or Debi-dayal, the superior terrorist or Shah the Muslim fanatic or the young but cynical Sundari, whose idea of love is that it'was a game-a game strictly for grown-ups so that if you were not sufficiently skilful, you could be broken by it.’ Sundari’s sour assertion, however, does not prevent the author from packing her off with Gian, whom she has humiliated, to safety (and presumably to marriage) at the end. Malgonkar works on a large canvas; the scene shifts from India to the Andamans and back and the racy narrative is full of exciting action. The upshot, however, is not an epic novel, but, melodrama, because the novelist’s vision is hopelessly circumscribed by his inability to look beyond the sheer horror and brutality of it all.

This same lack of a larger vision makes Malgonkar rest content with working on the superficial level of telling an exciting romantic tale in The Devil's Wind (1972), while his material clamoured in vain for the shaping power of the historical imagination. In this novel dealing with the great Revolt of 1857, Malgonkar claims to have told ‘Nana’s story as I believe he might have written it himself.’ Early in the narrative, Nana observes,‘For me the issues were not altogether clear cut, I could not, in my own mind, separate the national struggle from personal involvements.’ The novelist, however, appears to be far more interested in Nana’s 'personal involvements’ than in the ‘national struggle’. This is clear from the fact that both Tantya Topi and Mani (Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi) who played roles in the national struggle remain pale sketches. Nana himself is little more than a shadowy figure—the inevitable fate of the autobiographical narrator in fiction. Malgonkar’s use of mutilated anglicized forms of names like ‘Tantya’ (for ‘Tatya’) and ‘Dhondu Pant’ (for ‘Dhondo Pant’) can only be

explained by his pucka sahib proclivities (or, is it his eye on the Western reader?) since as a Marathi-speaking author he must be familiar with the correct forms.

Apart from the novels Malgonkar, a professional writer, has also written a competent espionage thriller, Spy in Amber (1971) and two novelizations of him scripts—Shalimar and Open Season.

The realism of Khushwant Singh (1918—) is of an earthier variety. He has declared that his ‘roots are in the dunghill of a tiny Indian village’18 and his fiction reeks with the odour of his roots. One of his characters says, ‘It was not possible to keep Indians off the subject of sex for long. It obsessed their minds.’19 Whatever the measure of truth in this generalization, it is certainly valid in the case of this novelist. Khushwant Singh also appears to take a markedly irreverent view of Indian life and character. His style, haid and vigorous, employs colourful Punjabi expletives and terms of abuse a la Anand while his irony is honed like a Sikh sword.

Khushwant Singh’s first novel, Train to Pakistan (1956) (Mono Majra in the American edition, 1956) illustrates all these features of his art. The impact of Partition on a small village on the Indo-Pakistan border is shown here with pitiless realism of description and the swift tempo of the narrative carries the reader along. The integrity of the novel is however flawed in two ways: the only role that Iqbal, the Communist who comes to the viltage for party work, seems to play is that of acting as the mouthpiece of the author; and there is also the conventionally romantic motif of the love of Jugga, the Sikh village gangster, for (of course) a Muslim girl, in saving whom he duly sacrifices his life.

I shall Not Hear the Nightingale (1959) has a greater authenticity, though the crudity persists. The novel presents an ironic picture of a Sikh joint family illustrative of different Indian reactions to the freedom movement of the ’forties, including double-dealing, posing and treachery. In Buta Singh, the magistrate, the novelist has mercilessly pilloried Indian officialdom. Khushwant Singh’s obsession with sex results in exercises in copulation involving major characters as well as minor in practically every chapter. The only character that wins our respect is the old mother Sabhrai who has ‘the dignity of an ancient people behind her.’ The novel derives its title from her reply to her son’s assurance that after Independence, ‘once more the Nightingales will sing.’ She says, ‘I shall not hear the Nightingale’—a sentiment in tune with the temper of the novel.

The realism of S. Menon Marath (1906—) is as securely rooted in the soil of his native Kerala, as Khushwant Singh's is in that of the Punjab; but it is manifestly far more refined in presentation. His Wound of Spring (1960) describes the disintegration of a traditional matriarchal Nayar family in Kerala during the second decade of the twentieth century. There is also an ironical picture -of the Gandhian movement here. At the bonfire of foreign-made clothes, beggars clamour: 'Don't burn them, give them to us'; and students welcome the agitation because 'the undone home work would not humiliate today, at any rate.' The Moplah rebellion of 1921 also shapes the events in the narrative. The Sale of an Island (1968) is a slighter work, depicting the conflict between Kumaran, who returns from the War to find the island on which his house has been built sold, and the rich landlord, Sekhara Menon. It ends with the eviction of all the tenants and the death of Kumaran. A theme with considerable social and tragic potential is handled here in a rather superficial manner.

Balachandra Rajan (1920—) illustrates both the strains prominent in Indian English fiction of the 'fifties and the 'sixties— viz., realism and fantasy. Unlike his contemporaries, however, his realism is less social than psychological in his first novel, The Dark Dancer (1959). In this story of Krishnan, a south Indian youth who, on his return from England to post-Partition India, finds himself torn between his love for the British Cynthia and his loyalty to Kamala his wife, the novelist's intention appears to be to pose the problem of East-West confrontation in terms of the protagonist's quest for identity. Unfortunately, both motive and action are almost lost in the haze which Rajan's donnish style, chokeful of literary echoes and allusions and straining after subtleties of thoughts frequently left half- said and unsaid, throws over the narrative. In this haze, unlike what happens in A Bend in the Ganges and Train to Pakistan, even the violence of the Partition holocaust takes on a curiously unreal air. The 'Dark Dancer' of the title —Shiva, the god of both destruction and creation—therefore remains only an item of colourful stage property and fails to become a powerful symbol incorporated into the fictional world of the narrative.

Rajan's second novel, Too Long in the West (1961) is in a totally different key altogether. This is a comic extravaganza in which the central figure is Nalini, a South Indian girl, who returns from an American University to face the problem of choosing a suitable husband. An advertisement for a bridegroom declaring that 'unprecedented paragon will marry whoever deserves her'.brings various suitors—almost everyone of them an eccentric in his own right-on the scene, while Nalini's parents and the rustics of her village contribute their own quota of

comedy to the proceedings. In addition to this parody of the ancient Hindu practice of swayamvara (i.e. bridegroom- choosing), Nalini's sojourn in the United States is also described with engaging irony. The breezy, facetious style harmonizes admirably with the tone of the narrative. Unfortunately, Rajan has not exploited this vein any further and has not in fact written any more fiction after this.

The novels of Sudhindra Nath Ghose (1899-1965) are an exciting experiment in the expression of the Indian ethos in a form firmly grounded in the ancient native tradition of storytelling. They have, however, suffered from a strange neglect until recently, owing to various reasons noted by Shyamala A. Narayan20. Apart from the fact that the novels, published in England, have long been out of print, they have been mistaken for memoirs (A Times Literary Supplement reviewer regarded them as such; theNational Bibliography of Indian Literature (1962) lists them as 'autobiographical sketches' and the National Library, Calcutta houses them in the Biography Section). The four novels— And Gazelles Leaping (1949), Cradte of the Clouds (1951) The Vermilion Boat (1953) and The Flame of the Forest (1955)—form a tetralogy knit together by the central figure of the protagonistnarrator, about twenty years of whose life and career they cover. The nameless narrator (called 'Balaram' at places, because he was born on the anniversary of the birth of the legendary Balarama of the plough) is an orphan, though born in a rich family and is brought up by a village aunt. The

tetralogy is actually a bildungsroman and its central theme is the growth of the narrator's mind, which is shaped both by his boyhood years in a traditional rural community and his youthful experiences in the city of Calcutta. The two forces that impinge upon his mind right from the beginning are faith and the awareness of evil, and each novel shows his mental development under their impact. The first novel of the tetralogy is a delightful idyll of childhood in a kindergarten housed in a small village on the outskirts of Calcutta. Here the narrator, as a child, ibefriends Mohan, a shy, dwarfish elephant with a strong inferiority complex, and imbibes from this experience the typical Hindu belief in the sense of oneness of all life, including man and animal. His first encounter with evil also takes place here when a gang of hooligans descends on the village, beats him up and threatens to injure Mohan. His refusal to be cowed down by them constitutes another significant stage in the education of his soul. In Cradle of the Clouds, the narrator's boyhood in a small Santal village is described. The happy camaraderie and tolerance of the villagers and their simple and yet devout faith influence the boy strongly. He takes this traditional faith on trust as when he

participates as Balarama in the ritualistic ploughing ceremony organized during a severe drought. Evil appears here in the form of intolerant and sceptical rationalism, represented by the Second Master who vainly tries to interrupt the ritual.

The Vermilion Boat shows the narrator first as a University student and then a job-seeker in Calcutta, which worships ‘corruption and the Bitch-Goddess’. The young man is now fully exposed to human nature in the raw, and sees through the treachery of his guardian Jogin-Da and the fake faith of the pseudo- sadhu, Prem Swami and has a taste of communal riots also. There is the inevitable sexual awakening too, but his affair with Roma reveals to him only the baser face of physical love. On the other hand, his deeply ingrained sense of the oneness of all life makes him befriend a porpoise which saves him from a watery grave, when his vermilion boat disintegrates in a storm and the legend of Manasa —the snake goddess, who dwells in the ocean—- brings home to him the significance of the Feminine Principle

as the saviour.

The narrator continues to live in Calcutta in the last part of the tetralogy, The Flame of the Forest, illustrating the truth of his verdict on the city: ‘Living in any city is risky, whereas in Calcutta it is positively dangerous.’ His encounters with the American journal, Life-in-Technikolor: Foni Dhar, the mercenary academic who makes a fortune out of a worthless textbook and recommends for a doctorate a bogus thesis on a non-existent writer and ‘Ek Number’, the corrupt politician, are productive of much sardonic humour. Here again, as in the earlier novels, one of his best friends is from the animal kingdom—Pi ram, the bulldog. In the end, the narrator, wanting to escape from the clutches of ‘Ek Number’ joins Myna, ‘The Flame of the Forest’— a devotional singer in her pilgrimage. He has at last encountered real, mature faith here, but there is a clear suggestion that armed with it, he will return to the world to fight evil, having only ‘decided rather to bide my time for hitting back, and reminded myself of the Penhari saying: “Like a heron be, when ’tis your time for lying low:/like a heron be when 'tis your turn to strike the blow.” ’

The fictional ‘ I’ of the narrator is the only concession that Ghose makes to the western fictional form. In virtually all other respects, his model is the oriental tale. Like his original, he makes no distinction between this world and the other, both to him being equally real. Hence, he tells the story of the South Indian

village, which, cursed by a holy man, floated in the air to land in the North with as much conviction as he evinces in talking about the corruption in Calcutta. Likewise, the human and the animal worlds too do not remain separate. An elephant, a fish and a dog feel, think and act like human beings (Mohan, the elephant, reads the notice 'No Elephants' and starts crying). Furthermore, the characters are often presented more as archetypes21than,as complex individuals, and carry symbolic overtones. Thus, the nameless, disinherited and orphaned protagonist is himself an apt representative of the modern man who has gained the West only to lose the East, and whose education should therefore comprise a recovery of his lost heritage. The names of many other characters are also suggestive, recalling those in thePancatantra like 'Immortal-Power', the King, 'Increase', the Merchant and 'Princess Lovely'. Some of them are personifications of qualities or status such as Ramoni (beautiful woman), Gama (Champion wrestler) and Ek Number (Number one), the leading politician who recalls the swollen- headed King Nahusha of old. Others are ironical nicknames typical of personal activities like Comrade Dynamiter, the Communist and Kolej Huzoor, the boastful collegian. And some others are known simply by their calling, like Kathak (story teller), Kumar (Kumbhakar—i.e. potter) etc.

Ghose's narrative technique also shows him discarding the Aristotelian concept of plot and employing the ancient Sanskrit device of the framing story interpolated with inserted tales told by oifferent characters. These tales are from diverse sources such as the ancient epics and puranas, legend and folk-lore, and even history. In addition to Indra and Krishna, the Buddha and Vikramaditya also figure here along with Emperors Akbar and Jehangir. There are Sadhus and Fakirs, goddesses and evil spirits like the Nishir Dak, and falcons and tigers too. Most of the tales are illustrative of some point made in a discussion between the characters, and are thus something more than mere digressions. Following the practice of the Sanskrit Campu Kavya Ghose mixes prose and verse and introduces into the narrative songs in Bengali with musical notations. There are long descriptions of the beauty of Nature in lyrical prose a la the puranas, and the frequent use of proverbs and sententious sayings is reminiscent of the Pancatantra and similar didactic tales.

While Ghose has undoubtedly registered remarkable success in his experiment, it is obvious that his achievement does not match that of Raja Rao. Unlike the author of The Serpent and the Rope, Ghose does not try to probe into the profound philosophical implications of the tradition to which he also returns.' The very fact that his protagonist in the first two novels is a boy and a callow

youth in the next two has naturally circumscribed his vision. But within his self-imposed limits he has produced fiction which has unmistakable authenticity, freshness and charm.

G.V. Desani's All About H. Hatterr (1948; revised edition 1972) is easily one of the most daringly experimental novels in Indian English literature. Govindas Visbnoodas Desani (1909—) ran away from home at the age of eighteen and spent the next twentyfive years in England, working as a newspaper correspondent, popular lecturer and broadcaster. Returning to India in 1952, he spent several years in seclusion, practising yoga and studying Buddhism. Since 1968, he has been teaching philosophy in an American University. All About H. Hatterr is a novel extremely complex both in theme and technique. It is at once a diverting autobiography ('autobiographical' as Hatterr

calls it in his own peculiar brand of English) of a Eurasian, who is as avid for experience as he is incapable of learning from it; the story of the hero's spiritual quest for understanding the meaning of life; a social chronicle revealing aspects of White, Eurasian and Indian character; an uproariously funny comedy— a 'human horseplay', brimful of various kinds of humour ranging from sheer farce to subtle wit; a triumphant experiment in blending Western and Indian narrative forms, and an astonishing exhibition of a seemingly unlimited stylistic virtuosity.

'Hindustaniwalla Hatterr' is the pseudonym of a fifty-five year old, orphaned son of a European seaman and a non- Christian woman from Malaya. The name, 'Hatterr' suggests both a 'sahib' (i.e. 'topiwallah', the man with the 'sola topi*, the badge of the colonial European in pre-Independence Asian countries; in fact, the hero himself tells us that the name Hatterr wis suggested by his headmaster's 'too large for him hat') and the Mad Hatter from Alice in Wonderland (it is significant to note that Hatterr has had a head-injury in boyhood and is warned that he might develop mental-disorder). He is a tragi-comic character, who elicits both our pity and ridicule. A rootless orphan, he is a lifelong prey to a nagging sense of insecurity. He tells us, T haven't had my mother to love me... I have no relations ... I am afraid, can't you see?' We are told that he carries in his pocket fifty doctors' telephone numbers, in case of accident. He is also a simpleton, who is fooled by the seven oriental sages whom he approaches reverentially; fleeced by a loan-shark in Mysore, and suffers time and again 227

at the hands of women, including a circus-manager's wife and a washer-woman.

Hatterr, however, is not merely the eternal gull; he is also Man in search of a viable philosophy of living. Desani himself has said, 'In my All About H. Hatterr, I have systematically concerned myself with the British (Western) aims and means of achieving status and respectability. I have also, as definitely, dealt with the Indian (eastern) aims and means of achieving status and respectability, not forgetting the hereafter .... Hatterr, having consorted with both, ended by jeering at both and their sources. He had to form a view of sorts for himself. And his view was to accept all situations, events, creatures, including the devil, as well within God's laws, and get on with the business of living.' At the end of his tragicomic Odyssey, we find Hatterr declaring, 'I am not fed up with Life. ... I carry on. . . . Carry on, boys, and continue like hell.'

The White members of the club from which Hatterr is expelled, the cockney circus impressario, Bill Smyth and his wife Rosie, and the exclusive Mrs. Hatterr are slight sketches but Hatterr's close friend, Banerrji is perhaps the most memorable portrait of the 'Babu' in Indian English fiction. A typical Anglophile, he wishes he could change his name from 'Nath' to 'Noel'. A minor poet who has composed in 'Heptastich and Ostastich', he is a pedant who specializes in knowing recondite facts like how'in about the year 1639, in Holland, as much as 4,203 guilders were paid for a single tulip.' A great admirer of Shakespeare, he always quotes the Bard mostly in a wrong context, while his bookish and stilted English is typical of his class.

