

## 5. REINVENTING FREEDOM

All words are pointers, indicators, symbols and there isn't a single word in any lingo, dialect or doggerel, which is absolutely cast true, suggesting in the exact infallible Truth.

*(All about H. Hatterr)*

Such mastery of the multiple gifts of ... language is rare indeed, yet I possess it. You are amazed, but I am not....

*(Midnight's Children)*

In the century and the quarter or so of its existence, the Indian English novel has proved its worth and possibilities. It is able to keep pace with the trends in contemporary social reality. It has also acquired an enviable place in the complex body of Indian literature. Indian English novelists have confidently faced the challenge of writing in the language of their colonial masters with commendable competence and resourcefulness. In the words of Indranath Choudhari:

At present there are no colonial hang-ups, no obsessive clamour for Indianness, no self-justification about why they write in English. They are now a liberated lot who write without any inhibition in a language, which comes to them naturally. They are extremely innovative in their use of narrative strategies; for instance, at the moment they appear to have less concern for realism and more for non-mimetic modes like fantasy and fabulation. They use mythical and other Indian situations in a way, which enables them to give a broader dimension to the presentation of the present-day realities (3).

The point is: The writers should have the freedom to make experiments with language and to take liberties with idiom and usage. In order to create the favourable atmosphere in their novels, writers should exert their freedom and use language in a distinctive Indian way, thereby setting the appropriate tone. Shantinath Desai explains:

When an Indian bilingual writes in English, he is obviously writing with a double vision in which both the native Indian cultural tradition and the non-native western cultural tradition get mixed up. The Indian experience that an Indian expresses in English is bound to have a dimension distinct from the Indian experience expressed in regional languages. Secondly, English itself is bound to be affected by the pressure of the Indian experience (17).

In the present chapter, some of the structural and stylistic devices used by the novelists will be studied with reference to the seven novels, which were taken up in the earlier chapters. The major concern, however, will be to identify the freedom with which writers have exploited the English language and moulded it to suit their purposes until it became their very own language. In this respect, Keshav Mallik's views are worthy of note:

Due to a historical accident some of us are doomed to write in this language; but accidents make history, and realizing which, we must do it as well as one may. The choice lies in this and not in the language (47).

[ 1 ]

When it comes to the question of language, the freedom of using it has always been a debatable point in India. Especially when questions revolve around the English language. The colonial aspect of the English language is that it was once forced upon the people. Although motivated by the political, administrative and economic needs of Britain in India, the English language, no doubt, was secular in character and liberal in essence. But at the height of the freedom struggle, many voices of dissent rose against the English language. The spirit of nationalism seeped into the domains of language and

Hindi was sought to be declared as the national language of India. The character of Sankar in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* truly represents this spirit. As the narrator states: "He spoke nothing but Hindi to his daughter and if by chance he used an English word, as they do in the city, he had a little closed pot, with a slit in the lid, into which he dropped a coin, and every month he opened it and gave it to the Congress fund" (143).

But for a writer like Raja Rao, the English language became a liberating experience. Being a creative writer, he took the utmost freedom to assert his Indianness in an alien medium and that too in a remarkable way. By exploring the fuller, deeper possibilities of the language he was using, Raja Rao introduced a whole new dialect. As he says in the Foreword: "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" (6).

The point is: How far has Raja Rao succeeded in giving us the feel of rural Indian life in an alien medium? Raja Rao's innovations as a novelist are very significant if we consider the problems that Indian writer face. V.Y. Kantak explains:

The difficulty is to find language equivalents to convey those minutiae of gesture and expression which distinguish the life of the home or of the social round, to convey that unique flavour of rural life or life of the small towns where everything seems strangely coloured by superstition and the ritual of tradition. To present it wholly, the truth as well as the superstition is not easy. The language has to be broken into it, as it were, and made new (175).

As a writer, Raja Rao has contributed a lot to the development of the Indian English novel. Raja Rao in fact, frees himself from the western narrative modes of writing by conducting new experiments with respect to the presentation of theme. The Indian form of writing is the puranic form, which is a blend of narration, description, philosophical reflection and religious teaching. The highly acclaimed novel *Kanthapura* is written in the traditional Indian narrative technique of the puranas. The narrator of the novel is an old woman who interprets India's struggle for Independence from the puranic

point of view and thus lends an objectivity and universality to it. As Raja Rao himself says in the Foreword:

The puranas are endless and innumerable. We have neither punctuation nor the treacherous 'ats' and the 'ons' to bother us. .... We tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thought stops our breath stops, and we move on to another thought.

This very attention to technique proves the fact that Indian English fiction has attained maturity. The narrative progresses describing events and weaving the past and present together. The frequent use of 'and' makes the sentences long and one action flows into another. No chronology of events is maintained. The grandmother who narrates the story goes on with her uninterrupted monologue telling about gossips, fights, nuptials, marriages and the talk of village women. By adopting the *sthalapurana*, Raja Rao shows his understanding of the social and cultural background of the narrative as well as the narrator. The narrative seems more possible, perhaps because the tale is told and not written down by the old woman. The people in the village are described evocatively in sobriquets such as Corner-House Moorthy, Fig-tree-House Ramu, waterfall Venkamma, Pock-marked Sidda, Beadle Timmayya, Jack-tree Tippa, front-house Suranna and so on. This labeling of persons is typical of Indian villagers and gives evidence of their community sense of belonging. This feeling of intimacy is further maintained while addressing people. The habit of modes of address confirms their intimacy and gives the rural touch. Indian speech tunes are freely adopted in order to make the language evocative of colloquial Kannada. For instance, reiteration which may be defined as the habit of repeating things is introduced in the novel and lends authenticity as in the following passage:

Oh, he's gone—he's gone, Cart—man Rudrappa, He', said he to his bulls and he', he', said he to his cart, he', he', he', said he to the wicked whip, he's gone — he's gone — he's gone, Rudrappa' and another woman adds, ' He's gone Potter Siddayya' --- (251).

The most distinguishing aspect of *Kanthapura* is its myth making quality. This mythical quality gives full play to fantasy and imagination so that the story is engraved in the human consciousness and has a haunting quality. The use of myth as technique is a distinguishing aspect of Indian English fiction. The central myth of *Kanthapura* is that of Rama and Ravana which has associations with good and evil forces. Gandhi is the incarnation of Rama who will win freedom from Ravana which is the British Government. Gandhi has also been compared with Krishna and Shiva. Like Krishna, Gandhi tried to kill the serpent of British rule. Like Shiva, he also desires to do good to others and to bring prosperity, freedom and equality among the people. Gandhi's idea of Swaraj has been compared with the three eyes of Shiva. "Shiva is the three eyed and Swarajya is also three-eyed: Self purification, Hindu-Muslim unity and Khaddar." Raja Rao also draws a parallel between Harish Chandra and Gandhi:

"Like Harish Chandra before he finished his vow, the Gods will come down and dissolve his vow, and the Britishers will leave India, and we shall be free, and we shall pay less taxes, and there will be no policeman."

The Indian myth of time and chronology has also been employed by Raja Rao. The end of the novel is like the end of Kalyug with Range Gowda finding that "there is neither man nor mosquito in Kanthapura." It is these qualities that lend to *Kanthapura* a haunting artistic quality. In *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao elevates the Gandhian movement by making use of myths and fables drawn from Indian culture. This imbues the novel with a symbolic significance. The traditional belief of the villagers also co-exists with the struggle for freedom. It is the omnipresence of faith in God that lends strength to the simple villagers. When the female freedom fighters are left stranded in the forest, haunted by wild animals, the women gather moral strength from their belief in the goodness of God. Moorthy's spiritual development and his recitation of Shankaracharya's ecstatic chant "Shivoham, Shivoham. I am Shiva. I am Shiva. Shiva am I." suggests Moorthy's experience of blissful union with the supreme God. It is also expressive of Vedantic philosophy. Thus there is all pervading religious ethos in the novel. The novel also suggests Raja Rao's deep attachment to Indian philosophy.

Another liberating feature of the narrative structure is the entirely new dialect used in the novel. Raja Rao deploys Indian English in such an artistic manner that it gets totally absorbed into the larger mythical pattern of the novel. Undoubtedly, when we read Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*, we sense a recognition of sensation and feelings associated with our daily lives. The question that arises is – How does Raja Rao transform a sophisticated language like English into the language of illiterate rural Indians without making it sound artificial? And the intimacy of the adoption is such that the reader is hardly conscious of the fact that he is reading English. The old illiterate narrator of *Kanthapura* seems to speak her own language. Also, the largely illiterate villagers of *Kanthapura* come alive through the pages of the novel and find their own voice in English. By maintaining the musical rhythm of the native habit of articulation, Raja Rao frees Indian English language from all trace of foreign acquisition.

Raja Rao experimented and no doubt, succeeded in evolving a completely new manner of articulation in English. Aphoristic expressions taken out from everyday experiences, which has become a part of the local language is used by Raja Rao with remarkable effect. There is a freshness and purity about such usages, as in the following lines.

“Rangamma, you are a sister to me and I am not a butcher’s son to hurt you.”

“It is good as things are and we haven’t more holes in our mouths for more morsels.”

It is this singularity of usage and tone that establishes the cultural background and rural identity of the characters in the novel.

