

Chapter - I

Aspects of Existentialism, the Theory of Comparative Literature and a Brief History of Indian English Literature

I.0 Introduction

In this thesis, I am going to present comparative study of the selected fiction of Arun Joshi and Anita Desai, the Indian English writers, on the Aspects of Existentialism reflected in their fiction. In view of this, in this chapter, I present the Aspects of Existentialism followed by the theory of comparative literature and a brief review of Indian English Literature.

I.1 Overview of the Philosophy of Existentialism

Existentialist philosophers appear to be possessed of the question of creation and existence of the universe, and especially of Man, the sentient being in this world. They ask themselves questions such as, why has the Almighty created the Earth, the Moon, the Sun, the Universe, and most significantly why has He created 'Human Being' in this Universe? What is the purpose behind the creation and the origin of Man? Why did Adam and Eve, the first creations of God, our first ancestors, ate that forbidden apple, and initiate the cycle of life and death? The answers to these questions are still unrequited as the question of the evolution and foundation of the Human Being. These matters have been explored by various philosophers, from the beginning of organized religion and the philosophy behind it. The mystery of human existence has been the most imperative and the most essential study so far. Number of studies has been conducted to answer the most significant and the central question, how the human being originated, and what the purpose behind the same is. Numerous philosophers, autologists and anthropologists have marked a shift from tradition to modernity. They have conducted their study to understand the exact nature of the origin and evolution of human being, which is still on. From the commencement of the human history and

till the present day, human being has been trying to seek answer to the question of his creation and the purpose behind it.

The clarification of all these questions can be explained only if we first understand the history of the traditional thinkers, various Autologists, who in recent times are termed as Anthropologists. These philosophers have tried to unravel the enigma of evolution of the Human Being. In ancient times the traditional thinkers studied questions such as 'what and who am I?' And in modern times the Anthropologists argues and compares different cultures and study the growth and development of it. They ask the major question, 'what is man?'

So, to understand the theory comprehensively, at first we have to understand the philosophical 'conception of man' and the Anthropological problem 'what is man', which deal with the momentous question about the existence of human being. Being a modern branch in the history of science, Anthropology has branches which study human race from different angles, such as physiological, sociological, archeological, psychological, biological, linguistic, and cultural, and have contributed to our knowledge of man to a great extent.

But the problem is still unsettled, as no one in this entire world is able to understand and answer the fundamental question, and for the same reason it is necessary to combine philosophical approach with the anthropological study. From this point of view in 1920's, a new and specialized branch of anthropology was developed, termed as 'Philosophical Anthropology' sometimes called 'Anthropological Philosophy', which studies the human nature from philosophical point of view, and is applied to study the meaning of the human existence. In simple words, it studies the existence of man, his experience, and interprets philosophically the facts discovered by various sciences. It connects the other anthropologies to this new and developed branch which interacts with all the special sciences. It is not only the study of the nature of Man, but also the study of Man from the other living beings, which differentiates Man from all the other living beings in respect of his

traits and potentials, such as his character, personality, behavior, emotions, and feelings. Recently, it has been initiated into scrutinizing the ontology, considered as the major part of philosophy known as metaphysics. It is the philosophical study of the existence of human being and it deals with the study of entities that cooperate with human relationships, with a major theme termed as intersubjectivity which is the study of how two individuals whose experiences and interpretations of the world may be different. This study further moves towards the existential and phenomenological themes.

To begin with, a bishop and ancient Christian Latin philosopher and theologian, St. Augustine, clearly visualized the philosophical anthropology, and described human being to be the ideal harmony of two substances that is, 'body and soul' in which the soul being superior to the body. St. Augustine, further explains body as a three-dimensional object composed of four elements, but soul does not have special dimensions. But later the founder of the philosophical anthropology, a German philosopher, Max Ferdinand Scheler, also known for his work in phenomenology, and ethics, related his philosophical anthropology to the Christian metaphysics and defined human being as a loving being, having lived body, soul and spirit. The other philosophers influenced by him were Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, who represent the philosophical anthropology as a movement. Max Ferdinand Scheler developed even the philosophical methodology for Edmund Husserl. Later, in 19th and 20th, Century this philosophical discipline was given prominence by German philosophers and idealists like Immanuel Kant, followed by Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and many others.

This novel branch of philosophy was introduced to study the behavior of the human being as 'creator of his own identity' and as the 'creature of the social environment'. It also deals with the question of metaphysics and phenomenology of man, also with the outgrowth of the methods in this philosophical anthropology.

Recently it has dealt with subjects such as existentialism, intersubjectivity, as the study of how two individuals or human beings, whose experiences and interpretations of the world are primarily different, understand and relate to each other, and to the studies of language. As the term 'Philosophical Anthropology' explains itself, it is derived from two terms, first is the 'Philosophy' (love of wisdom), which directly or indirectly studies the nature, and form, of the existence of human being. Philosophy is the study of essential and fundamental problems, for example, the reality, existence, knowledge, mind, and language. It deals with the human understanding and the human life as a whole. "And the other part is the 'Anthropology' which can be treated as the science of human nature. Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, formulated three questions meant to answer the problems of human interest, what can I know? what ought I to do? what may I hope for? and later he developed a fourth question, what is man?" (Manohar, 1984, 6) Still scientific methods and philosophical approaches do not entirely clarify the philosophers and for better understanding of human being they used phenomenological methods of Edmund Husserl, who studies the structures of consciousness and the related phenomena. Philosophical anthropologists also reckon to use 'Interpretive Understanding', which simply means understanding the things from someone else's perspectives for analyzing the basic categories of human nature.

So, today in modern times the combination of the scientific methods and philosophical approach is assigned to evaluate the unresolved question, which is as old as human being itself, the Existence of the Human Being.

In the second half of the 20th Century, Western philosophers set up a philosophical tradition from Continental Europe excluding Cyprus, Iceland, and Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom and its dependencies, which is termed as 'Continental Philosophy'. The movements initiated by Continental Philosophy are German Idealism, Phenomenology, Existentialism, Hermeneutics, Structuralism,

Post-Structuralism, French-Feminism, Psychoanalytic Theory etc.

Philosophical Phenomenology was a broad movement which appeared in the early 20th Century, founded by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl who studied the structures of subjective experiences and consciousness and its phenomenon. His philosophical movement was followed by his students, philosophers and existentialists such as Edith Stein, Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean-Paul Sartre etc. The other important movement of his time was Existentialism.

The term Existentialism can elucidate itself when we split the word, as it has been derived from the words- Exist and Existential, which goes to show that this philosophy primarily deals with the question of human existence. The term Exist means 'to be real or present', Existence denotes 'to exist outside of' and Existentialism is 'the philosophical theory which maintains that man is the free agent responsible for his own action'. There are two core tendencies in the philosophy of Existentialism, which are distinguished from each other as Theist and Atheist. For example, Soren Aabey Kierkegaard, is considered to be the father of the theist existentialism, he is a great Christian existentialist and has ardent attachment to the Christian faith. On the other hand, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche sincerely rejects the Christian faith and is considered to be the father of the Atheist existentialism. However, just by merely dividing the philosophers into these two categories is not helpful to understand it accurately as there are other philosophers who do not fit into this scheme, for example Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger stand apart from the others, as they are not Christians and they are not decidedly atheist.

Yet, however diverse their outlook is towards the philosophy of existentialism or however different views these philosophers have about this philosophy, the key term 'Existence', and the way they 'do philosophy', together constitute the shared style of philosophizing, and permits us to call them all the existentialists. One of the realistic and the tragic elements in the Existentialism is that all Existence ends in

death.

In any case, as far as the individual is concerned, existence ends in death. Perhaps the tragic side of existentialism is already implied in its starting point where existence is set over against the being of the inanimate world. (Macquarrie, 1972, 17)

There is no definition which can adequately explain the meaning of Existentialism, so it is said that at first it focuses on the condition of the human existence, and individual emotions, actions, responsibilities, thoughts, and the existence of the human being in general. Existentialists focus more on the subjective rather than the objective aspects or knowledge in the human being such as the beliefs, religion, feelings, and emotions- freedom, pain, regret, guilt, anxiety, despair, finitude, alienation, and boredom, etc. As Jean-Paul Sartre skeptically says:

The word is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all. (Macquarrie, 1972, 13)

Jean-Paul Sartre complains that the word 'Existentialism' has more or less emptied of meaning. Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel also rejected the label. Robert L. Shinn observes:

Almost any self-respecting existentialist refuses to call himself an existentialist. To say, 'I am an existentialist', is to say, "I am one of that classification of people known as existentialists"; whereas the existentialist wants to say, I am myself - and I don't like your effort to fit me into your classification. (Macquarrie, 1972, 18-19)

The basic characteristics of the style of philosophizing are, firstly, it is involved more with man/human being than with the nature. In other words we can

say that this is the philosophy of the subject rather than the object, which is also considered to be the major limitation of the existential philosophy, because the discussions of most of the existentialists are centered on the individual only, and the second characteristic is also its key term, which is the Existence. Jean-Paul Sartre's famous statement explains it very clearly that 'Man's Existence precedes his Essence.' This statement elucidates that the man or the human being first exists, he encounters or comes across life around him, and then he reacts with the world giving meaning to his own existence, defining himself in terms of his actions. In other words, first of all, human being exists in this Universe and then with freedom creates his substance or being, and he himself is responsible for his behavior, whatever it may be. If one considers some manufactured object, such as a paper-knife or a table, each has been made to serve a definite purpose. It has an essence, and its purpose which precedes its existence. The concept of man in the mind of God is comparable to the concept of paper-knife in the mind of the artisan.

Gabriel Honore Marcel was the first French philosopher who applied the term Existentialist for Jean-Paul Sartre, the native Parisian, and created the term Existentialism in the mid-1940. At the end of the Second World War, during the deliverance of Paris, in the left-bank Parisian Cafes, debates were conducted over the new found philosophy by the native-Parisians such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, which finally resulted into a philosophy which is termed as Existentialism.

The roots of the Existential philosophy, which is a contemporary phenomenon, are believed to be in the history of philosophy, or the pre-philosophical attempts of the human being to understand the meaning of life and his own self or existence and the pre-phenomenological endeavor. This particular philosophy has brought clarity and awareness about a way of thinking and an attitude of mind. Existentialism has explicit roots, which are as follows:

- 1) Mythology

- a) Hermeneutics of myths
 - b) Etiological myths
 - c) Anthropogonic myths
 - d) Eschatological myths
- 2) Ancient philosophy

Around 500 B.C. man began to meditate on the human existence and there was rise of critical thought and radical questioning about it. The existential themes that were present in the mythological stage of thought now became more explicit. It was the time of the Hebrew prophets such as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah to the prophets of the exile. About this time Greek culture was flowering, and the political institutions were developing.

Karl Jaspers initiated the formation of the 'Axial age' which was the end of the age of myths and the rise of the critical awareness about human existence. According to him it was the turning point in the history of humanity. The significant themes in this particular age were: Rationalism, Existentialism, atheism, higher religions, the study of nature, and man's study of himself. According to the existentialist thinker, Jasper:

What is new about this age... is that man becomes conscious of being as a whole, of himself and his limitations. He experiences the terror of the world, and his own powerlessness. He asks radical questions. Face to face with the void, he strives for liberation and redemption. By consciously recognizing his limits, he sets himself the highest goals. He experiences absoluteness in the depth of selfhood and in the lucidity of transcendence. (Macquarrie, 1972, 39)

With the advent of axial age, this period also had seen great differences from one culture to another; still it focuses on the problems of understanding the meaning

of man's self. More specifically it is the turning to the future.

