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SURVEY OF INDIAN-ENGLISH NOVEL

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Survey of Indian-English Novel

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Abstract – Development of Indian-English literature needs being discussed before the survey of Indian-English novel. Though English is not our mother tongue, yet our creative writers have got command over English writing and have secured a distinguished position among the renowned writers of English literature. Indian-English literature as critics say, began as an interesting by-product of an eventful encounter in the late eighteenth century between a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant as well as chaotic India.

Key words : Indian-English, distinguished

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INTRODUCTION

In defining its nature and scope mainly two problems were confronted by the historians of this literature: first, this body of writing had been designed variously as “Indo-Anglian literature”; “Indian-Writing in English”; and “Indo-English literature”; secondly, the failure to make clear-cut distinctions had also often led to a confusion between categories such as “Anglo-Indian literature”; “Literature in the Indian Languages translated into English and original composition in English”; Hence E. F. Oaten in his A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature (1908), considers the poetry of Henry Derozia as a part of “Anglo-Indian literature, and also includes Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore among “Anglo-Indian Writers” along with F. W. Bain and F.A. Steel. In his extensive survey Indian Writing in English (1962), K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar has included English translations of Tagore’s novels and plays, done by others in his history of Indian Creative Writing in English. John B. Alphonso Karkala Indo-English Literature in the Nineteenth Century (1970), used the “Indo-English literature” to mean “literature produced by Indians in English”.

Thus Indian-English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors who belong to India by birth, ancestry or nationality. It is undimmed that neither “Anglo-Indian literature” nor literal translations by others can legitimately form part of this literature. Now it is apparent that Indian-English literature, thus defined, is not a part of English literature. It is legitimately a part of Indian literature.

Another problem which the historians of this literature used to face was that to choose from among the various appellations given to it from time to time, as – “Indo-Anglian literature”; “Indian-Writing in English”; “Indo-English literature”; and “Indian-English literature”. The first of these terms was first used as the title of the Specimen Compositions From Native

Students, published in Kolkata in 1883. But after alterations the Sahitya Akademi has accepted “Indian-English literature” as the most suitable appellation for this body of writing.

After the Battle of Plassey (1757), the British who had come to India to sell, decided also to rule. The business of ruling naturally involved the shaking of India of her roots. But those engaged in shaking were also instrumental in planting the seeds of a modernization process in the eighteenth century which started burgeoning in the nineteenth century. The rise of Indian-English literature was an aspect of the Indian renaissance.

Novel is a work of fiction in which imagination and intellect both are combined to express life in the form of a story. Imagination is always directed and controlled by intellect. Novel is more concerned in men and women as they are rather than in romance or adventure. It aims to show the motives and influences which govern human life, and the effects of personal choice upon character and destiny. Such is the true novel and a true novel opens a wider and more interesting field than any other type of literature.

The rise of novel in India was not purely a literary phenomenon. It was a social phenomenon as much, rather the fulfilment of a social need. It was associated with social, political and economic conditions which were comparable to those which favoured its rise in England. The appearance of the novel as a literary form in the nineteenth century India as it did in eighteenth century England synchronized with the rise of individualism. Its rise was one aspect of the dawn of what may be called the modern era in Indian literature, an era which was itself ushered by a fast changing social order.

The eighteenth century was an age of anarchy from a political point of view. The first four decades of the

nineteenth century were eventful but the great events which took place between 1818 and 1850 led to the establishment of a settled government. Through the reverberation of the outbreak of the mutiny in 1857, the government of India was brought directly under the crown.

The “Sepoy Mutiny” is said to have completed the social estrangement between the rulers and the ruled, an alienation which had far-reaching effects on all the social and cultural relations between the English and the Indians in the years that followed and also influenced all “Anglo-Indian writing”. This new era which was born, was an era of accentuated race consciousness on the part of the British rulers and this race consciousness as well as social estrangement were further emphasized when the government assumed the responsibility of bringing about great social reforms. Most of the reforms had already been made by Lord William Bentinck. He abolished many social evils with Raja Rammohan Roy. All these wickedness were eliminated by education and also Indian society accepted those reforms without much resistance. It focuses that India was standing at the threshold of a new epoch undergoing a radical transformation in her social and religious ideas. She owed the transformation to the impact of western ideas and culture which came through English education.

Warren Hasting, the first Governor General of the East-India company as well as an Oxford scholar, poet and pioneer of Asian studies in 1783, founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in Kolkata in 1784. The purpose of establishment of schools for teaching English, however, was first mooted by Charles Grant, a civil servant of the company. Unfortunately Grant could not succeed in but his dream was fulfilled by William Carey, who laid the foundation of English education in India which was supplemented as well as reinforced by the reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy.

The introduction of English education was a very decisive turning point in the history of the nation. Very soon English education became the only passport to higher appointments made available to Indians and hence its popularity and rapid progress were assured. It was significant that India came into contact with western ideas at the time when the spirit of rationalism and individualism dominated European thought. The most important result of the impact of Western culture on Indian society was the replacement of superstitions and blind faith by reason and science. The rationalizing effect of English education, which at first manifested itself, particularly in Bengal, in religious and social ideas, began to affect profoundly in political consciousness of the people too.

From 1920 to 1947, the novel was influenced by Gandhian philosophy and feeling of patriotism. English novel achieved the semblance of literary movement only in 1930s. During this period the shadow of Gandhi loomed large on India's political and social horizon. It was related to India's struggle for independence. K.S.

Venkatramani's Murugan the Tiller (1927); Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable (1935); Coolie (1936); Raja Rao's Kanthapura (1938); were directly inspired with Gandhian ambience.

CONCLUSIONS

Awareness of a new generation, though different in thought and attitudes from its predecessors, is the hall mark of the Indian English novels that appeared at the turn of the century. New generation Indian English novelists are products of a sharply changing society. Their novels are characterized by uninhibited narrative with no holds barred about sex, incest and registered strong antagonism to the socio-cultural mores and religious beliefs of the earlier generation. New generation novelists project the dilemma and expectations of the Indian youth – the relationship with parents, job-crisis, cultural alienation, representing a generation in flux and unattached. This detailed survey, so far, gives an evidence of a substantive space of woman and her issues claim in this fast changing society. With the demands of changing world and society, demands of woman are also changing which cannot be ignored for a long time now.

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