This uniqueness is also reflected in the imagery used in the novel, the choice of similes and metaphors, which show the simplicity of the rural narrator. The similes are taken from birds and animals, plants and trees and common objects and experiences. Thus, the innocent villagers worship Goddess Kenchamma, asking to be gifted with “rice fine as filigree and the mangoes yellow as gold.” (162). It is a village where Range Gowda becomes “as lean as the areca nut tree” (258), where Moorthy goes through life

“like a noble cow”. (12) and Narsamma becomes “helpless as a calf.” The novel also abounds in sensuous images as in the use of metaphors like “bellowing gorges” , “waving paths” , “ungrudging rain” and so on.

Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* seems to have shed the marks of a laboured acquisition. He has succeeded in domesticating English to articulate the sensations and feelings of our daily lives, the intimacies of family as well as the larger social experience. What is remarkable is that he maintains it consistently through the action filled story. V. Y. Kantak observes:

The dialect meets the demands that the fiction makes upon it with no loss to its distinctive character, adopting itself freely to the lyrical, dramatic and narrative requirements of the moment. The effect is that from the first page to the last, we have an assurance of the language’s uniform competence and a sense of its organic unity. One’s impression is that of a seamless garment, a word – body that is whole, a self contained medium adequate for any mode of articulation (194).

The first person narrator used by Raja Rao is an illiterate grandmother who is also a participant in the action. The narrator lends a touch of realism and speaks in a conversational tone. However, the rendering is such that Rao manages to give a touch of impersonality to the narrator by adopting a plural point of view.

In the beginnings, Indian writing in English had to face serious handicaps. The writers were faced with the dilemma of conveying the sensibility and nuances typical of Indian life and culture through a language that is not of Indian origin. As Qaiser Zoha Alam says:

Generally speaking, it would not be too much to say that Raja Rao has given the English language an Indian domicile. That the English language communicates the peculiar Indian

experience is proof of its plasticity and flexibility. Though *Kanthapura* is an early novel written by an Indian about Indian life, Raja Rao, who was a struggling young writer then, did not find the difficulties inherent in such a venture insuperable (13).

In this way, Raja Rao churned out a new dialect that was truly Indian. He changed the pace and rhythm of speech, introduced the tendency of repetition, quality of diction and phrasing and the peculiar intonation and mannerisms of speech that carried the rustic flavour of colloquial Kannada. He uses English that has thoroughly imbibed the native speech tones. The new dialect meets the requirements of fiction without harming the richness of the language. *Kanthapura* has the texture of a novel written in an Indian language, which is a remarkable feat.

No Indian writer until Raja Rao had extended the experimentation to the whole language structure. This was a remarkable experiment. One of the distinctive qualities of Rao's technique is the presentation of concrete details. Take, for example, the following description:

Our village had four and twenty houses. Not all were big like Postmaster Suryanarayana's double storied house by the Temple Corner. But some were really not bad to look at. Our Patwari Nanjundia had a veranda with two rooms built on to the old house. He had even put glass panes to the windows, which even Postmaster Suryanarayana could not boast of (20).

In order to give an authentic cultural touch, there are descriptions of rituals and ceremonies. Prayers also form an important feature, as in the following passage.

O Kenchamma! Protect us always like this through famine and disease, death and despair. O most high and bounteous! We shall offer you our first rice and our first fruit, and we shall offer you saris and bodice-cloth for every birth and marriage (9).



The invocation of Gods during conversation like “Shiva – Shiva” “Rama – Rama” are added to project the rural identity of the villagers.

The distinctness of Indian culture is also brought out through the use of words like puffed rice, tamarind, lantana, pipal, arati etc. However, while reciting legends and mythical themes, Raja Rao resorts to deliberate archaism in vocabulary. This is meant to distance it from day to day life. Take for example, this passage: “Oh, learned sire, what brings you into this distant world? asked Brahma, and offering the sage a seat beside him, fell at his feet. Rise up, O God of Gods! I have come to bring you sinister news” (21). Raja Rao also resorts to the use of startling verbs, which convey a sense of physical action. For e.g, in the village of Kanthapura, rain ‘swings and swishes’, sometimes it ‘churns and splashes’, it also ‘beats and patters’. Thus, auditory and visual sensations are evoked in an artistic manner.

A distinguishing mark of *Kanthapura* is the frequent use of abuses and curses, which form a part of the language of rural folk. Here are some expressions:

- ‘I am no butcher’s son to hurt you’
- ‘Ah! I’ve seen your elders, you son of my concubine’.
- ‘He will get a jolly fine marriage–welcome with my broomstick’.
- ‘Not till I’ve poured my shoe-water through his throat’.
- ‘The policemen are not your uncle’s sons’.

Frequent use of tag-questions, as in the sentence-“Brahmins do not spin, do they?” (29) heightens linguistic realism in the novel. Alliteration and Assonance are also used to manipulate the sound, which is apparent from the following passage:

What should we see on Rangamma’s veranda – a crouching elephant, and a crowd around it, and the mahout poking its ears and kicking it, and it roared and it rose, and it wailed, and it dashed against the door, the crowd of policemen cheering it on and on, and we heard the door creak and crash (215).

Thus, Raja Rao attempts to free the English language from those identifying aspects, which are supposed to be western. He succeeds remarkably as far as possible for an Indian writer. He makes changes in the whole language structure and heralds the beginning of the truly distinctive Indian style of writing in English. V. Y. Katak observes:

To come upon a page of Raja Rao's is to regain our lost faith in the Indian's creative use of English. Raja Rao's language seems to spring from the Indian scene, the Indian manner of gesture and speech, absorbs it and yet suffers no distortion. Word, phrase or sentence structure, the shifts and modulations – all grow from that root. And it is English, chaste English, not borrowed and applied but taking the shape of the new material (184).

Undoubtedly, *Kanthapura* remains a landmark in the history of Indian fiction in English. Its puranic texture, its abundant application of Hindu myths, legends and rituals, style of story-telling and introduction of Kannada speech patterns are novel attempts at creativity. In the hands of Raja Rao, the adopted tongue subjugates itself to conform to the intricacies of the Indian tongue and to incorporate the idiom and rhythm of the regional language. And in so doing, Raja Rao portrays the independent spirit of India.

## II

The changing status of Indian writing in English owes a great deal to the experimentations done in it. Desani's *All about H. Hatterr* published in 1948 became yet another major landmark in the history of Indian English fiction, after *Kanthapura*. In terms of formal experimentation, the novel is a groundbreaking work. The protagonist of the novel is H. Hatterr or Hindustaniwallah Hatterr. The distinctive name itself prefixed with the word 'Hindustaniwallah' combines in itself the hybrid qualities of the East and the West. Commenting about the symbolic significance of the name, Basavaraj Naikar asserts:

The long form of his name Hindustaniwalla Hatterr is comically suggestive of the cultural hybridization of his

identity. H.Hatterr has in his blood both the elements of the East and West; the coloniser and the colonised; the Hindu and the Christian. His entire life happens to be a struggle to harmonise the two apparently contradictory cultures (64).

The novel deals with the comic adventures of H. Hatterr in his search for Truth as well as for a viable philosophy of living.

*All about H Hatterr* is a remarkable experiment in terms of fictional form and style. What Desani tries in the novel is "to attempt effects of style --- that the English would feel to be a perverse defiance of the genius of the language." (7) As a writer, Desani received a lot of praise in the 1940 s. He was also well known for his oratory. A significant reason for the wide spread acclaim which the novel received was also due to the remark made by T. S. Eliot, which is quoted in the introduction. Praising the novel, Eliot said. "In all my experience, I have not met with anything quite like it. It is amazing that anyone should be able to sustain a piece of work in this style and tempo at such length" (8).

Being a unique experiment, the novel is fascinating and technically perplexing. However, Desani succeeds remarkably in evolving a new idiom of his own. Written in the autobiographical tone, the novel relates Hatterr's adventures in a half-tragic and half-comic manner. The language used is Hatterr's own and is a strange mix of colloquialisms, philosophical terms, oratorical idioms and archaism as well as French and Latin. The individual mode of expression used in the novel takes its cue from the background of Hatterr. With his hybrid parentage, his spirit for travel and his self teaching methods, Hatterr learns many things and completely justifies the language used in the novel. Commenting about this aspect, Desani says in the Introduction:

This book isn't English as she is wrote and spoke --- There are two of us writing this book. A fellow called H. Hatterr and I --- As for the arbitrary choice of words and constructions --- they are there because, I think, they are natural to H. Hatterr (17).

A significant aspect of the narrative technique of the novel is the moral instruction introduced in it. This moral teaching is conveyed through a guru–shishya dialogue in the manner of the *Upanishads*. The form of *Upanishads* represents the traditional and impersonal Indian mode. The section is entitled “Instruction”. Sometimes the moral teaching is offered in the form of stories. Some of the stories, which are told, include the story of potter Ali Bee and his talkative parrot, the tale of the Princess of Bhoongal, the story of a python and a cat among others. After getting moral instruction, Hatterr proceeds to the next stage of his education, which is titled “Life Encounter.”

*All about H. Hatterr* is a triumphant experiment in blending western and Indian narrative forms. It borrows some of the western narrative forms such as autobiography, picaresque and the Shakespearean plays. The two main narrative models used in the novel are autobiography and the *Upanishads*. Hatterr starts his narrative about his birth and parentage in the conventional autobiographical style.

One of my parents was a European, Christian by faith,  
merchant merman. From which part of the continent?  
Wish I could tell you. The other was an Oriental, a  
Malay Peninsula-resident lady, a steady non-voyaging, non  
Christian human. From which part of the Peninsula?  
Couldn't tell you either (31).

