



## 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY RENOWNED NOVELISTS AND THEIR CHOSEN THEMES – AN EXPLORATION

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### ABSTRACT

There appeared many historical novels such as *Padmini* of T. Ramakrishnan in English in 1903; His novel narrates the story of Talaikotte Battle, that 'never to be forgotten; Vijayanagara Empire. Romesh Chandra Dutt's '**The Slave Girl of Agra**' (1909) and Sir Jogendra Singh's '**Nurjahan**' (1909) are also historical romances. Manohar Malgonkar's '**Distant Drum**' and '**A Bend in the Ganges**' explore more about the two nation theory. Following these historical novels, there appeared many novels about social criticism and social protest of a distinctive group. Certain other novels tell about the racial marriage, culture of various regions and differences in languages etc.,

**KEYWORDS:** criticism, distinctive group, racial marriage, regions, historical novels and social protest.

### INTRODUCTION :

The novels written in modern times, Tagore's '**The Home and the World**' and '**Four Chapters**' say about politics and revolutionary movements of the twentieth century. '**The Sword and the Sickle**' of the MulkRaj Anand and **K.A. Abba's Ingulab** both commented about the politics of the twenties. '**Kandan the Patriot**' of K.S., Venkataramani (1932) and **Kanthapura(1938)** of Raja Rao were certain best novels in the early thirties. There were innumerable miseries and frustrations in the novels of N.S. Phadke's '**Leaves in the August Wind**' (English version of his own Marathi novel), Bhattacharya's '**So many Hungers**' (1947), R.K. Narayan's '**Waiting for the Mahatma**, (1955) and Kamala Markandaya's '**Some Inner Fury**, (1957) filled with partisan of art, in Kushwant Singh's '**Train to Pakistan**' (1956), Balachandra Rajan's '**The Dark Dancer**' (1959). We come across glimpses of horror during the partition period.

### A Literary Appreciation of Great Leaders

Father of our Nation Gandhi too exercised a potent influence on our language and literature through his own writing in English and Gujarathi. His autobiography, '**The Story of my Experiment with Truth**' is an imperishable classic. When Gandhi was tired or exhausted Dr. Sri. Raja Gopalachari assisted him in writing of autobiography into English.

Jawaharlal Nehru our Nation's eminent leader and great politician is identified as a superb writer in English. He has an amazing and idiomatic style in his writings. His autobiography and his '**Discovery of India**' are great masterpieces of his own. Whatever he sketches, it has an architectural fineness and perfection. "He was like a powerful current of fresh and that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths; like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes; like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of peoples mind," observes Nehru about Gandhi.

## Living Novelists

The latest list of top 10 Indian Writers in English today has been published recently. After a brief check out the following list of authors and their books are listed out as the Top 19 Indian Writers in English today.

### Salman Rushdie

The 1980s and 1990s saw a renaissance of Indian writing in English, making the task of choosing the top TEN authors of this genre especially, challenging. The renaissance was spearheaded by Salman Rushdie. He wrote a path breaking novel, '*Midnight Children*' in 1980. It was a grand success to him to have written such an unbeaten creation. Following this there has been a great of Indian authors writing in English. These contemporary writers emerged from various corners of India. Earlier writers like Nirad.C, Chaudhuri, R.K. Narayan, Malkuraj Anand or Raja Rao used English in its classical form. Salman Rushdie gave importance to multiculturalism in his novels with his Pidgin English and a new trend in writing, '*Midnight children*', *Shame*, '*The Moor's Last Sign*', '*Fury and Shalimar*', '*the Clown*' were certain other novels he wrote during 1980s. His '*The Satanic Verses*' was full of his most controversies with the usage of magic realism. He was accused of blasphemy by many Muslims because of certain allegedly irrelevant references to islam Prophet Mohammed, in 1989, Ayotollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa calling for the execution of the author, Rushdie. Many countries banned the book including India. Rushdie flew to U.K. in order to escape from the fury and punishment of the Khomeini Government. To this day Rushdie is being chased for execution of the fatwa.

### Vikram Seth

Vikram Seth stands second in the series who produced some magnificent works like *The Golden Gate*, '*A Suitable Boy*', '*An Equal Music*' and '*Two lives*'. A Suitable Boy, his second novel based in a post independent India, brought him into the limelight.