Humour of character is only part of the intricate comic design of the novel. There are comic situations galore here, like Hatterr, asked to take off all that he wears by the Sage of the Wilderness, doing a Red Indian War dance round the pile of clothes dressed only in a towel marked 'G.I.P. Railway'; and Hatterr as the would-be lion-tamer, fainting in the lion's cage and dreaming of an operation theatre with millions of bottles labelled 'Pearls Before Swine', a surgeon who tears off his mask at the operation table, revealing himself to be a lion, and a nurse reciting from Tagore. But it is in the apparently inexhaustible linguistic humour that we see Desani at his most characteristic. His 'husbandry of words is unfathomable,' almost surpassing James Joyce inFinnegans Wake. The verbal pyrotechnics in the novel include parody of numerous types of style including Babu English, Oriental flowery style, cockney speech, commercial English, medical, legal and nautical terminology; outrageous puns and word-play involving half a dozen languages; twisted translations, deliberate Malapropisms; mixed metaphors, folksy parallels, comic analogies, funny proper names, misapplied allusions and jokes of all kinds.

This apparent verbal chaos is, however, carefully controlled and harnessed to the needs of a skilfully structured narrative, which the author himself has characterized as a 'gesture'. Of the hero's disastrous encounters, the first illustrates the general theme of the contrast between appearance and reality; in two each (Nos. II and VI, and III and VII) he is duped and worsted by women and charlatans respectively; and in the remaining two, his own attempts to masquerade as a fake sage end disastrously. Equally interesting is the perfect blending of western and Indian narrative techniques. The autobiographical narration is typically Western, and so is the surrealistic technique of characterization in which all the seven sages ultimately resolve themselves into the Pseudo-sage, and their various disciples into Hatterr himself, of whom Banerrji, is in a sense the alter ego. At the same time, there is so much of the Pancatantra and the Hltopadesa, the Upanishads and the Puranas in the novei, while the presentation of each encounter under the three stages called 'Instruction', 'Presumption' and 'Life-encounter' is reminiscent of the structure of the Nyaya syllogism, the five members of which (hypothesis, reason, example, applicatidn and conclusion) were reduced to three by the Vedantins. Both the emboxed technique of story-telling and the emphasis on a viable philosophy of living in the world recall the Pancatantra in which also appearance versus reality, deception, and 'diamond cut diamond' are recurring themes. The dialogues between sage and disciple read like a parody of the Upanishads and the vast range of reference to diverse subjects is a typical Puranic characteristic.

All about H. Hatterr is a difficult novel, which has been much admired and highly praised but still awaits full and intensive critical analysis. Its place, however, is evidently unique in Indian English fiction; it is a tour-de-force which its author himself has not been and perhaps may not be able to repeat.

Both Sudhin Ghose and G.V. Desani tried to blend western and oriental modes of narration in telling tales with a modern setting. In his The Silver Pilgrimage (1961), M. Anantanarayanan (1907—) adopts a purely oriental form while narrating a story set in sixteenth century Ceylon and India. It tells how Prince Jayasurya of Ceylon, sent on a pilgrimage of Kashi (which is technically a 'Silver Pilgrimage' as opposed to the journey to Kailasa—a 'pilgrimage of Gold') with his friend Tilaka, undergoes several adventures, meeting robbers and scholars, tyrants and sages and even a tree-dwelling demon on the way. The narrative is punctuated with long dialogues and discourses and digressions. The model here is obviously Dandin's Dasakumaracarita (c. sixth century, A.D.), a picaresque narrative dealing with the adventures of ten princes led by Prince

Rajavahana, son of the exiled king of Magadha. The Silver Pilgrimage is an interesting pastiche, but merely telling a traditional story in the traditional manner is a less meaningful experiment than adapting it to the attitudes of the living present. Only at two places does the novel rise above mere pastiche—first, when the sage Agastya discourses on the 'six pleasures of rheumatism' (a delightful touch of parody, this) and secondly when the merchant describes the manners and the literary modes of Renaissance England as seen through sixteenth century Indian eyes. The Silver Pilgrimage would have been a far more significant experiment had the author continued in this vein throughout.

Of the novelists of the late sixties and the seventies, the most prominent are Arun Joshi (1939—) and Chaman Nahal (1927—). Arun Joshi's recurrent theme is alienation in its different aspects, and his heroes are intensely self-centred persons prone to self-pity and escapism. In spite of their weaknesses, they are, however, genuine seekers who strive to grope towards a purpose in life and self-fulfilment. In his three novels, Joshi attempts to deal with three facets of the theme of alienation, in relation to self, the society around and humanity at large, re- spectively, Sindi Oberoi in The Foreigner (1968) is a born 'foreigner'—a man alienated from all humanity. The only son of an Indian father and an English mother, and born in Kenya, he is orphaned at an early age and grows into a youth without family ties and without a country. 'My foreignness lay within me,' he confesses. Educated in England and the U.S.A., he sums up his life as 'twenty-five years largely wasted in search of wrong things in wrong places.' He develops a philosophy of detachment, which is really a mask for his fear of committing himself, of getting involved too deeply with others. His love for an American girl, June Blyth ends tragically both for the girl and for his best friend, Babu, primarily because Sindi (a short form of 'Surrinder' which he, with unconscious irony, transliterates as 'surrender') is afraid of marriage and its demands, 'of possessing anybody and. . .of being possessed.' He returns to India and joins an industrial concern but his rootlessness persists. Finally, when the numerous employees of his factory face ruin as a result of the exposure of the fraudulent boss, he discovers his latent humanitarianism, which compels him to save them by taking over the management. This sudden transformation is unfortunately neither adequately motivated nor prepared for earlier; the ending thus appears to be botched up —a weakness not confined to this first novel alone, though Joshi's presentation of his hero's alienation is evocative enough.

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas(1971) presents a protagonist alienated from the higher middle-class society in which he is born and brought up and in which

he is compelled to live, though he finds in himself an over-powering urge to march to a different drum altogether. Right from his adolescence Billy has been conscious of an urkraft—a. ‘a great force—a primitive force’ within himself, which continues to register its presence time and again. His higher training in anthropology in the U.S.A. accentuates this consciousness further. After his return to India, marriage and a secure teaching job in a major University fail to stifle the nagging, strident primitive voice within, and Billy runs away during an anthropological survey expedition to join a primitive tribe, where be is soon accepted as an incarna

tion of a legendary ancient king. The ‘short happy life’ of Billy Biswas ends when, during an attempt by his near relations to reclaim him, he is shot dead accidentally by a policeman. Billy’s transformation, unlike Sindi’s, is well-motivated throughout and the absorbing narrative quickens its pace, leading to the final, tragic man-hunt. In spite of this, the novel fails to be a major fictional achievement because it is not, in the final analysis, informed with sufficient imaginative power to make so unusual a narrative absolutely convincing, especially in its picture of the tribal society in which Billy finds himself king, its beliefs and practices, and its apotheosis of the professor.

The most acute kind of alienation is that from self and the victim in The Apprentice (1974) is Rathor, a minor Government official. The son of a middle class freedom-fighter, he had been a poet and an athlete in youth and his ambition had been ‘to be good! Respected! To be of use!’ The imperatives of making a living however, compel him to be a clerk and the prevailing atmosphere of corruption and Mam monism in the post-Independence period soon corrodes his soul. His part in a fraudulent deal involving defective army supplies which leads to the death of his Brigadier friend in the Sino-Indian war proves an eye-opener. Rathor’s penance in his quest to regain his pre- lapsarian innocence however, takes a form more symbolic than practical: he takes to polishing the shoes of the devotees who visit a tempfe, on his way to his office. One wonders whether Joshi has not botched up his ending once again, the upshot being a sudden slackening of artistic control.

Joshi is a novelist seriously interested in existential dilemmas and equally acutely aware of both the problems of post- Independence Indian society and the implications of the East-West encounter. He is a skilled narrator and can even make an entire novel a long monologue (as in The Apprentice) without losing his hold over the reader's attention. He has the vision and the technique; all he

needs is greater maturity.

Chaman Nahal is a novelist of painful odysseys presented in different contexts. In his first novel, My True Faces (1973), Kamal Kant, whose wife Malati has left him, goes in search of her throughout Delhi and its outskirts, but having found her In the end, realizes that their marriage is broken beyond repair. The quest motif enables Nahal to hold the narrative line taut and the realism of scenes like the brothel episode is evocative; but Delhi fails to become a presence in the novel as Dublin is in Joyce. No foundation has been laid for the temple episode at the end, which is a glaring example of writing done with one eye on the Western audience's stock response to such a motif. The sudden change-over to the mock-heroic in an entire chapter (No. XIII) also mars the unity of tone.

A zadi (1975), which won the Sahitya Akademi award for the year 1977, is a much more ambitious undertaking. This account of the migration of Lala Kanshi Ram, a Sialkot grain merchant and his family to India at the time of the dismemberment of colonial India into two nations in 1947, is easily one of the most comprehensive fictional accounts of the Partition holocaust in Indian English literature. Episodes like the procession of jubilant Muslims in Sialkot when Partition is announced, the queer parade of naked Hindu women in Narowal and the immolation of Niranjan Singh stand out by their realism. On the other hand, the love affair between Arun and a Muslim girl is a hackneyed romantic touch. (Why must Hindu heroes of Partition novels fall, with monotonous regularity, in love with

Muslim girls alone?). And in describing with intimate detail the liaison between Arun and Chandani, the charwoman's daughter, the author appears to be aiming at killing with one stone the two birds of sex-interest and social reform. Another serious flaw is the mixing up of the point of view of the protagonist, Lala Kanshi Ram and that of Arun, which destroys the unity of impression. As a novel of migration Azadi is by no means in the same class as The Grapes of Wrath, though it has its felicities.

Nahal turns to the Indian English novelist's favourite theme of East-west encounter in Into Another Dawn (1977) but does not appear to bring either a new perspective or a freshness of treatment to this subject. His hero, Ravi Sharma hails from an orthodox Brahmin family from holy Hardwar; goes to the United States for higher studies and duly falls in love with an American woman, the unhappy wife of a business executive. They elope, but Ravi discovers that he has

terminal cancer and

returns to Hardwar to die. His death-bed musings, cast in the form of a retrospective narration can hardly be said to constitute a commentary on two cultures which is in any way original or marked by subtlety of perception. Both the central theme and the hero as a Brahmin intellectual invite comparison with The Serpent and the Rope—a comparison which does little credit to Into Another Dawn.

In his recent novel, The English Queens (1979), Nahal appears to be trying to do too many things. In narrating this tale of the love of Rekha, an army officer's daughter living in a select colony, for a poor musician from an adjoining slum, Nahal does not seem to be quite clear in his mind whether to present the tale as a realistic social satire on the anglicized elite or a sheer comic extravaganza or a supernatural fantasy (the hero is revealed at the end to be a new incarnation of Vishnu, called Lord Chetanal). Both the satire and the extravaganza have their moments of success, but the supernatural motif has been very crudely handled, and in any case, the three ingredients in the novel ultimately fail to form a ‘seamless whole’.

Like the women poets of the post-Independence period, the women novelists too form a sizable and significant school. The work of the earliest of these writers of fiction, Ruth Prawer Jhabvata (1927—) raises, as suggested in Chapter I, a knotty problem for the historian of Indian English literature—viz., whether she can legitimately be called an Indian English writer. Born of Polish parents in Germany and educated in England, Ruth Prawer married an Indian and has lived in India for more than twenty-four years. She herself has declared that she should not be considered an ‘Indian writer’ but ’as one of those European writers who have written about India. But an important point of difference between Jhabvala and prominent Western writers such as Kipling and Forster is that she has lived in India much longer than they did and with far greater involvement; and more importantly, her marriage to an Indian gave her access to Indian society on terms radically different from those in the case of these writers. Consequently, her best work reveals such inwardness in her picture of certain segments of Indian social life, that it is difficult not to consider her as an ‘insider’,

who at the same time enjoys the privilege of being an ‘outsider’ in an obvious sense.

Jhabvala's eight novels fall into two distinct and evenly matched groups—viz., comedies of urban middle class Indian life, especially in undivided Hindu families and ironic studies of the EastWest encounter. The first group comprises To Whom She

Will (1955), The Nature of Passion (1956), The Householder (1960) and Get Ready For Battle (1962); to the second belongEsmond in India (1958), A Backward Place (1965), A New Dominion (1973) and Heat and Dust (1975). The two motifs are combined in some of the novels, always with the one subordinated to the other. For instance, The Householder is primarily a comedy of middle class Indian life, though the East-West theme appears here in a minor way in the picture of Hans and the foreign set; on the other hand, in A Backward Place the focus is manifestly on contrasted western responses to India, while the picture of Bal and his family is in the nature of counterpoint.

In her treatment of both these motifs, Jhabvala is at her best when she observes acutely oddities of behaviour and response and brings out with gentle irony and good-humoured satire the comedy of what she observes. Her art, however, suffers when she offers instead well-worn types and stock reactions, when her irony turns acid and her satire borders on cynicism, and when she occasionally tries unsuccessfully to plunge into the deeper waters of serious emotional complications.

Nothing much by way of 'action' happens in Jhabvala's novels. A young man and woman enjoy the illusion of romantic love before accepting a separate arranged marriage each (To Whom She Will); a successful, patriarchal businessman is so much attached to his youngest daughter that he is reluctant to get her married into a rich family, though the match will further his own business interests; but finally succumbs to the pressure of his family (The Nature of Passion); A youth, newly married, learns through trial and error the privileges and pains of becoming a grihastha (The Householder); a businessman, with a scheme for acquiring land occupied by the poor, who are to be evicted, is thwarted by his own wife, a social worker from

whoE he is separated (Get Ready For Battle); the marriage between a lazy, stupid but beautiful Indian girl and a snobbish, colonialminded English expatriate proves a disaster (EsmonA in India); of three Western Women in India, one, placid and good-natured, tries without complete success to become a good Hindu wife; the second, a woman of the worlds finds admirers retreating,

as age advances and the third who had come to India to find ‘the deep truths' is compelled to hunt for a roof over her head (A Backward Place); another set of three European girls get caught in the toils of a fake Swami (A New Dominion); and a young English girt in postIndependence India finds herself unconsciously repeating, with inevitable variations, patterns of behaviour of her step-grandmother of the colonial days (Heat and Dust).

The most distinctive feature of Jhabvala’s novels is the subtlety and adroitness with which she unravels the gossamer threads of intricate human relationships—especially among the women in the Hindu joint family. She recreates admirably this drama of cattiness in which conversation is often a veiled battle of polite affronts, the favourite weapons being innuendoes and insinuations, left-handed compliments and deadly insults masked as innocuous generalities, while a chance word is a bomb dropped with devilish accuracy and devastating effect. In these battles, old scores are settled and new wounds inflicted, all over a pleasant cup of tea or a glass of cool sherbet.

Jhabvala is thus a laureate of the parlour; but she seems to be out of her depth when dealing with strong emotional involvements, as in the Olivia story in Heat and Dust. The author's refusal (or is it inability?) to analyse the nature and the causes of Olivia’s sudden infatuation for the Nawab robs the novel of all authenticity and makes it simply a clever exercise in machine- made parallelism. One also notices that from the mid-sixties onwards, Jhabvala’s irony has-increasingly been turning sour, while her perceptions appear to be losing their fineness She has recently declared, ‘I would like to live much more in the West, going back to India? sometimes but not as much as before. One hopes this will activate old memories which may help her recapture the charm of her early fiction, in which she

worked deftly and zestfully on her inch of ivory.

If Jhabvala is an outsider-insider, Karaala Markandaya (Purnaiah Taylor, 1924—) is an insider-outsider in that she is an expatriate, who has been living in England for a number of years. Markandaya’s fiction evinces a much broader range and offers a greater variety of setting, character and effect, though her quintessential themes are equally few—viz., the East-West encounter, and woman in different life-roles. The East-West encounter takes two forms—first, a direct relationship between Indian and British characters; and secondly, the impact of the modern urban culture brought in by the British rule on traditional

Indian life. Murkandaya's first novel, Nectar in a Sieve (1954) illustrates all these preoccupations. The narrator, who is also the central figure, is Rukmani, a rustic woman. The story of her hard peasant life illustrates the truth of Coleridge's line, 'work without hope draws nectar in a sieve.'The vagaries of nature and the depredations of modern industrialism (in the shape of a tannery) force Rukmani and her husband to migrate to a city where they are fleeced. Kennington, the kind-hearted itinerant British doctor and social worker represents the better side of the West. The novel, a 'Book of the Month Club' selection, has been compared toGood Earth by some foreign reviewers. Those who know their Indian village will, however, not fail to notice how contrived a picture of rustic life it offers. And when the novelist proceeds to describe the public naming ceremony of Ira's child which is born in sin, one is convinced that Rukmani's village exists only in the expatriate imagination of her creator. Surely, no traditional Indian village will allow so permissive a code of sexual morality. Some Inner Fury (1955) and Possession (1963) concentrate on Indo-British personal relationships. In the former, the love of Mira for Richard is denied fruition by the fury of the freedom movement which tears the lovers apart. The unhappy marriage of Kitsamy, the England-returned Civil servant and Premala, his traditional Hindu wife, shows another facet of the EastWest relationship. Since Richard remains a paste-board figure, the novel fails to be a tragedy of star-crossed love. An even greater air of unreality hangs over Possession, the story of the clash between Lady Caroline and a Swami for the

'possession' of the soul of Valmiki, the rustic artist, who is lured to England by her, but later returns to his mentor. Since the Swami is so obvious a fake, the conflict is not even adequately realized in personal terms, let alone the possibility of a larger symbolic dimension.