3) Christianity

It is believed that Existentialism is not a novel branch in philosophy, which is created to study the existence of human being. But existentialism in its developed form is rather a phenomenon of recent times. Earlier Philosophical thought and phenomenology were there struggling to comprehend the most significant question of the existence of human beings. Philosophy itself directly or indirectly studies the nature and form of the existence. It is the study of the fundamental problems, such as reality, existence, knowledge, values, and language.

There are other branches of philosophy which closely resemble the philosophy of existentialism, in other words, the boundary between existentialism and other branches of philosophy is not clear at all. Each and every existentialist was in one way or the other the believer and follower of other philosophies. The other philosophies, which are adjacent to the Existentialism, are Empiricism, Humanism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Nihilism. And we can say that the philosophy of existential has a very profound relation with the above stated philosophies.

At first we can say that existentialism and empiricism were the two foremost philosophical thought of the earlier times, Empiricist philosophy was based on experience, observation and evidence, especially sensory experience, in the form of ideas rather than theory. It flourished in the English speaking countries. This philosophy was meant to study human life, along with rationalism, idealism, and historicism. The common themes between the two philosophies is that they make common cause against the rationalism, they both are suspicious of developing philosophy into a priori and are not concerned with making comprehensive systems. Still both these philosophies differ from each other. The empiricist philosophy puts more emphasis on the outward experiences rather than inner experience, so this philosophy turns towards the world outside for the data,

whereas the existentialist turns inwards. The other dissimilarity is that existentialist stresses knowledge by participation but the empiricist stresses observation.

“Humanism is considered as the system of thought, which believes people are able to live their lives without the need of religious beliefs, and in one sense, existentialism is humanism- as it is very much concerned with the human and personal values and also with the authentic existence of the human being. Roger Shinn has made a useful distinction between ‘open humanism and closed humanism’.” (Macquarrie, 1972, 28)

According to him ‘open humanism’ refers to the pursuit of human values in the world, and the ‘closed humanism’ means that the man is the sole creator of meaning and value in the world. The second type of humanism is related to Jean-Paul Sartre’s views, as only the human being has the freedom to choose from all the alternatives about his present and future, and with this decision making ability he is able to create the values and meaning in his/her life and at the same time he is responsible for the outcome. But Martin Heidegger stresses on ‘open humanism’ and in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ he says:

Man does not create being, but rather receives his existence from being, and becomes responsible for being and to be being. Before he speaks, he must let himself be addressed by being. (Macquarrie, 1972, 29)

The third philosophy that adjoins existentialism is Idealism, the philosophy of idealism stresses on the ideas and claims that the world exists fundamentally as a spirit or consciousness. Idealism is concerned with the subject rather than object, and they begin from the ideas and consider human being as a thinking subject. It believes that the ideals, aims, and principles can be achieved. And this philosophy is similar to the views of the existential philosophy which too is linked with the existence of the total being in this world. But still the word ‘exist’ in existentialism is only related to the ‘human being’ as according to the existentialists other living

beings or other things do not exist in this world, 'they are'. For example, a tree, a flower, a mountain, 'are' there, but they don't 'exist' in this world. Existentialists used the word exist in some special manner, in which the existentialists used the phrase 'Man alone exists' and this makes a significant difference between the two philosophies.

"Pragmatism deals with the things in a practical and sensible way, and this philosophy has certain resemblance with the existential philosophy, in that they both protest against abstract intellectualism, stress the relation of belief to action, they acknowledge the risk of faith as an attitude about which we are compelled to decide by the demands of concrete existence before we can arrive at theoretical grounds for our decision, and both look for the confirmation and falsification of faith in terms of its fulfillment or diminution of our humanity." (Macquarrie, 1972, 30) Still these philosophies differ in some sense. The major difference between the two philosophies is that pragmatics is usually an optimistic philosophy as opposed to existentialism which relates to the obstacles of life, the dreadful and maddening life of the human beings. The existentialists who have been influenced by pragmatic philosophy are Unamuno and Jose Ortego Y. Gasset; they are narrowly interested in the tragic life of the human beings as opposed to the positive things.

The word Nihilism is derived from a Latin word which means 'nothing', and this philosophy has a belief that nothing has any value in this world and argues that life is without any objective meaning, purpose or ethical values. It simply denies the real existence, and believes in nothingness. It also states that there are no moral values and even stresses that the 'reality does not exist.' It even explains the meaninglessness of existence, laws, values, or norms. It is also believed that entire human species is insignificant and the life is without any purpose. In simple words this theory asserts that the human being is thrown into this world without any purpose and is compelled to invent meaning in his/her life.

Similarly in existential philosophy the human being exists in this world without

any purpose and is forced to create meaning in his/her life. In other words, the human being has the freedom to take decisions about his life and at the same time the individual is solely responsible for the outcome of his decisions.

The atheist existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre, Camus, Simon de Boeuvre, Martin Heidegger, and Friedrich Nietzsche were at one time or the other nihilists in their life.

It is rather believed that there is no philosopher who is so narrowly existentialist, most existentialists are phenomenologist, although there are many phenomenologists who are not existentialists. A close relation has developed between these two types of philosophies, as the phenomenology offers a methodology for the existentialists with which they can pursue their investigation of human existence. Literally phenomenology is defined as the 'philosophical study of the structures of subjective experience and consciousness'. Immanuel Kant used this philosophy to study phenomenon or appearances as opposed to the things in themselves, and in recent times Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl developed a complex phenomenology which is considered to be the most significant in understanding the crux of phenomenology itself. "The best known work from all the other written works is the Introduction to Pure Phenomenology" (Macquarrie, 1972, 22) and the center of this phenomenology is 'description'. Here Husserl has devised a method for the detailed and accurate description of the various kinds of objects in their pure essences, and requires clarity of mind from all the presuppositions and prejudices. It is also necessary to be bound to the description only, as it is very difficult to resist moving from description to inferences. Because of all these reasons this phenomenology is a complex study demanding strict control on the mind. Many existentialists have been influenced by phenomenology, such as Martin Heidegger, Max Ferdinand Scheler, Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. But they did not follow Husserl but developed their own phenomenological thought to suit their purpose. In spite of all the correspondence between Husserl and

Existential Phenomenology, a very prominent difference has arisen between them, that is Husserl stresses on the 'essence' and thinks of phenomenology as the eidetic science and follows idealist tendencies which believe consciousness to be always intentional, that means being directed to a particular object beyond itself, whereas Existential Phenomenology lays stress on 'existence', and rejects idealism. In other words, phenomenology describes what is seen, as each and every individual has his own perspectives, similarly every human being will see differently. And it provides scholarly and reliable methods to investigate the elusive question that is the existence of human being.

Later, this philosophy was adopted by many other philosophers, but every philosopher concurs on one key point that is 'Existence', and in particular the 'Existence of human being', in which all the Existentialists aver that 'only human beings exists', and the plants, animals, etc don't exist in this world, 'they simply are'. 'Existence' is a technical term which means 'to Exist outside of', and human being takes constant leaps from himself and moves further, it is a continuous process which ends with the death of the person, which is a very significant reason for the human being to develop himself. In other words we can say that a human being makes himself because only human beings have the potential to create and formulate himself. Only the human being had had the knack to surpass his present and his future continuously, and only he has the freedom to take his decisions, and at the same time he is responsible for his actions.

Jean-Paul Sartre's famous pronouncement clearly states and explains that:

Man is condemned to be free: condemned because he did not create himself yet nonetheless free, because once cast into the world, he is responsible for everything he does.
(Sartre, 1956, 29)

In Existential philosophy, 'freedom' is a very significant component and it is considered as a compulsory factor, as human beings have the freedom to think and

progress and they are completely responsible for the consequences of the same. It is considered as a burden, as human being has no other way to be free and every time he takes decision he is bound to face the consequences of his decision. As the human being is responsible for his own existence, his past, present and future, and he has the power to develop his own personality, character and individuality, he is responsible for the outcome of his own decisions and in this process he does not have to impugn on the circumstances, situations or any other individual. Even when the human being has freedom to choose a lone alternate from many others, freedom is only to help in making the choice, and it does not mean freedom to accomplish that thing. Human being can endeavor to attain something, he can try to get desired things in his life, but all the circumstances are not in his hands, and he does not have the freedom to achieve it.

Sometimes due to being saddled with the responsibility of his actions he takes concession or exemption from the freedom, and tries to run away from his responsibility of taking decisions. And for this reason he takes external or foreign assistance from some deity, religious conviction, tradition, doctrines, and ritual. But at the same time he forgets that in taking any decision even with help of the some outer source, only the human being will be responsible for it. In other words, whether the human being takes some decision by himself or with the support of some outer agency, he is condemned to be free.

Existentialists also state that if the human being takes decision with the help of the external sources ignoring his own decision making ability, it is termed to be less a decision, a bad decision or his negative-freedom to take a decision. Jean-Paul Sartre defines this term as 'Bad Faith', he also explains the use of freedom, and states that if the human being uses his own freedom to take some decision, it is termed as 'Authentic Life', and if the individual takes the outer assistance, his life is considered to be 'Inauthentic Life.'

To understand the philosophy of Existentialism, it is necessary to understand

the themes/aspects of the philosophy, as these themes play a very significant role in this philosophizing.

I.1.1 Themes/Aspects of Existentialism

1) Freedom/Responsibility:

Freedom plays a very important role in an individual's life and his existence, as each and every human being has the capability and liberty to choose from all the alternatives in his life, the being is free to choose meaning, responsibilities and the interpretations about his actions in his life. Living in the uncertain world, the individual faces all the limitations in life such as the codes of the society, laws, rules, illness, the tragic element in life that all existence ends in death. Yet the individual has freedom to compose his individuality, that is, how he is going to use his freedom to think, dream, plan, envisage and create. And at the same time he is solely responsible for his course of action, what-so-ever the consequences may be. The human being does not have even the choice to blame others for the consequences, as the being is responsible for his present, future and his past. An individual develop his own personality, so at every step he takes decisions at his free will to make and develop himself.

This aspect plays a very significant role in the existentialist philosophy which involves both choices and the responsibility. It is often considered as a compulsory factor and a burden because the human being is free to choose and is bound to face the consequences of that.

In the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Man is condemned to be free'. He is condemned to take his own decisions, to choose from the alternatives. Once thrown in this world, he is responsible for every action and reaction. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself, this is the first and foremost principle of the existential philosophy. The world exists without any relevant good or bad values or ethics, the action of the human being is accountable for them. And the individual has liberty to choose from the alternatives but the individual does not have control over the

outcome. He can struggle and strive but to achieve that goal is not in his hands.