### Arundati Roy

Arundati Roy made a radical change with her commercial success in writing in having written her, '*The God of Small Things*'. It revealed the talent of Indian authors and brought her the Booker Prize and remained on the top of the New York Times best seller list for a long time. There started the trend of large advances no heard of until then among Indian writers.

### Rohinton Mistry

The rest of the authors to be discussed, in the coming list are, Rohinton Mistry, V.S.Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Tharoor and Upamanya Chatterjee. The author displayed the issue of affecting the Parsi Community in India. Although the novels are very long and make the readers tired of depression, the lyrical prose in them enchanted the readers. Some of her better known works include, '*Such a Long Journey*', '*Family Matters*' and '*A Fine Balance*'.

### V.S. Naipaul

V.S. Naipaul is of Indian origin, though he was born in Trinidad and was a Nobel Laureate. He was a prolific writer. His critical and scornful commentaries on the developing countries like India or the Caribbean and his evaluation and assessment of Muslim fundamentalism on non-Arab countries have become a subject of harsh criticism. V.S. Nai paul's works include '*A House for Mr. Biswas*', '*India*', '*A Wounded Civilization*', '*An Area of Darkness*' India '*A million Mutinies Now*' and '*A Bend in The River*'.

### Amitav Ghosh

Among the top ten contemporaries Amitav Ghosh is an author's respected name who has won many accolades including Sahitya Akademic Award and the Prix Medici's, Etrangere of France. He

produced the most lyrical and insightful works on the effect of colonialism on the native people. His books were *'The Circle of Reason'*, *'The Glass Palace'*, *'The Calcutta Chromosome'* and *'The Hungry Tide'*.

### **Jhumpa Lahiri**

Jhumpa Lahiri is a recent entrant into the world of Indian Writers. His debut book, *'The Interpreter of Maladies'* stormed the literary world, which won him the prestigious Pulitzer prize in 2000. The *'Namesake'*, his first novel is an ambitious attempt he made to sketch out the lives of an immigrant family through the eyes of a young boy. Both the books received brickbats as well as accolades.

### **Shashi Tharoor**

Shashi Tharoor's works include, *The Great Indian Novel* and *Show Business*,. His latest book, *'India; From Midnight to Millennium'* is a non-fiction and is a chronicle of India's past and its further projection.

### **Upamanyu Chatterjee**

Upamanyu Chatterjee is the last among top ten writers who deserves a mention. He was one of the first Indian authors who found success outside India with his debut novel, *English, August (1988)*. It is a witty and amusing book full of wry human portraying India.

### **Rabindranath Tagore**

Rabindranath Tagore is an all round creative genius of our country. Tagore's poetry appears with such fineness and cohesion in form, matter and feeling. It is all his own. And yet he is rooted in the soil of his land. He had drunk deeper than anyone else, from the mainsprings of Indian poetry.

He is the most Indian of the Indian poets as well as the most universal. He was always open to receive from every quarter and from every source from English poetry to Bengali nursery rhyme, from the most elaborate classical symphony to the simplest rustic time. But whatever he received he made his own; he was incapable of imitation of any kind. He wrote poems with the ultimate source of creation and continuation of life in every form. His notation in writing poetry is universal from the Indian point of stance.

Tagore travelled all over the civilized world, and was received everywhere with warmth and spontaneous welcome. He was a quiet thinker at most times but he was capable of quick decision and prompt action when needed. *Viswa Bharati* and *Santiniketan* are the standing evidences for his power of organization and long-time planning. He produced his poetry by a very healthy mind housed in an uncommonly strong, healthy and handsome body.

In Tagore's early days he had no social contacts available to a boy from an ordinary middle-class home as he was the youngest of his mother's fourteenth issues, he heard stories of Rama, Mahabharata and recited versions from Meghaduta all told by his elder brothers. He had finished reading Bengali novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji when he was a teen-ager.

The poet envisages a glorious image of India as a nation about to rise up from the stupor of ignorance and inactivity. Herem in these lines we can recall Vivekanda, the great youth prophet's call to the youth of our country by saying:

***"Arise, Awake and stop not until  
Your goal is reached".***

Chetan Bhagat, the author of the select novels under study too delivers his address to the youth of India to be aware of things happening around him in connection with the corruption, education, secularism and rants. At the major problems of India and introduces the concept and the need for the common Indian values that India is lacking.