It is only when Markandaya subjects her theme to a far deeper probing that she is able to create living characters in meaningful dilemmas. The first novel in which this is achieved is A Silence, of Desire (1960). Here, the clash between the Westernoriented rationalism of Dandekar, who wants his wife

Sarojini to get herself operated for a tumour and the traditional religious faith of Sarojini, which relies absolutely on the faith-healing of the Swami (a much more credible figure than his counterpart in Possession) is adequately realized. It also leads to a larger conflict, exemplifying the Hegelian concept of two kinds of good pitted against each other—in this case, the domestic peace of the partially privileged middle-class represented by Dandekar versus the Interests of the

totally unprivileged poor who will starve if the Swami is driven away, as Dandekar and others similarly situated wish.

The retreat to undemanding superficialities in A Handful of Rice (1966) is quite obvious. This story of Ravi, an urban vagabond on whom lower middle-class respectability is thrust, when he marries Nalini the daughter of a poor tailor, is unconvincing because the hero's gangster friends are totally unrealized creations, while Nalini remains the typical, long-suifering Hindu wife.

The Coffer Dams (1969) marks a distinct watershed in the development of Markandaya's fiction. There is now a serious attempt to consolidate the artistic gains made in A Silence of Desire', at tne same time, me novelist also tries to evolve a new style, which sounds like a mixture of Faulkner and the later Henry James. In this narrative of the arrival of a firm of British engineers to construct a river-dam in Independent India, Markandaya offers one of her most comprehensive pictures of the Indo-British encounter. The various British attitudes to India include Clinton's studied neutrality based on the desirability of a purely working relationship with Indians; his wife Helen's curiosity and fascination for the tribals, which results in her affair with Bashiam, the 'jungly wallah'; Millie's pathologic cal fear of the 'natives'; and Lefevre's friendly stance. The novelist views the Indian responses in an equally objective manner, highlighting the ultra-sensitiveness of Krishnan and Gopal Rao and investing the death of the old tribal chief which coincides with the completion of the dam with obvious symbolic significance. The new style with its primacy of oblique and convoluted expression, tortured syntax and jerky sentence-structure, however, does not make for easy reading.

The Nowhere Man (1972) deals with the same theme in a more limited, but far more intensive manner, and against an English setting. Srinivas, an old Indian widower and a Londoner for the major part of his life, finds a kindred soul in old Mrs Pickering, a divorcee. But during the anti-immigrant wave of the sixties, he is persecuted, though he does have some sympathetic white neighbours. He dies when a fanatic sets fire to his house, but even before that his discovery that he has developed leprosy (an evocative symbol both of his isolation and his disintegration) has already spelt tragedy. Unfortunately, Mrs Pickering remains a shadowy character and the Mandarin style which contmues 'to stall, to deal in obliquities' is a constant irritant.

In Two Virgins (1973), a slight work, Markandaya lapses into her earlier

superficiality in once again telling an unconvincing tale of Indian village life. The contrast between the two sisters, Lalitha, the ‘child of grace’, who yearns to become a ‘town miss' and Saroja, the ‘child of the soil’ and the ‘country miss’ is utterly machine-made, while the theme, of the adolescent’s loss of innocence could not perhaps be handled more cruedly than here.

The longest and the most ambitious of Markandaya’s novels. The Golden Honeycomb (1977) is her first attempt at historical fiction. This is a chronicle of three generations of the princely family of Devapur, covering a period of about a century from 1850 to Independence. The novelist appears to have too many irons in the fictional fire here. Scenes like the elaborate account of the Delhi Durbar of 1903 are in the manner of conventional historical fiction; while at many places the impression is created that what the novelist is primarily interested in is the psychological workings of the minds of the characters, irrespective of the historical setting. And along with scenes of authentic local colour, there are incidents like Prince Rabi’s affair with a slum girl in Bombay, which arecredible only as fantasy. The upshot is a honeycomb from which the queen bee of a purposive centre is missing. Furthermore, the experiments of narrating the story in snippets instead of chapters and putting a major part of the narrative in the present tense are of doubtful value, considering the vast period of time covered, while the ghosts of Faulkner, and James still continue to haunt the style. Unless Kamala Markandaya ceases to try to be a Faulkner in a frilled sari or a James in Madras jeans, her maturer fictional utterance is unlikely to be completely authentic.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927—) is usually regarded as an expo- nent of the political novel, but politics is only one of her two major concerns. She herself has declared that each of her novels ‘more or less reflects the political era we are passing through’; and daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, Nayantara naturally had an upbringing in which politics was inevitably a strong ambience; but along with the obvious political theme, her fiction is also preoccupied with the modern Indian woman’s search for sexual freedom and self-realization. Neither of the themes is, however, handled with sufficient complexity and the failure to establish a clear ideational relationship between the political turmoil outside and the private torment of broken marriages robs most of her novels of a unified effect.

Of Sahgal’s five novels, the first, A Time To be Happy (1958) is a loose chronicle dealing with two north Indian families during the last stages of the

freedom-struggle and the arrival of Independence. While the awakening of young Sanad, the ‘Brown Englishman’ to the social and political realities of newly Independent India is the main theme, Maya, whose traditional upbringing makes her marriage to the anglicized Harish ‘a sterile, if exotic bloom’ is the first of Sahgal’s trapped women seeking escape into extra-marital arms. This Time of Morning (1968) contains one of Sahgal’s best realized political portraits — Kalyan Sinha, a man with acid on his tongue, a gimlet in his eye and a chip on his shoulder—a figure whose resemblance to V.K. Krishna Menon is quite plain. Rashmi, who feels ‘how like prolonged starvation wrong marriage could be, and Uma, the nymphomaniac, again represent women chafing against the marriage code. In Storm in Chandigarh (1969), the political background is that of the division of the Punjab into the two

states of Punjab and Haryana. The Home Minister is a thinly disguised portrait of LalBahadur Shastri and Gyan Singh of Pratap Singh Kairon, the former Chief Minister of Punjab. The protagonist, Vishal Dubey, a civil servant sent to Chandigarh to deal with the explosive political situation there, finds ample time to have an aflair with Saroj, whose husband Inder in turn has a liaison with Mara, the wife of Jit. The resulting storms in the two domestic teacups remain thematically unrelated to the storm in Corbusier’s well-planned city. The domestic plot dealing with a broken marriage in The Day in Shadow (1971) was obviously inspired by the personal experience of the novelist. Here again, while Sardar Sahib, the stern senior Minister for Petroleum and Sumer Singh, the Deputy Minister, who is a ‘glamour boy’ are well realized, the private world of the divorced Simrit bears little organic relation to the political background. Nor is the disintegration of the marriage presented with the necessary analytical power. A Situation in New Delhi (1977) deals in a rather superficial manner with the aftermath of Nehru’s death, the Naxalite movement and student unrest. In a sense, this novel registers a definite advance in Sahgal’s fictional art, since there is no cleavage here between the political and the private worlds, the main actors in both being the same. But Sahgal’s concept of the political novel remains limited to a few easily recognizable portraits of well-known politicians and A Situation in New Delhi, like its predecessors, also fails to be in the same class as major political novels like Disraeli’s Sybil and Andre Malraux’s Man's Fate, in which action and character are solidly grounded in significant, political issues and their repercussions on individuals and society.

In contrast with Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Dcsai (1937—), youngest of the major Indian English women novelists, is more interested in the interior landscape of

the mind than in political and social realities. Writing, for her, 'is an effort to discover, and then to underline, and finally to convey the true significance of things.'-* Her novels, according to her, 'deal with what Ortega Y Gasset called the terror of facing, single-handed, the ferocious assaults of existence.'27 Desai's protagonists are persons 'for whom aloneness alone' is 'the sole natural condition, aloneness alone the treasure worth treasuring'. They are mostly women, who, though they have reached different stages in life (from school-girl to grandmother), are all fragile introverts 'trapped in their own skins.' Their emotional traumas sometimes lead to violent death, in the end. Maya in Cry, the Peacock (1963) is obsessed with death and haunted by an astrological prediction that her marriage is going to end in its fourth year, with the death of either wife or husband. She can establish no effective communication with her husband, who is unsentimental, matter-of-fact and twice her age. There are no children of the marriage and this accentuates Maya's isolation, which becomes total when she murders her husband in a fit of insane fury. The symbolism of the peacock, whose 'dance of joy is the dance of death' has however, no adequate relevance to Maya's plight. In Voices in the City (1965) Desai tries unsuccessfully to make her setting—in this case, Calcutta, 'City of Kali, goddess of Death'—a contributory factor in another tale of alienated individuals. Nirode and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla are rebels against the stolid conventions of middle class life and long for creativity and self-expression. Each comes to grief: Nirode ends up as a drifting bohemian, Monisha commits suicide and Amla is heart-broken when her love is rejected. Bye-bye Blackbird (1971) is the only novel of Anita Desai in which social and political realities take precedence over probing of the mind. This picture of the East-West encounter as revealed in the lives of Indian emigrants to Britain, however, adds little to our awareness of the varied implications of this phenomenon. Curiously enough, the British characters in the novel appear, on the whole, to be better realized than the Indian protagonists, Dev and Adit, whose sudden Golte-face at the end is less than convincing. Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975) marks a return to the autonomous world of inner reality. Sita, the main character here, appears to be a less morbid Maya after four children. The cruelty and callousness of urban life stifle her and when she is with child again, she panicks at the thought of bringing a new, fragile being into this harsh world, and runs away to a small island, which has childhood associations for her; but Anally allows her husband to persuade her to return. The novel is tightly structured and the island is an evocative symbol of a lost paradise but Sita's sudden capitulation at the end comes as an anti-climax. In Fire On the Mountain (1977) two alienated souls confront each other: Nanda, an unsentimental, old widow living as a recluse in' an isolated house in the hills,

and Raka, her great grand-daughter, a shy, lonely schoolgirl, a convalescent guest, who is a ‘recluse by nature, by instinct’, as opposed to Nanda, ‘a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation’. Their relationship begins with mutual indifference and a jealous guarding of frontiers but later Nanda makes overtures which are flrmly rejected by Raka. The sudden death of Nanda’s friend, Ila Das, a social worker, who is raped and strangled, compels Nanda to review her past and confess that she has been a self-deceiver, but the recognition comes too late, as Raka has started a forest fire which threatens to destroy the house. Since Ila Das remains a one- dimensional character, the violent ending appears contrived. The title of Clear Light of Day (1980) indicates the main theme of seeing the light. The protagonist, Vimla, is an elderly spinster living in a decaying house surrounded by a neglected garden containing a disused black well (into which a white cow has drowned years ago), with a neurotic younger brother to whom going out alone on the street is a nerve-shattering ordeal. The arrival of her younger sister with her family stirs old memories of shared childhood and past traumas. The shift from the present to the past and back in the narrative helps create the appropriate mood of nostalgia, of long-forgotten impressions, words and actions being suddenly suffused with ‘the light of her days. Unfortunately the focus is not on Vimla’s con

sciousness alone and this results inevitably in a diffusion of effect; nor is her final moment of epiphany adequately motivated.

Anita Desai unravels the tortuous involutions of sensibility with subtlety and finesse and her ability to evoke the changing aspects of Nature matched with human moods is another of her assets, though her easy mastery of the language and her penchant for image and symbol occasionally result in preciosity and over-writing. If her fiction is able to advance from the vision of ‘aloneness’ as a psychological state of mind to that Of alienation as a metaphysical enigma—as one hopes it will— Anita Desai may one day achieve an amplified pattern of significant exploration of consciousness comparable to Virginia Woolf at her best.

Very few of the rest of the women novelists of the period have so far attempted sustained fictional writing, most of them remaining content with a solitary novel or two each. Of Santha Rama Rau’s two novels, Remember the House (1956) is a charming picture of the East-West encounter, particularly as it affects young Indira, whose growth from adolescence to maturity is another theme. The Adventuress (1970), the story of a young Philippino girl stranded in post-war

Japan, however, fails to rise above the level of superficiality, though the exotic setting is portrayed with some expertise. Nergis Dalai's experience of journalism has hardly proved a salutary influence on her fiction. Her Minari (1967) is an account of high class life at a hill station, with conventional characters (a Byronic hero, a vamp etc.) in stock situations.Two Sisters (1973), a contrastive study of twins at opposite poles both physically and mentally, starts promisingly as a keen probe into jealousy but ends in melodrama. And in The Inner Door (1976) the Guide motif of enforced sainthood is handled as crudely as the stock theme of East-West encounter is treated in The Girls from Overseas (1979).

Minor fiction by women offers some authentic chronicles of social life in Hindu, Muslim and Parsi households. Venu Chitale's (Mrs Leela Khare) In Transit (1950) is an evocative picture of three generations of a Poona Brahmin joint family between the two World Wars. Two novels provide revealing glimpses into the lives of Muslim families: Zeenuth Futehally's Zohra(1951), with Hyderabad in the Gandhian age as its setting, and Attiah Hosain's Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961), a nostalgic account of aristocratic life in pre-Partition Lucknow. And Perin Bharucha's The Fire Worshippers (1968) deals with Parsi life.

Prominent examples of historical fiction are Vimala Raina's Ambapali (1962) which takes us to the India of Buddha's time and more recently, Manorama Modak's Single in the Wheel (1978), a novel set against the fall of the last Peshwa in the early nineteenth century.

Shakuntala Shrinagesh's one novel, The Little Black Box (1955) is an interesting, though not wholly successful, experiment in psychological fiction, depicting the thought processes of Sarala, an embittered rich woman, who lies dying in a hospital with her money-box under her bed.

The nineteen fifties and sixties witnessed comparatively few novels by women. Among these are Lotika Ghose's White Dawns of Awakening (1950); Mrinalini Sarabhai's This Alone is True (1952); Bani Ray's Srilata and Sampa{ 1953); Sally Atho- gia's Gold in the Dust (1958); Tapati Mookerjee's, Murder Needs a Staircase (1962) and Six Faces of Eve (1963); Padmini Sen- gupta's Red Hibiscus (1962); Muriel Wasi's Too High For Rivalry (1967)—a fine picture of a girl's school drawn by an insider; Hilda Raj's The House of Ramiah (1967); Sita Ratnam- mal's Beyond the Jungle (1968) and Meenakshi Puri's Pay on the First(1968). Veena Paintal's Serenity in Storm (1966) and other novels including

the later Midnight Woman (1979) are unabashed pot-boilers.

Among novels by women published during the nineteen seventies may be mentioned Raji Narasimhan's The Heart of Standing is you cannot Fly (1973) and Forever Free (1979)— an absorbing tale of a young woman's search for fulfilment; Bharati Mukherjee's Tiger's Daughter (1973) and Wife (1976)— a sympathetic study of a frustrated Bengali wife in New York; Veena Nagpal's Karmayogi (1974) and Compulsion (1975), which follow the best-seller formula with a vengeance; Jai Nimbkar'sTemporary Answers (1974); Shanta Rameshwar Rao's Children of God (1976), which has a Harijan woman as its protagonist; Kamala Das's Alphabet of Lust(1976), which suggests that the novel is not the right medium for this talented poet; Rama Mehta'sInside the Haveli (1977, Sahitya Akademi Award 1979) an engaging story of Rajasthan Purdah life; Shouri Daniels's The Salt Doll(1977); Jyoti Jafa's Nurjahan (1978); Uma Vasudeva's The Song of Anasuya(1978) and Anita Kumar's The Night of the Seven Dawns (1979).

Apart from Bhattacharya and the other major novelists, there are few writers of fiction with a substantial corpus to their credit in the post-Independence period. Anand (Arthur Samuel) Lad's picture of the blasd upper class life in The House At Adampur(1956) and Seasons of Jupiter (1958) is undistinguished by either keen insight into character or control of fictional technique. The hero of Seasons ofJupiter, who takes to a life of renunciation after a prolonged pursuit of pleasure but before the end once again returns to a worldly life, is hardly a credible figure in his avatar as ascetic. M.V. Rama Sarma, a senior academic and noted Milton scholar, has written four novels, in two of which, viz., The Stream (1956) and Look Homeward (1976), the theme of East-West encounter figures, with the hero going abroad for education. The Farewell Party (1976), cast in the form of the reverie of a professor on the day of his retirement, has many interesting reflections on the educational scene in India today; while The Bliss of Life (1979) is a novel on the life of the ancient Andhra saint poet, Kshetrayya. Ruskin Bond, an Anglo-Indian, has not kept the promise of his autobiographical first novel, The Room on the Roof (1956), an evocative study of an observant Eurasian boy's reactions to the colourful Indian scene. His later novels include An Axe for the Rani (1972) and Love is a Sad Story (1975). Bond has also written a number of books for children. Jatindra Mohan Ganguli's novels include When East and West Meet (1961), Two Mothers (1964), Fire on the Snows of Himalayas (1965), The Fisherman of Kerala (1967) and Bond of Blood (1967). In spite of their variety of scene and setting (ranging from Bengal to Kerala),

they are marred by many conventional motifs. The novels of Romen Basu—A House Full of People (1068), A Gift of Love (1974) and Candles and Roses (1978) —carry too many elements of popular circulating library

fiction to warrant serious scrutiny.

