

# Portrayal of Historical Illustrations in Indian English Novels

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## Abstract:

The term 'history' refers to the events, incidents, and changes of the history. The record of history, and its interpretation, perspective and the comment of the annalist play a vital part in shaping the documents of the history. So, history has been considered as scientific and data offered in the books of history need to be examined and analysed carefully. Indian Pens in English have made the most significant donation in the field of the English novel. Indian novel has grown vastly in bulk variety and maturity. Indian English literature is now a reality, which cannot be ignored. The Indian pens have made the most remarkable donation to the sphere of fabrication, which as Mulk Raj Anand says, has "come to stay as part of world literature". Still, Indian jotting in English in the Contemporary erudite Script enjoys equal status with the literatures of the other Countries. Indian pens have made their voice heard around the World in the Indian way, expressing too artistically.

**Keywords:** History, Explication, donation, wide, contemporary, global recognition, recent times.

Indian English Literature refers to the body of workshop by authors in India who write in English and whose native orca-native language could be one of the multitudinous languages of India. It's also connected with the workshop of members of the Indian Literal representation. The veritably description of the adjective "Indian" then's hazy. Numerous of these pens neither live in India, nor are Indian citizens. As a order, this product comes under the broader field of Literal Novels – the corollary from preliminarily colonised countries similar as India Though one can trace similar pens in India to a century back, Indian jotting in English has come into force only in the last couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes.

The first Indian English novel was Raj Mohan's Wife (1935) by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. The Colonial period (1858- 1947) saw a renaissance in Indian Historical Novels. In Mulk Raj Anand's the Black Waters (1939) set during WWI, an Indian soldier realizes that the European war is not his. Raja Rao's Kanthapura (1938) describe the rise of Gandhi's Freedom movement in a village and a ruthless suppression. One of the best Indian Historical novel The Shadow from Ladakh by Bhabani Bhattacharya.

He is portrayed India – China border war, the novel discuss with the conflict and compromise between two separate modes of life represented by steel town and Gandhi gram. Azadi by Chamn Nahalis one of the novel of Gandhi string Quartet. "Nahal's view is not to depict history but to describe the significance of the Historical tragedy of the partition on ordinary people" (226). Azadi not just mirrors the brutality and monstrosities of the partition.

Bhisham Sahani's (1915 -2003) epic work Tamas is a novel based on the riots of 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. Seeing the bloodshed in the process of partition, Shani demands, "the government should take effective steps to bring the situation unless control... or....or...Vultures will fly over the city." (sahni.2008).the thematic and linguistic expressions make it completely sensitive, but it presents a rational study of the time of partition.

The Big Three and what is called the new writing in Indian English of the 1980's some writers of the 1950's writers like Anita Desai, Khush want Singh and Arun Joshi have made their presence felt on the scene of Indian Writing. Anita Desai is one of the identified writers of this period. She has published eight novels till date of which the most famous are: Cry the Peacock (1965), Clear Light of the Day (1980) which was short listed for the Booker Award and Fire on the Mountain (1977) for which she was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978. Arun Joshi has four novels to his credit: The Foreigner (1963), The Strange case of Billy Biswas (1971), The Apprentice (1974) and The Last Labyrinth (1981). Both these writers represent the modernist-existential strain in Indian Fiction in English. Before Khush want Singh made his foray into writing he splashed in Journalism and law. His two novels: Train to Pakistan (1956: Published as Manomajra) and I shall not Hear the Nightingale (1959) portrayed the human tragedy behind the Partition of India in 1947. He is also recognised as a literate Sikh historian.

The direction of Indian Writing in English is highly influenced by Salman Rushdie's and he has attained a very important position in the literary field with a high respectable place in the readers. Midnight Children was truly a fate changing novel for Rushdie and predictable

example of postcolonial novel that mixes the elements of magic realism into it.

“Condemned by a perforated sheet to a life of fragments, I have nevertheless done better than my grandfather because while Adam Aziz remained the sheet’s victim, I have become its master.” -- Salman Rushdie in *Midnight’s Children*

Personal experiences of the characters in *Midnight’s Children* are closely related to the national history of Indian and Pakistan. It is set in the context of actual historical events as with historical fiction. The protagonist symbolizes the country Indian as they were both born at the same time and the writer made this very clear in his writing. He does not only experience historical events, but also takes part in it. For example, he assists his uncle General Zulfikar as he makes the revolution against the Pakistani government, which made General Ayub Khan the second President of Pakistan. There are historical events like Indo-Pakistan War of 1947, Indo-Pakistan War of 1965, Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 and Sino-Indian War in 1962. Rushdie depicted these events and made judgments through the expression of characters’ opinions. For particular, Rushdie is against Sino-Indian War and thought it wasn’t a good time for war because people are still suffering. As a newly born country, India has a long way to go before it achieves prosperity. However, the president then was quite reality about the war, as Rushdie wrote “The disease of optimism” “optimism about the war grew as fat” “optimism-fever”. He even argued “this country is finished. Bankrupt. Funtoosh.”[3]

Moreover, almost all Saleem’s family members can be seen as embodiments of history. Saleem’s grandfather Aadam Aziz has a big nose and he is very sensitive to historical events because of the nose. Saleem’s son Aadam Sinai, born at the moment of the Emergency, which is also a very important day in India’s history, can be seen as another Saleem Sinai and the continuation of the history. As Riemenschneider says, “In Rushdie’s book there is virtually no event which is not given an individual as well as an historical meaning.” [6] So personal experience and life are linked closely to history, and they are the embodiments of history.