The novelist also makes skilful use of dramatic presentations. Sometimes the author himself steps into the fictional world of the text.

“---Pharisee G. V. Desani: see the feller's tract All About --- publisher, the same publisher company” (122).

Several metafictional devices are also used to achieve this effect. The author himself comments on the style of the narrator.

“H. Hatterr – who tells his own story – isn't a writer. How could he know the theory and the practice of Perfections? If,

in spite of it, I have made him write at all, well, it is because  
I am clever” (18).

In contrast, even the fictional characters sometimes step out of the fictional world to comment on the novel. The novel also abounds in direct quotations from a wide variety of texts including those of Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Addison and others.

“If music be the food of love, play on” (169).

“Mr. Coleridge rightly implies, a mere dwarf on a giant’s shoulder often sees more than  
his honour himself”(65).

“Birds are there, too. They are brand new birds of twelve-months growing, as Mr.  
Thomas Hardy rightly says” (265).

All of these factors combine to maintain the parody of the novel, which is delightfully comic.

The entire narrative is carried on in the same manner, which by no means is an easy task and that too, in English. The comic possibilities of the language had to be explored and made use of. Undoubtedly, Hatterr is one of the most memorable comic characters in Indian English fiction. The comedy in the novel arises, mainly, because of linguistic humour. Some of the lines in the novel strike us as unpredictable and extremely funny. Take for example, the passage where Hatterr lies down as a living human plate for a circus lion Charlie and speculates:

Supposing he (Charlie) should decide to eat his steak, and  
still hang about the anatomy to put my heart out of action? I  
had to rely on English and Hindustani and on yells for help.  
But who would dare come into the cage when the king of  
beasts tackles a feller? Though hell, he might be uproaring in  
two widely understood lingos? Even if, granted, I could get  
up, be vertical again and possess the whip, but what dam  
good is a whip to a lion? (80)

“While he was at it, he gave me a hell of a nut-cracker kick on the penalty area!” (142)

As is clearly evident, the language has a freshness and vitality about it. Desani also introduced the comic effect by translating Indian names into English. For instance, Sadanand is referred to as Always Happy, Hiranmanek Mukti is called Diamonds and Rubies. Some other names are fabricated nicknames such as kiss curl, Longanberry face.

There are many instances in the novel where the novelist, in order to indicate the distinct and individual pronunciation of Hatterr, changes the spelling of the English word. This alteration also adds a comic touch. For instance, he uses words like yuss for yes, You Essay for U.S.A, Yell for Yale, Noo Yawk for New York. The use of ‘he’ to denote gender change also maintains the comic touch.

e.g. He – cow, he – nun (63)

In order to suggest the regional, social and cultural attributes of the speaker, Desani makes abundant use of Hindi, French and Latin expressions. Such words are italicized in the novel. For instance he uses Hindi words such as *Shikar*, *dhobin*, *kismet*, *todii*, *bazaar*, *sarad*, *hemant*, *sisir* etc. Latin words like *sie vos non vobis* (48) are also used. Tamil and French expressions are also sprinkled in adequate measure.

“*Ina samacharam, swami?*” he required.

*Nala, samy.*’ I replied.” (111)

Sometimes the words given in italics are accompanied by the meaning as for example, *ojha*, an exorcist (185)

One of the peculiarities of Desani’s use of language is the startling coinage of words like *absquatulated* (65) *sexploitation*, *lillibulero* (173), *boozologue* (52). Desani has also made use of startling adjectives such as anti-climax behaviour, post – dated children.

The images and metaphors used by any writer are his' natural modes of expressions. Desani's use of similes and metaphors seem to spring from the Indian scene, absorbing it and yet suffering no distortion. Here, very little influence of English literature is discernible. Take for example, the following passage: "Her nails matching the red Malabar sunset, the lobes of her hair as sweet as Kulu peaches. Her ankles as nimble as those of a fawn --- the parting of her hair as straight as the road to Mandalay."

When we consider some of the passages, we find an attempt to imitate a sensuous apprehension of the external world in the form of insistent onomatopoeia; as in the following passage:

Then iron and steel, wheels began to clatter, clattering clatter  
clatter, shush, shush! The engine's puffing-chocking cough,  
the last locomotive shriek – and wheeze, the guard's whistle,  
and the final salaams to my pal and we were off! (35)

There is a continuous straining for sound effects in alliteration and assonance with which almost each page is replete.

She dwelleth, dwelleth the Babe! Dwelleth midst murmer and  
gurgle, gurgles ever gurgles, coiling, ever-coiling they, the  
round-rings-round of sonorous sound, circles, circles, ever-  
dancing, ever-merging, ever-curling, ever-curling (133).

Thus, by making his language original and distinctive, Desani domesticates the English language. As he confesses in the novel, he has used "a language deliberately designed to mystify the majority, tempt'em to start guessing and interpreting our real drift and allegory, what the hell we mean" (122).

The self-referential status of Hatterr's narrative is indicated in the long title of the novel: "The Autobiographical of H. Hatterr. Being also a Mosaic – organon of life: viz. A Medico – philosophical Grammar as to this contrast, this human horse play, this Design for Diamond cut Diamond." The issues raised in the different chapters are summed in the beginning under the title "Digest." Desani employs many linguistic

manipulations in the novel by using a strange mix of a variety of babu, sahib, cockney, pidgin, learned, oratorical and rhetorical idioms.

“Command me, Sage, and I will give my life for thee !  
Though I am non-Indian, I am well versed in the scriptures.  
Know, the way of saints and sages are known to this  
unworthy! In thy occult inquiry, I affirm, is hidden a deep  
meaning !” (53)

“I served him as khansamah – cook, and tended to his  
comfort! Following the after – dinner chhota-pegs of  
wholesome whiskies – soda, he often divulged to me many a  
secret of overcoming the present!” (104)

The language is a queer blend of conventional idiomatic English, street slang and peculiar Indianism .

Desani has introduced a lot of symbolisms in the novel, especially with respect to dreams. Basavaraj Naikar throws further light on this dream symbolism:

His (Hatterr's) sight of “an inconceivably beautiful coffin”  
being carried into the church and being fixed with a tin plate  
containing Hatterr's name and countless degrees and  
honorifics like Ex- sahib. Ex- sportsman, Ex-human, Ex-  
parte may be taken to symbolise his own metaphorical death  
or wish for death, perhaps caused by his forlornness and  
deep frustration in life. But the dream may also be taken to  
be symbolic of Hatterr's wishful glorification of himself  
even after his death in the form of being sealed in a beautiful  
coffin displaying his name with innumerable degrees on the  
tinplate. The contradictory nature of his dream appears to be  
in tune with his own philosophy, which declares that life is  
nothing but a bundle of contrarities (67).



One of the major concerns of the novel, therefore, is that the world itself is a mode of contrasts as well as of deception, a fabrication passing itself off as Truth. Desani uses the parodic mode to communicate this view of life. Hatterr's adventures with many fake sages forms a pattern which stresses on this recurrent theme. The philosophical theme of the novel is the conflict between appearance and reality. It stresses the fact that the world we live in is appearance and not real. In each of his encounter, Hatterr realises the discrepancy between appearance and reality. The sage of Delhi tells Hatterr:

“All appearance is false. Reality is not appearance --- The wise should discriminate between Reality and Appearance --  
- Appearance and disguise always wins (198).

In his seven encounters with fake Sadhus, Hatterr becomes a victim and realises that things are not what they appear to be.

Desani also deals with the question of truth in relation to literary representation. The basic presumption is that if the world we see and experience is not real, a literary text which is an imitation of that world is also not presenting reality. Therefore, if life itself is not as it appears, how can words in literature be real? As Hatterr says:

“Can words ever communicate Truth – whatever it is? All words are pointers, indicators, symbols: and there isn't a single word in any lingo, dialect or doggerel, which is absolutely cast-true, suggesting in the exact infallible Truth”  
(283).

This disbelief in the reality of the world might be the reason why Desani makes use of the parodic form in the novel. Since the world is made up of the opposition of reality and appearance, Hatterr comes to the conclusion that the world itself is a struggle of opposites. Therefore, he understands that “Life is contrast”.

*All about H.Hatterr* thus, frees itself from the inhibitions of a colonial language. The fluent comic prose has a harmony, which is the result of a complete interpenetration of subject-matter, language and characterisation. To quote C. Vijayashree:

Desani's novel is self-conscious about its existence as language. In the first place, it playfully parodies certain conventional forms of writing. Secondly, it is self-conscious about its status as written text----The linguistic self – awareness is also found in the various forms of word play such as puns and anagrams, verbal tricks and grotesque lexical inventions (148).

The novel reflects Desani's unswerving devotion to his craft and medium. His linguistic achievement as a writer is commendable and very satisfying. By not following any fixed pattern, the novel frees itself from any impression of superficiality and stereotyped presentation. Desani undoubtedly, draws his artistic sustenance from his Indian heritage. It is this Indianness, which finds expression in his use of Indian setting, choice of Indian subject-matter, linguistic humour, appropriate language and imagery as well as the ethos of the novel. In an article titled 'The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance', Salman Rushdie admiringly wrote:

"Desani has shown how English could be bent and kneaded until it spoke in an authentically Indian voice."

By remaking the English language, Desani, in fact, shows its appropriateness to Indian themes. Most important, he uses his freedom to explore new areas of consciousness.