Chetan Bhagat tries to his best to mobilize youth through his writings as well as the social network. Besides many musical plays, tragic and comic dramas Rabindranath Tagore created many short stories in Bengali (1891) and remained the best. The sense of frustration in human life is tersely and exquisitely expressed by Tagore in his dramas. Tagore's stories are neat and perfect, and they can be compared favorably with the best in any language. His first two novels have their plots taken from the history of the seventeenth century Bengal, in 1883 and 1885. Some fifteen years later the next novel. Cokher Bali (Eye-sore, 1902) was written by Tagore. The psychosis of the characters is followed realistically, and this is unique for Indian literature.

Tagore wrote the great novel '**Gora**' (1910) about the problems of the individual. It also narrates about the problems of the society and the state. Gora had been rightly viewed as a Mahabharata of Modern India. The social and political destiny of the country is boldly indicated and there is a clear prediction of the non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi. Ghare Baire (At Home and Outside, 1916) followed by Chaturanha (The Quarter 1916) was introduced in 1916.

Jogayog, Seser Kavitha (1929), Dui Bon (The two sisters, 1933) and Malanca. The Florist's Garden (1934) are long stories of Novelettes.

Char Adhyay (Four Chapters, 1934) was written in Ceylon. It is a novel no doubt, but in length, it is little more than a long story. There is an attempt here to analyze the real motives and values of the revolutionary activities of violence in Bengal that followed the non-co-operation movement and Tagore shows that however a patriotic or philanthropic motive there may be, it is never a man's duty to follow it if it goes against his conscience or good sense. Tagore's deep sympathy for the independence movement and his admiration for the young men and women, who sacrificed themselves for the cause of independence, have found glowing expression in this last novel of his. At the same time his acute insight and far-reaching vision have not missed the lurking pitfalls of a bloody revolution. That Tagore's analysis and assessment was essentially correct was proved inversely by the luke warm acceptance of the novel by the general apathy of the common readers when it was first published.

In spite of all the above poems, dramas, novels etc., Tagore wrote essays on religious matters, political issues and about his extensive travels in India and abroad. Tagore has also written innumerable letters with full of literary green and thoughtful content.

Rabindranath Tagore ranks with the greatest masters of the craft of writing stories. He brings the smallest details of life with the analysis of human relationships. K. Chandrasekharan feels that "Tagore's capacity for arresting descriptions, his highly cultivated sensitiveness to beauty and penetrating analysis of the relationship between human beings, have all brought us a wealth of felicity derivable from literature", Ibid.

### **Toru Dutt**

With an impeccable feeling for words, Toru Dutt had remarkable gifts for poetic description, narration and dialogue. The poetry of Toru Dutt mirrors, to a certain extent, her own life. And as such some relevant biographical facts may lead us to a better understanding and appreciation of Toru Dutt's poetry.

Toru wrote two novels, one in English names, '**Bianca or the Young Spanish Maiden**' and another in French entitled, "**Journal de Mademoiselle Arvers**". A friend critic considers her a linguistic prodigy and remarks.

*" This one surpasses all the prodigies.  
She is a French Women like  
Ourselves. She thinks, she writes  
Like one of us".*

Toru had a special liking for the story of Satyavan, Dhruva, Ekalava, Sindu, Hiranyakasipa and Prahlad. She listened to all these tales without any tiresome and rendered them into exquisite pieces of poetic excellence.

### **Mulkraj Anand**

The Indian novelist, Mulkraj Anand is not usually attracted to new techniques in plotting, narration and characterization. As a rule, description of sex life used to be prudish, but writing in is less inhibited in novels published in recent years. Norms are changing in India too. The Indian novelists tried 'the stream of consciousness' the method of narration. One can find stern consistency in the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan. Anand hails from India while Narayan from almost the Southern end of the Peninsula. Born at Peshawar in 1905, Mulk Raj Anand had his education in Lahore, London and Cambridge.

The first five novels of him appeared in the following sequence: '*Untouchable*' (1935), '*Coolie*' (1936), '*Two Leaves and a Bud*' (1937), '*The Village*' (1939) and '*Across the Black Water*' (1940). Therefore, however, several novels and collections of short stories: '*The Sword and the Sickle*', '*The Barber's Trade Union*', '*The Big Heart*', '*The Tractor and the Corn Goddess*', '*Seven Summers*', '*Private Life of an Indian Prince*', and '*Morning face*'.