2) Bad Faith:

Bad Faith is the existential category used in Sartre's Existentialism. It is widely used in Existentialism and it means self deception. As Heidegger has argued, in our everyday life, we are inclined to neglect our openness to Being and we simply 'go with the flow'. This is living inauthentically. Sartre also says that our usual inclination is to deny responsibility for our situation (what we are), which means to be in Bad Faith. This happens as there is exploitation and oppression in the societies. Even our protestation of being in good faith is a claim made in Bad Faith.

The term Bad Faith is considered to be the most significant aspect in existentialism as this philosophy is closely related to freedom. Existentialists such as, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir used this philosophical concept. According to them it is a phenomenon in which an individual takes a decision or makes his/her choices without using their decision making ability, but takes help of some foreign agency such as society or religion or any emotional forces. In doing this he disowns his power of freedom, which is termed as Bad Faith.

Existential philosophy claims freedom for each and every human being, freedom of choice from the alternatives, to choose to live their life on their own terms and conditions, to develop their present and future. Man composes his individuality by choosing from the odds and develops himself. And at the same time he is solely responsible for his/her actions, either good or bad. As the individual is entirely responsible for his actions, sometimes he neglects his decision making ability and takes external help, but still the individual remains responsible for his actions, which is called Bad Faith.

Existentialism elaborately deals with the category of 'Bad Faith'. Sartre says, it is a kind of Self-deception, and more widespread in its relevance. Heidegger says, we are immersed in the average everyday life, and 'go with the flow', which also

means living life inauthentically. In terms of the Bible, this going with the flow or immersion is 'fallenness', as characterized by Heidegger. Our inclination is normally to deny responsibility for our own situation. This is being in Bad Faith. In a society where there is exploitation and oppression, there is Bad Faith.

3) Focus on concrete existence:

Existentialist philosophers put emphasis on the concrete existence of the human being rather than human essence. According to it the human being exists, while the other living creatures and the other things in this world such as trees, animals, vegetables etc 'they just are', but they do not exist. Each and every existentialist has developed and followed his own style of philosophizing yet all of them agree on one factor that this philosophy is meant to study and understand the existence of the human being. In other words, this philosophy stresses on the subject rather than the object, it initiates with the man rather than with nature. It is developed to understand the fundamental and significant question about the evolution and the existence of the human being.

4) Existence precedes Essence:

Jean-Paul Sartre, the father of the atheist existentialism, made a very famous and fundamental pronouncement or a proposition about the existential philosophy that is 'Existence precedes Essence'. Existential philosophy attempts to assert self-understanding and basically the origin and the evolution of the human being. The search of the existence of the human being is as old as the human being himself. According to Sartre's statement, at first, the human being exists in this world and then he develops himself with the power of his decision making ability, and develops his past, present and future. The individual is thrown into this world and then he develops his essence, his character, personality, purpose and meaning in his life. For example, the book is lying on the table exists as a particular item or thing in this world, and as soon as we talk about the form in which it exists, we have already started moving from existence to its essence. The essence of the book is

described in terms of its title, the author's name, the publication details, number of pages, the weight and specific gravity and so on. Thelma Z. Lavine says that, Man is a conscious subject, rather than a thing to be predicted or manipulated; he exists as a conscious being, and not in accordance with any definition, essence, generalization, or system.

She also explains that human being is condemned to be free. His freedom is a burden and the responsibility at the same time, which he cannot deny or neglect. It means one is thrown into this world, and he is bound to take his own decisions, to make himself, to explore himself, to create his own values and meaning in his life because in the beginning the individual does not have his identity or any values, the individual has to fabricate it with his decision making ability and at the same time he is solely responsible for his actions. A man who acts cruelly towards other people is, by that act, defined as a cruel man and in that same instance, he is defined as being responsible for being this cruel man. Still, the individual can choose his actions in a different way, he can choose to be a good person instead of a cruel person.

Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir explain that sometimes the individual disowns his freedom to choose under some pressures such as societal, emotional, traditional, etc. and takes help of someone else, takes wrong decisions, which is termed as 'Bad Faith'. And it is explained that in this phase the person is both aware and, in a sense, unaware that he is free.

5) Humanism:

Humanism is a very common term which refers to or centers on the human beings, and concerns the work of the humanity and neglects the metaphysical speculation about the nature of God. This is associated with the optimistic outlook towards the human beings, and stresses the choice of the beings in the creation of their own values and decisions. In other words, humanism is optimistic in nature, in spite of the fact that there is an objective value, we are entirely responsible for what

we become, and even puts the future of humanity in the hands of the human beings. Therefore, the Existential philosophy is considered as a person-centered philosophy. It focuses more on the human being than on nature, on the individual's pursuit of identity and meaning in his/her life than the social, emotional and economic pressures. In this regard it is considered that, 'Man is the future of man'.

Existentialism is Humanism; it is derived from the French language, *L'existentialisme est un Humanisme*, is indeed a philosophical work published in 1946, which is based on the lecture by theist existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre at Club Maintenant in Paris in 1945. In this particular lecture he clearly maintains that Existence precedes Essence, and rejects the deterministic excuses and explains that human being is responsible for his actions. And with this the other aspects of existential philosophy such as anguish, despair, abandonment, loneliness and alienation are also present with the human being whilst acknowledging their free will to choose and understand the meaning of their lives.

6) Angst/Anguish:

The term angst was used by the father of the theist, and Danish existentialist, Soren Kierkegaard, and the more specifically, it is introduced into English from the Danish angst, to describe intense feeling, nervousness, apprehension and severe inner emotional tumult. In common Danish language, angst, is sometimes called dread, fear, anxiety, stress or sense of anguish, which is common to many Existentialist thinkers. Anxiety has a sense of anguish, a generalized uneasiness, a fear or dread, which is not directed to any specific object. Anguish is defined as the dread of the nothingness of human existence.

Soren Kierkegaard in his philosophical work 'The Concept of Anxiety' (as a pseudonymous author named Vigilius Haufniensis) focuses on the first anxiety experienced by the first man, Adam, and his choice to eat that forbidden apple from the tree of knowledge and initiated the cycle of life and death. Still it is believed that Adam and Eve were not aware of the concept of good and evil, as this concept did

not exist before Adam ate that fruit, still he knows that God told him not to eat from the knowledge tree. Here the concept of anxiety becomes intuitive; in spite of God's prevention Adam eats the fruit from the tree. God's prohibition implies that Adam is free and that he could choose to comply with God's dictum or not. And as soon as Adam chose to eat the apple, the sin was born, the concepts of good and bad, life and death were initiated. In this, Kierkegaard explains that anxiety precedes sin, transgression which leads to suffering in this world. In the story of Genesis, Abraham faces the anguish when God commands him to sacrifice his son. It is the conflict between ethics and the grace of God. Abraham is doubly anxious because the command given to him might not be divine in origin.

By the term angst, Soren Kierkegaard means a deep and subconscious condition of insecurity and fear in the free human being. It is generally considered to be the experience of human freedom and his responsibility. According to him, freedom leaves the human being in constant fear and dread about its consequences or the outcome, and failing his responsibilities in his/her life, and more specifically fear of the concrete responsibilities towards the Almighty or God. Recently, this term is broadened by the inclusion of the frustration with the actual responsibilities towards self, one's morals, emotions, principles, values, and beliefs, and about one's future that is not determined but must be freely chosen.

According to the existentialist philosophers, anxiety is in a special way revelatory of the human condition, and helps to interpret the feelings in general. The term anxiety is considered and studied rather in the context of the cause and origin of sin, the fall of man. According to Kierkegaard, anxiety is a prior condition towards the wrongdoing, and the fall of man, and he describes anxiety in three ways:

- 1) It is inherent in the state of innocence. In Innocence there is something like instability, uneasiness, a presentiment that disturbs the tranquility of bliss.
- 2) Anxiety is linked to freedom. It is also a kind of instability prior to action.

Freedom invests man with responsibility, which leads to primitive anxiety.

- 3) With man's peculiar constitution as body and soul, established in spirit, human being is subject to feel tensions, and by all means, tension leads to anxiety. (Macquarrie, 1972, 166-167)

Man is the only living being who has freedom to choose and is solely responsible for his/her actions and always lives in the shadow of anxiety. The animals or the other living beings are merely corporeal, they are not subjected to anxiety.

- 7) Facticity:

Facticity may be defined as the quality or state of being a fact. Pointing on something factual is an objective affair, but facticity might be called the inward or the inner side of factuality. As John Macquarrie says:

No one has chosen to be. He simply finds himself in existence. We discover ourselves, so to speak as free existents in the midst of the world of things. We did not put ourselves in that world. There is almost surprise, even shock, that we find ourselves there as a fact to be reckoned with.
(Macquarrie, 1972, 190)

It is also considered as the opposite to possibility. On the one hand, human being projects his possibilities in his life, and on the other hand, the individual is bound to the factual situation in which he is born or finds himself. We can choose from the alternatives and the available possibilities by our own understanding, but the fact always overpowers the prevailing situation. It can be understood by the quote of Austin Farrer:

Choice is exercised by us, appetite comes upon us.
(Macquarrie, 1972, 192)

The fact is that our existence is given; the only thing human being knows is

that we exist, and we are. From where we have come from and what will be our destiny is just a mystery. We have aspirations and beliefs but still the fact remains the same that, we are, and we have to be. It can also be explained as 'I' exist. I cannot exchange my existence with the existence of someone else. It explains that 'I' as a human being exists in this world, in some particular historical time, in some particular society and generation, in some particular caste and culture, with particular race and colour, with some particular intellectual, emotional, economic status, and so on.

No two beings, and no two situations, are really commensurable with each other. To become aware of this fact is to undergo a sort of crisis. (Flynn, 2006, 24)

In other words, in taking decisions sometimes the external circumstances compel an individual to choose, in one sense the individual still has the freedom of choice, but at the same time though human being is free to choose, he is in a constant state of fear about the consequences, or fear that his freedom will lead him to fall short of the standards laid by the Almighty. The individual chooses in anguish rather than by his/her free-will. They make choices rather by foreseeing the circumstances or the consequences than their freedom of choice, and not as a free agent. For example, a person does not consciously risk his/her life, because he/she has to support his/her family.

Facticity has a variety of meanings, and it can refer to the facts, factuality, trueness, ideality or verity. This concept is closely related to the aspects of freedom. The word facticity has been derived from the German word, Faktizitat, French word, Facticite, and from the Latin language Factum. It can be better understood in relation to the dimensions of the past of each and every human being, it is believed that one is only one's past. However, to say that one is only one's past would be to ignore a large part of reality that is his/her present and the future; while saying that one's past is only what one is, in a way that would entirely detach it from them now.

According to Martin Heidegger, facticity has been described as the 'thrownness', (from the German word, Geworfenheit) of individual existence, which is to say that the human existence or dasein is thrown into the world, with the paradox of living in relationship with other human beings and still being eventually alone with oneself. Man is thrown into existence; each and every individual is thrown into his particular existential situation. And there is no known reason about the differences between every human being. For example, the individual may come up as an Indian or an American, or white or black or intelligent or stupid etc.

8) Authenticity and In-authenticity:

The aspect of authentic existence is universal to the existentialist thinkers. The existentialists consider this aspect as the degree to which one is true to one's personality and character despite the external difficulties. The consciousness seems to come to terms with being in the material world and encountering with the exterior facts and pressures; which are rather different from other than one's self. It is often taken to mean that one has to find oneself and then live in accordance with his/her self.