### [III]

It is clear that after attaining independence, India was moving into a new direction in her social and political life. The changing scenario of India spurred many writers to deal with contemporary themes. The social purpose of art began to be stressed by many writers. Bhabani Bhattacharya, who wrote during this period used the medium

of art for the propagation of his views and his philosophy. He created a suitable ethos in his novels through his use of the English language. Talking about the creative freedom, which a writer should enjoy, Bhabani Bhattacharya argues:

The concept of freedom will have to include the medium of expression to which the writer, out of his inner urge, commits himself --- It is far more difficult to write creatively in a foreign language than in one's own. But this must be regarded as the writer's own business.

*He who Rides a Tiger* published in 1954 deals with the Indian freedom struggle as well as a variety of problems such as the Bengal famine, the caste system, exploitation of the poor and the increasing evils of money power. The story of Kalo, the blacksmith who transforms himself into Mangal Adhikari, the brahmin in order to take his revenge upon a caste conscious and unequal society raises Bhattacharya to the level of a social critic. At the end of the story, Kalo re-establishes his integrity by revealing his true identity in front of a large gathering. With an extraordinary strength of character, he decides to face all the consequences of his confession. In this way, Kalo achieves the ultimate liberation of spirit.

The story of *He who Rides a Tiger* is an experiment in fantasy. It has melodramatic incidents, pathetic tales of Indian poverty, strange coincidences such as the meeting between Kalo and his daughter in the brothel. It presents idealistic solutions to the problems of caste and poverty. Indian values of love, truth, self-denial and renunciation are also upheld by the author in the novel through characters and incidents.

Bhattacharya's experiments in the English language for adopting it to Indian needs is commendable. Indianness is a particular way of looking at life. Many forces combine to create Indianness such as sense of tradition, culture, heritage, history, habits, political and social life etc. In order to provide the necessary local colour, and to overcome the problem of linguistic alienation, Bhattacharya borrows words from Indian languages, mostly his mother-tongue Bengali or Hindi. He uses words like *pronam* (16), *choorie* (17), *Bhagwan* (27), *kamar* (5) which are repeated in the course of the novel. Bhattacharya italicizes the borrowed words to make the readers understand that they are

non-English words. He also does not use the glossary to explain the meaning. Some of the originally Sanskrit or Bengali words used in the novel are explained by the author. Take, for example, the words:

*Viman*, aerial cars (19)

*Sabdadevi*, cannonballs flying to a target by sound (19)

*Sonar Bangla*, the golden land of Bengal (44)

*Brahmastra* -wonder missile (19)

*Bhoga*, the food offering to the deity (117)

The most commonly used non-English words italicised in the novel are 'han' (2,24,86) and 'nah' (67,65) Let us consider the context in which they are used.

1. Dark minded folks of your caste have a fancy for Haba and Goba, Punt and Munni, *han*?" (2)
2. *Han!* That was the way to get on the train, Kalo made a mental note (24)
3. *Han*, that was the way to avenge himself (86)
4. "*Nah* \_-----" in a sort of gasping agony "*Nah----nah*" (67)
5. The unbearable silence was broken by her sudden scream of terror "*Nah-- ----nah*"(75)

It is quite evident that in the first sentence *Han* is used as a question-tag, meaning – don't they? In the second and third sentence, *han* stands for the English equivalent "yes". On the other hand, the word *nah* is used by the author not merely as a substitute but to convey feelings of fear and pain.

A writer should have the freedom to experiment with language and to take liberties with idiom and usage without seriously affecting its naturalness. Bhattacharya experiments with the language freely. He uses various devices such as literal translation of Indian words and idioms, changes in syntax and also a judicious use of Indian imagery..Some of the proverbs used in the novel make the Indian dialogues more authentic.

End my earth-life before my husband's (189)

Why, she is a wingless fairy (219)

She called him a crocodile in loin cloth (228)

Indian imagery is equally evident in the following sentences:

“You smile to yourself in a dim happy way as if you were eating cool water melon”(2)

“His strength would give out like a lamp using up its oil”(27)

“He has fed well for a month and revived like a famished snake (124)

“Be sensible and live like a Rani”(197)

Bhattacharya also tries to make changes in the structure of the English sentence. He frequently uses a mark of interrogation at the end of a statement. He also uses very short sentences. For example, the following conversation between Lekha and Obhijit:

“More food to take to old Aunt’s kitchen?”

“Not today.”

“Another day?”

“May be another day.”

“She’ll not beat me with a stick?”

“Beat you? No one will dare beat you.”(215)

A significant aspect of Bhattacharya’s style is the use of irony. The novelist uses irony effectively when the heartless magistrate who asked Kalo at the trial why he should live at all, touches Kalo’s feet in his new avatar as Mangal Adhikari, the Brahmin. The incident, in fact seems to be an answer to the question and upholds the feelings of justice. While some of the characters meet recurrently in the novel in ironic situation, some of the sentences are also repeated to make a lasting impression. Take for example, the following statement:

“I know a man by the look in his face”

The sentence is repeated in different contexts through out the novel and is always used with reference to Kalo. The first person to use the word is the policeman who arrests Kalo for the theft of bananas .The second person who makes the same remark is Rajani , who owned the harlot house. Lastly, Motichand too speaks the same sentence.

The face of Kalo thus deceives people. While the policeman thought he looked like a thief, Rajani thought he was a fit person to work in brothels. And in a very surprising manner, the same face of Kalo makes Motichand respect him as a holy man.

One of the significant achievements of Bhattacharya is the popularization of novels written in English reflecting Indian society. In *He who Rides a Tiger*, Bhattacharya attacks the distinctions based on caste and class. The contrast between poverty and affluence, power and helplessness, goodness and hypocrisy is commendable. Bhattacharya's experimentation with dialogue and form makes his Indian readers feel more at home while reading his works. At the same time, the book appeals to the foreign reader as well. In this way, the novel reaches a very wide audience within India as well as abroad. Bhattacharya succeeds in communicating aspects of personal appearance and manner, social qualities, intellectual endowment and cultivation. His language truly mirrors the Indian sensibility.

Through the character of Kalo, Bhattacharya shows how each individual can influence and enrich the thinking of society and try to correct the wrongs prevalent in it. As Meenakshi Mukherjee points out:

Whatever the degree of Bhattacharya's success, his intention is laudable. Like Raja Rao, he also attempts, through experiments with sentence structure, to indicate a different ethos. Both have experimented with a number of devices to make it clear that these novels are different from contemporary English novels, that they deal with people who think and act and speak differently from English speaking people. (185)

Finally, what is notable is that a new dimension is added to the quest for freedom. While Kalo asserts his freedom as a human being, Bhattacharya too asserts his right to use English as an independent idiom. The uniqueness and significance of the novel lies in this assertion of freedom.

#### IV

No analysis of Indian English fiction would be complete without a reading of Rushdie's masterpiece *Midnight's children*. At first reading, *Midnight's children* gives the impression of a unique charm, enhanced by Rushdie's gymnastics with the language aptly termed as literary calisthenics. For Indian English fiction, this is indeed a remarkable achievement, which has, since its beginning, grown into a powerful body of English literature. Let us consider the following passage from the novel, describing the pre-natal development of Saleem Sinai, which might also be construed as a development of Indian English as a language.

The foetus was fully formed. What had been no bigger than a full stop, had expanded into a comma, a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a chapter, now it was bursting into more complex developments, becoming, one might say a book-perhaps an encyclopaedia- even a whole language(100).

It would be interesting to consider Rushdie's use of language in comparison with the earliest experimentalist – Raja Rao. The major difference between Rao and Rushdie is that while Rao drew upon his mother tongue Kannada to create English, Rushdie uses hybrid English by mixing the national language Hindi and English. Thus, while Rao placed his characters geographically, culturally and linguistically in a particular region, Rushdie created a language which cut across the barriers of religion, region and class. In other words, Raja Rao uses English as a regional language; Rushdie uses English as a pan Indian language.

Rushdie's experimentation with language is one of his most remarkable achievements. Some of the pet devices used by the novelist are: -

- A. He uses different language for characters belonging to different social class and background.

Padma : "Only believe, mister, how much I have your well-being at heart! What creatures we are, we women, never for

one moment at peace when our men lie sick and low – I am  
so happy you are well, you don't know!" (231)

Evie Burns:

"Who? Him? Whynt' cha tell him to jus' go blow his nose? That sniffer? He  
can't even ride a bike." (221)

It is quite evident from the language that Padma belongs to a native rural  
background and Evie Burns has an American background.

B. Rushdie also uses Hindi words to express his views clearly. For instance, words  
like *Dilli-dekho* machine (206), *Bharat- mata* (485), *Chota peg* (453), *Indian fauj*  
(305)

C. Rushdie also makes abundant use of dots and dashes, semi-colons, putting in  
three dots etc, thereby dislocating the English language.