Anand's first three novels were banned by the Indian Government. The names of these novels appeared like so many packets of dynamite: They ruffled the bureaucracy. One of them, '*Two Leaves and a Bud*', had to be withdrawn from circulation in England on the threat of prosecution as an obscene book.

Of all the novels, *Untouchable* is most compact and artistically satisfying, *Coolie* is the most extensive in space and time, evoking variegated action and multiplicity in characters, while *Two Leaves and a Bud* is the most effective as a piece of implied indictment.

*Untouchable* is further, the shortest of the novels, and the most revealing and rewarding of the lot. The *untouchable* covers the events of a single day in the life of the 'low caste' boy, Bakha, in the town of Bulashah. Anand is the most competitive writer with nearly three dozen books to his credit. All his major novels reveal his basic concern for the down-trodden and his relentless zeal for social justice. Anand deals with the misery and wretchedness of the poor and their struggle for a better life. He showed eagerness to raise the position of the untouchables, the peasants, the serfs, the coolies and the other suppressed members of the society, to human dignity and self-awareness in view of their untold sufferings, despair and apathy they were put into.

### **Prof. Mehta says:**

*"Dr. Anand, in all his novels emphasizes the fact that nobility and dignity is not the monopoly of the rich. The poor have their greatness, honour as well as the rich. Mute inglorious Miltons and Cromwell's are not uncommon in the ranks of the poor"*

**R.K. Narayan as a Novelist**

R.K. Narayan is a novelist and an ardent writer of the middle class. Narayan sets his stories on the traditional Malgudi. He has dealt with the town Malgudi and its surroundings in all his works and short stories.

His novels may be classified as early novels, domestic novels-dealing with Mammon-worshippers and political novels. His early novels-'*Swami and Friends*', '*Bachelor of Arts*' and '*The English Teacher*'- although of slender structure and plot show signs of his future brilliance.



'Swami and Friends' has for its background a town called Malgudi lying on the border of the states of Mysore and Madras. Malgudi is for Narayan what Weymouth had been for Hardy. All his novels are set in Malgudi. There are river Sarayu, Nallappa's Mango Grove and the Memphis Forest. There are also numerous streets and lanes like Kabeer Street, Kabeer lane, Sarayu street, Smith street, Vinayaka Temple, Mudali Street, etc., Later there are some improvements like the Lawley Extension. The Albert Mission School has become Albert Mission College from which the hero of 'Bachelor of Arts' graduates and in which the hero of 'The English Teacher' delivers his lectures on English Literature.

Narayan's novel '**The Dark Room**' is a study of domestic disharmony. It deals with the tragedy of domestic life. The hero of this novel is Ramani, a successful branch manager of Insurance Company. He has a middle aged wife namely, Savitri and three children namely, Babu, Kamala and Sumathi. The early chapters are devoted to his life and moods. Later a lady named Shanta Bai is taken as an Insurance Organiser for improving business and he soon falls in love with her. Rumours get widespread. Savitri's life becomes highly miserable and she attempts to commit suicide. But she is saved by a blacksmith, returns home and takes up her normal duties as a housewife.

'**The Financial Expert**' of Narayan's novel based on the town of Malgudi is a precious book, full of hidden humours. The story deals with a middle aged money lender, Margayya. Dr. Pal, a 'Journalist, correspondent and author' and Margayya's son Balu whose progress from charming childhood to spoiled, frustrated manhood all contribute to the saddest episodes. Margayya the sad, ambitious, absurd financial expert is perhaps the most engaging of all Narayan's characters.

Narayan's next novel, '**Mr. Sampath**' is most unusual and its way a minor masterpiece. '**The Guide**' which won for Narayan the Sahitya Academi Award shows the novelist's skill in placing the Orient into fashion for Occidental eyes. The hilarious charming and typical novel, 'The Man-eater of Malgudi' of Narayan is delightfully funny and deeply thoughtful.