Amitav Ghosh brings out the uselessness of drawing lines across a nation to form two nations, one having an East wing, which is separated from its West wing by over a thousand miles. Alpana Neogy in her article, “The Partition of Bengal: A Comparative Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* and Sunil Gangopadhyay’s *Purba Paschim*” points out that the novels focus on the Partition of India and the consequent trauma of the East Bengali psyche. The writer’s focus is on India and Dhaka

where he tries to find the meaning of political freedom. The meaning of nationalism or Indian nationalism changed after the Partition and take out the people on the other side of the border but could not include everybody on this side of paradise. Partition of the Indian subcontinent was the most terrifying experience in our recent history. Nationalism in the twentieth century degenerated into political antagonism. The historic event of Partition shocked the Indian’s sense of nationalism.

In *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh inquires into the issues of religion and nationality, of belonging and supplanting of the necessity of suppressing memories that threaten to disrupt the tidy narrative of history and national identity. The “minor riots” that take place in India are crucial informing the psyche of the people of the subcontinent. In this novel, the writer has given a new treatment to an old theme of partition. The “line” symbolizes all such lines that divide nations and people in the name of nationalism, religion, language and caste. Manohar Malgaonkar in *A Bend in the Ganges*, Attia Hossain in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Khushwant Singh in *A Train to Pakistan*, Bapsi Sidhwa in *Ice Candy Man* have all reflected their concern over partition, war and violence. A.N. Kaul wrote, “...rather a novel about the compensations and the escape routes which that world, such as it is, still makes available to a certain privileged class of sensitive and talented persons.”<sup>5</sup>

In *The Shadow Lines*, Ghosh emphasizes the absurdity of the two nation theory which resulted in the partition of India on the eve of India’s Independence.

“Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* is a manifestation of the appetite to justify the post-colonial experience and to attempt a reconstruction of “public history” through a reconstruction of the “private” or personal history.”<sup>11</sup>

In his other novel *The Circle of Reason*, Ghosh is involved with the idea of the border, and the crossing of the border. The novel presents a journey from “Satwa” through “Rajas” to “Tamas”. Like V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie, Ghosh perceives experiences of the part to explore the lives of men and women in his novels. His *The Shadow Lines*, *In an Antique Land* and *The Calcutta chromosome* redeem a gap between worlds of the rulers and the ruled. These novels have immediate as well as historic appropriateness because they deal with history and politics. Ghosh approaches human affairs from the points of view like anthropology, medical science, psychology, history and sociology. He chooses to represent the past from bits of memory and this ‘memory’ is a complex cultural and historical and increases human experiences.

In his novels Ghosh analyses the historical significance of his family, his town, Calcutta and Bengal as a whole. He doesn't go beyond a century's back rather he focuses on the latter part of the twentieth century which witnessed the ups and downs of Bengal civilization in the pre-independent British reign and even after independence. His fictions like the circle of Reason. The sea of puppies and shadow lines discussed with the history of Bengal and India as a whole in which Ghosh mostly focused on Calcutta and portrays the socio-cultural and religious importance of the past. Study of history and heritage of Bengal helps planning strategy for contemporary and futuristic needs. But Ghosh forward portraying history to go through an ambitious planning for his readers. Those unaware of their past, progress and culture of civilization face some problems but history removes such obstacles by dealing with real life of past that provides lessons for present and future. Actually the history of Bengal and Calcutta is nothing but the decision and their ways of life. It is essential for Ghosh to turn the scars of past into the simile of present. This is possible only through a thorough understanding of the unrevealed history of Bengal which Ghosh attempts to unveil through his fictions. The freedom that the Indians experience today is an outcome of the mental and physical agony that they had undergone during the British reign. It is important for Ghosh to bag the spirit of bygone age and turn it into living deeds.

In Indian English novels, Post-colonial writers set a different trend in the domain of Indian fiction with plurality and complexity of Indian social life and subvert the notion of History and imperialists' record of Indian history. Manohar Malgaonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964); Chaman Nahal's *AZADI* (1975); Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988); Mukul Keshavan's *Looking through the Glass* (1995); and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, and *Delhi*; are the best examples for such historical records. These are the comprehensive array of historical novels.

It is appropriate to mention the poem of T.S.Eliot, "Gerontion" before going to discuss the handling of history in the novels of Khushwant Singh.

History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors and issues, Deceives with whispering ambitions,

Guided us by vanities. Think now  
She gives when our attention is distracted  
And what she gives, gives with such supple  
confusions

That the giving famishes the craving. History is told that re-existence of the past. The historical reality forms a part of work in terms of time and space. Literature can no longer be considered isolation from its social implications, cultural and moral values, and racial ethos. The historical setting of Indo-Anglican fiction is essential for it is an integral part of its cultural vision and ethos. Such things are made as possible even in the Indian novels by many novelists.

They endeavoured to present the unified vision of man and his milieu. Many Indian writers have written many novels on the backdrop of Indian history. Among such novelists, Khushwant Singh is successful one who demonstrates the process of historical realities and Indian cultural ethos finding expressions in the art of fiction. Singh presents the unified vision of man and his milieu in his novels. As T.S.Eliot told the past is re-existed in the historical novels of Khushwant Singh.

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