A common misunderstanding is that the self is something one can find if one looks hard enough, that one's true self is substantial. Authenticity is also connected with the creativity; it arises from the actions of the individual person and not imposed from the external factors. It cannot be arrived by just repeating certain actions or events in one's life. To describe authentic life the individual takes possession of himself to become a particular kind of person, to adopt certain kind of life and the pressure to ignore one's morals and principles in order to have more comfortable existence. And being unable to understand one's self or the inner being and to live one's own life authentically, sometimes become so unpleasant that it leads people towards the negative or the inauthentic ways of life.

9) Despair:

The term despair is commonly defined as total hopelessness divulged from

within the individual being. In existential philosophy it is more specifically related to the breakdown of one's identity. In other words, if the human being compromises with his individuality in some particular situation, the person is doomed to the state of despair, despondency and in some hopeless state. The loss of hope, expectations, confidence, and optimism often lead to depression, isolation, dejection, anguish, sadness and desolation. For example, a driver who loses his legs in a road accident may despair that there is nothing to rely on, and becomes hopeless about himself.

10) Reason:

Jean-Paul Sartre said that there is no inherent meaning in life, therefore it is up to each individual to find one's own reason for existing. This aspect of existentialism is also associated with the conception of freedom, which is considered as the paramount aspect of human existence. Existentialism asserts that people actually make decisions based on the meaning to them rather than rationally.

The rejection of reason as the source of meaning is a common theme of Existentialist thought, as the feelings of anxiety and dread that we feel in the face of our own fundamental freedom and our awareness of death. Soren Aabye Kierkegaard saw strong rationality as a mechanism humans use to counter their existential anxiety and their fear of being in the world. If I can believe that I am rational and everyone else is rational then I have nothing to fear and no reason to feel anxious about being free.

11) The Absurd:

The idea of absurd is a very common theme in the philosophy of existentialism, which emphasises the disagreement between the human beings in seeking some inherent meaning in this world, and their hopelessness of finding meaning. The notion of the Absurd contains the idea that there is no meaning to be found in the world beyond what meaning we give to it. This meaninglessness in life

also encompasses the amorality or unfairness of the world. It highlights the quest of human being for purpose. It is assumed that everything has a purpose, a reason for existence. This even argues about the universal question, such as if the humankind is created by God then who created God?

To exist as a human being is mysterious and wholly absurd. Each of us simply exists here, or is thrown into this time and place, which has no meaning and no purpose of its own. This even contrasts with the faith in the karmic ways of thinking, in which it is believed that bad things don't happen to good people. Still it is only faith that binds an individual to believe such activities. In other words, metaphorically speaking, there is no such thing in the world as a good person or a bad thing, whatever happens in this entire world, it occurs with the wish of the supreme power or the divine providence that determines these matters and it may just as well happen to a good person as to a bad person.

This aspect of existentialism is also related to the alienation and rootlessness in an individual's life, even in Indian English fiction, the writers demonstrate that the characters living alone or living in isolation from their respective families are rather considered to be living their life in an absurd world. Ionesco defined this kind of absurdity as follows:

Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose....Cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd and useless.
(Kumar, 2003, 3-4)

12) Alienation/Isolation/Boredom:

Alienation in the biblical sense is alienation from the God; it is the sin in the biblical sense. But in Existentialism alienation is alienation from one's own being. (Macquarrie, 1972, 204). It is a major aspect which characterizes existentialism. It basically means to become withdrawn or impassive or isolate emotionally from others. It also includes the feeling of separation, moral breakdown, from the society.

A human being can be alienated from the society or social system, and considers their society as meaningless vacant, from other individual being. And the most profound alienation is from one's consciousness. According to the existentialists, human being lives in the alienation of their entire institutions, they are neither a part of it nor will they ever understand the nature of their existence, the mankind is not aware of the history of its existence, or its history. Everything is dependent on faith, rather than on any rational belief. There is no meaningful root of our past and even about the future. In other words, we do not belong to the past, or to the present or to the future.

Alienation in the biblical sense is an alienation from God. It is the Sin in the biblical sense. But in Existentialism alienation is alienation from one's own being. (Macquarrie, 1972, 204)

Meenakshi Mukherjee has written about the alienation aspect, saying that alienation is a very common theme in our Indo-English novels. (Kumar, 2003, 2) It arises within the family, between the parents and their children, between relationships such as husband and wife, between the siblings; it has dominated even the relationship of love. It has affected the social, personal and work relations in the history of mankind.

Alienation is one of the greatest problems confronting modern man. Its corrosive impact can be seen in the form of generation gap, the anti-war movement, the hippie phenomenon, the credibility gap, the compartmentalization of our lives, the stunting of personal development, the conspicuous absence of a sense of meaningfulness of life, and so on. (Kumar, 2003, 3)

13) Existence:

The word existence comes from the Latin word 'existere' which literally means, 'to stand out'. In other words, existence means to appear, to arise, to

become, or to be. The term existentialism is derived from the term existence only, which means to 'exist outside of'. This philosophy basically relies on this fundamental aspect. The existence of the human being and only the human beings exist, are the elemental themes in this philosophy. The philosophy clearly explains that in this whole world only human being exists, and the other living beings such as the animals, vegetables, trees, plants, etc do not exist in this world, they just are.

This philosophy also argues about the most significant questions in the history of mankind, which are, the existence of the world and the existence of the God. According to the existentialists, only the human beings exist and they exist in this world, that is other things away from this world or outside this world, do not exist, and there is the issue whether the world exist or not. The existentialists also squabble about the existence of God. Friedrich Nietzsche's famous declaration about God, expresses decline of religion and the rise of atheism.

With the Nietzsche's famous statement 'God is dead', there is another assertion that even if God did exist, it would make no difference. It is also considered that if there is Universe, there is a Universe of human subjectivity. But the other existentialists have other views about Nietzsche's pronouncement. According to Albert Camus, the death of God was insignificant and the human race had no need to have the threat of divine wrath to live a good life.

14) Finitude/Death:

Human beings are the finite beings. This statement is as factual as the existence of the human being. With this it is believed that there is a fundamental relationship between the community and death; death is considered as the integral part of the existence. Finitude is the condition or the state of being finite; this aspect has been prominent in the writings of the existentialists. In fact the existentialists prefer the aspect of finitude to death. With this aspect these philosophers explain that human beings have simply been thrown into existence and everyone must accept their inward awareness of their very own being. Each individual person's

existence is characterised by facticity, in other words, the individual has not chosen to be, but rather, he is just here.

The aspect of death is as absurd as the existence of the human being. It is considered as the tragic element or the universal characteristic that is found with the existence of the being. If there is beginning of this human race, there will be end to it and that is called death. Death is an awareness which is present with everyone, that whatever exists in this Universe, is going to end one day. At the same time it is unknown when it is going to happen, but it is the ultimate truth that each and every human is aware of at every moment of life.

Living in full acknowledgement of our finitude is the key to being authentic or rather the key to authentic being. (Gorman, January 2005)

Martin Heidegger discussed the aspect of death in detail, and according to him there is a shift in death as the once-for-all observable fact at the end of life to the existent's inward awareness that his being is a being-towards-death. Death is already present as the most significant possibility in every individual's existence. Each human being lives in the face of his end, the existence of the human being is uncertain and at any time it may vanish into nothingness. It is the last possibility of all the possibilities; it is the limit to existence for the human being and the world.

Death is the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all. (Macquarrie, 1972, 196)

15) Guilt:

Guilt is an emotion that occurs when a person disobeys and defies the moral and ethical standards. The human being feels remorse and regret after he/she violates the ethical values in his/her life. The human being wants to change that past experience in which he has failed his conscience and did not follow the values, morals, ethics etc, and even regrets the finitude of his/her past choices, or inability

to change the past actions which have been chosen in the moment of Bad Faith by neglecting authentic and subjective life. By betraying his self, by denying his values the person faces existential guilt in his life. As John Macquarrie states:

The gap is between the existence and the essence, or between the facticity and the possibility, or between the self one is and the self that is projected. But this kind of flaw is not yet a moral flaw, but rather the kind of finite being that makes morality possible. (Macquarrie, 1972, 203)

Human being is composed in such a manner that he stands in the possibility of falling, or he fails to measure up to the stature of his possibility. The very fact that human being is a finite being who is also free to choose, there is always the possibility that he would fall, and by this he is placed in a state of guilt. It is considered that the existential guilt is free-floating, it floats from one cause to another, one sin to another and arises from the individual's core of consciousness and not from the individual's past or personal failures or misbehavior. And it is also believed that it is never yielded, which means moral improvement does not cure the existential guilt or debt. No matter how good we become by improving our ethical behavior, still our pent up guilt never sheds, it remains with us everywhere and every time. For example, a basketball represents the personality shell of the individual being, and the air inside it is the pressurized existential guilt. "The bumps and knocks of everyday life are the pangs of our conscience. Mistakes make an individual inadequate and ashamed but still the human being is bounced back to the original shape quickly and easily, which is very similar to the basketball, the individual throws and bangs it still it returns to its original shape." (Park, 2007)

16) Uncertainty/Leap in the Darkness:

Uncertainty is another significant aspect of existentialism. Literally it means the condition of being uncertain and doubtful about the future. Every individual being exists and has the freedom to choose from the alternatives, he can desire or

wish to achieve something, he can even attempt to achieve that goal, but it is not known that his work will be accomplished or not. The objective is ambiguous and indefinite in this world and it is believed that it occurs with the wish of the superlative power only. In other words, when the human being attempts to achieve something in his life, the uncertainty aspect exists with his wish and at the same time he is aware of its ambiguity.

This aspect can be explained with the help of the phrase 'Leap in the darkness'. It elucidates the existence of the human being; that is the individual person lives his life or performs all of his duties without being certain about its consequence. The human being is thrown in this world, or exists in this world and then he is bound to develop himself with his freedom and he lives with the fact that his future is indefinite.

In spite of all the aspects, themes and the pronouncements of the existential philosophy, it is believed that it does not have any influence on the 'Indian English Literature' and on the writings of the Indian writers. There is no single writer who has been influenced by this style of philosophizing; the professors of philosophy simply disagree that this philosophy plays any role in influencing creative works of any of the Indian writers or the critics. Dr. Ravindra Manohar, for example, says:

Existentialism doesn't exist as far as Indian English Literature is concerned. (Manohar, 2012, Personal Interview)

It is claimed that the themes in the numerous Indian novels, short-stories, poems, articles, travelogues, etc are never affected by the existentialist philosophy. But in my view the works of the renowned Indian English writers, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi, illustrate certain aspects of the existential philosophy. In an interview on 21 August, 2012, the renowned Indian English writer Dr. M. K. Naik, maintained that Arun Joshi more successfully articulates the aspects of existential philosophy in his work than Anita Desai does. He says:

I think Arun Joshi is more powerful, emotional. It may be his Indian nature, emotional person, very shy. Arun Joshi is a psychological case; his life was responsible for existential aspects in his works. He was so shy that he used to blush.
(Naik, 2012, Personal Interview)

Some of the aspects of existentialism are glaringly expressed in the work of the prominent Indian English authors Anita Desai and Arun Joshi. This is indeed the central part of the present research, in which the researcher has undertaken comparison of some of the aspects of existentialism in the selected novels of both the authors. In delineating the characters and their life in the novels these two authors have demonstrated existential aspects in their life, the angst the protagonists have experienced. The characters in these novels suffer from the numerous existential traumas and distresses resulted into death and despair in some cases.