The novel, '**Waiting for the Mahatma**' of Narayan has a special significance of its own. Here the author has encompassed a wider theme and handled it with great artistry. Narayan's latest novel '**The Vendor of Sweets**' also has the usual freshness and vigour, but it deals with a theme unlike that of his previous novels. The clash of affections is nicely depicted. Thus in all his novels, as Dr. Iyengar feels,

*"Narayan presents smiles and tears  
together, smiling through the tears  
In things and glimpsing the rainbow  
Magnificence of life"*

**Raja Rao as a Novelist**

Raja Rao is hailing from Mysore from an old and learned Brahmin family. Raja Rao's first novel, '**Kanthapura**' appeared in 1938. A volume entitled, '**The Cow and the Barricades**' containing the collection of short stories, was published in 1946. Raja Rao's '**The Serpent and the Rope**' was published in 1960. His next novel '**The Cat and Shakespeare**' appeared in 1965. He is a versatile writer in three languages Kannad, French and English. He won Sahitya Academi Award and was honoured with the title of 'Padma Bhushan' by the government of India in 1969.

### Women Novelists

Shashi, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandeya and Shashi Deshpande were other women novelists of Indian writers in English.

### Kamala Markandeya as a Novelist

There are several outstanding writers of no mean wisdom who have compelled world attention. Even more than men, women writers, gifted with extraordinary talents have made Indo-English Literature a matter of interest evinced by the publishers as well as readers.

Kamala Markandeya is the most outstanding Indo-English novelist and has about six novels to her credit. She follows a unique narrative technique and structure in her novels. Her '**Nectar in Sieve**'

is the most widely read and has been a compulsory study in Asian studies and in American Universities. Her '*Some Inner Fury*' is a superb success and had made Markandeya a major fiction writer. '*A Silence of Desire*' is her third novel. It is the most ambitious novel which bridges the chasm between matter and spirit, doubt and faith.

Markandeya's '*Some Inner Fury*' is a superb success and made the author a prolific writer that India has produced. Mira is a beautiful Hindu girl. Richard is an official of the British Government of India. They are worlds apart, yet they met and fell in love. This is their story. This is a compelling novel of two young people whose love cut across the boundaries of hatred and survived the terrors of war. Markandeya's next novel '*Possession*' is a story narrated by Anusuya. Her novel, '*To Whom She Will*' is a vivid analysis in social observation; the social etiquette and manners are more specifically depicted in this novel.

The other novels of her, '*Get Ready for the Battle*', '*From Fear Set Free*', '*A Time to be Happy*', and her latest novel, '*Storm in Chandigarh*' deal with social atmosphere of the modern world and with the realities of the situation and makes a sincere exposure of the events of life.

### Anita Desai

Anita Desai occupies a distinguished place among the Indo-Anglian Writers, whose maiden novel; '*Cry the Peacock*' put her in the front rank of contemporary novelist. Her '*Voices in the City*' is also much acclaimed. Her latest novel is '*Bye-By, Black Bird*'. She has added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction. She deals with the exploration of sensibility rather than outer world of action.

Anita Desai is a reputed Indo-Anglian woman novelist. She is known for her distinctive style and intensely individual imagery. In her first novel, '*Cry the Peacock*', the narrator is a hyper sensitive young woman, tense and over wrought. The main pattern of the contrast between the woman's response to the world through her senses, and her husband's response through his intellect. '*Cry the Peacock*' of Anita Desai is a typical 'feminine' novel, a novel of sensibility rather than of action. Its concern is almost wholly with the terrors of existence.

Besides all the above there were many other postcolonial reputed authors like Bhabani Bhattachariya, Amitabh Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Raj Kamal Jha, Jumpa Lahiri, Shobha De, Manju Kapur, Anita Nair to name but a few aiming at encouraging variegated opinions, without confirming to fixed and rigorous critical canons they have focused on novels, but also on the other forms of literature that are brilliant evocation of historical, psychological and subliminal issues.

### Amitabh Ghosh

Amitabh Ghosh is one of the foremost Indian diasporic writers in modern Indian English writing who believes in what Ahmad has said. His reputation rests on '*The Circle of Reason*' (1986), '*The Shadow Lines*' (1988), '*Quotations found*' (1992), '*The Calcutta Chromosome*,' '*A novel on Fevers, Delirium and Discovery*' (1996), '*The Glass Palace*' (2000), the nonfiction. The Glass Palace won the 2001 Frankfurt e-book Award of fifty thousand dollars Grand Prize for non - fiction. He has presented a unique rendition of history in fiction from the international perspective and writes imaginatively about the process of colonization in India, Burma and Malaya.