Not many minor novels of interest were published during the first two decades after Independence. Among these may be mentioned Dilip Kumar Roy's The Upward Spiral (1949), a philosophical novel; Huthi Singh's Maura (1951), a political novel set in a pre-Independence Rajput State; Aubrey Menen's satirical fantasy—The Prevalence of Witches (1955); S.Y. Krishnaswamy'sKalyani's Husband (1957); K.J. Shridharani's Adventures of an Upside-Down Ttee (1957); Victor Anant's The Revolving Man(1959)-the story of a youth,- symbolically named John Atma, who finds himself between two worlds— the Eastern and the Western; P.M. Nityananda's nostalgic account of south Indian college days—The Long, Long Days (1960); K.B. Vaid's Steps in Darkness—an exercise in urban naturalism (1962); Ved Mehta's extravaganza set in England—Delinquent Chacha (1967); Nirmal Jacob's Monsoon: A Story of Rural Kerala (1968); Cartoonist R.K. Laxman's ironic study of urban life—Sorry, No Room(1969) and Dilip Hiro's A Triangular View (1969)—a story of three Indian youths in Britain.

With the growing interest in Indian English literature, there was a sudden spurt of fiction—many of them first novels— during the nineteen seventies. Notable among these are B.K. Karanjia's novel of Parsi life in Bombay—Mote of an Indian (1970), a fine ethnological study; Leslie dc Noronha's story of colonial Goan life—The Mango and the Tamarind Tree (1970); V.K. Gokak'sNarahari: Prophet of India (1972), which projects a hero, who is the beacon-star of India's'science of the spirit'; Timeri Murari'sThe Marriage (1972), Reginald and Jamila Massey's The Immigrants (1973), Sasthi Brata's She and He (1973), Saros Cowasjee's Goodbye to Elsa (1975), A. Bhaskar Rao's The Secret (1978) and S.S. Dhami's Maluka (1978)—all variations on the theme of East-West confrontation, some with a generous helping of sex (though Cowasjee's novel offers some splendid black humour also); K M. Trishanku's Onion Peel (1973) —a story of a sexual orgy with some psychological interest since the highly sexed hero is to have an operation which will make him impotent; Bunny Reuben's You, I and Her (1973); Raj Gill's The Rape(1974), The Golden Dawn (1974) and The Infidel (1979); D.R. Mankekar's No, My Son, Never (1974)—a novel about journalism by an experienced journalist; Nishi Khanolkar's

Dwasuparna (1976), a story of public school life; B.S. Gidwani's The Sword of Tipu Sultan (1976)—a highly idealized portrait of the 'Tiger of Mysore'; Rohit Handa's study of the Naxalite movement—Comrade Sahib (1977); H.S. Gill's story of communal hatred—Ashes and Petals (1977); two presentations of corruption in high places—Rattan Mann's Silence with the Storm (1978), the autobiography of a scientist fed up with officialdom, and Holier Than Thou(1978)—a journalistic peep into politics, by Sudhakar Bhat; Kasthuri Sreenivasan's Service with a Smile (1978)—a highly diverting social satire on small-town busybodies, in the spirit of Nagarajan's Chronicles of Kedaram; Vikram Kapur's sex-dominated The Traumatic Bite (1978) and Shiv K. Kumar's The Bone's Prayer (1979), in which a story of sexual betrayal is bandied with the same agonized intensity which marks some of the verse of this writer. Narendrapal Singh, noted Punjabi author, has recently published English translations of his fiction including Trapped (1979).

The Short Story

The variety and fecundity of the post-Independence novel are hardly evinced in the field of the short story, the writing of which still continues to be mostly a by-product of the novel- workshop. Of the novelists, Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Malgonkar, Nahal and Joshi have produced short story collections, while among the women writers, apart from Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Nergis Dalai and Attiah Hosain, the number of the practitioners of this form is not very large, as compared to the novelists.

Of Bhattacharya's two collections of short stories, Indian Cavalcade (1948), an early work, is a re-telling of striking incidents from Indian history. Steel Hawk (1968) contains very few stories with psychological interest, the rest being either anecdotes or static character-sketches, while there is a strong whiff of sentimentality around many of them. The title story is easily the most successful of all; it is a perceptive account of the reactions of rustics when a helicopter descends near the village. The finest touch is the lively curiosity of the old Grandma, 'who was of Yesterday was possessed by Today.' 'She Born of Light' effectively brings out the conflict between the Man and the Artist in a painter; but stories like 'Names are Not Labels' and 'Acrobats' peter out rather tamely after much promise of psychological portrayal.

For the bibliographer, Khushwant Singh is the author of four volumes of short stories—The Mark of Vishnu and other Stories(1950); The Voice of God and other Stories (1957): A Bride For the Sahib and Other Stories (1967) and Black Jasmine (1971). But in actual fact, a large majority of the stories in the first, second and fourth collections are the same. Singh's most characteristic note is a rather heavy-handed satire on several aspects of modern Indian life, including bureaucracy (e.g., 'Man How the Government of India Run'); democratic election procedures (e.g. 'The Voice of God'); anglicized Indians (e.g. 'A Bride For the Sahib'); and Indians abroad ('Mr. Kanjoos and The Great Miracle'). The uproarious farce in 'Maiden Voyage of the Jal Hindia' and 'Rats and Cats in the House of Culture' is also typical of this author, whose obsession with sex colours stories such as 'The Rape', 'Kusum* and 'Morning of the Night Before'. In 'The Mark of Vishnu', 'The Memsahib of Mandla' and 'Death Comes to Daulat Ram' we find him drawing upon the supernatural and folk-lore—the usual standby of the Indian English short story writer. That Khushwant Singh is not entirely incapable of more delicate effects is proved by stories like 'A Love

Affair in London' and 'The Portrait of a Lady'—a memorable pen-portrait of a grandmother, recalling old Sabrai in / shall Not Hear the Nightingale.

Manohar Malgonkar's stories have been collected in A Toast in Warm Wine (1974), Bombay Beware (1975) andRumbleTumble (1977). They provide diverting glimpses of the world of activism including several areas such as army life, espionage, hunting, mining, smuggling, treasure-seeking and film-making. Most of these activists appear to specialize in one single exercise which marks them as birds of the same feather—viz., one- up-manship. While this certainly makes for amusing anecdotes usually with a snap ending, it naturally constricts the author's view of the possibilities of the short story. For instance, even when he deals with situations of strong social import in stories like 'Bondage' and 'Two Red Roosters', Malgonkar seems to be more interested in the surprise ending than in the social problems involved.'Bondage' brings out the irony of the new Tenancy Laws which, with all their avowed good intentions of reform may, in actual practice, result in harming the cause of the landless. But the author's handling of his material makes it clear that the ironic reversal interests him more than the social implications. In 'Two Red Roosters', an old farmer, whose buffalo is dead, prays to the spirit of the underworld to get his field ploughed. His prayers are answered—though in a totally unexpected way—when an enthusiastic 'Kheti-sahib' makes a Government tractor available for the purpose in order to advertise the advantages of mechanized farming. The situation here is very similar to that in Anand's 'Tractor and the Corn Goddess', but while Anand's story unmistakably touches upon the theme of tradition versus modernity, Malgonkar just manfully works up to his punch-line. Like his novels, Malgon- kar's short stories also prove that an exceptionally varied experience of life does not make for major art, if a writer consistently approaches experience obstinately wearing emotional and intellectual blinkers.

Chaman Nahal and Arun Joshi have so far produced a solitary short story collection each, neither of which is a major work. In Nahal's The Weird Dance and Other Stories (1965) middle-class match-making in North-Indian families and all its ironies is a recurrent theme, and the Partition and its aftermath are a strong presence. The title-story, which presents a woman, who, shattered by the death of her child, suddenly indulges in marital infidelity, is a rather unconvincing attempt at psychological portrayal.

The characters in Arun Joshi's The Survivor (1975) range from young Eve-teasers to a dotard who tries to cling to youth; and from a sex-obsessed rustic

servant to a middle aged travelling salesman attached to his crippled daughter. While some of these stories tend to be merely anecdotal (the besetting sin of the Indian English short story in general), others like ‘The Boy with the Flute’ and ‘The Intruder in the Discotheque handle fantasy rather inexpertly. The title story treats the Billy Biswastheme superficially, but ‘The Home Coming’, a totally unsentimental tale of a young soldier who returns from the War to find himself a changed man in a changed world, is easily the best story in the collection.

Ruskin Bond has published a number of collections of short stories: Neighbour's Wife and other Stories (1966); My First Love and other Stories (1968); The Maneater of Manjari (1972) and The Girl From Copenhagen (1977). His favourite subjects are pets, animals and a variety of have-nots, including waifs, orphans, abnormal children, restless adolescents and frustrated old men, whom he portrays with genuine compassion, His exercises in the supernatural like ‘Never shoot a Monkey’ and ‘Haunted Bungalow’ are adequate, though by no means brilliant. Bond is at his best in evoking a mood of nostalgia for the vanished sights and scenes of boyhood, of the pathos of the inexorable march of Time, as in ‘The Meeting Pool’, I can’t climb Trees Any More’ and ‘My Father’s Trees'. In all the three stories, the middle-aged narrator visits a scene of his boyhood and feels the impact of the change both in the setting and himself. Another special feature of Bond's stories is his acute responsiveness to nature, the ‘great affinity between trees and men’. It is not simply a matter of nature description as a narrative technique, but a genuine feeling for the natural world which has somewhat of a Wordsworthian quality about it.

Unfortunately, Bond has not always written in this vein and has his own share of slick ‘magazine stories’ as well.

Manoj Das, winner of the Sahitya Akademi award for his Oriya writings, has published four cbllections of short stories: Song For Sunday and other Stories (1967), Short Stories (1969), The Crocodile’s Lady (1975) and Fables and Fantasies For Adults(1977). Das tries his hand at several narrative strategies including satirical extravaganza as in ‘The Mystery of the Missing Cap’ (the missing cap is a minister’s and it is stolen by a monkey); humour, as in ‘The Sage of Tarungiri and the Seven Old Seekers’; tabular presentation as in ‘The Panchatantra for Adults’; comic fantasy as in ‘Sharma and the Wonderful Lump’ and psychological delineation as in ‘A Song for Sunday’ (in which a staid clerk, who gives charity to a mad old woman everyday, suddenly joins her on a Sunday and himself becomes mad). Some of his stories are translations from Oriya

Sasthi Brata's A Search For Home (1975) contains stories which are for the most part, obviously thinly disguised autobiographical pieces with the author's reflections on Indian life and culture—more particularly life in Calcutta and the EastWest encounter. They go over much of the same ground as Brata's autobiography, My God Died Young but with expectedly diminished impact. The stories in Encounter (1975) are variations on the mating game mostly against a western setting. If mere frankness were everything in literature, these stories would have deserved a high rating.

The short stories of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala show substantially the same attitude and response that characterize her novels. Her four short story collections are: Like Birds, like Fishes (1963), An Experience of India (1966), A Stronger Climate (1968) andHow I Became A Holy Mother (1976). In the stories dealing with life in Indian joint families, Jhabvala once again shows her understanding of complex personal relationships, in stories like 'The Old Lady' and 'A Loss of Faith'. And when her realism is harnessed to a subtle analysis of mental processes as in 'The Sixth Child', which presents the great expectations of a middle-aged businessman with five daughters on the day of his wife's lying in, she writes one of her finest stories. Her Indian characters include adolescents and young people of both the sexes and a host of middle-aged females ranging from staid housewives to kept women. Jhabvala, however, remains far too often content with surface realism and interesting reportage alone as in 'Lekha' and 'My First Marriage', refusing to accept the challenge of deeper probing of the psyche.

In the Introduction to An Experience of India, Jhabvala recounts her changing response to India and declares, 'I am no longer interested in India. What I am interested in now is myself in India.' In her later volumes, therefore, the experience of Westerners in India becomes a staple theme, though she continues to paint vignettes of Indian life as before. The Europeans in India appearing in A Stronger Climate are divided into two classes: the 'Seekers', who come to India in search of some- thing which Europe cannot offer; and the 'Sufferers'—i.e., those who, in their long sojourn in India have developed a curious love-hate relationship with this country, which at once exasperates and enslaves them. Among the 'Seekers' are young English girls in love with Indians (e.g. Betsy in 'Passion') or drawn to Swamis (e.g. 'A Spiritual Call'); the 'Sufferers' include old men and women like Dr. Ernst, a naturalized alien, who, with all his fanatic love of India, is still regarded as a foreigner; and Miss Tuhy, a spinster, who returns to England after Independence but comes back to India feeling home-

sick, only to discover that things are now far different from what they used to be. Jhabvala's objectivity, which was a definite asset in her comic studies, however, becomes a liability here, because the carefully cultivated clinical detachment prevents her from bringing out the pathos of these annals of alienation. The return to garish irony in later stories like 'How I Became a Holy Mother' definitely indicates that as in her later novels, Jhabvala's perceptions have now become more blunt, and the earlier fineness of touch has gone—one hopes, not for good.

Anita Desai's solitary collection, Games At Twilight and Other Stories (1978) again underscores her fascination for the country of the mind in preference to what happens in the world of men and matters. Her characters are persons with keen sensibility and it is not surprising that many of them are children,

women, artists and introverts. In the title story, a boy hides himself too long in a hide and seek game and feels frustrated to realize, when he comes out, that the game is already over. 'Scholar and Gipsy' presents an American woman who, fed up with the heat, the squalor and the boredom of urban India, finds peace in the quiet of Manali. 'The Accompanist' is a study of an artist who is convinced after some soul-searching that he can never become an 'ustad' in his own right; in 'Studies in the Park' a tense, worried college student's conflicts are resolved when the affection between a beautiful anaemic woman and a very old man brings to him a vision of intense tenderness. Dcsai's presentation of the inner experience is authentic only when she provides adequate motivation for feeling and response. When this is missing the result is sheer mystification as in the story, 'Surface Texture', where the sight of a cut melon suddenly and unaccountably transforms a Government clerk into a sadhu. Again, as in her novels, in these stories also one gets the feeling that the journey through the interior regions is yet to take one both to the dizzy heights and the tenebrous depths.

There are severaL other women writers with a solitary collection each to their credit. Krishna Hutheesing's Shadow on the Wall (1948) is based on the lives of women prisoners encountered during the author's jail term. Attiah Hosain's Phoenix Fled and other Stories (1953) contains evocative sketches of North Indian women; Jai Nimbkar in her The Lotus Leaves and other stories(1971) deals realistically with middle class Maharashtrian life, often with an acute perception of the complexity of human motives as in the story, 'In Memoriam', which shows a family fanatically clinging to the fading memory of a young son

killed in an accident some years ago, until his surviving brother boldly revolts against this futile logic of placing the dead before the living. Sujatha Bala Subramanian's The House in the Hills and Other Stories (1973) reveals a keen understanding of different kinds of people including an old-world zamindar ('The Zamindar of Pallipuram'), a lonely motherless boy lost in his world of dreams ('Ants'), a domineering mother ('Mother') and a poor clerk living in his fool's paradise of fantasy ('The House in the Hills'). In her The Nude(1977), Nergis Dalai mostly offers well-made stories with a surprise ending, or melodrama. It is only when she concerns herself seriously with motivation that she writes her better stories like 'The Exiles'—a study of an old British couple about to go home after having been too long in the East. The stories in A Doll For the Child Prostitute (1977) by Kamala Das generally harp upon the sex-theme. The title story is marred by an overplus of melodrama and most of the other stories are too sketchy to present adequately realized experience.

Some of the other short story collections by women are: Perin C. Mehta's S ort Stories (n.d.); Rajkumari Singh's A Garland of Stories (1960); Usha John's The Unknown Lover and other Stories (1960); Jaya Urs's Song and the Dream and Other Short Stories (1971), Padma Hejmadi's Coigns of Vantage (1972); Margaret Chatterjee's At the Homeopath's(sic) and other Stories(1973); Raji Narasimhan's The Marriage of Bela (1978); Shashi Deshpande's The Legacy (1978) and Juliette Banerjee's The Boyfriend (1978).