In their novels both the authors have shown how their protagonists face the problem of Being and nothingness. For example, they face alienation from their family and society and due to this they undergo traumatic existential experience. For example, the aspect of loneliness and aloofness make an individual anxious, fearful, and absurd, and is led to question the factuality of his/her own life as authentic or inauthentic.

It is apparent that all the aspects of existentialism are inter-related, and any individual can experience them one time or the other as they face traumatic happenings in their life. How the aspects of existentialism discussed here influence the life of sensitive men and women is the objective of this research, while comparing and contrasting these aspects in the fiction of two prominent Indian English novelists.

I.2 Preface to the Comparative study of Literature

Comparative literature is also called the World Literature or literature without

borders. This deals with the comparison of the literatures in two or more different languages, communities and cultural groups. It is also illustrated with the works in the same language by different authors to demonstrate the similarities in their works, paintings or films, or comparing a literary work and a film on it. This study also states that the expert or the critic (scholar) named as comparatists is usually very proficient with the languages, the literary criticism, the critical theory and the literary theory of that language, and he also exhibits some acquaintance with the history, translation studies, sociology, cultural studies, and even the religions involved.

Comparative literary programs are designed within the Universities, deliberated by the scholars within the departments. It is even considered as the interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study literature across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the other arts, across disciplines that include not only literature but psychology, philosophy, science, history, architecture, sociology, politics, etc.

Comparative literature scrutinizes and compares various themes, forms, aspects, history, ideas, and relation between works as well as the ideology of the two or more authors, their socio-cultural views and possible relation between the works of the authors. This literary field undertakes comparison of the books, novels, poems, novellas, short-stories, etc., by numerous writers.

Comparative Literature, in the Indian context, would reveal to us Indian experiences and Indian culture manifested in the fiction of writers, who belong to different states in India, each having its distinctive social background, and still reflecting composite Indian culture. Indian writers, writing in English, may belong to different regions, or they may even be expatriates writing from abroad. In their works, they still express their distinct socio-cultural experiences, and at the same time reveal the composite Indian culture.

The comparative study of the works of two Indian English writers, tries to

show unity of their Indian consciousness and at the same time their unique socio-cultural background and experiences of the people and the states where they come from. Moreover, some of the Indian writers are expatriates, who look at Indian socio-cultural scene from a different point of view provided by distance and the perspective given to them by totally different society in which they live. As Amiya Deo rightly says,

_____single literatures in India do lay a claim for comparison.
(Deo, 1989, 38)

Comparison can be between the works of two writers in terms of themes, social milieu, orientation to particular ideologies, even in terms of themes dealt with in two different forms like fiction and drama.

There could be different cultural patterns in the creative literature, different ways the writers have given expression to their feelings and experiences. And still there can be an underlying unity in the literary works of different writers.

Literary works can be analysed and compared on the basis of themes and ideas, heritage reflected in manners and morals, distinct socio-cultural background and the way it influences the life of the characters in the fiction.

Comparative literature is a method used for comparing two different works of literature. It is not itself a body of literature like Hindi literature, Tamil literature, etc. So far as applying this method is concerned, one may take up comparison of literary works from two different backgrounds writing in the same language. There are writers writing in English coming from different States of India, or from abroad. They can have distinct point of view, and characters from very different socio-cultural background. As stated above, Amiya Deo does affirm this possibility for comparison. There can be legitimate comparative study of the Canadian writer and the American writer, both writing in English. In India also literature of writers from different states of Indian writing in English can be legitimate object of Comparison.

We cannot say there is just one Indian culture. There are distinct traditions in the South and the North in India, in fact each state in India with its language and literature shows distinct traditions. Just as we cannot club together the literatures of Germany, France, England, Italy, etc as European culture, and study these literatures in their own right, we have to study the literatures in Indian languages as distinct entities. In 1974 University of Delhi in its department of Modern Indian Languages, started a post-graduate course in Indian Literature. It acquired the title of Comparative Indian Literature. It was the beginning of Comparative Studies in the Indian literature in different languages. Language departments in other Indian Universities in India started their own programmes in Comparative Studies. Seminars on Comparative Indian Literature started being organised. It was, of course, not necessary that the Indian scholars should undertake comparative studies only within Indian language literatures. The scholars undertook studies of literature in their own language and the literature in the West, especially English, to begin with. Comparative Indian Literature is not, therefore, restricted to Indian national literature. The scholars could undertake comparison of literatures in Indian languages. Since the Indian literatures provide natural social cultural background, the scholar can undertake this study better than any literature in Europe or America. Naturally, Comparative studies in Indian Literatures got an impetus. But, even in this case. Scholars appear to have increasingly taken up comparison of the works of Indian writers in English from different states of India.

The discipline of Comparative Literature is greatly relevant in a country like India, a multilingual and multicultural country, which can help rediscovering common roots and help the unity of the country. Comparative study of Indian literatures would bring us awareness of rich and composite culture of India. Tamil poet Bharati once said about India, She speaks eighteen languages, but her soul is one. One can say this about the Indian English Literature. Every state in India has its own divergent culture, but the comparative study of Indian literatures can reveal a unifying thread running through this diversity. Indian English Literature from every

state of India is at once unique and diversified. It shares common heritage like the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Indian English Literature from various states of India reflect themes, problems, genre, style with a great variety, but they share common archetypes such as mother, (like Kunti, Sakuntala), wife (like Savitri, Sita). There are different themes and motifs provided by ancient Sanskrit, Tamil and other ancient literatures in India, which are reflected in modern literatures in Indian languages in different ways.

There is one important aspect of Comparative Literature, which is related to translation activity. Works in Indian languages are translated into English by the authors themselves. Tagore is perhaps the earliest example. Then Europeans or other Indians translate literature in Indian languages into English. For example, U. R. Ananthamoorthy's *Samskara* has been translated into English by A. K. Ramanujan. This is an important trend in Comparative Literature. The corpus of translations from Indian languages into English and Indian English writings into English languages can be a very useful body of literature for comparative studies. The translations also reveal that there are Indian themes pervading the pan-Indian literature, which shows the relevance of Comparative Indian Literature. There is the heritage of myths and archetypal images shared by the literatures in different languages in India. There is, of course, cultural difference in adapting these myths and archetypes. But over coming this problem is the positive element in the discipline of Comparative Literature.

The history of Comparative literature in India dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, when a question was raised in India about how pure a literature in any language can remain. Indian literature absorbed influences of English and consequently European literature in the mid-nineteenth century. Michael Madhusudan Dutt defended this influence and even imitation pointing out how Byron's poetry showed Asiatic influence, and Moor's poetry showing oriental influences. Even Bankim Chandra Chatterjee showed instances of imitation in the

literary history. Under the influence of Western literature, the Indian writers abandoned the parochial attitude and started Comparative studies of Literature. For example, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's essay, 'Shakuntala, Miranda and Desdemona' written in 1873 is an instance of early Comparative study of Sanskrit and English Literature. He compared Shakespeare and Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Shakespeare in their plays.

Nowadays Comparative Literature programme has been included in the M.A. Syllabuses of most of the Indian Universities, Seminars are being held in the Indian Universities on the aspects of Comparative Literature.

This researcher believes that comparative study of literary works of different writers can provide insight into socio-cultural aspects of different societies and characters as well as their universal characteristics.

I.3 Introduction of Indian English Literature

The aim of this research work is to focus on the Indian English Literature and to compare the literary works of renowned Indian English writers of the Independent India, Anita Desai and Arun Joshi, to special reference to the philosophy of Existentialism.

I.3.1 Indian English Literature

"Ever since One hundred and seventy years to the present day from the James Augustus Hicky's Bengal Gazette, the first English language newspaper founded in Calcutta on January, 29 1780, Poet Cavally Venkata Boriah's dissertation on the 'Accounts of the Jains' appeared in Asiatic Researches, Vol. IX, 1809, or even the first publication of Rammohan Roy's tract on Sati, and the translations of Vedanta and some Upanishads were available in 1816, Indian English Literature (IEL) has influenced the literatures globally, the existence of British in India and the battle of Plassey fought in 1757 that made this possible." (Kumar, 2005, 29)

The moment that changed the fate of Indians and the Indian English literary work happened to be in the year 1794, by Sake Dean Mahomet's autobiographical travel narrative, 'Travels of Dean Mahomet'. It even altered the thoughts and beliefs of Indians deliberated for Indian English literature. This is indeed the first book ever written and published in England by an Indian in English, and it is in the form of a series of letters to a fictive friend, which is based on his experiences in colonial army. Mahomet was the first Indian who used English words to express his experience which was Indian in nature, describing several cities in India and allocated Indians as human beings worthy of respect, which is later considered as the mechanism which promulgated the petite sampling of the Indian writing in English which has turned out to be a matured and full-grown tree.

In the beginning, two terms were implied for the Indian writing in English, firstly 'Anglo-Indian Literature' and another term is 'Indo-Anglian Literature'. 'According to "Dr. M. K. Naik Anglo-Indian Literature was confused between the literature of two categories, literature in the Indian languages translated into English and original composition in English by Indians." (Naik, 2011, 2) "On the other hand numerous surveys were organized on the term 'Anglo-Indian Literature' by Edward Farley Oaten, Professor P. Seshadri, Dr. Bhupal Singh and Mr. George Sampson" (Dodiya, 2004, 2) and even presented several essays on it, writings of Englishmen in India on Indian themes and Indian writers of English but according to Kodaganallur Ramaswami Srinivasa Iyengar,

In all these surveys 'Anglo-Indian' literature has no racial significance at all; it means merely that this literature is a product of Indo-English literary relations. England and India had come together or had accidently thrown together and out of their intimacy-whether legitimate or illegitimate-had come this singular offspring that is Anglo-Indian Literature! (Iyengar, 2011, 2)

“And later Vinayaka Krishna Gokak interprets the terms in his book, *English in India: Its Present and Future*, 1964 states that ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’ as comprising ‘the work of Indian writers in English’ and ‘Indo-English Literature’ as consisting of ‘translations by Indians from Indian Literature into English, while John B. Alphonso Karkala uses the term ‘Indo-English Literature’ to mean ‘literature produced by Indians in English’.” (Naik, 2011, 2)

In simple words, Indian English Literature (IEL) is considered as the text written by an Indian in English language whose native language is other than English or one of the numerous languages of India in which they communicate. Even those Indian writers who are born in India but have moved to overseas for their living are technically labeled as Diasporic writers. These can be placed into a broader term, ‘Indo-Anglian Literature’ or ‘Indo-English Literature’ or ‘Indian writing in English’. It is clear that this category of literature excludes Anglo-Indian Literature, literal translations by others, and translations from the Indian languages into English, with the exception of the fact if the work is the translation by the authors themselves. In other words, if any Indian author translates his own work into English language, it will be part of the Indian Literature category. At first K. S. Srinivasa Iyengar used the phrase, ‘Indian writing in English’ in 1962, during his inclusive study of the subject, and after that the term was published in 1968 in two essays on Indian literature by David McCutcheon and later by Dr. M. K. Naik, S. K. Desai and G. S. Amur. “Even Sahitya Akademi has recently adapted the term ‘Indian English Literature’ as the most appropriate title for this body of Indian English writing.” (Naik, 2011, 5)

“In spite of the facts stated above there are exceptions too, as Anita Desai, born in India as half Bengali and half German parentage, influenced by the western authors Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul born in Chaguanas, Trinidad and Tobago, to the parents of Indian descent. ‘Ruth Praver Jhabvala born of Polish parents in Germany but married to Indian and lived in India for more than twenty

years, and even Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, born of an English mother and a Sri Lankan Tamil father, was neither an Indian citizen and nor did he live in India, yet these people have contributed to the English literary genre and position a prominent spot in the history of Indian English writers.” (Naik, 2011, 3)

Indian literature, comprises several literatures such as Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Punjabi, Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, Kashmiri, Maithili, Oriya, Sindhi, Telugu, Malayalam etc. and Indian English is considered as one of the other languages in which Indians communicate with their native citizen in everyday life and even across the world. Indian English Literature is not considered as dissimilar in structure, form, and type from Indian literature, it is considered as a part of Indian literature. Indian English literature has contributed to the literature globally. Indians have written and are still writing in English language, they have seen achievements and even failures but they have educated themselves to write in English language and have even edified their native people.