"Ah," it says, "but what about the matter of her tantrum --  
the one she threw the day Ahmed announced they were  
moving to Bombay? Now it mimics her: "You -- always  
you decide what about me? Suppose I don't want --- I've  
only now got this house straight and already ---!" So,  
Padma: was that house-wifely zeal --- or a masquerade?  
(101)

D. In order to communicate uninterrupted motion, Rushdie also joins three or four  
words without a hyphen.

whatsitsname (180)

deeperdeeperdeeper (227)

faster faster faster (227)      round and round and round (227)

E. Rushdie also tries to inculcate vernacular language habits into English.



“Do you wonder, whatsitsname, that the little one calls herself Emerald? In English, whatsitsname? That man will ruin my children for me. Put less cummin in that, whatsitsname---”(43)

“Chhi-Chhi”, Padma covers her ears, “My God, such a dirty filthy man, I never knew!” (381)

“We should all get together and live some where, no?” (273)

“Mother-sleepers! Eunuchs from some where!”---  
Uncomprehending, they see their bizarre tormentor emerge,  
rush away into the darkness, vanish. His imprecations---  
“Sodomizers of Asses! Sons of pigs! Eaters of their own  
excrement!” (97)

- F. Nonsense neologisms such as “tea-cup kissery.” Some of the other expressions used in the novel are: the chutnification of history, writery, looker-after, writing-shifting, a blood-jungle, forest of new relatives, pickles of history, myth-ridden, Bombayness, history-free, clock-ridden, crime-stained birth, jugglers-with-facts, calico-skirted secretaries, vengeful irruption, discombolutation, midnight-given life etc.

The narrative world of *Midnight's children* begins on the midnight of August 15, 1947 with the birth of Saleem Sinai and ends on the midnight of August 15, 1978 with the birth of Saleem's so called son Aadam Sinai. Through this technique, Rushdie shows Time as cyclical and a continuous process. Saleem is able to discriminate between Time and Timelessness and says:

“It must have been morning although the gloom of the  
endless midnight hung over the ghetto like a fog.” (20)

Saleem drifts into a mood of meditation and seeks an identity. Through meditation and invocation, he discovers a sense of fulfillment and freedom from the limitation of Time as well as Timeless reality. In the words of Stephanie Ravillon:

•

Rushdie has emphasized the nature of time as artistically controllable and has developed an aesthetic theory based on the idea of fragmentation. He has worked on the assumption that it was the partial nature of our memories that made them so evocative for us and has reached the conclusion that the best way to master time was to split it up into vivid and meaningful images of the past. --- He has brought to light the partial and subjective nature of the perceptual process and has therefore demonstrated that there were as many conceptions of time as there were individuals, which has ultimately enabled him to portray time as multifaceted and ever changing. (64)

The narrative world of the novel is brought out through the consciousness of the protagonist Saleem Sinai who becomes the voice presenting the subjective and objective world of the novel. The narrative is supposedly told to Padma who acts as intermediary between the reader and the writer. As Madhusudana Rao points out:

Though she is not a passive receptor, with her own reactions and comments on, at times, bizarre world of Saleem Sinai, her sensibility does not significantly alter or affect in any degree our response to the narrative. It is at these two levels of Saleem Sinai's centre of consciousness and the delightful intermediary role performed by Padma that the "point of view" of *Midnight's Children* is majorly defined. (140)

In order to widen the scope of his narration, Rushdie invests Saleem Sinai with super human vision and extra ordinary powers of thought-reading. This makes his account credible and trust-worthy. The narrative technique of the novel thereby achieves its chosen aim of integrating the personal and historical events, myth and fantasy as well

as Time and Timelessness. To quote Madhusudana Rao:

Through the narrative moves in a chronological manner, in a linear sequence from 1947 to 1978, Time is sometimes reversed and localized to dramatize a particular subjective experience. It means that there are two temporal realities: the objective, impersonal historical reality: within this, in an inclusive manner, a subjective and intuitive perception of a particular reality is dramatized. As the objective Time reality is cyclical, the subjective world progresses slowly in localized emotional patterns (40).

The integration of the post- Independence scenario with the destinies of three generations of the Sinai family is a remarkable achievement of Rushdie. He offers a parallel between the individual's life and history which is sustained through out the novel. Saleem's gradually disintegrating body refers to the political fragmentation in Indian politics. The East-West encounter is reflected through his white father Methwold and the native ebony mother Vanita. The development of India after Independence is also brought out through the physical growth of Saleem. Growing at an apparently fantastic rate, he was a "good strapping boy with a big appetite, an early developer." (146). At the national level, this is an indication of India's ambitious five-year plans and large amounts of foreign aid received from America. Rushdie also makes a parallel between the events leading to Emergency and the personal life of Saleem.

History books, newspaper, radio-programmes tell us that at two p.m. on June 12<sup>th</sup>, Prime minister Indira Gandhi was found guilty, by Judge JagMohanLal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court, of two counts of campaign malpractice during the election campaign of 1971. What has never precisely been revealed is that it was precisely two p.m. that Parvati-the-witch became sure she had entered labour. (497)

Emergency is declared in India at the same moment when Saleem's wife Parvati gives birth to a son. The censorship of the Press that followed Emergency is reflected in the newborn son who is dumb.

In its narrative structure, *Midnight's Children* follows the ancient narrative structure of the Panchatantra tales. Like *Midnight's Children*, the Panchatantra tales have a teller who narrates his story to the listener. These stories have other stories embedded in them. *Midnight's Children* also tells a tale which contains stories within stories. The novel starts with the birth of Saleem Sinai and the story transgresses and we listen to the tales of his grandfather and the boatman Tai:

“And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumors, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane.” (4)

Thus, there are a lot of digressions in the novel. Sometimes, as in oral narratives, endings are followed by beginnings. By following such a method, Rushdie mocks at the ridiculousness of the cause and effect logic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century realism. He uses the form of metafiction in order to investigate the relation between art and life. The multi-linear narration of *Midnight's Children* reveals a complex of inter-related events, which hold the story together.

However, *Midnight's Children* is most commonly classified in a category of fiction known as magic realism. Rushdie combines the advantages of symbolism and realism so that historical accounts gather new meaning. The background of the novel is based on real places like Bombay, which are factually correct. To this real world, Rushdie adds an element of fantasy through the imaginary Midnight's Children club comprising of Saleem, Shiva, Sony, Parvathy, Cyrus and Kapadia. The central myth holding the novel together is the myth of Shiva. Saleem and Shiva, both are born on the stroke of midnight. Rushdie evokes Shiva in his destructive *avatar* through the character of Shiva who is blessed with powerful knees and becomes the hero of the Bangladesh

war. In Rushdie's novel, Shiva gradually evolves into a tyrannical force.

“He felt an old violence being renewed in him, a hatred for these high-ups and their power, which is why I am sure – why I know – that when the Emergency offered Shiva-of-the knees the chance of grabbing some power for himself, he did not wait to be asked a second time”(489).

*Midnight's Children*, thus, fuses the world of the real and the world of the fantastic. Rushdie combines fantastic elements with ordinary empirical experience. He makes use of myth, memory and prophesy but retains the historical setting, by fixing a particular time and place of the narrative. In this way, Rushdie makes use of the symbolic dimension of magic realism in order to foster the collective identity of India as a nation. Madhusudana Rao observes:

Saleem Sinai seeks the medium of Fantasy for various purposes, both for liberation and attachment. As the fantastic mode is a Timeless construct, he can retrieve into his troubled psyche and resolve his national identity between India and Pakistan there. Memory or reminiscing with a degree of objectivity and authenticity serves such a purpose. (15)

To conclude, *Midnight's Children* is a significant effort by Rushdie to recreate his homeland India by mixing memory and desire, fact and fantasy, reality and vision, time and timelessness. Salman Rushdie's conclusions on what India has achieved after freedom is inescapable. There is a feeling of discontent and anger about the fate of midnight's children. Saleem's concluding words in the novel clearly express his disillusionment.

“It is the privilege and curse of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace”(552)

Despite such negative sentiments, the fact remains that Rushdie in *Midnight's Children* makes full use of his startling imagination and intellectual resources. Thereby, he certainly defines the efficacy of freedom in Indian English fiction.

\* \* \* \*

(V)

Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* paved the way for a new crop of writers who were comfortable with the English language. New writers like Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Tharoor, Amit Chaudhari, Githa Hariharan, Indira Ganesan etc. represent a radical departure from what was written previously by their predecessors. Gita Mehta belongs to this new generation of writers who deserves consideration for her achievements in fiction writing.

Gita Mehta's very Indian novel *A River Sutra*, published in 1993 is a eulogy to the great river Narmada. In keeping with the Indian tradition of narrating stories, Gita Mehta employs more than one narrator who provides the connecting links to the different characters in the novel. The novelist unfolds the intricate reality of life by presenting different viewpoints. The story is told in an autobiographical tone through the experiences of its main characters. Every character in the novel tells his or her story to the bureaucrat on the banks of the Narmada. Rama Nair comments:

The quest for personal and social meanings based on the structure of tragedy and frustration are the interacting fields of human awareness that give a cohesive structure to *A River Sutra*. Each tale is a major enquiry into the tragic reality of life and brings with it a critical problem. (151)

The religious backbone of the tales equips the reader with the mental strength to confront the ultimate question of life. At the end of the novel, Prof. Shankar says: "If anything is sacred about this river, it is the individual experiences of the human beings who have lived here." (267)

In narrating the story, Gita Mehta makes use of the ancient Indian tradition of story telling. The central theme of the novel is man's quest for freedom in its different manifestations. In keeping with its theme, the novel contains sociological, archacological and mythological explorations about the Narmada.