Among other short story collections of the period may be mentioned N.R. Deobhankar's Hemkumari and other Stories(1949); A.C. Kazi's Random Short Stories (1951); M.K. Unni Nayar's My Malabar (1952), Sachindra Mazumdar's Creatures of Destiny (1954); N.S. Phadke's Where Angels sell Eggs and other stories (1957) and Sun-beams and Shadows (1962)—both translations by the author himself from his Marathi originals; G.D. Khosla's The Price of a Wife (1958) and The Horoscope cannot lie and other stories (1961); Kewlian Sio's A Small World (1960) and Dragons: Stories and Poems (1978); A.C. Biswas'sStories of Indian Life (1964); Leslie de Noronha's Stories (1966); P. Balakrishnan's The Gold Bangle (1966); Balaraj Manara'sThe Altar and Other Stories (1967); M.D. Melwani's Stories of a Salesman (1967); J.M. Ganguli's Son of Jesus and other stories(1967); Saros Cowasjee's Stories and Sketches (1970) and Nude Therapy (1978), which contains all the stories in the earlier book, with the addition of three new pieces; Bunny Reuben's Monkeys on the Hill of God (1970); Ramkumar's Stories (1970); A.D. Gorwala's The Queen of Beauty and other Tales (1971); Jug Suraiya's The Interview (1971); K.B. Vaid's

Silence and other stories (1972), translated by the author himself from his Hindi original; Nirmal Varma's The Hill Station and Other Stories (1973); Vivek Adarkar's We could be Happy Together (1973); Hamdi Bey's Small Town Stories (1974); Farrukh Dhondy's East End at Your Feet (1976) and Come To Mecca (1978); S.B. Capoor's A Woman's Tears and Other Stories (1977); Jai Ratan's

The Angry Goddess (n.d), K.N. Daruwalla's Sword and Abyss (1979), and Shiv K. Kumar's Beyond Love and Other Stories(1980).

Drama

Unlike poetry and fiction, drama has not registered very notable gains during the post-Independence period. An important reason for this is that drama—essentially a composite art involving the playwright, the actors and the audience in a shared experience on the stage—has its own problems of which the other literary forms are free. It is true that post-Independence drama did benefit by the growing interest abroad in Indian English literature, and a number of plays by dramatists like Asif Currimbhoy, Partap Sharma and Gurcharan Das were successfully staged in Europe and the United States of America. But these stray performances abroad, in spite of all their advantages, did not lead to the establishment of a regular school of Indian English drama at home. This was mainly because the encouragement which drama received from several quarters immediately after Independence was monopolized by the theatre in the Indian regional languages, while Indian English drama continued to feed on crumbs fallen from its rich cousins' tables.

Actually, the first Five Year Plan after Independence encouraged the performing arts as an effective means of public enlightenment and the National School of Drama was established in Delhi. Institutions for training in dramatics were founded in big cities; drama departments were established in some universities and the National Drama Festival was started in Delhi by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1954. But all these developments have led, almost exclusively, to the growth of regional language theatre, while most Indian English plays have had to remain content with a performance or two each even in big cities. This lack of opportunity to subject his plays to the acid test of a living theatre in his own country (an Indian English play staged abroad may succeed simply as an exotic tour de force) has, as in the past, continued to hamstring the dramatist of this period also.

As in the earlier periods, the number of playwrights with sustained dramatic activity remains very small, though stray contributions are quite numerous.

The Tagore-Aurobindo-Kailasam tradition of poetic drama continues, but with a difference, in the hands of Manjeri Isva- ran, G.V. Desani, Lakhan Deb and Pritish Nandy. Isvaran's Yama and Yami (1948) is a dialogue in poetic prose, with a prologue and an epilogue, dealing with the incestuous love of Yami for her brother. Based on the Rig Veda Samhita, Yama and Yami makes no attempt

to look at the ancient legend in a new perspective. Again, restricting itself to a brief dialogue between brother and sister, it does not exploit full drama out of the situation; nor does the style rise above stale romantic diction.

G.V. Desani's solitary experiment with drama, Hali (1950) is a much more complex work. Desani himself explains its genesis thus: 'I had a personal tragedy-a serious love affair. Hali is a monument to this affair and tragedy. It took me a very long time to write Hali. I planned it so carefully as to make people moved to tears and therefore reduced the whole to essentials without any padding whatsoever. l,was then carry* ing a deep hurt in my heart and Hali was to be a gesture of loyalty to the love I bore a friend. After this tragedy I felt so helpless that I would have been killed by the sorrow but for some kind friends.'48

Described as a 'poem play ', Hali was 'originally a work of nearly 300 pages, and written and planned as an epic, and was later abridged into a drama in poetic prose. It was successfully staged at the Watergate Theatre, London in July 1950, 'aided by visual devices only the actors being invisible, and present only as voices.' 'Hali was also produced in India, (in) 1950 and 51.'30An allegorical play, Hali is a presentation of everyman's quest for fulfilment. The protagonist, Hali, stands for humanity in both its male and female aspects. (It is significant that as a child, Hali is named after a Muslim saint, but has long hair like a girl's, wears bangles and anklets and is also given a girl's name, 'Girija'). The boy, losing his doting mother at an early age, makes early acquaintance with death. Maya (Illusion) comforts him for a time. Later, as a young man he

briefly enjoys the felicity of love until Rooh, his beloved dies. Throughout, Rahu, the dread spirit (literally, 'one who abandons') tests him. In dreams and visions, Hali realizes the essential truth of the human condition—that Man, entrapped in 'the snare of dreams', in the sorrows of life, must ultimately accept the fact that beauty and felicity are all too short-lived. Finally, Hali finds peace in the thought that Man must transcend human love; go beyond life and death and even leaving behind his limited idea of godhead, develop in himself a godlike love and detachment. When the play ends, Hali has reached self-knowledge, 'the summit city'.

Hali has received extremely high praise from British critics, both for its thematic richness and its style. It is, however, a moot point whether the hybrid and tenuous mythology employed by Desani is an adequate vehicle for the existential

experience he has tried to express in the play. (Maya, Rahu and Isha are drawn from Hindu mythology, while Hali himself is named after a Muslim saint as noted earlier). The mingling of these disparate motifs has resulted in a physical, not a chemical, mixture. This has inevifably affected the quality of the felt experience which Hali tries to convey. The style undoubtedly has passages of intensity but the ghost of faded romanticism always seems to be round the corner.

Of Lakhan Deb's three blank verse plays, Tiger Claw (1967) is a historical drama dealing with the encounter between Shivaji and the Bijapur general Afzal Khan, while Vivekanand (sic; 1972) and Murder At the Prayer Meeting (1976) are chronicle plays, the latter dealing with the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. Deb's blank verse is competent, but some of the rhymed passages inMurder At the Prayer Meeting employ atrocious rhymes like 'Mahatma/Coma', and 'scruple/People'. Besides, the entire play, right from its title onwards, is a pale imitation of Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral.

Other verse plays of the period include P.A. Krishnaswami's The Flute of Krishna (1950)—a dramatization of the legend of a girl and a youth who, through their devotion to Krishna were transformed into the Lord's flute and cowherd's staff respectively; M. Krishnamurti's The Cloth of Gold (1951), a dancedrama set in feudal times; Sadasbiv D. Rawoot's Ioetic Plays: Immortal Song, Karn[sic] and The Killers (1959); Satya Dev Jaggi's The Point of Light (1967) in verse and prose, which makes fun of both psychiatrists and Sadhus; Pritish Nandy's Rites for a Plebeian Statue (1969) in which the movement of the free verse is more assured than the rather confused symbolism of the plot; Hushmat Sozerokashme's Vikramjeet (1970)— a sermon in verse on national integration; Shree Devi Singh's The Purple-Braided People (1970), a pageant of Indian feudalism in its decay; P.S. Vasudev's The Sunflower (1972) and S. Raman's Kama (1979).

The number of prose plays is naturally much larger. Indisputably the most prolific Indian English playwright of any period is Asif Currimbhoy (1928—), a business executive, who has, within a period of eighteen years beginning with 1959 written and published no less than thirty plays, the earliest of them being The Tourist Mecca. Their range and variety of subject-matter are indeed amazing. History and current politics; social and economic problems; the East-West encounter; psychological conflicts, and religion, philosophy and art—everything is grist to Currimbhoy's dramatic mill.

The single largest group is that of-the plays dealing with recent political events like the Partition and its aftermath (The Restaurant, 1960); the Sino-Indian conflict (The Captives, 1963); the liberation of Portuguese Goa (Goa, 1964); the coming of freedom to a tropical island in the Malaysian archipelago (Monsoon, 1965); the Indian freedom-struggle and the assassination of Gandhiji (An Experiment with Truth, 1969); theNaxalite Movement (Inquilab, 1970); the Bangla Desh War (The Refugee, 1971) and Sonar Bangla (1972); the Chinese invasion of Tibet (Om Mane Padme Hum, 1972); the vicissitudes in the history of Indo-China (Angkor, 1973) and the recent student agitation in Gujarat (The Dissident M.L.A., 1974). Most of these plays have a strong 'documentary' element about them and there is no attempt to understand and project in dramatic terms the ideological implications of the political conflicts dealt with. The dramatist appears to be primarily interested in the thrill of the exciting events rather than in the thought-processes which shaped them. The result is sheer reportage; and when Currim- bhoy gives free rein to his imagination, the upshot is often crude and contrived symbolism as in Goa, where Rose ('Rose is Goa; Goa is Rose', is the slogan) is fourteen years old simply because Goa continues to languish in slavery even after fourteen years of Indian Independence. The characters are often unapologetic- ally one-dimensional—e.g. 'Goan Nationalist', 'Smuggler' etc. and when they have names, they remain little more than names.

The plays dealing with social problems betray the same inability to bring to bear a strong creative imagination on issues, which are, on the other hand, treated in a hopelessly superficial manner. The Doldrummers (1960), which won some notoriety as it was banned for a time for alleged obscenity, is a study of young Christian drop-outs living in a shack on a Bombay beach. Here again, the emphasis appears to be more on the melodrama in the lives of the characters than on any attempt to understand the nature of the forces which have made them what they are. The Miracle Seed (1973), an extremely naive presentation of the famine situation in Maharashtra, makes it abundantly clear that the dramatist does not know his village at all.

The East-West encounter is the chief theme in The Tourist Mecca (1959), The Hungry Ones (1965, 77) and Darjeeling Tea?(1971). Here also, what is offered is a series of stereotypes (the Americans in The Tourist Mecca are too 'American' and the Russians too 'Soviet' to be authentic). The attempt to show the 'strange correlation between the yogic-beatnik of America and the meditative-yogi in .India, between the Black Muslim of America and the Islamic

Muslim of Bengal' in The Hungry Ones does not rise above the conventional, which is also the case with the picture of the lives of British tea-planters in Darjeeling Tea? The rich seasoning of melodrama is an additional irritant.

Among plays in which the emphasis is on psychological portrayal, The Clock (1959) is an attempt to project the frustrations of a failed, middle-aged salesman. In The Dumb Dancer (1961), a Kathakali dancer identifies himself so thoroughly with his role of Bhima, the slayer of Dusshasana that he becomes mentally deranged at the thought of his having become a murderer. Ironically enough, the woman psychiatrist who treats him, becomes so strongly involved emotionally with his problem that in the end, instead of curing him, she herself becomes insane. This Alien .. . Native Land (1975) presents an Indian Jewish family caught in the conflict between its historic connections with India and the call of the newiy instituted Jewish State of Israel. Promising as these themes are, Currimboy's characters are too shadowy to sustain intensive probing, while his penchant for melodrama dispels all hopes of subtlety of presentation.

The evolution of Hindu religion is the theme of OM (1961), described as a trilogy, which actually contains only three acts. The subject does not lend itself easily to dramatic treatment and the episodic structure only makes for expository effect. Nor is the attempt to deal with the problem of the freedom of art in Thorns on a Canvas (1962) more successful, owing to much confused symbolism.

Ourrimbhoy's fecundity is not thus attended by actual achievement commensurate with it, though isolated scenes in his plays do give evidence of a genuine dramatic talent. However, a woefully superficial treatment of promising themes and pasteboard characters have given a general air of artificiality to his work. His dialogue betrays extreme poverty of invention, since he appears to forget that dramatic dialogue is not just an exact transcript of everyday speech, but a technique of verbalization, which, while creating an effect of realism, goes beyond mere reproduction of spoken language. His symbols are often crude, conventional and machine-made but the greatest limitation of his technique is revealed especially in his later plays, in which Currimbhoy appears to confuse dramatic technique with theatrical trickery, and stage gimmicks with dramatic experience. Plays like An Experiment with Truth, Darjeeling Tea? and Om Mane Padme Hum require numerous shifts in time and place, flashbacks and black-outs, dream-sequences and screen-shots and many other stage tricks. The last mentioned play has a scene actually exhibiting the copulation between a

'beautiful aristocratic lady* and a ‘huge hairy monkey’, and another showing the dismembering of a dead body ‘completely, limb by limb, into small pieces’. Stage directions like ‘There is an indescribable expression on his face as he enters the room’ (Goa, II ii), are hardly an aid to genuine drama. Unless Currimbhoy realizes that drama is something more than simply play of lights, plethora of sounds and parade of violence, all his enviable industry and enthusiasm are unlikely to produce viable and worthwhile plays.

Of the plays of Partap Sharma (1940—), A Touch of Brightness (1968) was performed on two continents abroad, but banned in Bombay for some time. A picture of the Redlight district in Bombay, the play is to be commended for its thematic boldness, which however, is marred by an obvious attempt to dish out sensational superficialities to titillate a foreign taste. Slum, brothel and official corruption; a temple dancer gone astray and a fake sadhu who at once quotes (or to be exact, misquotes) the Gayatri mantra, and concocts spurious drugs for venereal diseases—here is a typical mixture of garish colours for western audiences fed on shows like Oh, Calcutta.

Sex is again the main theme in Shartna’s The Professor Has a Watery (1970), in which young Virendra comes to know that he is an illegitimate child of a mother raped successively by a Muslim and an Englishman, after having been dese/ted by her lover, a Hindu professor. The symbolic use of the demon from the Kathakoli dance to project Virendra’s mental conflict appears to be far-fetched, in view of the context of the action, and finally, when Virendra and the Professor kill each other little. more than melodrama s:ems to have been achieved. However, Sharma shows a keen sense of situation and his dialogue is often effective.

Nissim Ezekiel’s Three Plays(1969) includes Nalinl: A Comedy, Marriage Poem: A Tragl-Comedyand The

Sleepwalkers: An Indo-American Farce.There is a skilful use of ironical fantasy in these plays. In Nal.nl,the contrast between the real Nalini and the phantom Nalini of a dream serves to expose the philistinism of the two young and successful business executives, Raj and Bharat. Marriage Poempresents a middle class bus

band caught in the cross-fire of marital duty and love; and The Sleepwalkers is a diverting take-off on national preconceptions and prejudices. Ezekiel’s Song of

Deprivation (1969), a short play, has appeared separately. The plays are in a minor vein, and it is to be regretted that Ezekiel has not followed them up so far with any attempt at writing major drama, particularly because there is a keen sense of the dramatic in some of his later poems.

Gurcharan Das's Larins Sahib (1970) is a historical play, dealing with Henry Lawrence of the Punjab. Das succeeds admirably in evoking the nineteenth century colonial Indian background but his treatment of the protagonist's character has resulted in a blurring of focus, because the three separate avatars of Henry Lawrence—viz., the enlightened empire-builder, the latter-day 'Lion of the Punjab', and the little cog in the wheels of the East India Company machine —are not properly integrated.

Das's Mira (1969) has not yet appeared in print, while only Act I of his Kama was published in 1974.31

Girish Karnad (19?8—), Kannada actor, director and playwright has translated two of his plays into English: Tughlaq (1972) andHayavadana (1975). Tughlaq is a historical play on the life of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq of the fourteenth century India. Karnad projects the curious contradictions in the complex personality of the Sultan, who was at once a dreamer and a man of action, benevolent and cruel, devout and godless. His two close associates—Barani, the scholarly historian and Najib, the politician seem to represent the two opposite selves of Tughlaq, while Aziz, the wily time-server, Appears to represent all those who took advantage of the Sultan's visionary schemes and fooled him. Karnad himself has suggested that he found 'Tughlaq's history contemporary'31in that the souring of his idealism had a close parallel in the mood of disenchantment of the sixties after the passing away of Nehru; and this is another reason why the play was a success on the Kannada

stage. However, Tughlaq fails to emerge as a tragedy, chiefly because the dramatist seems to deny himself the artist's privilege to present an integrated vision of a character full of conflicting tendencies.