Indo-Anglian literature, then, is both an Indian literature and a variation of English literature. (Iyengar, 2011, 6)

Right from its birth some Indians have had negative view regarding ‘Indo-Anglian literature’ some even thought that an Indians cannot write in English language as fluently as they write in their native languages such as Hindi or Marathi or other languages which Indians speak. Dr. M. K. Naik, in his book, A History of Indian English Literature stated that:

There are, in fact, even today many, both in India and abroad, who believe that Indian English Literature is little more than an exotic Indian dish fried in British butter, which may serve to titillate a jaded literary palate for a time by its outlandish flavor. (Naik, 2011, 297)

Even some Englishmen thought that Indo-Anglian literature is not as good as English literature. It is quite clear that Indian writing in English is influenced by the

writings in England still it has a vast impact on the literature of the world and has contributed to it. It is rather in charitably observed that;

It is all misdirected effort and a miscarriage of creative talent. One can never really hope to master a language not one's own, and an Indian writing in English is rather like one animal imitating the steps of another. (Iyengar, 2011, 6)

But today we can proudly say that English has become one of the Indian languages, it has become our language. English language is part of our education system, from Basic Education to Higher Education, Newspapers, Magazines, and Interviews etc people are educating themselves in a language which is useful in everyday communication which has achieved an important place in Indian socio-culture life. It is steadily growing and has become a part of Indian policy. Up to 1920, English education was criticized, and the use of English in place of the Indian National languages was disparaged. The constitution of Independent India adopted in 1950 gave 15 years' lease to English to make the switch-over from English to Hindi.

In 'Hindi Replaces English Language in India' an article which appeared in The Gazette, Montreal, Friday, 22 January, 1965, pg. 15, explains:

Hindi will replace English as official language Jan. 26. But there will be no overnight abolition of English. As a concession to the 250,000,000 Indian whose mother tongue is not Hindi, the Indian Government has agreed to treat English as an "associate language" for official purposes for as long as necessary. The assurance has pacified at least temporarily, the ruffled feeling of the non-Hindi speaking Indians from south India, west Bengal and Maharashtra state. (The Gazette, 1965, 15)

Indian freedom fighter, Gandhian, leader of the Indian National Congress, founder of Swatantra party, Indian lawyer, Premier of the Madras Presidency, last

Governor-General of India Chakravarti Rajagopalachari or Rajaji has boldly suggested that English should continue as India's official language for all-India and International purposes, as also the medium of instruction in the University, and as the medium of the higher law courts and of the learned journals.

In a newspaper article named 'Does Language Matter?' appeared in The Times of India of 26 March, 1988, Sham Lal, a former editor of the paper, wrote:

If the nationalists' dream of developing Hindi as the link language has gone sour, so has the westernizers' dream of domesticating English...Mr. Raja Rao's brave talk that 'we shall have the English language with us and among us and not as guest or friend, but as one of our own, of our caste, our creed, our sect and our tradition' was a bit of blarney. Curiously, he also said that English 'is the language of our intellectual make-up and not of our emotional make-up'. But can a person reserve the nuances of his thought and feeling for two separate languages without developing a split personality?

Sham Lal ended by saying:

There was a time when a British writer jeeringly described Indian writing in English as "Matthew Arnold in a sari" and an Indian professor hastened to correct him and said it would be more appropriate to compare it to a Shakuntala in skirts. (Mehrotra, 2008, 20-21)

Indian English literature grew parallel with the advent of British imperialism in India and it is believed that its beginning had received momentum from three causes, the British government's educational reforms, the endeavor of missionaries and with the response and acceptance of English language and literature by upper-class Indians.

For the greediness of the servant of the British East India Company, the educational reforms were called out by both the 'The East India Company Act 1813' (or the 'Charter Act of 1813') and the 2 Feb. 1835 English Education Act of William Bentinck and the English Parliament approved the Charter Act, which made England responsible for the educational improvement of the nation. The subsequent English Education Act, prompted by Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous 'Minute' on Indian education, made English the medium of Indian education and English literature a disciplinary subject in Indian educational institutions.

Even before the William Bentinck's 1835 Act, English language existed in Indian colleges. In the early 1800s it was taught with the oriental studies.

Indo-Anglian Literature was the term first used in 1883 when a book published in Calcutta bore the title Indian-Anglian Literature which contains specimen compositions from native student. (Chandra, 2004, 2)

Secondly, the 'Missionary activities' directly influenced the advent of Indian English literature, after the 1835 Act, which gave a severe blow to the Orientalist hopes and English emerged in India as the language of literary expression available to the Indians.

Finally, it is believed that it was the vested interest of some of the Indians promotes English to receive the benefits of the English education that assured them a place in the government, which ensured the place of English language and literature in the stream of Indian education. It might be said that it was caused because of the mixed social codes of the British and the educated Indians.

1.3.2 Indian Diaspora

Indian Diaspora is a broader term to describe people who have migrated from India and residing in the distant land. About 20 million people of Indian origin are living abroad. And 'Indian Diasporic writers' are not small in number, more than

fifty writers from the Indian- subcontinent representing the Indian Diasporic writing are spread all over the world, from London, New York, Johannesburg and Toronto to Mauritius and Singapore and even the South Pacific to the South America.

Early 19th Century Indian writer of English, writing language novels and short-stories, Raja Rao was born on 8 November, 1908 in Hassan, Karnataka in South India. He died on 8 July, 2006 at Austin, Texas, at the age of 97. R. Parthasarathy, Indian poet Indian poet, translator, editor and critic was born in 1934 at Tirupparaiturai near Tiruchchirappalli, was educated in Mumbai and Leeds University, United Kingdom and presently is working as the Associate Professor of English and Asian Studies at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, USA. Zulfikar Ghose, Padma Hejmadi, Bharati Mukherjee, Mena Alexander, Shankar Menon Marath, Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Prafulla Mohanti, Rustom Cowasiee, Dom Moraes, Farrukh Dhondy, V. S. Naipaul, Shiva Naipaul, Adil Jussawalla, Amit Chaudhury, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Rohinto Mistri, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Monica Ali, Nadeem Aslam, Vikram Chandra, Deepak Chopra, Kavita Daswani, Kiran Desai, Narinder Dhama, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Roopa Farooki, Nikita Lalwani, Amulya Malladi, Pankaj Mishra, Anita Nair, Michael Ondaatje, Mitali Perkins, Shyam Selvadurai, Kamila Shamsie, Manil Suri, Vikas Swarup, Monique Truong, Thrity Umrigar, Loung Ung, M. G. Vaasnji, are various leading writers in Indian English, who are internationally well known.

I.3.3 Fiction as a Genre of English Literature

The genres in literature can be subdivided into prose, poetry and drama, which are divided into sub-genres. Prose can be subdivided into novella, novel (fiction and non-fiction), and short-story, poetry can be further sub-divided into epic, lyric and dramatic poetry (melodrama), and drama may be divided into comedy and tragedy. According to Robert Henkle,

Fiction and drama present men and women reacting to each other in the way that is closer to real life. (Henkle, 1977, 1)

Fiction is the major branch of literary work. It is the form of any work that deals with events, situations, character or information invented by an author, that are not factual, but rather, imaginary and theoretical. This category of literature comprises works including novellas, novels and short stories in which the author formulate a story, and express the thoughts, feelings or beliefs about the life and society. It has great impact on our present society and plays a very important role in the alteration and amendment in different fields of our society.

In Indian English Literature genres, fiction, as a proper genre found its position relatively late, it finds its place only after the end of the British tyranny. For the attainment of Independence, Indians formed various political parties, which played pivotal role in the freedom struggle. During the struggle, numerous things were changed and adopted by the British for the growth and development of the country, which includes the awareness about the social and cultural issues of India. Introduction of the English language was the significant element that Indian adopted from them, which is also responsible for the beginning of the press in English and the other vernacular languages of India. With this initiation Indians become aware about India's past and began to study the ancient history, philosophy, culture, religion, science and literature.

1.3.4 Indian English Writers

The beginning of Indian English fiction is marked by Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* published in 1864. Well known novelists of this period are Raj Lakshmi Debi, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, Toru Dutt and their family book, Manmohan Ghosh, K. Charkavarti, Kamala Sathianandhan, Lal Behari Dey, Behramji Malabari, Nagesh Vishwanath Pai, Tara Chand Mookerjee, and Anand Prasad Dutta. During the struggle for Independence, the Indian writing in English

helped many reformers to fight with the pen for the rights of millions of Indians. Indian writers writing in English explored social as well as political themes.

The reformers wrote about numerous ills in the Indian society such as the social and economic inequality, slavery, illiteracy, casteism and the exploitation of women. The list of the writers includes, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharishi Devendranath Tagore, M. M. Banarji's Nanda, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, R. G. Bhandarkar, Mahadeva Govinda Ranade, Henry Vivian Derozio, D. G. Mukharjee, Mrs. Annie Besant, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Shiv Dayal Khatri, Guru Shaligram Sahib, Satyananda Agnihotri, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhans, Rajnarain Bose, C, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Aurobindo Ghose, Maulvi Chirag Ali, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Parthsarthy, A. Madhaviah, Bal Krishna, Cornilia Sorabji S. K. Ghosh, Maharani Sunity Devee, S. M. Mitra, K. S. Venktramani, Sir Joginder Singh, Naba Gopal Chatterjee.

With the changing time the Indian English novelists started focusing on the contemporary themes, problems and situations. The prominent Indian English fiction writers of pre-Independence period are the trio, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao, whose work makes a definitive move in the Indian English Literature. Other writers were Ahmad Ali, Humanyun Kabir, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, and D. F. Karaka. They focus on Gandhian thoughts, social and religious themes, and the rapidly changing historical and political situations.