*A River Sutra* is not significant merely in terms of the language used or in its story telling. What is compelling in the novel is the quest for an understanding of human life as presented in it. The novel is highly rich in associations and is valuable for the complexity of its structure. There is a lot of philosophical content revealing the intricacies of Hinduism, which helps to bring out the different layers of meaning contained in it. For example, the following statements:

"I remind myself that the purpose of the pilgrimage is endurance. Through their endurance, the pilgrims hope to generate the heat, the tapas, that links man to the energy of the universe."(8)

"Many men die before they learn that the desire for freedom lies deep within them, like a dammed river waiting to be released. But once a man has had that momentary glimpse of freedom, he needs to be instructed further."(31)

"The ancient Greeks would probably have sympathized with the river's mythology, but at least they had to deal with only one set of myths, whereas Indians have never been prepared to settle for a single mythology if they could squeeze another hundred in."(152)

"On top of all that mythology, there's the river's astrology. Her holiness is believed to dispel the malevolent effects of Saturn so all manner of epileptics, depressives and other

unfortunates rush to her banks And yet, the Narmada is also a magnet to scholars. Towns on the banks of the river are renowned for the learning of their Brahmins. It is as if reason and instinct are constantly warring on the banks of the Narmada.”(153)

The philosophy of life, which comes through in these statements is convincing and confounding at the same time. It helps to bring out the complexity of the Indian psyche. The author’s insight into human motives and passion is remarkably brought out through such statements. The moral or didactic elements are maintained through out in keeping with the subject of the novel .

*A River Sutra* thus can be valued for the variety of meanings contained in it. An important aspect of the novel is the conscious use of myth. The use of myth is a familiar feature of most Indian English novels. As Meenakshi Mukherjee says:

As such the Indian writer gains greatly by basing his symbology on this rich mythic material Also, since most of these myths are part of the heritage of all Indians regardless of their language, using myth as a symbol for the Indo-Anglian novelist is an excellent artistic solution of the problems arising out of the heterogeneity of his audience (31).

What sets the novel apart however, is that Gita Mehta has totally avoided the commonplace myths and adopted the rarely widespread myths centring around the river Narmada. It is perhaps for the first time that a writer has chosen not to deal with the popular myths of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* Instead, the novelist has described the mythology surrounding the river Narmada which is informative and appeals to us by its originality. Gita Mehta writes in the novel:

It is said that Shiva, Creator and Destroyer of the worlds, was in an ascetic trance so strenuous that rivulets of perspiration



began flowing from his body down the hills. The stream took on the form of a woman – the most dangerous of her kind: --- Her inventive variations so amused Shiva that he named her Narmada, the Delightful One(8).

In order to communicate the aesthetic experience of salvation, Gita Mehta uses the myth of Shiva, the creator as well as the destroyer. Rama Nair explains:

Mehta's deeply intuitive comments about the dilemmas of existence spring from the dualistic nature of Shiva himself. Shiva is a deity with a complex and polarized personality. An outsider to society by nature, he unites ascetic and erotic, creative and destructive, male and female aspects of existence, into a divine character...The predominant characteristic of Shiva's personality was that of the Yogin. He was the consummate celibate who had mastered control of all his senses and desires, and who with the power won by his tapas or self-discipline, controlled the world. (150)

Gita Mehta has also made use of localised myths, which do not have a pan-Indian appeal. The songs and popular beliefs surrounding the river Narmada are used as structural devices in the novel.

*O messenger of passing Time,  
O sanctuary and salvation,  
You dissolve the fear of time itself  
O holy Narmada (278)*

*You removed the stains of evil  
You release the wheel of suffering  
You lift the burdens of the world  
O holy Narmada (279).*

Since the tribals regard the river as their Mother, they propitiate her through songs and rituals. They believe that the river will cure them of all physical and mental problems.

The tribals believe they once ruled a great snake kingdom until they were defeated by the gods of the Aryans. Saved from annihilation only by a divine personification of the Narmada River, the grateful tribals conferred on the river the gift of annulling the effects of snakebite. (6)

Along with this gift of annulling the effects of snakebite, the Narmada can also cure a person of unhealthy attachment, as well as the malefic effect of Saturn.

Whatever the nature of the myths employed, the importance of the novel lies in the fact that it holds all the elements together. As Meenakshi Mukherjee says:

“---Weaving in of myths, legends and rituals, will not by itself give a novel special stature unless there is an underlying design holding together all the digressions, all these tales within tales, and mere description of the rituals will weaken rather than enrich the structure of a modern novel. (139)

Along with the mythological explorations, sociological and archeological explorations are also made. Prof. Shankar observes in the novel:

The Hindu calendar is different on either bank of the Narmada. Just think. Thousands of years ago the sage Vyasa dictated the Mahabharata on this riverbank. Then in our own century this region provided the setting for Kipling's Jungle Book. In between countless other men have left their mark on the river (264).

The Narmada is what we call a degrading river. It has a very fast current, which erodes the riverbed, cutting deeper and deeper into the rock (264).

On the one hand, *A River Sutra* makes excellent use of Indian myths, folklore, rituals and even superstitions. On the other hand, the novelist has also made use of research texts, and talked to historians as is evident from her acknowledgement at the end of the novel. This lends authenticity and imparts value.

The language used in the novel is highly evocative. There is an erotic undertone, which is expressed powerfully through the use of adequate images. For example, the waters of the Narmada sparkle and disappear like “the anklets encircling a woman’s foot” (96). The narrator imagines the river as “a woman painting her palms and the soles of her feet with vermilion as she prepared to meet her lover”(139). Serpent images are used again and again in the novel in a powerful manner. The village deity of Vano village is a stone image of a half-woman with the full breasts of a fertility symbol but the torso of a coiled snake. Nitin Bose discovers that the pre-Aryan world is believed to have been peopled by a mysterious race, which was half-human and half-serpent. Nitin Bose’s ebony bed has “serpents carved on the head board.”(116) Such serpent images recur in the description of the encounter between Nitin Bose and the tribal woman Rima. As Nitin Bose recollects:

I did not know whether I had fashioned her from the night  
and my own hunger, even though her small teeth pierced my  
skin again and again like the sudden striking of a snake, and  
I heard the hissing of her pleasure against my throat (125).

Thus, the erotic impulse running as an under-current throughout the novel is substantiated by the use of serpent images.

Many Indian English novels are set by the side of the river. In *A River Sutra*, most of the narrators like the bureaucrat, Tariq Mia, Nitin Bose, the courtesan’s daughter, the musician’s daughter converge on the banks of the Narmada to tell their experience. The peaceful ambience and the very act of narrating gives peace and mental

serenity. The ecology of the Narmada region is beautifully recreated by the novelist. This fascination towards the river is equally evident in eminent writers like Raja Rao. In *Kanthapura*, the river Hemavathy is a sustaining presence. As Srinivasa Iyengar points out:

The river in India is a feminine power and personality and the land must woo her and deserve her love if their hopes of fruitfulness and security are to be realized (323).

In this way *A River Sutra* powerfully evokes the feminine force. The river Narmada is described by the narrator as a beautiful woman dancing and arousing the lust of ascetics. The novel asserts the fact that all activities are controlled by the primordial feminine force worshipped in many societies as the Mother Goddess. The goddess is referred to by Mr.Chagla follows:

The goddess is just the principle of life. She is every illusion that is inspiring love. That is why she is greater than all the gods combined. Call her what you will, but she is what a mother is feeling for a child. A man for a woman. A starving man for food. Human beings for God. (142)

Finally, the Narmada also provides the ultimate liberation to man, meaning salvation.

O Messenger of passing Time,  
O sanctuary and salvation,  
You dissolve the fear of time itself  
O holy Narmada. (278)

Taken as a whole, *A River Sutra* is a significant contribution to Indian writing in English. The novelist has offered authentic interpretations of Indian cultural values, music, art forms and ethos. Thereby, she establishes the Indianness of her novel. The variety and vitality of the presentation makes it a novel of considerable strength. On the whole, the novel is written in the best Indian tradition.

## VI

The major dilemma of Indian writers is to evolve a language that represents their regional and social affiliations. Ceaseless experimentation and innovations are responsible for the present form of Indian-English, which gives expression to the writer's individual experience. *The Thousand Faces of the Night* by Gita Hariharan, with its emphasis on women characters, depicts the constant struggles and self-realization of three women, namely Devi, her mother Sita and Devi's family retainer Mayamma. All the three women characters portray the feeling of repression, the pressures of feminine role-play and pretensions.

Hariharan's use of language, as a result, is basic to issues pertaining to women. The Indian family, with its patriarchal structure and family ties, remains at the backdrop of the story. In keeping with the general theme of the novel, the language used by Hariharan is specifically confined to family and the discourse is rigorously private. Hariharan's treatment of Indian thoughts, evocation of Indian sensibility and the use of diversified idiom has lent authenticity to her fictional art.

In this connection, a look into Hariharan's use of Sanskrit quotations in the novel is necessary, since to many of her readers, this particular feature represents an absolute stamp of Indianness. The novel is replete with many Sanskrit renderings such as the following composition by Muthuswamy Dikshitar, which is accompanied by an English translation.

*"Hiranmayun lakshmun Sada bhajami--"* When I have  
with me the golden Lakshmi, what do I care for unworthy  
mortals?"(52)

Hariharan also makes use of Telugu compositions of Thyagaraja and translates it into English, as in the following lines:

*"Tholjanmamuna jeyu dudugu, ORama---"* I have now

reaped--- the bitter harvest of the sins I committed in earlier births.”(67)

Such innumerable quotations from the Indian classical tradition present an authentic Indian atmosphere. Further, in order to cater to a non-native audience, some of the directly borrowed words which emphasise the cultural background are explained in the glossary at the end of the novel. These words such as *agraharam ashtapadi*, *kolam*, *kriti*, *nadaswaram*, *nagalinga pushpa*, *sumangali* etc. is related to the Indian cultural tradition. Information regarding great music composers like Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja is also provided in this section. The glossary also contains a general explanation of words relating to Indian classical music like *shadja*, *panchama*, *todi*, *bhairavi* etc. However such borrowed words are sparingly used and add local colour to the work.