The novel opens with the distant noise of the 'English Canon' outside the royal palace called the "*Glass Palace*" is Mandalay where a coal-black in Mandalay where a coal-black Kaala Rajkumar, the eleven year old Indian orphan from Bengal, is serving in Ma Cho's tea-stall. The Burmese King Thebaw and the piquant queen Supayalat, the royal prisoners, are deported into exile in Ratnagiri in Maharashtra and the palace itself is on the brink of defeat after the declaration of King Thebaw's "*Royal Proclamation*".

His majesty, who is watchful that the interest of our religion and our state shall not suffer, will himself march forth will efface these heretics and conquer and Amax their country. To uphold the religion, to uphold the national honour, to uphold the country's interests will bring about threefold

good-good of our religion, good of our master and good of ourselves and will gain for us the important result of placing us on the path to the celestial regions and to Nirvana(16).

### Jhumpa Lahiri

Jhumpa Lahiri pioneered the venture of a collection of short stories entitled *Interpreter of Maladies* and was named by New Yorker as “One of the 20 best writers under the age of 20” (www.saja.org). Like Edgar Allan Poe, Jhumpa adheres to the fineries of a short story to heighten the effect to the apogee she strives to achieve total effect through the process of brevity, perspicuity and verity of experience. “Lahiri is the kind of writer who makes you want to grab the next person you see and say, ‘Read this!’ She’s a dazzling story teller with a distractive voice, an eye for nuance, an ear for irony. She is one of the finest short story writers I’ve read”, says Army Tan at the back cover of the text.

Jhumpa’s other stories are, *‘Sexy Mrs. Sen’*, *‘This Blessed House’*, *‘The Treatment of Bibi Halder’* and a *‘Temporary Matter’*.

A precarious balancing of two cultures, forging a path and forming a bridge are tight rope walking, migrant Indian English writers do. The new generations of Americans, born of Indian immigrant parents are presented by this young and vibrant writer. Her first novel, *The ‘Namesake’* published in 2003 and her collection of short stories, *Interpreter of Maladies*, published in 1999, which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction 2000, made her a literary celebrity overnight. Lahiri, being the daughter of Bengali parents, her heritage and culture are influenced by India and the United States. This multicultural life style, with perplexing experiences of these bicultural worlds prominent in both her books.

### Rajkamal Jha

*‘The Blue Bedspread’* (1999), being the debut novel of Raj Kamal Jha, the novelist shot into literary fame with its publication. This novel bagged the prestigious commonwealth Prize for literature. His second novel, *‘If you are Afraid of Heights’* (2003), published after a considerable gap, continued to maintain the standard that Jha, as a novelist, has set for himself. This novel presents the peculiarities of the landscape and life of Kolkata, a typical Indian city undergoing fast change to cope with the pace of development. It focuses the common and often neglected class of individuals, struggling to come to terms with their hopes and despair.

*‘If you are afraid of Heights’*, the second novel, is set in three parts, each part presenting a different story. Rima and Amir meet by chance in midnight during an accident and consequently acquainted each other, the messages of a news reporter Mala uncovering the incident of a girl child’s rape and murder in a suburban town, the fears of a young girl shaken by suicides in her neighborhood, are the pivotal stories recounted in the three parts respectively. Even though placed independently the three stories are linked together in so far as these commonly constitute the body of the fictional world the novelist aims to project.

### Siddharth Shanghvi

Siddharth Dhanvant Shanghvi’s debut novel *‘The Last Song of Dusk’* is one of the most recent voices that have made an instant mark in the literary scene. The kind of deep understanding into the realm of intricate human relationships, of love and loss, of darker or shady aspects of human characters that he exhibits and the deft style of writing make Shanghvi’s work a true winner. No winner, the book has already won the first novel Betty Trask Award for him. Through the explorations of love and loss, sexuality and innocence friendship and solitude it is surely another great debut of India. In the exotic technique of Magic Realism, Shanghvi weaves the tale of the Gandaravas in a combination of humour, darkness and exuberance. *The Last Song of Dusk*, a song of dawn for Shanghvi – has already won wide acclaim in the literary circles. It has received rave reviews like this one from Book list.



### Shashi Tharoor

Shashi Tharoor's *'Rio't*, published in 2001, is an interesting mixture of facts and fiction presented through various narrative modes. The plot of the fiction revolves around the death of Priscilla Hart, an American doctoral student working for an NGO in Zalilgorh in Northern India. The book begins with a newspaper report informing us about a riot. The novel revisits the sight of the incident and reconstructs the circumstances surrounding the death. Along with the main thread of the story that resolves around the affair between Priscilla Hart and V. Lakshman, the Stephen's educated District Magistrate, the narrative also includes perspective on the socio-cultural milieu and political traditions that influence and shape the environment of the Indian sentiment.