Hayavadana is a bold experiment in the use of folk motifs, like the 'Bhagavata' narrator, masks, miming, the chorus etc. The story is taken from the ancient Kathasaritsagara, though the immediate source is Thomas Mann's version of it in The Transposed Heads. The irony of the transposed heads on the bodies of two friends, who stand at opposite poles of personality viz., the intellectual

versus the activist is employed here to raise the problem of identity. The sub-plot of the man with a horse's head, who achieves integration when he finally becomes fully equine, brings out the contrast between the fundamental simplicity and the essential complexity of animal and human life respectively. Karnad does not succeed fully in investing the basic conflict in the play with the required intensity, but his technical experiment with an indigenous dramatic form here is a truimph which has opened up fresh lines of fruitful exploration for the Indian English playwright.

Among other plays of interest may be mentioned V.K. Gokak's The Goddess Speaks (1948); B.S. Mardhekar's Prometheus Rebound (translated by the author from Marathi, 1950); K. Nagarajan's Chidambaram: A Chronicle Play (1955); M. Majeeb'sOrdeal 1857, (translated by the author from his Urdu original, 1958); V.D. Trivadi's My Forest (1963); Santha Rama Rau's A Passage to India (1968), a dramatization of Forster's novel; M.V. Rama Sarma's Towards Marriage (1954), The Carnival (1960),Sakuntala (1975) and The Mahatma (1977); Husenali Chagla's The Mussulman (1966) and The Director General (1968); K.S. Rangappa's Gandhiji's Sadhana (1969); M.D. Melwani's Deep Roots (1970); Dilip Hiro's To Anchor a Cloud (1972) and two oneact plays: Apply, Apply, No Reply (1977) and A Clean Break (1978); P.S. Vasudev's Lord Ravan of Lanka (1974); Shiv K. Kumar's The Last Wedding Anniversary (1975); K.A. Abbas and Pragji Dossa's Barrister-At-Law: A Play about the Early Life of Mahatma Gandhi (1977); Manohar Malgonkar's historical play, Line of- Mars (1978), and Syed Amanuddin's The King who sold his Wife (1978), which deals with the ancient legend of King Harischandra.

There are several other plays which have appeared in periodicals like Enact and others. The Enact plays include Anil Saari'sIrefaces (1969); K.S. Rangappa's T ey Live Again (1969); Dina Mehta's The Myth-Makers (1969); Mrinalini Sarabbai's Vichaar(1970); Kamala Das's A Mini-Trilogy (1971); Madhu Rye's I Am a Butterfly (1974); Snehalata Reddy's Sita (1974) and B. Narayan's The Onlookers (1975).

There are also a few plays which have been successfully produced but not yet published, like Gieve Patel's study of the small Parsi community, Princes (1970). On the other hand, the number of minor plays (mostly first attempts) by stray authors continues to be as large as in the previous period.

Prose

A large part of Indian English prose of the pre-Independence period was inevitably political in character. With the attainment of Independence, the ‘overwhelming’ political question had finally been answered but fresh political thinking continued to be provided by men like M.N. Roy, Jayaprakash Narayan and R.M. Lohia. Their work has already been mentioned. Other types of prose most of which had also flourished earlier continued to do so equally vigorously. These .include autobiography and biography, historical and religious writing, travelogue and prose of social criticism.

It is an interesting fact that all these different types of non- fictional prose have been ably handled by Nirad C. Chaudhuri (1897-), the most outstanding writer of prose during the postIndependence period. His first literary effort, Defence of India or Nationalization of Indian Army (19)5) is a noted study of military organization in British India. This brief monograph for 73 pages is closely argued and deals with questions such as the character, spirit and quality of the colonial Indian army, the unjust recruitment policy and its harmful effects, the need of Indianization and the mode of achieving it. It is, however, Chaudhuri’s The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1951) which is not only his most characteristic and best work: it also contains all the basic ideas that have shaped his highly individualistic world-view. The story of his development, as told here, is that of a middle-class Bengali boy endowed with an acutely sensitive mind, a restless spirit of enquiry, a strongly iconoclastic outlook, and encyclopaedic interests—a boy who fell in love with England and Western civilization at a very early age (The Autobiography is dedicated to ‘The Memory of the British Empire in India.... All that was good and living within us was made, shaped and quickened by the.. .British rule’). In spite of his great innate gifts, however, Chaudhuri's life was one of failure until he won recognition as a writer quite late in life. He himself confesses to a ‘malaise that has haunted me throughout my life. During the years of my education I was becoming a stranger to my environment and organizing my intellectual and moral life along an independent nexus; in the next ten years I was oppressed by a feeling of antagonism to the environment; and in the last phase I became hostile to it.’ It is possible to see in this alienation the chief source of Chaudhuri’s highly unorthodox view of Indian history and civilization. In the ‘Essay on the Course of Indian History’ at the end of the Autobiography, Chaudhuri claims that ‘from the personal standpoint, this historical thesis has emancipated’ him from his ‘malaise’; but the impartial

observer is likely to feel that it is the other way round, and that it is the ‘malaise’ that explains the historical thesis..

Chaudhuri’s thesis briefly is that Indian history comprises three cycles during each of which a strong and creative foreign influence provided the primary moiive force viz., the mid-European Aryan, the Muslim and the British, respectively. But the Indo-Gangetic plain—‘the vampire of Geography*—with its enervating extremes of climate and dulling flatness of topography every time led to the degeneration of the invader. Writing in 1951, Chaudhuri prophesied that T expect either the United States singly or a combination of the United States and the British Commonwealth to re-establish and rejuvenate the foreign domination of India.’

This extremist thesis appears very much like an intellectual extention of the wish-fulfilment of a self-confessed Anglophile, alienated from his own culture and at the same time all too conscious of the fact that the British empire had conferred ‘subjecthood’ on him but had withheld ‘citizenship’. Chaudhuri claims that the Autobiography is ‘more of a national than personal history’, but this ‘historical’ aspect is the least significant— though the most spectacular— element in the book, which is at its best at the personal and social levels. Chaudhuri’s self-portrait is all the more fascinating because the ‘unknown Indian’ is so much of an ‘unusual’ Indian; and the picture of life in a small East Bengal town in the early years of the twentieth century is drawn with many evocative details. The historical thesis in the Autobiography has merely raised the dust of controversy; it is the depiction of the man and his mise-en-scbne in it that makes it one of the most remarkable examples of its genre in Indian English literature.

A Passage to England (1959) was the product of a short visit to England in 1955. This account of the ‘Adventures of a Brown Man in Search of Civilization’ constitutes a very unusual travel book. Chaudhuri’s self-stated aim here is ‘to grasp... the reality I would call Timeless England, which I was seeing for the first time, and which I was inevitably led to set against the Timeless India in which I had been steeped all my life.’ However, the England Chaudhuri sees and loves is not so much modern England, but anante-bellum, nineteenth century England, of which he has been a devoted admirer all his life. This is clear from the fact that his chapter on the Welfare State is the sketchiest; and when he contrasts England with India (not exactly ‘Timeless India’, but the India of his highly personal vision) all his pet prejudices have a field day. Chaudhuri’s best

insights are revealed when he comments on typical features of British character such as ‘the inward classicism of the English people, who have two souls, one northern and the other southern;’ ‘the eternal silence’ of the British crowds; the Englishman’s ‘commercial honesty’, and his veneration for tradition. It is obvious throughout that Chauduri looks at England with rose-tinted spectacles and one will have to go to writers like George Mikes (whose humour Chaudhuri lacks, though he is capable of irony and satire) for the other side of the shield.

The Continent of Circe: An Essay on The Peoples of India (1966) elaborates the historical thesis already set forth in Chaudhuri’s Autobiography. The ‘vampire of history’ of the earlier book now becomes, with a change of metaphor, the land of the oriental Circe, which emasculates all immigrants. Chaudhuri again states that ‘the Hindu is the European distorted! corrupted and made degenerate by the cruel, torrid environment’ of India. His advice to his countrymen, therefore, is ‘Cease to think of yourselves as orientals. .. Say that we are Europeans in our own right.' As for Chaudhuri himself, he has 'rescued my European soul from Circe. . . I would save the fellow beasts. They do not, however, listen to me. They honk, neigh, bellow, bleat or grunt, and scamper away to their scrub, stable, byre, yen and sty.’ The book bristles with wild generalizations on subjects such as history, politics, religion, culture and literature. For instance, 'life-long observation has convinced me that there is a streak of insanity in the Hindu’ (Chaudhuri, one remembers, claims to be a Hindu, himself); India’s liberation of Goa was ‘like Hitler’s occupation of Austria’; ‘there is no such thing as thinking properly so called among the Hindus’; ‘Hinduism will never be destroyed. , . but. . .what is surviving is only the ugliness of Hinduism’; Lady Chatterley's Lover is an ‘outrageously low’ book, Lawrence being a representative of a class of men, who in their writings, ‘satisfy a double passion: lust and class-hatred.’

The thought in The Intellectual in India (1967) is much more balanced, if a trifle too conventional by Chaudhuri’s standards. In his historical survey of his intellectual traditions in India—viz., the Hindu, the Muslim, and the Indo-European, Chaudhuri emphasizes the reformist zeal of the modern Hindu intellectuals, the traditionalism of their Muslim counterparts and the derivative and imitative element in the thought of the intellectuals of the modern Indian Renaissance. This persistent psittacism is not the only failing of the Indian intellectual today. Another is his alienation from the majority of the people, thus leading to his alienation from his own culture. The temptation to slide into the inviting grooves of careerism has also proved too strong for him. In suggesting

remedies for the situation, however, Chaudhuri rather unjustly equates the intellectual with the writer—

and what is worse—with the Indian English writer alone. His summary dismissal of all literature in the modern Indian regional languages as mere 'entertainmen'is a typically Chaudhurian gesture.

Chaudhuri's examination of Indian society and culture was continued further in To Live or Not to Live (1972) and Culture in the Vanity Bag (1976). The aim of the first book is to consider how we can have a happy social and family life under the conditions to which we are born in this country.' Chaudhuri finds Hindu social life gregarious, noisy, lacking in privacy and leisure and destructive of 'civilized mental communication. The segregation of men and women is a further limitation. Family life—especially in the joint family—is also a bed of thorns and a source of irritation and disappointment. The traditional system of arranged marriages has become debased and hence unsafe. The qualities of a good unitary family—viz., 'energy and animation', 'acquisition of interests' andapositive and dominant tone' -are seldom in evidence now. Curiously

enough, in spite of his westernolatry, Chaudhuri disapproves of working women; but on the whole, his criticism of Hindu society today is not totally unbalanced here.

Indian clothing, through the ages is the theme of Culture in the Vanity Bag. The book, an application of Chaudhuri's favourite thesis on Indian history to sartorial fashions, shows that both his Anglophilia and his Hindu-baiting continue unabated. Obiter dicta like 'India.. .is not a country in which a fusion of cultures resulting in the appearance of a composite culture has ever taken place'; 'the strength of Hinduism lies in its unblastable inertia'; 'the Gandhi Cap' and 'the Jawahar waistcoat' are 'two of the ugliest imaginable adjuncts from non- Hindu families of clothing' are revealing samples.

Scholar Extraordinary: The Life of Friedrich Max Muller (1974, Sahitya Akademi Award 1975), ChS'udhuri's first attempt at biography, is a curious work, because there is obviously a yawning gap between the biographer's and the biographee's attitudes to Hindu culture. It is indeed ironical that Chaudhuri, the inveterate Hindu-baiter should write the life of a European who once Sanskritized his name as 'Moksha-mulara*. The upshot is a strange ambivalence which ultimately makes the biography rather colourless. The book is thoroughly

researched and the characteristic Chaudhuri scholarship is unmistakably there; what is missing, however, is a kind of intimacy and warmth which could only have come if the writer and his sub- ject had not stood at opposite poles in relation to ancient India.

Chaudhuri is naturally on far surer ground in Clive of India (l975)—a ‘re-interpretation of the personality and achievements of Clive', which is perhaps the most objective of this author’s works, though Chaudhuri’s admiration for Clive’s spectacular rise and his commiseration for the sad last days and sudden death of his hero are evident enough.

In contrast to this, Hinduism (l 979) is a sketchy and onesided presentation of a subject to which Chaudhuri returns again and again. The historical account is scrappy and the descriptive part makes too much of several taboos which are only of peripheral significance; while the analytical part makes no attempt to probe into the basic tenets of Hinduism and merely describes several cults. There is also the usual quota of sweeping generalizations like ‘Hindu spirituality is a pursuit, not of beatitude, but of power’ etc. The best part of the book is Chaudhuri’s observations on Hinduism in Bengal.

Nirad Chaudhuri’s prose is a copy-book example of that overworked dictum, ‘style is the man.’ His learning, a mark of his insatiable intellectual curiosity, is almost encyclopaedic. He seems to take ‘all knowledge’ for his province, and the breadth of his interests, reminiscent of Renaissance Humanists, has few parallels in an age of specialization, where a scholar appears to try to know more and more about less and less. But a born rebel, he carries no learned lumber on his back, for his ‘spirit of fierce intellectual defiance’ compels him to challenge all accepted opinion. The largeness of his interests naturally makes for a largeness of utterance and his periodic style is punctuated with quotations from several languages and has an amazingly wide range of reference. His intrepid unorthodoxy, however, ensures that there is no ponderousness, but an athletic vigour instead. His eye for lively anecdote and homely parallel and his use of irony and satire also lend trenchancy to his style. At the same time, the reader is often irritated- by his intolerance, obstinacy and opinionatedness. In his weaker' moments, he merely 270

offers conjecture, not theory, and elevates personal pique to the level of primary principle. His thinking is time and again vitiated by extreme positions, blind prejudices, half-truths and sheer sophistry. At his worst, he appears to have an

axe to grind, not an implement to open up new paths of thought; at his best even when he may not enlighten the reader, Chaudhuri can certainly provoke, tease and dazzle him.

Autobiography

Apart from The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, a number of autobiographies by persons from different fields of activity were published during this period. Among them are authors, journalists, artists, academicians, politicians, men in public life, and civil servants, while there are not a few women autobiographers also. Notable life-stories by authors are Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's Life and Myself, Vol. I: Dawn Approaching Noon (1948); K..A. Abbas's I write as I feel (1948) and I Am Not an Island (1976); Dom Moraes's My Son's Father (1968); Ved Mehta's Face To Face (1963); Sasthi Brata's My God Died Young(1967) and Confessions of an Indian Lover, first published under the title, Confessions of an Indian Woman Eater (1973); Aubrey Menen's The Space within the Heart (1970) and R.K. Narayan's My Days (1975). Prabhakar Machwe's From Self to Self(1977) comprises the reminiscences of a writer who wrote in three languages—Hindi, Marathi and English.

Autobiographies by well-known journalists include Sachchi- danand Sinha's Recollections and Reminiscences of a Long Life(1950); A.S. Iyengar's All Through the Gandhian Era (1950); K. Rama Rao's The Pen as My Sword (1960); Prem Bhatia's All My Yesterdays (1972); Frank Moraes's Witness to an Era (1973) and K.L. Gauba's Friends and Foes (1974). Two noted artists talk about their art in Ram Gopal's Rhythm in Heaven (1957) and Ravi Shankar's My Music, My Life (1968) respectively. Academicians gone far afield are ably represented in D.S. Sharma's From Literature to Religion (1963) and D.C. Pavate'sMemoirs of an Educational Administrator (1964) and My Days As Governor (1974).