It is positively evident in the novel that Hariharan attempts to emphasise the Indianness of her character through the introduction of native Indian speech tunes. Such innovations are motivated by the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the speakers, as is evident from the following individual statements:

“My husband, that wretch, God pity him, had disappeared years ago.”(63)

“And she sang: my God, how she sang those bhajans.”(63)

“But they all leave, child, no one stays long enough.”(82)

“Where is the money, little one? (31)

“I stood in the darkness, my hands folded in awed humility, and whispering Rama, Rama, I fell at his feet”(123).

Terms of endearment such as Pati, Amma, Baba which also emphasize the kinship relations are effectively used in the novel.

It is this transference of mother tongue patterns into English, which bridges the cultural gap and makes the alien medium more acceptable to the readers. It gives the readers the constant feeling that the writer is trying to free herself from linguistic constraints and is eager to transcend the restrictions of ordinary language. It is obvious that the language evolved by Hariharan represents the evolution of a distinct standard of

writing in English, which is typically Indian in speech pattern, thought, rhythm and tone. She demonstrates her ability to use English creatively, communicating with precision and clarity the emotional and individual experiences of women.

A major characteristic of Hariharan's novel is that she presents everything, including inanimate objects of nature, not as they are but as experienced by an individual consciousness. The imagery used in the novel, therefore is a further experience of woman's individual self. The description of the natural scenery is such that the whole world acquires meaning and existence only so far as it is grasped by a woman's consciousness. There is a great deal of personification. Take for instance, the following descriptions where inanimate objects are described in terms of human features:

Jacaranda gives way to gulmohar. Long before the drip-drop of rain, the mauve fuzziness blooms, moist, light and feathery. It was made for floating, wafting spinelessly in the arms of the brutal winds, a perfect woman who can sleep dreamlessly. (85)

It is the gulmohar that is the upstart, the noisy tyrant who usurps the purple numbness with her incessant chatter, resounding sighs, loud heaving sobs and raucous witch laughter (86)

This constant analogy is found everywhere in the novel. Even the wind is compared to an "over- eager mother"(93) This emphasis on a personal apprehension of the world is a significant feature of the novel and establishes it as a woman centred novel. Also, there is the frequent use of evocative words such as loneliness, uselessness etc. which belong to the well-defined domains of women. Such words keep on recurring in the novel and expresses the frustration of the protagonists.

One specific stylistic characteristic of the novel is a marked tendency to use simile especially the abundant use of animal imagery. Consider the following examples:

“Like a lizard that has lost its tail, he writhed convulsively,  
the open wound gaping.”(84)

“But we don’t look at each other furtively as some of the  
others do, their hands crawling across the sand like secretive  
crabs and colliding innocently.”(22)

*The Thousand Faces of the Night* is thematically informative because it contains deliberations on mythical characters, culture, traditions and the position of women in society. Devi’s grandmother relates the story of Amba:

The young princess had lived several lifetimes in a week or two. She cast aside her finery, the trappings of a life denied to her, and set out for the forest, a new hardness in her heart--The hardness that congealed into hatred was the child of the man who had spurned her (38).

Several statements regarding women’s position as uttered by the different characters in the novel, adds to the richness and profundity of the novel. Let us consider some of the startling observations, which reflect old Indian values as told by the worldly-wise grandmother and Baba.

“Because, my child, a woman meets her fate alone”(28)

“All husbands are noble, Devi . Even the blind and deaf one” (29)

“If you don’t have a child, you displease the gods, if the gods are angry, they make sure you don’t have a child”.

“A woman fights her battles alone”(36).

“The woman has no independent sacrifice to perform, no vow, no fasting, by serving her husband, she is honoured in the heavens”(55).

The major characteristic of Hariharan’s language is her sensitiveness and a love for the sound of words, which imparts a total aesthetic effect to the novel. The novelist aims at a deliberate asymmetry of sentences and tries to create a rhythmic pattern. The atmosphere, nature and landscape are significantly employed by Hariharan in order to



evoke the feelings of her characters, revealing thereby their hidden mental turmoil or attitudes. To quote S. Indira:

Though her survival is far more efficient than Mayamma's, the effort it has cost, the pain it has caused, however subtle, has been just as deep. A symbolic correlative is seen in the way she trains the Jasmine creeper to grow horizontally, filling its specified spaces on the supports provided, without allowing it to grow upward as its nature (180).

This correlation of individual psychology to the landscape and atmosphere heightens the symbolic effect of her imagery. Many words and phrases in the novel build up symbolic significance when they are repeated and add to the beauty of the sentence:

"I walked into an empty room, and turning to leave, I saw by the door an old hag, grinning evilly, so evilly that I remembered her from an older dream"(58).

"Alone, alone in the house with Mayamma and Baba's orphaned books, I read a page he had not read to me."

"The fever rose and fell, rose and fell till he was reduced to helpless, delirious moaning."(82)

A habitual repetitive grouping of letters "s" and "h" is also evident. It points towards an aesthetic intention of impressing the reader, as in the following lines:

"Go home, he hissed, and before I could turn around to run, his heavy hand marked my cheek with a stinging slap. Hussy that I was, I had stained the purity of the temple, with my gushing womanhood."(115)

Hariharan thus experiments with the language to convey faithfully all nuances and shades of thought and feeling. Women's fundamental experience in the domestic

sphere is one of repetition and waiting. By using repetitive words, Hariharan gives emphasis to the woman's point of view.

The novel is written in the first person narrative technique and moves into retrospective flashbacks. Hariharan tries to impute a semblance of impersonality on the narrator by adopting a plural point of view in the first and last chapter. The employment of myths is a prominent feature of Hariharan's novel. An important part of the narrative structure is the fables of childhood, which are introduced in the novel. As Devi points out:

My grandmother's stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion, a story in reply to each of my childish questions. She had an answer for every question. But her answers were not simple: they had to be decoded – Her stories fashioned moulds. Ideal moulds, impossibly ambitious, that challenged the puny listener to stretch her frame and fit into the vast spaces, live up to her illustrious ancestors (27).

The narratives constantly move from one phase of the protagonist's life to the other. This frequent time shift helps us to understand events from different perspectives. It also helps us to understand the psychology of the central character.

Hariharan has used myth as a powerful medium for expressing women's subtle feelings. Since the position of women in India is exemplified by the use of myth drawn from Indian culture, the mythical design becomes very effective. Women like Gandhari and Amba can remain human and close enough to contemporary Indian mind to become a vehicle of modern doubts and queries. They protest against male injustice in their own individual manner. The captivating power of the novel lies in the fact that many aspects of tradition are scrutinized and traditional values are recreated in new perspective. Accounts of the travails of womanhood endured by eminent representatives such as Amba and Gandhari are introduced and reinterpreted by the novelist. Githa Hariharan seems to assert that these tales have not lost their immediate relevance to our lives. The traditional myths have shaped and helped give meaning to people's lives for centuries. It

is also interesting to consider the different names of women characters in the novel such as Sita, Devi, Uma. These names acquire new meaning when considered in the context of classical Hindu mythology. S. Indira elaborates:

In Hindu mythology, the wife of Shiva has several names. She is both benevolent and fierce. As a loyal wife she is known as Parvati, the mountain girl, daughter of the Himalaya mountain, as Uma, 'mother', Gauri, 'white' and Sati 'virtuous.' As Devi, which simply means the 'Goddess', the spouse of Shiva unites both the personalities – the ferocious and the sublime. And as Sakti she is regarded as the motivating energy of the universe without which even Shiva is powerless to act. Paradoxically, it is only Devi, the Goddess, whether beneficent or cruel, who among the goddesses has an independent personality of her own (173).

Hariharan's clever use of names thus imparts a symbolic value to the general theme of the novel.

What emerges is that through her skilful use of myths, Hariharan succeeds in striking a skilful balance between what is contemporaneous and what belongs to no time. Marks of individuation, especially that of women's domain, is evident in the rhythm of speech, in the tendency of repetition, in the quality of diction and phrasing, in the peculiar intonation and speech mannerisms. *The Thousand Faces of Night* thus embodies in a sense the living truth of human life from an Indian woman's point of view.

## VII

When Githa Hariharan took to writing, the western prejudices regarding Indian English writing had already been shattered. Many writers like Narayan, Naipaul and Rushdie were able to write books, which established a permanent place in the English literary consciousness. Gradually, young writers like Amit Chaudhari, Mukul Kesavan and Vikram Seth became publishing events in the west. It is into this confident arena of the Indian English novel that Arundhati Roy strode into with her overwhelming talent.

Her very first novel, *The God of Small Things* earned the prestigious Booker prize and made her the first Indian woman to win it.

*The God of Small Things* relates the universal story of love and tragedy through the eyes of seven-year old twins. What sets the novel apart however, is the extraordinary linguistic inventiveness evident in it. Here, the novelist succeeds in inventing a new idiom and vocabulary to tell an old story. With its delicate humour and feel of the language, the novel has the clear stamp of authenticity, tranquility and triumph.