After the attainment of Independence, the themes in fiction reveal a huge change, the social themes have been shifted to the personal and private spheres. Emotions, feelings, anxiety, isolation, frustration, aloofness, restlessness, guilt, women's inequality, their sufferings etc. with these themes the writers focus on themes such as cross-cultural conflicts, traumatic experiences, industrialization, materialism, realism, rural and urban life etc. which are seen in the works of novelists such as G. V. Desani, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Khushwant Singh, Nirad C.

Chaudhari, Manohar Malgonkar, S. N. Ghose, R. P. Jhabvala, Santha Rama Rao, B. Rajan, Kamala Markandaya. And later on these themes were adopted by Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Jatin Mohan Ganguli, P. M. Nityananda, Chaman Nahal, B. K. Karanjia, Timeri Murari, Attia Hussain, Bharti Mukherjee, Nayantara Sehgal, Nargis Dalal, Vimala Raina, Veena Paintal, and Anita Kumar etc.

In the late eighties, yet another class of Indian fictionists in English emerged with not only having new vision, novel themes, innovative ideas, and modern thoughts but they are winning International recognition too. The novelists of this era include Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Upmanyu Chatterjee, Allan Seally, Shashi Deshpande, Namita Gokhle, Shashi Tharoor, Farukh Dhondi, Amitav Ghosh, Bapsi Sidhwa, Brinda Mukherjee, Ipsita Roy Chakraverti, Sudhir Kakkar, Dina Mehta, Dolly Ramanujan, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Shauna Singh, Shiv K. Kumar, Saros Cowasjee, V. A. Shahane, K. V. Subbaram, Ranga Roa, Raj Gill, Balaraj Khanna, etc.

I.3.5 Indian Women Writers

Indian women writers have given a new facet to the Indian English Literature. Several distinguished personalities worked hard to achieve their position in the male chauvinist society and achieved the present status and distinction in Indian English literature. They started writing in English in mid-nineteenth century, and it is believed that at first they composed songs, short stories and small plays and later novels. One of the greatest poets of India, the first Indian woman President of Indian English Congress and the first woman to become the governor of a state in India, Sarojini Naidu, stood as the representative and model for the contemporary writers. She is known to be the first Indian woman who wrote poems in English language, which could also be sung.

Women writers, though their writing illustrates the Indian tradition, society and culture and most significantly demonstrate their perceptions and experiences about life in India. The contribution of the women writers to the Indian English

Literature is very significant in the sense that they have given voice to the predicament of women in the male-dominant conservative Indian society.

In the eighteenth century, at the advent of the Indian English Literature, the women authors faced a lot of trouble due to the social and cultural issues; they were even underestimated because India has been a male-dominated nation, or in other words the society gave precedence and primacy to the male writers than the women writers of India. But later, after mid-nineteenth century, their work started getting attention of more and more readers and critics.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, women writing and women novelists became a powerful division of Indian English Literature which illustrates the feminist experiences, female psyche, emotional, social, existential and psychological problems faced by women as house-wives. With the advent of the new century and the growth of the modernistic society, the Indian women writers witness success, they become independent. These changes resulted in creating awareness in the Indian society feminist issues, which paid more attention towards education of women; and which later resulted in gradual increase in the interest of the women writers towards English language.

The diverse topics and themes such a hardships of women, sufferings of married women, unequal rights, female psyche, man-woman relationship, psychological problems etc depicted in the work of women novelists earned them a prominent position in the listing of Indian English writers.

The first Indian English women writers are considered to be the great poetess, and the popular freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu, and Toru Dutt. After witnessing their success, other Indian women started writing in English. The list of Indian Women writers who have contributed to the Indian English literature comprises Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy, Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalal, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Kamala Das, Anita Nair, Namita Gokhale, Susan Viswanathan, Nayantara Sahgal, Rama Mehta, Indira

Goswami, Malati Chendur, Gauri Deshpande, Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Ruth Jhabvala, Shobha De, Jhumpa Lahiri, Arundhati Roy, Namita Gokhale, and Kiran Desai.

The present research is based on the comparative study of the Existential aspects in the novels of one of the prominent Indian English women novelist of the nineteenth century, Mrs. Anita Mazumdar Desai who has contributed greatly to the Indian English Literature. Her literary writing clearly shows the feminist themes such as the emotional world of Indian women trapped in the society and culture, the innermost depth of the human psyche, individual quest for meaning in life, psychological issues, assaults on existence, existential problems in human life and feminist movement.

Anita Mazumdar Desai

Anita Mazumdar Desai, renowned Indian English novelist and short-story writer is an inspiring idol for numerous young students, writers, and scholars. Born on 24 June, 1937 in Mussoorie, a hill station near Dehradun, Uttar Pradesh, India to a Bengali father Dhiren N. Mazumdar and a German expatriate mother, and an engineering student in pre-war Berlin of German origin, Antoinette (Toni) Nime who met Mazumdar in Germany, got married there and then immigrated to India in 1920, lived with her two sisters and a brother in Old Delhi. One of her two sisters works as a Doctor (Pediatrician) and the other works as a Civil Servant and the other as. She spoke German as a child and read western literature, listened to western music to a great extent. Although she grew up speaking German at home and English, Hindi, Bengali and Urdu outside her old Delhi house, English was the first language she learned to read and write at Queen's Mary Higher Secondary School, New Delhi and even attended British grammar school. She says in an Interview with Sarah Ferrell on 9 April, 1989:

We spoke German at home; it was the language in which I learned nursery rhymes and fairy tales. We spoke Hindi to all

our friends and neighbors. I learned English when I went to school. It was the first language that I learned to read and write, so it became my literary language. (Ferrell, 1989, 230)

Anita Desai began to write in English at the age of seven and her first story was published at the age of nine in an American Children's magazine.

At graduation level, Ms. Mazumdar used to contribute her short-stories to the magazine 'Thought'- a political and literary magazine. In 1957, she received her B.A. (Honors) in English literature from Miranda House, University of Delhi. She was determined to be a writer, mainly of fiction; her short-stories were favorites in the children's magazine. She published her first short-story the same year she graduated, in 1957. Desai even worked for a year at the Max Muller Bhavan in Calcutta in 1958 before her marriage.

In the subsequent year of graduation, on 13 December, 1958, Anita Mazumdar got married to Mr. Ashvin Desai, a business executive, the director of a computer software company and the author of the book, 'Between Eternities: Ideas on Life and The Cosmos'. They had four children, Rahul, Arjun, Tani and 'Booker Prize' winner novelist Kiran Desai. Desai lived in Calcutta from 1958 to 1962, and then moved to Bombay, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pune. "Writing in English was innate choice in her life, and she became a freelance writer in 1963. 'Desai also contributed to various prestigious literary publications, including the New York Times Book Review, London Magazine, American magazine Harper's Bazaar, Indian periodicals Quest, The Illustrated Weekly of India, Miscellany, Thought and Femina and London publication Envoy.'" (Singh, 2007, 112) In an Interview with Magda Costa in Barcelona, 30 January, 2001, Desai said:

When I was a very little girl, we had a house that was full of books. All of us were great readers. We were always going to the library and the bookshop. When I was taught how to write and read at school, I remember I made up my mind that this

was what I'd love to do best and this was the world I was going to occupy. So I started writing little stories in that time. I never really wanted to do anything else. I think it was simply a love of books, and the pleasure I found in imagining images within words. (Tandon, 2008, 207)

Only at the age of 26 she made her debut with her novel, *Cry, the Peacock* in 1963 which was published in Britain by Peter Owen, a publisher specializing in literature of the British Commonwealth and Continental Europe, she herself did not want her novel to be published in India as the Indian publishers lacked interest in Indian writers at that time.

During her childhood, merely at the age of ten, Desai had experienced Second World War, the atrocious partition of India and Pakistan, the riots between the Hindus and the Muslims, mass deterioration of mankind. The riots and the wear and tear of the entire society and the World are somehow considered to be the influential factors in Desai's life and writing. She saw her mother's apprehension and concern about the situation and her family in Germany during the war. Even after the war was over her mother didn't want to visit Germany; and therefore she did not visit Germany until she was an adult. Her literary writing clearly shows the realities of life and human nature, the emotional world of Indian women trapped in the society and culture, the innermost depth of the human psyche, individual quest for meaning in life, psychological issues, assaults on existence, existential problems in human life and feminist movement. Many contemporary writers would not classify her as a feminist writer. She says:

The feminist movement in India is very new and a younger generation of readers in India tends to be rather impatient of my books and to think of them as books about completely helpless women, hopeless women. They find it somewhat

unreal that the women don't fight back, but they don't seem to realize how very new this movement is. (Tandon, 2008, 9)

Mrs. Desai herself says that, her writing is realistic and believes in discovering the truth and revealing the psychic life of her characters. As a writer, Anita Desai is unique. The skill with which she uses the 'Stream of Consciousness' technique and 'Interior monologue' presenting the character's thoughts and feelings in a continuous flow in her novels is something beyond imagination. Stream of Consciousness technique was initiated in English fiction by Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and James Joyce. The use of narrative technique, symbols, images, flashback, nature, etc. for describing the true situation and mainly about the characters inner self in her novels is quite remarkable.

Writing is my way of plunging to the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover to underline and convey the true significance of things. (Tandon, 2008, 16-17)

As a writer, interested in the individual only-whether men or women, young or old or children-Anita Desai displays a great creative ability. Being a novelist of moods and the state of psyche, her characters have a tendency to turn inward. Anita Desai's characters can be classified in two distinctive groups- those who fail to adjust to the harsh realities of life and those who compromise. (Bande, 2000, 14-15)

The stalwart of Indian English literature Mrs. Desai infuses into another category of writers entitled as the Indian diasporic writer; Diaspora a generic term used to describe people who migrated from Indian territories and settled abroad, around twenty million Indian origin people are living abroad.

Desai was born, brought up and educated in India under the guidance of Bengali and German parentage but started her literary career with England

publisher 'Peter Owen' who were interested in foreign writers. Desai did not leave India until she was 45, and now she lives and balances her life between Boston, Mexico, Cambridge and Delhi.

Modern-day India is slipping away from me. (Singh, 2007, 122)

The subjects in the vast oeuvre of Mrs. Desai vary from the dreadful, isolated, humiliated, and psychic world of Indian woman to the secluded world of immigrant Indians, value of individual, problem of existence, marital disharmony, racial discrimination, demise of tradition, German anti-semiticism, western stereotypical views of India, Egyptian culture, and her recent novel illustrate Indian culture including the themes of decay and disappointment, solipsistic existence, isolation, and expectations and realities. She has acquired a respectable position in the Indian diasporic writer catalog, as she herself has said that:

Desai own claims that she 'feels about India as an Indian', but thinks about it as an outsider. (Khair, 2011, 82-87)

There is not much that is acknowledged about her personal life, some of her contemporaries in the 1950's describe her as intense and solitary, she likes to lead a quiet life and creative art is one secret thing she revealed herself. She likes to read books and her favorite authors are Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, a Russian physician, dramatist and author, who is considered to be among the greatest writers of short stories in history, an American-born writer Henry James, English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic and painter D. H Lawrence, and Russian writer Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky.