The number of autobiographies by men in politics and public life is very large. These include Mirra Ismail's My Public Life(1954); M.R. Jayakar's The Story of My Life (1958); N.G. Ranga's Fight For Freedom (1968); A.K. Gopalan's In the Cause of the People (1973); Morarji Desai's The Story of My Life (Vols. I-III, 1974, 1979); A.S.R. Chari's Memoirs of an Unrepentent Communist (1975); C.D. Deshmukh's The Course of My Life (1975); V.V. Giri's My Life and Times (1976); Goan freedom-fighter Telo dc Mascarenhas's When the Mango-

Trees Blossomed (1976); M.R. Masani's Bliss Was in That Dawn (1977), K.M. Panikkar's Autobiography (1978) and M. Hid- ayatullah's My Own Boswell (1980). Hiren Mukerji's Portrait of Parliament: Reflections and Recollections 1956-77 (1977) is interestingly reminiscential. Notable among memoirs by diplomats are Sadath Ali Khan's Brief Thanksgiving (1959); K.P.S. Menon's The Flying Troika: A Political Diary (1963); Many Worlds (1965); andMemories and Musings (1979); M.R.A. Baig's In Different Saddles (1967) and Apa B. Pant's A Moment in Time (1974). Those by eminent jurists include M.C. Mahajan's Looking Back (1963); M.C. Setalwad's My Life: Law and Other Things (1971); and M.C. Chagla's elegantly written Roses in December (1973). R.V.M.G. Ramarau, Prince of Pithapuram's Of Men, Matters and Me(1961) is remarkable for the candour with which the author describes how he 'played with women as if they were toys.' The exercise in dropping (many) a brick is also at the heart of M.O. Mathai's more recent Reminiscences of the Nehru Age (1978) andMy Days with Nehru (1979). Indian civil servants and other officials appear to have established a tradition of reminisoing after reaching the haven of retirement. Prominent examples are M. Viswesvaraya's Memoirs of My Working Life (1951); Prakash Tandon's vivid Punjabi Century (1961) and Beyond Punjab (1971); Short Story writer S.K. Chettur's Malayan Adventure (1948),The Steel Frame and /: Life in the I.C.S. (1962) and The Crystal Years (1964); E.N. Mangat Rai's Commitment My Style (1973); R.P. Noronha's A Tale Told by an Idiot (1977); O. Pulla Reddi's Autumn Leaves (1979) and Mohan Mukerji's Ham in the Sandwich: Lighter Side of Life in the I.A.S. (1979). Krishna Sondhi's Uprooted: An Inner Voyage to India's Past (1977) is a sensitive document

Women autobiographers include Savitri Devi Nanda [A City of Two Gateways (1950)—a picture of childhood in a Punjabi aristocratic family]; Brinda. Mabarani of Kapurthala [The Story of An Indian Princess (1953)—a saga of high life and not so high a sexual code]; Nayantara Sahgal, whose Prison and Chocolate Cake (1954) and From Fear Set Free (1961) are warm studies of the Nehru family; Sita Rathnamal, a tribal girl from the.Nilgiri hills, who wrote Beyond the Jungle (1968)— a fascinating account of tribal life seen through the eyes of an insider turned outsider; Kamala Dongerkery [On the Wings of Time, (1968)]; Kamala Das, the poet, whose MyStory (1976) is in the same vein as her confessional poetry; Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur (A Princess Remembers, 1976), and Lady Dhanvanthi Rama Rau (mother of the novelist Santha Rama Rau), whose An Inheritance (1978) reveals how a modern Indian woman can imbibe the best in the West without sacrificing her oriental inheritance; and

Durgabai Deshmukh, whose Chintamani and I(1980) is a fascinating account of the career of one of the most distinguished couples in modern Indian life.

A special mention must be made of Hazari's An Indian Outcaste (London, 1951; published in India under the title, / was an Outcaste, 1957). Hazari is the pseudonym of Marcus Abraham Malik, the first man from the depressed classes to write an autobiography.

Biography

The post-Independence Indian biographer naturally found a wealth of subject, since finis had now been or was soon going to be written to the career of many a stalwart of the freedom struggle. D.K. Roy's Among the Great (1947) includes assessments of Gandhi, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Iqbal Singh's Rammohun Roy appeared in 1958. Notable biographies of Lokmanya Tilak are those by Ram Gopal (1956), D.V. Tam- hankar (1956), S.L. Karandikar(l957), Dhananjay Keer (1959), G.P. Pradhan and A.K. Bhagwat (1959) and N.G. Jog (1963). The most massive study of Mahatma Gandhi's life is by D.G. Tendulkar—Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi,

8 Vols., (1951-54). The numerous other biographical studies of Gandhi include N.K. Basu's My Days with Gandhi (1953), the lives by B.R. Nanda (1958) and Hiren Mukherji (1960) and J.B. Kripalani's Gandhi: His Life and Thought (1970). Ved Mehta'sMahatma Gandhi and His Apostles (1978) and Manohar Malgonkar's The Men Who killed Gandhi (1978) are evidently journalistic in spirit. The number of studies of Nehru is equally large and includes books by D.F. Karaka (1953), Frank Moraes (1954), B.R. Nanda (1962) and M. Chalapathi Rau (1973). The first volume of Sarvepalli Gopal's comprehensive Jawaharlal Nehru (Sahitya Akademi Award, 1976) came out in 1975 and the second in 1979. Studies of other prominent political figures include Dhananjay Keer's Savarkar and His Times (1950) and Dr. Ambedkar: Life and Mission (1954); S.A. Ayer's Unto Him A Witness: The Story of Netaji Sublias Chandra Bose In East Asia (1951), and N.G. Jog's In Freedom's Quest: A Biography of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1969); V.J. Patel's Life and Work of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1958); Kodanda Rao's The Right Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Sastri (1963) and Feroz Chand's Lajpat Rai (1978). Among other biographies may be mentioned R.R. Diwakar's Mahayogi: Life, Sadhana and Teachings of Sri Aurobindo (1954); A.B. Purani's Life of Sri Aurobindo (1960); K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Sri Aurobindo: A Biography and a History (2 vols., 1972) and On the

Mother (1952; revised and enlarged ed. 1978, Sahitya Akademi Award 1980); Krishna Kripalani's Rabindranath Tagore (1962), Gandhi: A Life (1968) and Dwarkanath Tagore: A Forgotten Pioneer (1981); and Padmini Sen-Gupta's Sarojini Naidu (1965). The Builders of Modern India Serieslaunched by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting aims at covering 'all eminent national personalities.' More than thirty volumes of varying quality have come out so far in the series.

Politics and History

In contrast with the politics of the freedom struggle which produced an impressive corpus of political writing, the politics of the Indian Sovereign Democratic Republic has not produced many new political thinkers of note, the most significant contribution still being by stalwarts of the previous age like M.N. Roy, Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia, whose work has already been noted. The Emergency of 1975-77 produced a spate of books, many of them based on personal experience. Even the best of these like Ved Mehta's The New India (1978) are little better than 'books of the hour'. Of the historians whose first important studies appeared after Independence, D.D. Kosambi is easily the most outstanding. A brilliant thinker interested in several disciplines such as mathematics, genetics, archaeology, numismatics, Sanskrit textual criticism and history, he adopts a modified Marxist point of view in his Introduction to the Study of Indian History (1956) and Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline (1965). Dismissing 'personal', 'episodic, drum and trumpet' history as 'romantic fiction', he views history as 'the presentation in chronological order of successive changes in the means and relations of production.'

Among other historical works may be mentioned Romila Thapar's Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas (1961) and A History of India Vol. I (1966). Historical studies by creative writers include Manohar Malgonkar's Kanhoji Angrey: Maratha Admiral(1959) (reissued as The Sea Hawk: Life and Battles of Kanhoji Angrey, 1980); Puars of Dewas Senior (1963) and Chattrapatis of Kolhapur (1971)—books which again reveal bis gift as a narrator, and Khushwant Singh's eminently readable Ranjit Singh (1962) and A History of the Sikhs, 2 Vols., 1963 and 1966.

Religion and Philosophy

As in politics, in this field too, there are few new writers whose work can rival that of Radhakrishnan and others of the earlier period. Perhaps the most remarkable contribution is by a savant whose poetry had already appeared during the Gandhian age. J. Krishnamurti's The First and the Last Freedom (1954), Life Ahead (1963), This Matter of Culture (1964) and The Awakening of Intelligence (1973) represent the cream of his thought. The Penguin Krishnamurti Reader (1970) and The Second Penguin Krishnamurti Reader (1970) are handy selections. There are several collections of the discourses of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh including From Sex to Super-consciousness(1977) and The New Evolution of Man (1978). R.N. Dandekar's Insights into Hinduism(1979) is an important contribution to its subject. Notable among writers on philosophy are T.M.P. Mahadevan (Gaudapada, 1954), T.R.V. Murti (Central Philosophy of Buddhism, 1955), N.V. Banerjee (The Concept of Philosophy, 1968) and Daya Krishna (Social Philosophy: Past and Future, 1969).

Literature of Travel, Essays and Belles-Lettres

Among the travel books of the period may be mentioned K.P.S. Menon's Delhi-Chunking: A Travel Diary(1947), Russian Panorama (1962) and China Past and Present (1966); Santha Rama Rau's East of Home (1950), This is India (1954), View to the Southeast (1957) and My Russian Journey (1959); R.K. Narayan's My Dateless Diary (1960), an account of his visit to the United States of America and The Emerald Route (1977), a description of the Karnataka land; Sadhan Kumar Ghosh's My English Journey 0961); Ved Mehta's Walking the Indian Streets (1963, rev. ed. 1975), and the more ambitious Portrait of India(1970)—both well-written books, which, however, unmistakably betray the alienation of the expatriate author; Dom Moraes's Gone Away: An Indian Journal (1960), The Tempest Within (1970), an account of East Pakistan in 1970, and A

Matter of People (1974), which describes a visit to twelve mostly undeveloped countries to study 'the population explosion'; John B. Alphonso Karkala's Passions of the Nightless Night (1974), which, in spite of its lurid title, is a sober fictionalized account of a trip to Finland; K. Nagarajan's Cauveri: From Source to Sea (1975), a delightful medley of lyrical description, history, legend and reflection; Khushwant Singh's Around the World with Khushwant Singh edited by Rahul Singh (1978); and F.D. Colaabavala'sAdventures of an Indian Tramp (n.d.).

Some notable collections of essays are R.K. Narayan's Next Sunday (1956), and Reluctant Guru (1974), both illustrative of this author's keen observation of men and manners and his gentle irony. His Gods, Demons and Others (1965) is a

retelling of stories from Hindu mythology. The essays in N. Raghunathan's Sotto Voce: The Coming of Freedom (1959) and other collections first appeared in journals. Ved Mehta's Fly and the Fly-bottle: Encounters with British Intellectuals (1963), The New Theologians (1966) and John is Easy to Please: Encounters with the Written and the Spoken Word (1971) represent contributions which appeared originally in The New Yorker. Armando Menezes's Lighter Than Air (1959) and Airy Nothings(1977) are collections of gracefully written radio broadcasts. In his Mine Oyster (1968), Crisis of Crisis (1972), Modern and Otherwise (1974) and Man and Society. As on a Darkling Plain (1979) Sisir Kumar Ghose offers lively discussions of numerous subjects ranging from American culture to spiritual life. V.V. John's Light Luggage (1969), The Orbiting Professor (1969) and The Great Class-room Hoax (1978) offer witty fusi- lades on the Indian educational scene; and the breezy laughter of Khushwant Singh's India : A Mirror for its Monsters and Monstrosities (ed. Rahul Singh, 1969), is typical of its author. Without Fear or Favour (1974) is a selection from Frank Moraes's articles. M.C.: Selected Editorials and Other Writings of M. Chalapathi Rau (Compiled by Jag Mohan) and Magnus and Musings: 'Off the Record" Musings of M.C. (ed. Harindra Srivastava) appeared in 1976 and 1980, respectively. Idylls Past and Present: An Editor's Wet Copy (1979) is a collection of essays by and on another noted journalist—Pothan Joseph, edited by Jaiboy Joseph.

Criticism

Several factors made for the growth of literary criticism after Independence. The inception of a large number of new universities with departments of post-graduate teaching and research naturally generated increased critical activity (though not to the extent hoped for); and the consciousness of the newly acquired national identity perhaps made for a greater degree of self-assurance without which all attempts at critical evaluation are bound to be reduced to dutiful echoes from foreign masters. Though even the most optimistic observers will not claim that a specifically 'Indian' school of literary criticism has so far emerged, not a little work of note has been done in several fields. The criticism of Indian English literature especially appears to have received a fresh impetus after Independence.

Of critical works on Sanskrit literature, Krishna Chaitanya's A New History of Sanskrit Literature (1970) provides a balanced literary evaluation of the entire field, employing the modern critical idiom. R.N. Dandekar's Vedic Mythological Tracts (1979) is a collection of papers written over forty years. Studies of individual authors and works include V.S. Sukathankar's On the Meaning of the Mahabharata (1957), V. Sitaramiah'S Vahniki Ramayana (1972) and K. Krishnamoorthy's Kalidasa (1972). Among assessments of drama, G.K. Bhat's The Vidusaka (1959) and Tragedy and Sanskrit Drama (1974) are notable Important studies in poetics and aesthetics are P.V. Kane's History of Sanskrit Poetics (1951), S.K. De's Sanskrit Poetics as a study of Aesthetic(1963); Krishna Chaitanya's Sanskrit Poetics (1965) and K. Krishnamoorthy's Studies in Indian Aesthetics and Criticism (1979).

The Sahitya Akademi Series of Histories of Literature in the Indian languages, of which more than ten have already been published ir an extremely useful project. General studies of the literature in the several Indian languages include Literature in Modern Indian Languages edited by V.K. Gokak (1957); Contemporary Indian Literature: A Symposium published by the Sahitya Akademi in 1957; Indian Literature: Short Critical Surveys of Twelve Major Indian Languages and Literatures edited by Nagendra (1959); Sunitikumar Chatterjee's Languages and Literatures of Modern India (1963) and Indian Literature since Independence: A Symposium edited by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1973).

Among evaluations of the Indian theatre are C.B. Gupta's The Indian Theatre (1954); Drama in ModernIndia and The Writer's Responsibility in the Changing World edited by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar (1961); Balwant Gargi's Theatre in India (1962) and Folk Theatre of India (1966) and J.C. Mathur's Drama in Rural India (1964). There are also more specialized studies like R.D. Ranade's Pathway to God in Kannada Literature (1961), and assessments of individual authors like S.C.

Sen-Gupta's The Great Sentinel: A Study of Rabindranath Tagore (1948), Sisir Kumar Ghose's Later Poems of Tagore(1964) and NihaTranjan Ray's Rabindranath Tagore (1968).

In the evaluation of British Literature, Shakespeare criticism is best represented by S.C. Sen Gupta, whose Shakespearean Comedy (1950) and Shakespeare's Historical Plays (1965) are well-known. Sitansu Mitra's Shakespeare's Comic

Idea appeared in 1960. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's Shakespeare: His World and His Art (1964) is a lucid survey. V.Y. Kantak's perceptive critiques of Shakespeare have appeared in Shakespeare Survey and elsewhere but he has not attempted a book-length study. R.C. Sharma's An Approach to King Lear (1975) is a study in the Bradleyan tradition. R.W. Desai's Sir John Falstaff, Knight appeared in 1975. Outstanding examples of Milton scholarship are B. Rajan's Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century Reader (1947) and Lofty Rhyme: A Study of Milton's Major Poetry (1970) ; M.V. Rama Sarma's Paradise Lost: A Study (1951); The Heroic Argument: A Study of Milton's Heroic Poetry (1971); and The Eagle and the Phoenix: A Study of Samson Agonistes (1976) and A.G. George's Milton and the Nature of Man (1974). Neo-classicism has not received much attention except in Sarup Singh's The Theory of Drama in the Restoration Period (1963), R.C. Sharma's Themes and Conventions in the Comedy of Manners (1965) and Tulsi Ram's The Neo-Classical Epic (1971) . The Romantics and the Victorians appear to be comparatively neglected, though Amalendu Bose's Chroniclers of Life: Studies in Early Victorian Poetry (1962), A. A. Ansari's study of Blake—Arrows of Intellect (1965) and O.P. Mathur's The Closet Drama of the Romantic Revival (1978) are notable studies.

In contrast, the twentieth century has received the most attention. T.S. Eliot has invited the largest number of assessments—those by S.S. Hoskot (1961), A.G. George (1962), C.T. Thomas (Poetic Tradition and Eliot's Talent, 1975), J. BirjePatil (Bener.th the Axle-Tree, 1977) and B. Rajan (The Overwhelming Question, 1977) are general studies. On a more specialized nature are K.N. Sinha's On the Four Quartets of T.S. Eliot (1963); Rajendra Varma's Royalist in Politics: T.S. Eliot and Political Philosophy(1966); A.N. Dwivedi's Indian Thought and Tradition in T.S. Eliot (1977); V.K. Roy's T.S. Eliot: Quest for Belief (1979); M.K. Naik'sMighty Voices: Studies in T.S. Eliot (1980); Subhas Sarkar's T.S. Eliot: The Dramatist (1972) and K.S. Misra's Plays of T.S. Eliot(1977). Among evaluations of W B. Yeats are Bhabatosh Chatterjee's The Poetry of W.B. Yeats (1962); H.R. Bachchan's W.B. Yeats and Occultism (1965); B. Rajan's W.B. Yeats (1965); S. Mokashi-Punekar's The Later Phase in the Development of W.B. Yeats (1967) and The Later Poems of W.B. Yeats (1973); Naresh Guha's W.B. Yeats: An Indian Approach (1968); R.W. Desai'sYeats's Shakespeare (1971) and Ashok Bhargava's The Poetry of W.B. Yeats: Myth as Metaphor (1979). K.R. Srinivasa lyenger's G.M. Hopkins: The Man and the Poet appeared in 1948. Critical works on modern fiction include Shiv K. Kumar'sBergson and the Stream of Consiousness Novel (1962), Sisirkumar Ghose's Aldous Huxley: A Cynical Salvationist (1962); V.A.