Arundhati Roy makes skilful use of her talents to give colour and life to the small town of Ayemenem. This is evident in the first paragraph of the first chapter itself, where the novelist highlights the natural scenic landscape of Kerala.

May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dust green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun (1).

The richness of language and the verbal exuberance employed by Roy is clearly evident here. The novel, on the whole, overflows with such great lines for literature under the sedate backdrop of the moss-green Meenachal river, giving due importance to the insects and the flowers, the wind and the water, sounds and their sense. The story is narrated in a manner that reveals a child's heightened capacity for looking at the world and wondering at it as life slowly unfolds. It makes use of language in an incredibly imaginative manner, as a way to illustrate how children see the world. Take for instance, the following lines:

Of the four things that were possible in Human Nature, Rahel thought that Infnate Joy sounded the saddest. Perhaps because of the way Chacko said it. Infnate Joy with a church sound to it. Like a sad fish with fins all over (118).

What is evident from this brief extract is that Arundhati has made use of capitalization, misspellings and a liberal sprinkling of italics so as to put the reader into the mind of a seven-year old child. Indira Nityanandam observes:

A writer writes to be read and in order to be read, Arundhati Roy writes in a style truly different from that of other Indo-English novelists---Roy writes with a linguistic stylistic exuberance, which lends a flavour and colour, though artificial, of its own to the entire novel. She writes differently to a great extent and in doing so breaks many of the accepted rules of language (113).

The novel is full of capitalized phrases and italicized words, which are used in order to emphasise certain viewpoints. As for instance, the following lines where the novelist dwells deep into the mind of Baby Kochamma:

“In her mind she kept an organized, careful account of Things She’d Done For People, and Things People Hadn’t Done For Her” (98).

“Determined not to let the past creep up on her she altered her thought at once. She. She might steal her present back” (29).

Roy’s range of expression is clearly superior. At the same time, we are aware that the writer is intent on putting all of her very considerable powers of language on display. To quote Rowena Hill:

Roy’s English is true Indian English, a cultivated but undoubtedly local variety, used with a fluency and a conviction not much seen up to now in writers whose English is not the product of long stays in Anglo-Saxon countries, and carried to original extremes of poetry and playfulness which, nevertheless, always contribute to the novel as a whole (79).

Roy's language very aptly harmonises with the Indian scene and successfully expresses the peculiar nuance of Indian life. The striking simile used by Roy adds to the beauty of the novel. She portrays the little town of Ayemenem where birds sit by on moving wires "like unclaimed baggage at the airport" (87), where blankets of coal dust floated down "like a dirty blessing"(86), where the moon-lit river falls from a swimmer's arms like "sleeves of silver"(289) and where the smell of shit hovered over the village "like a hat." At this very place, Sophie Mol dies a tragic death and the loss of Sophie Mol stepped around the Ayemenem House "like a quiet thing in socks"(15).

Metaphors and similes are also used to describe people. For instance, Mammachi's "pale, fine skin was creased like cream on cooling milk and dusted with tiny red moles"(166), the ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach were "like the divisions on a slab of chocolate" (175), the twins at birth looked like "twin seals, slick with their mother's juices"(40). The similes used by Arundhati also reveal her minute observation of life.

"Inspector Thomas Mathew's moustaches bustled like the friendly Air India Maharajah's, but his eyes were sly and greedy"(7).

"The Paradise Pickles and Preserves signboard rotted and fell inwards like a collapsed crown"(295).

The use of oxymorons also brings freshness and novelty to the expressions; such as Noisy Television silence (28), Beautiful Ugly Toads (187), A lucky leaf that wasn't lucky enough (73).

Arundhati Roy's language seems to absorb the Indian manner of gesture and speech without suffering any distortion. In order to provide the local colour, liberal use of Malayalam words is employed during conversations. This is chiefly attained through the character of Comrade K. N. M. Pillai who is a bilingual. T. Vinoda explains:

One of the remarkable creative choices that the novelist appears to have made in writing this novel is to set up an

inadequate bilingual, K.N M Pillai for her persona. For when an average Indian expresses himself in English the deviations from the L1 variety of English that invariably appear in his speech reveal his socio-linguistic background and allow us a glimpse of his cultural differentiae. This novel would have been less Indian and far less amusing had Arundhati Roy absolutely confined herself to the westernized Syrian Christian characters whose English approximates the standard British variety (64).

Some of the words used in the novel to provide the local colour are – *Naailey* (340), *Kushumbi* (185), *Kando* (178), *Orkunnilley* (128), *Enda* (287), *Madyo* (310), *Modi aayirikkum* (310), *Keto* (277).

Malayalam words are also used to indicate kinship relationship and while addressing people:

*Pappachi* (35), *Mammachi* (35), *Kochamma* (35), *Mon*, *Mol* (311), *Addheham* (270), *Allay edi* (278), *Oru Kaaryam parayathey* (277).

Although Malayalam words are used so abundantly in the novel, nowhere do we see a glossary of the words indicating the meaning. This is in striking contrast to most Indian English novels in which abbreviations and meanings are given at the back pages for the benefit of the non-native reader. Only the native Malayalam songs from folklore are translated into English mainly to emphasise the cultural background such as the very famous song from Thakazhi's *Chemeen*.

“Pandoru mukkuvan muthinu poyi, (Once a  
fisherman went to sea)

*Padinjara Kattathu mungi poyi*, (The west wind blew and swallowed his boat” (219).

There is also a reference to the Onam boat race, which is accompanied by the song:

*"Thaiy thaiy thaka thaiy thaiy thome!*  
*Enda da korangacha, chandi ithra thenjadu?*  
 (Hey Mr. Monkeyman, why's your bum so red?)"(196)

Words are also deliberately misspelt in the novel to emphasise the peculiarity of Malayalam speech. For example, die-vorced (30), Porketmunny (102), Amayrica (129), Yooseless (312), Lay Ter (146), Verrrry sweet. (323). Some of the unique adjectival expressions used by the novelist are also laudable attempts at a creative use of English. Expressions like fish swimming sense (30), die-able age (327), Gulf-money houses (13), elderly cucumber (20), Kissable mouth (23), pernickety attention (27) give a new dimension to the English language. Very often, colloquial expressions like communist patcha (27) are also transplanted in the novel. Short, one-word sentences and paragraphs as well as repetition of sentences and words are also frequently employed with lucidity and force.

Squashed Miss Mitten-shaped Stains in the Universe.  
 Squashed frog-shaped stains in the Universe  
 Squashed crows that had tried to eat the squashed  
 frog-shaped Stains in the Universe (82).

The novel is also sprinkled with single word sentences and paragraph

“Out	“Gate
In	Road
Up	Stones
Down.”(293)	Sky
	Rain” (285)

By displaying a glittering extravaganza of literary innovation, Arundhati Roy thus, frees the language from any staleness.



The high point of *The God of Small Things* is that from the first page to the last, we have a clear appreciation of the language's uniform competence. T.Vinoda points out:

The God of Small Things uses the Indian English idioms, collocations, vocabulary items, syntax and pronunciation to a telling effect. The disparity between what one has learnt to expect from standard English and what one finds manifested in the Indian English here has become a great creative opportunity for the novelist to light up some significant aspects of the common Indian personality. Style here is no longer a mere dress of thought, but is its soul. (68)

The language that Arundhati uses is not the language we read in English books. And that is clearly where she makes the difference. As she herself states in an interview to Alix Wibur:

“My language is mine, it is the way I think and the way I write – I don't scrabble around and try, and I don't sweat the language.”

Apart from the language, the most interesting thing about the novel is its structure. Instead of a straightforward narration of events in their chronological order, Roy employs a circuitous narrative. The novel slips back and forth between several different time frames. The story is told in the very first chapter and the rest of the chapters merely tell us about how and why the events took place. As the novelist explains about the complex structure, in an interview to Alix Wilbur:

I think that one of the most important things about the structure is that in some way the structure of the book ambushes the story. You know, it tells a different story from the story the book is telling. In the first chapter I more or less tell you the story, but the novel ends in the middle of the story, and it ends with Ammu and Velutha making love and it ends

on the word “tomorrow”. And though you know that what tomorrow brings is terrible, it is wonderful that it happened at all.

What is evident is that the English language as used by Arundhati Roy has clearly reached the process of naturalization. As Rowena Hill asserts:

“Her book is alive on all its inseparable levels and creates a vision of a terrible beauty which is born of compassion. No quotation can illustrate it” (82).

With her unique experiments in language and structure, the novel transcends all cultural, linguistic and social barriers. Regardless of nationality, it has appealed to people all over the world. The highest tribute to the novel is paid by Kamala Das when she admits:

“We didn’t take English lightly. We felt we had to beat the British at their own game --- But Arundhati uses English as a plaything. She can spit at correct English”(125).

*The God of Small Things*, in this sense, can be seen as an escape route to freedom, the attainment of which is the highest demand of any creative writer.

\* \* \*

It is evident that all the seven novelists studied in this chapter extend the limits of English language in their own individual manner. These writers present an illuminating view of the Indian socio-cultural matrix and make necessary modifications to Indianize English. It is this endeavour, to free themselves from the handicaps associated with the use of a foreign language that has contributed to the growth and development of Indian English writing. While seeking their individual identity, Indian writers in English have finally been able to forge a national identity also. It may be said that by conquering the English language, the Indian novelists have also conquered the English-speaking world.

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