Tharoor, by simultaneously offering divisive and variant notions of the historical impetus, brings into sharp focus the limitations of historical knowledge that is at best seen as a creative discourse which "actively" survives with the nebulous notions of "truth" and "reality". In other words, Riot characterizes historical narrations as inventions or fictions.

***"which have more in common with  
Their counterparts in literature than  
They have with those in the sciences"***

Here, in this novel, history is constructed as a fiction in which the uses of formal literary devices have been involved. To quote Hutcheon, both history and fiction,

***"are cultural sign system, (and)  
Ideological construction" (292).***

### Anita Nair

Anita Nair's ventures have produced some good works and in a little span of her career she has gained an international reputation. Her first publication was *'With Satya of the Subway'*, a collection of short stories. She has made news with two novels, *'A Better Man'*, (2000) and *'Ladies Coupe'* (2001). *'Her Malabar Mind'* (2002) is her poetic sparks. Anita Nair has written a collection of writings on Kerala. Her latest book, Puffin Book of World Myth and Legends, which makes readers realize Nair's concern for all classes and groups of people.

Anita Nair's *'Ladies Coupe'* is set in a railway compartment specially meant for ladies. Six ladies in the coupe narrate their stories and share their secrets lying deep in their hearts. The train journey, through various tunnels and wild vegetation, unfolds a backward journey, which the ladies undertake in their lives. The vivid realization of their roles separates from them their real selves. Their agitated minds and their longing bodies need heaven's rain, which cannot only wash their complicity between their bodies and souls, the body finally wins since it is the body and bodily desires that dictate the soul.

#### 1.10.9 Manjoo Kapur

A group of Indian Women novelists in their inbetweenness, hybridity of thought and multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious social dimensions have contextualized the women problem in general and middle class and upper class women in particular. While the same language of Silence, that is spoken in practice in too many countries; Indian women novelists like Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Arundati Roy and Manju Kapoor have tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women.

Manju kapur's novel, *'A Married Woman'* is a work of investigative reporting of the most controversial and political issue of the demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman's love and lesbianism. The novel is a kind of narrative on a woman's incompatible marriage and resultant frustration and political turmoil in its historical context. In the novel, Kapur has taken writing as a protest, a way of mapping from the point of a woman's experience. Kapur has proved through his woman protagonist that,

*“A woman should be aware, self controlled,  
Strong willed, self reliant and rational,  
Having faith in the inner strength of  
Womanhood, A meaningful change  
Can be brought only from within by  
Being free in the deeper psychic sense”*

Astha, a sensitive daughter of an enlightened father and orthodox mother has grown in a middle-class educated house wife, teacher painter and a lesbian in her status of a married woman. She fights for her self assertions. Unlike many married girls she had her infatuations of adolescent love for Buntty, a boy from another colony and for a better career. But her real story of love and marriage started with Hemant, the son of a successful government official in Delhi. Soon after marriage Astha gets disillusioned about human nature in general and politics of the country in particular. Sharing her feeling,

*“We should struggle with her, agonize  
Together with about her choices, and  
Weep with her once she’s made them”.*  
Astha realizes herself that,  
*“A willing body at night, a willing  
Pair of hands and feet in the day  
On an obedient mouth” (231)*

Are the essential prerequisites of a married woman? She contemplates marriage a terrible decision as it puts her in a lot to enjoy bouts of rage, pain and indecision.

## CONCLUSION

Hence it is of more useful to the students of English Literature, researchers and even it would appeal to those interested in the English works of Indian Writers. It will undoubtedly enkindle in readers an avid interest towards their works and also help them sharpen their critical understanding and appreciation with its ample food for thought.

Nevertheless, it would be more appropriate to note that the readings of the novels and other literary works of the above authors have been many a leading lights to the later novelists like that of **Chetan Bhagat** of the present century, to have become a block buster novelist attracting millions of readers, to understand the ‘Youth Icon’ in the author and the Indian Youths, their cultural conflicts, his representation of his autobiography and the sportive spirit found in himself and his protagonists in his select novels of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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