Shahane's assessments of E.M. Forster (1962, 1975) and Rudyard Kipling (1973); M.K. Naik's W. Somerset Maugham (1966), and Studies ofD.H. Lawrence by Chaman Nahal (D.H. Lawrence: An Eastern View, 1970), Yudhisthir (Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence, 1968), and M.G. Krishnamoorthy (The Tale as Medium—A Study of the Tales of D.H. Lawrence, 1972); K. Viswanatham's India in English Fiction (1971), which covers authors from Scott to Maugham, and G.K, Oas's E M. Forster's India(1977). Drama has received less attention. H.H. Annaiah Gowda's The Revival of English Poetic Drama (1963, 1972), like hisDramatic Poetry from Medieval to Modern Times (1971), is a competent survey. Among studies of individual dramatists may specially be mentioned Saros Cowasjee's Sean O 'Casey: The Man Behind the Plays (1963) and A Study of Sean O'Casey(1966) and K.S. Misra's The Plays of J.M. Synge (1977).

Towards the end of the 'fifties American literature began to be studied more intensively in Indian Universities. The establishment of the American Studies Research Centre of Hyderabad in 1964; the number of scholarships, fellowships and visiting lecturerships offered by the United States Educational Foundation in India and the numerous conferences, senrnars and workshops in American literature and history organised by it during the sixties and seventies gave a fillip to American studies in India, the first fruits of which were collections of research papers like Indian Essays in American Literature-' Papers in Honour of Robert E. Spiller edited by Sujit Mukherjee and D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu (1969); Indian Studies in American Fiction edited by M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai and S. MokashiPunekar (1974) and Studies in American Literature: Essays in Honour of William Mulderedited by Jagdish Chander and Narinder S. Pradhan (1976). Considering the large number of Indian scholars trained in American literature, their contribu- tion to its criticism is not yet as substantial as,could have been expected. A.N. Kaul's The American Vision: Ideal and Actual Society in Nineteenth Century America (1962) is a perceptive general study. Critical woiks on individual poets include V.K. Chari's Whitman in the Light of Vedantic Mysticism (1964); O.K. Nambiar's Walt Whitman and Yoga (1966); Som P. Ranchan's Walt Whitman and the Great Adventure with Self (1967); T.R. Rajasekhariah's The Roots of Whitman's Grass(1970) and V. Sachithanandan's Whitman and Bhdrati: A Comparative Study (1978). Inder Nath Kher's The Landscape of Absence (1974) is a critique of Emily Dickinson. Among studies of novelists are K.B. Vaid's Technique in the Novels of Henry James (1964); D.S. Maini's Henry James: The Indirect Vision (1973); Chaman Nahal's Narrative Pattern in Hemingway's Fiction(1971); K.M. Mutalik's Mark Twain in

India (1977); Chiran- tan Kulshrestha’s Saul Bellow: The Problem of Affirmation (1978) and S.T. Kallapur’s John Steinbeck (1978). D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu’s Eugene O'Neill (1963), and N.S. Pradhan’s Modern American Drama: A Study in Myth and Tradition (1978) are among the few notable assessments of drama.

Growing interest in Indian English literature was another important feature of the critical scene of the sixties and the seventies. Significant landmarks here are the publication of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar's comprehensive Indian Writing in English(1962 and 1973) and two of the earliest collections of critical evaluations —Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English presented to Armando Menezes edited by M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai and G.S. Amur (1968, 72 and 77) and David McCutchion’s Indian Writing in English: Critical Essays (1968). Since then several general collections, surveys and studies of forms—especially fiction—have appeared. The Twayne’s World Authors Series (New York) contains critical assessments of individual authors and of the volumes in the Indian Writers Series (Arnold- Heinemann, New Delhi) fifteen have already appeared. The Bibliography appended to this history gives further details of criticism of Indian English literature.

Theoretical criticism continues to be sparsely cultivated. Important contributions are V.K. Gokak’s The Poetic Approach to Language (1952); An Integral View of Poetry: An Indian Perspective (1975) and Coleridge's Aesthetics (1975); Sadhan Kumar Ghosh’s Tragedy (1961); G.S. Amur’s The Concept of Comedy (1963) and R.B. Patankar’s Aesthetics and Literary Criticism(1969). Prominent examples of art criticism are V.S. Agrawala’s Gupta Art (1948) and Indian Art (1965); Motichandra’s Technique of Mughal Painting (1949) and Studies in Early Indian Painting (1974); M. Hiriyanna’s Art Experience (1954); S.N. Dasgupta’sFundamentals of Indian Art (1954); Nandalal Bose’s On Art (1957); C. Sivaramamurti’s Indian Sculpture (1961); South Indian Bronzes (1963) and Nataraja in Art, Thought and Literature (1974); S.K. Saraswati’s Early Sculpture of Bengal (1962); andComprehensive History of Indian Architecture (1979) and Nihar Ranjan Ray’s Idea and Image in Indian Art (19731 and Maurya and Post-Maurya Art(1975).

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CHAPTER 6

Retrospect and Prospect

As the nineteen seventies recede yielding place to the eighties, there could not be a more suitable point of time for literary stock-taking. At the outset, it is astonishing that doubts concerning the very raison d'etre of Indian English literature are still being raised even after this-body of writing has been more than a century and a half old and more. And a recent historian of Indian English fiction has even prophesied that Indian English literature is dying and has also predicted a possible date for its ensuing lamentable demise, which according to her, will take place in the year 2,000 A.D.1 If Henry James found being an American to be a 'complex fate', being an Indian English, writer would appear to be a far more complex destiny. There are, in fact, even today many, both in India and abroad, who believe that Indian English literature is little more than an exotic Indian dish fried in British butter, which, may serve to titillate a jaded literary palate for a time by its outlandish flavour. According to this school of thought, it is, at best merely a hot-house plant, a contrived thing which may, for some time attract attention by its novelty, illustrating the logic of Dr. Johnson's well-known example of a woman's preaching being 'like a dog's walking on its hinder legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all.' Such misgivings are not entirely a new phenomenon. As early as 1895, we find R.C. Dutt declaring, 'All attempts to court the Muses in a foreign tongue must be fruitless.. . . True genius mistakes its vocation when it struggles in a foreign tongue.'- More recently, we have Buddhadev Bose's outright denunciation of Indian English poetry as 'a blind alley lined with curio shops, leading nowhere.'

In the same year, M. Chalapati Rau improved upon this and dismissed the entire Indian English literature in equally strong terms: 'Indian Writing in English is at its best composition, and the best of it is translation. Nothing more is possible except for some one who can live the language, think the language, and write, not compose in, the language.' It has also been

reported that in the class-room of an American University, R.K. Narayan's fiction is being used to furnish sociological data rather than artistic material for critical assessment.

Critics of Indian English literature have attacked it from different stand-points: The simplest argument is that English is only an acquired language for most Indians. Kailaspathy and Anantha Murthy have argued that 'English with most Indians is still a language of official public affairs, of intellectual and academic debate. They do not use English for their most intimate purposes, "to think and feel, bless and curse, quarrel and kiss." '* It is maintained, English is the living speech of the people in countries like the United States, Australia and New Zealand, in which a new national literature was and is being forged. English is rooted in the soil there, and can therefore blossom forth, reflecting in its growth the very peculiarities of the soil and the climate and the ethos of the people who have sprung up from and returned to that soil. In contrast with this, English is perhaps in the brain of the Indian, but not in his blood and bones.

John Wain even declares that 'Indian English, being a lingua franca, lacks the fineness of the nuance that makes literature possible.... It is not a question of "writing English like a native," because many Indians are native English speakers, or nearly so. If English is not the language in which they lisp their first words, it is still acquired very early. The question is, a native of where?'

An answer to this question will perhaps be found in the distinction made by Professor Paul Christopherssen, between a foreign language and a second language. The former is: 'a language which is not one's own, though one may have a good knowledge of it; a second language is a language which is one's own, though not one's first in order of importance, nor usually, the first to be learnt. A foreign language is used for absorbing the culture of another nation; a second language is used as an alternative way of expressing the culture of one's own.'7

In the case of at least some Indians, English has always been 'a second language' in this sense and they have naturally used it for expressing themselves creatively. In fact, until recently— and this is true of many even today—the educated Indian wrote his letters in English, used English at work and play and acquired it so perfectly that it often became a verbal skin, rather than a coat. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, 'It is not true in all cases that one can't write first class things in a learnt language.'8 The example of Conrad, who learnt English at the

age of twenty-six comes to mind immediately. He wrote, ‘My faculty to write in English is as. natural as any other aptitude with which I might have been born.... Its very idioms, I truly believe, had a direct action on my temperament pnd fashioned my still plastic character.... If I had not written in English, I would not have written at all.’*

Vladimir Nabokov wrote eight novels in Russian, turned to English at the age of forty and wrote eight novels in this language, including Lolita. And in our own generation, the ambidextrous Samuel Beckett has, by this example, again shown that creatiye effort is possible for a writer in more languages than one. But perhaps the best argument in support of Indian English literature is the fact that the best in it has been taken seriously and subjected to minute appraisal by critics in both India and abroad. Surely, the sensibility of men like E.M. Forster and Lawrence Durrell, Graham Greene, William Walsh and Jack Lindsay in the west and Srinivasa Iyengar and V.K. Gokak in the east cannot be said to have suddenly undergone a complete critical paralysis when confronted by Indian English literature, for they have all appreciated the finer things in it. And even the most touchy Indians will have to concede that not all the Western praise is mere patronising, nor all the Indian commendation brazen salesmanship. Again, the proof of the success of Indian English literature is its success. The steady interest it has roused, in recent years, in English-speaking countries shows that it has merits other than those of sheer novelty and exoticism.

Another oft-repeated charge against Indian English literature is that its practitioners wrote with an eye on the foreign reader and hence try to provide stereo-types of both character and situation, which attract this reader. Like Benjamin Franklin's famous recipe for a New England elegy, the recipe for a successful Indian novel in English is, according to these critics, now very well patented. Take an assortment of sadhus, fakirs, maharajas, agitationists, Westernized Indian men and traditional Indian women—either pious paragons or seductive sirens according to your mood and choice—and let them perform against the background of communal riots and nationalistic uprisings; throw in a couple of tiger-hunts, rope-tricks, snakes and elephants; and a pinch of mysticism if you can carry it olf successfully—and there you have your Indian English masterpiece. While it is true that this description does lit at least some Indian fiction in English with more or less aptness, it would be patently unfair to dismiss the best work of novelists like Nara- yan, Anand and Raja Rao in these terms. It would be like condemning all fiction in English as cheap, taking circulating library novels and pulp magazines as the only evidence admissible.

‘Agreed,’ (somewhat grudgingly) says the critic of Indian English literature, ‘but why can’t the Indian writer write in his mother tongue? Why must he choose an alien language, which hardly two per cent of his own countrymen understand, and which is very soon to go the way all Englishmen went thirty years ago?’ Presiding over the fifth All India Writers’ Conference in 1965, Mr. Sacchindananda Vatsyayan, a noted modern Hindi writer, launched a scathing attack (in masterly English) on Indian English literature. He dubbed its practitioner ‘a secondclass brother’ and ‘a poor relation’ and concluded, ‘To be Indian as a writer is first and foremost to write

Indian, to write in an Indian language.... To be Indian

must mean giving expression to what is unique in our experience-. . . India cannot have a literature—I mean a great literature and pne in which her spirit will find expression-r-except in an Indian language.’10

Two answers are possible to the question, ‘Why does the Indian English writer prefer English to his mother tongue?’ In the early phase of this writing, perhaps the motive was predominantly practical. The Indian wanted to be heard by his English masters. Writing at the turn of the century, Babu Sambu- nath Mukherjee said it in so many words: ‘We might have created one of the finest literatures in the world without making any impression in the camp of our British rulers, and, of course, without advancing our political or even social status. Hence we are compelled to journalism and authorship in a foreign tongue, to make English a kind of second vernacular to us. You have no idea of the enormous personal sacrifice involved in this. . . . But we who write in English have to make this sacrifice for the fatherland.’11

Sacrifice always brings its rewards, as Hindu tradition has it. Soon, the Indian came to realize that he could combine business with artistic pleasure by writing in English. The practical motives are still relevant. There is plenty of ivory in India, but the ivory tower is not the home and habitat of the Indian writer. He knows that by choosing to write in English he can reach a far wider audience than he can muster if he expresses himself in his mother tongue. He also knows that the Indian (who, according to Westerners, talks too much, too fast and too loud) has a ‘tongue’ for languages and that a stroke of historical providence has placed into his hands an instrument of expression which is one of the most supple and pliant that civilization has so far produced. Furthermore, modern India represents, to a large extent, a synthesis of East and West, for we have

taken and assimilated much from the West, while retaining, rediscovering and reclaiming much that has always been our own. This synthesis and its experience can be adequately expressed in Indian English literature, which itself represents part of this process. M.E. Derrett convincingly argues: ‘Because of their first-hand experience of the West, they (i.e,.

Indian writers in English) have the power to perceive differences; they have experienced the oriental’s adjustment to a western society and re-adjustment again to the oriental, and from this they have a slightly detached view of their own society—not the detached and slightly repellent view of the deIndianized Indian. They must feel a sense of release in expressing their sensations, which after all demand expression and as one writer expresses it: “Since we cannot expect others to try to understand our achievement in our own terms, we have to present it in a language which they (the West) can understand.”

Champions of the mother tongue are not, however, so easily convinced. Maintaining that ‘some of the works of R.K. Narayan well received in the west... are not too well received when translated by him into Tamil and by others into Kannada,' A.K. Ramanujan asks, ‘Is this to be accounted for by reference to the readership they then obtain, the linguistic style, or is the endproduct the expression of a “sub-culture?”

M.G. Krishnamurthy goes a step further and claims that the Indian writer in English has the dice heavily loaded in his favour, right from the start: ‘Since English has developed in a “non-Hindu” cultural complex, certain details, stereotypes and even words and phrases when skilfully employed can trigger into existence a non-English culture. For instance, Narayan’s bare descriptions of a middle-class south Indian household, Raja Rao’s use of Sanskrit words and phrases and direct translations of Kannada idioms, and Nagarajao’s descriptions of the temple.. .do much more for their novels than they can for the novels of one writing in an Indian language. I don’t think anyone would get excited when he comes across the word “Ganga” or a Sanskrit sloka in a novel in one of our languages. But when we come across these in Raja Rao or when he uses the phrase “Little Mother” something seems to happen to an Indian reader. An uncomfortable question—Do we respond to these words and phrases the way we do because of “the shock of recognition” or because we are, in subtle ways, so alienated from our own culture, that. . .we can recognise the value of a native culture only when it is distanced from us?’14

This is an extremely clever line of argument. Unfortunately, it seems to be vitiated by a totally misleading first premise— that style in Indian English literature is a matter of certain tricks and gimmicks to be used for certain effects in certain ways. If the Indian writer in English gains certain special effects by the very fact that he is expressing an essentially Indian experience in a foreign language, they are inevitable concomitants of his peculiar situation which he has to accept with all its advantages and limitations. On the other hand, the writer in the mother tongue will have his own strong points and their consequent restrictions too.

The Indian writer in English can justify his existence—he must live, though some may not see the necessity, to adapt the words of a character in a French farce in another context—by being wholly and truly himself. He (or she) must not try to be 'Matthew Arnold in a saree' (in Gordon Bottomley's famous phrase), or a Shelley in a salwar, or a Byron in a burkha or a Lawrence in a iungi, or a Joyce in jodhpurs or a Babu Beckett. As this History shows, there was a time when he did try to be these, when he did content himself with shoddy imitation.

But it would be patently unfair to maintain that he never developed any further. In fact, the course of Indian English literature is an absorbing record of the steady march of the Indian writer in English from sheer psittacism to authentic literary expression. Far from remaining merely 'bastard bantlings of the British', Indian English writers, struggling valiantly against prejudice, neglect and ridicule, have, at their best, proved themselves to be proud heirs to the two equally rich worlds of the East and the West. Perhaps the finest answer to those who question the very raison d'etre of Indian English literature has been given by Kamala Das:16

Don't write in English, they said,

English is not your mother-tongue. Why not leave Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins, Every one of you? Why not let me speak in Any language I like? The language I speak Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses, All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,

It is as human as I am human. ..

It voices my joys, my longings, my

Hopes. .. It

Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is

Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and

Is aware.

As for the future, in what direction Indian English literature is going to develop may best be left for time to unfold. With the almost unlimited lease of life given to English in India today and the consequent increase in readership, and with the growing interest in Commonwealth literature in the West recently, reports of the impending demise of Indian English literature would appear to be ‘greatly exaggerated’. Literary forecasts are not less unreliable than weather forecasts and the historian need not rush in to make either Micawberish prophecies or Cassandralike predictions. He may, however, be permitted to hope (being human) with Henry Derozio, the first Indian English poet, who told the youth of the Hindu College in the early years of the Nineteenth century:14

I see

Fame in the mirror of futurity,

Weaving the chaplets you are yet to gain.