As a writer, Anita Desai handles the raw material of life and conveys it through a pattern and design. Writing itself is a quest for meaning, for value and for truth. She is as much interested in life, with its hopes, frustrations, negations, rejections and the chaotic flow of events, as she is concerned with art to give shape, purpose and wholeness of life. (Bande, 2000, 18)

Mrs. Desai started her literary career before her marriage, just after receiving her graduation degree; she worked for a year at Max Muller Bhavan, Calcutta in 1958. Since then there was no stopping her, she worked as the Helen Cam visiting fellow at 'Girton College' Cambridge University, United Kingdom in 1986-1987. She worked in three of the 'Seven Sisters Colleges', they are the seven Liberal Arts Colleges in the Northeastern United States that are historically women's colleges; from 1987 to 1988. She served as an Elizabeth Drew Visiting Professor at 'Smith College', Northampton Massachusetts, United States of America, and from, 1988 to 1993 a Purington Professor of English at 'Mount Holyoke College', South Hadley Massachusetts, United States of America, and as the Gildersleeves Professor at 'Barnard College', Morningside Heights, Manhattan, New York, in 1989. Desai served as the spring 2003 Sidney Harman Writer-in-Residence at 'Baruch College', Manhattan, New York. She was a visiting Ashby fellow 'Clare Hall' Cambridge 1989, visiting scholar at the 'Rockefeller Foundation' in Bellagio, Italy in 1992, 'American University' of Cairo Egypt 1992. Since 1972 Desai is a member of the 'Sahitya Academy English Board'.

She is the author of several reports for United Nations (UN) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF); and has reviewed books for numerous literary journals and newspapers. Desai is a member of Advisory Board for English of the 'National Academy of Letters' in Delhi. She is an honorary member of the 'Royal Society of Literature' of London, and recently elected as fellow of the 'American Academy of Arts and Letters'.

From 1993 to 2002, Mrs. Desai was the John E. Burchard Professor of creative writing teacher at the 'Massachusetts Institute of Technology'. At present, she is the Emeritus John E. Burchard Professor of Humanities at the 'Massachusetts Institute of Technology' in Cambridge Massachusetts, United States.

Anita Desai's fictional work includes novels, short-stories, and fiction for children. Her early work presents the fretful and isolated world of woman protagonist, psychological and spiritual and existential problems of the woman in India in a male-oriented society. Some of her novels illustrate themes which switch from woman-centered to male-centered narrative, such as racial discrimination, craze for freedom, marital disharmony, suffering of the women in the male chauvinist society, leading to total violence and death. Being half German and having encountered her mother's suffering during the Second World War as a child, she has dealt with even the problems of the West, Egyptian culture, German anti-semiticism, and the demise of tradition and western stereotypical views of India. Her short-stories are witty, sensitive and thoughtful, which portray the children's psychology and life of middle class families.

Following is the detailed account of Mrs. Anita Desai's works in chronological order:

Novels:

- 1) *Cry, The Peacock*. (1963) London: Peter Owen.
- 2) *Voices in the City*. (1965) London: Peter Owen.
- 3) *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*. (1971) New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books.
- 4) *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) New Delhi: Vikas Publication.
- 5) *Fire on the Mountain*. (1977) Uttar Pradesh: Random House Publishers India Private Limited.
- 6) *Clear Light of Day*. (2001) New York: Harper.
- 7) *In Custody*. (1984) Delhi: Random House.
- 8) *Baumgartner's Bombay*. (1988) New Delhi: Vintage.
- 9) *Fasting, Feasting*. (1999) London: Chatto & Windus.
- 10) *Journey to Ithaca*. (2001) London: Vintage.

11) *The Zigzag Way*. (2004) London: Chatto & Windus.

12) *The Artist of Disappearance*. (2011) India: Random House.

Short Stories:

1) *Games at Twilight and Other Stories*. (1978) New Delhi: Allied.

In 1991, 'Twilight Games' Anita Desai's eleven short-stories were translated and published in Finnish Language, as 'Hämärän leikkejä' translated by Riitta Oittinen, Jari Majanen, Sirkka Karjalainen, Anne Nyman, Sari Fire Chest, Pirjo Kuusela, Aulikki Uusitalo, Susan Mattila, Taina Lehtonen. This collection contains following short-stories:

2) *Diamond Dust: Stories*. (2000) Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

3) *India- A Traveler's Literary Companion*

Uncollected Short Stories:

1) Circus Cat, Alley Cat, *Thought* (1957), New Delhi.

2) Tea with the Maharani, *Envoy* (1959), London.

3) Grandmother, *Writers Workshop* (1960), Calcutta.

4) Mr. Bose's Private Bliss, *Envoy* (1961), London.

5) Ghost House, *Quest* (1961), Bombay.

6) Descent from the Rooftop, *Illustrated Weekly of India* (1970), Bombay.

7) Private Tuition by Mr. Bose, *Literary Review* (1986), Madison, New Jersey.

Children Fiction:

1) *The Peacock Garden*. (1974), Bombay: India Book House.

2) *Cat on a Houseboat*. (1976), Bombay: Orient Longman.

- 3) *The Village by the Sea: An Indian Family Story*. (1982), London: Heinemann.

Film:

In 1993, her novel *In Custody* was modified into a movie by Merchant Ivory Production, directed by Ismail Merchant, screenplay by Anita Desai. It even won 'President of India Gold Medal' for Best Picture starring Shashi Kapoor, Shabana Azmi and Om Puri.

Television Series:

In 1991, Anita Desai children's novel *The Village by the Sea: An Indian Family Story* (1982) was adapted into a television serial starring Saeed Jaffrey, screenplay by James Andrew Hall, and produced by Griffin Productions.

Awards:

Desai is awarded with 'Padma Bhushan', Literature and Education in 2014. She was nominated for 'Booker Prize' fiction three time for her novels '*Clear Light of Day*' (1980), '*In Custody*' (1984), and '*Fasting Feasting*' (1999), and won a countless awards. She won 'Padma Shri' Award in 1980 from the Government of India and the Taraknath, 'Winifred Holtby Prize' of the Royal Society of Literature for the novel '*Fire on the Mountain*' in 1978, "Sahitya Akademi Award' (National Academy of Letters Award) '*Fire on the Mountain*' in 1978, 'Guardian Children's Fiction Award' for Children's Literature for '*Village by the Sea*' in 1984, 'Neil Gunn' Prize in 1993, 'Alberto Moravia Prize' for Literature (Italy) in 2000, 'Benson Medal' of Royal Society of Literature' in 2003, 'Orange Prize' for Fiction '*The Zigzag Way*' in 2005, and 'Das Award' for promotion of Indo-U.S relations. In 2005, Anita Desai received the 'Italian Grinzane Cavour' Awards International Prize for 'A life for literature' (Una vita per la letteratura) for her body of works.

Arun Joshi

Arun Joshi was born in an enlightened family in 1939 in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. His family lived in Hoshiarpur district, Punjab and during his childhood days they moved to Benaras and Lahore. His father is a well-known botanist of his time and was the Vice-Chancellor of 'Punjab University' and later of 'Benaras Hindu University'. Arun Joshi had a brilliant academic career; he took his primary education from schools in India and went to United States of America on scholarship to receive his Engineering degree from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, United States of America and a degree of Industrial Management from 'Massachusetts Institute of Technology', Cambridge, Massachusetts. Joshi even worked at a mental hospital in the United States for a brief period in 1957, where his uncle used to work as a psychiatrist. "In 1962, he returned to India and joined D.C.M. in a managerial capacity, on the recruitment and training and worked as an Executive Director of Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, until his death. After returning to India he married Rukmani, daughter of the owner of the corporate body and they had three children." (Kumar, 2003, VII)

Arun Joshi's demise in his fifties cut short his promising literary career. He died young, by an asthmatic attack, which resulted in cardiac arrest. And for that reason he was able to contribute only five novels, a few short stories and two biographies. It is believed that his own experiences in life have had some influence on his works. It is even believed that his experience in the United States of America and the experiences he had about the human behavior at the mental hospital are reflected in his early novel, *The Foreigner*. Later he shifted to the history of India and demonstrated Indian themes such as the tribal life in *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*; his novel *The Apprentice* encompasses the theme of national history of Gandhian moral teachings, and *The Last Labyrinth* exemplifies another shift, illustrating mystery, a love tale, and the power of oracle. It is last novel *The City and the River* too deals with the mystery, about the mythology and tradition of religion

and its devotees. He won Sahitya Akademi Award for his fourth novel *The Last Labyrinth* in 1982.

It was believed that Arun Joshi is influenced by the western existentialist writers. In an interview with Pranab Banerjee he explained:

I did read Camus and Sartre.... I liked that Plague and read *The Outsider*. I might have been influenced by them. Sartre I did understand clearly or like. As for existential philosopher Kierkegaard, I have never understood anything except odd statements. (Kumar, 2004, 21)

He even read a lot about the Indian philosophy to understand the exact meaning of existence and to find solutions to numerous problems. "He is even influenced by the teachings of Gita and Mahatma Gandhi. Joshi believes that, Hinduism is highly existentialist-oriented philosophy since it attaches so much value to the right way to live (to exist)." (Kumar, 2004, 22) In spite of love for the western existential philosophers and teachings of the Indian epic poetry, he stated that he became a novelist to share his life experiences with his family and friends. He says:

My novels are essentially attempts towards a better understanding of the world and of myself.... If I did not write, I imagine I would use some other medium to carry on my exploration. (Lokesh, 2004, 22)

Following is the detailed account of his works in sequential order:

Novels:

- 1) *The Foreigner*. (1968) Bombay and London: Asia Publishing House.
- 2) *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*. (1971) Bombay, London, and New York: Asia Publishing House.

- 3) *The Apprentice*. (1974) Bombay and New York: Asia Publishing House.
- 4) *The Last Labyrinth*. (1981) New Delhi: Vision.
- 5) *The City and the River*. (1990) New Delhi: Vision.

Short stories:

- 1) *The Survivor: A Selection of Stories*. (1975) New Delhi: Sterling.
- 2) *The Only American from our village short stories*.
(Included in *Contemporary Indian English-Stories* edited by Madhusudan Prasad, New Delhi, Sterling, 1983, pg. 55-60.)
- 3) *Kanyakumari*
(Included in *Another India: An Anthology of Contemporary Indian Fiction and Poetry*, selected and edited by Nissim Ezekiel and Meenakshi Mukherjee, New Delhi, Penguin India, 1990, pg. 211-218.)

Other:

- 1) *Shri Ram: A Biography*. (1968) with Khushwant Singh. London and New York: Asia Publishing House.
- 2) *A Biography of Late Lala Shri Ram: A Study in Entrepreneurship and Industrial Management*. (1975) New Delhi: Orient Longman.

Among the writers of his time, such as the trio R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand and other novelists, for instance, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Anita Desai, the themes of Arun Joshi's novels are comparable to the subject matter of Anita Desai's novels. They both focused on the problems faced by the human beings on the issues of affection and aloofness in their lives. Every reviewer and his contemporaries acknowledge that Arun Joshi's writing is new and he is a new voice in literature. But he was one of the few writers who did not come from the literary background. Being an Industrialist and a writer at the same time, his two creative worlds do not flow into each other

and in this regard he said in an interview with Sujata Mathai in 1983 that his two worlds:

_____ of business and of writing were separate. (Jain, 2010, 74)

As an Industrialist turned into a writer, Arun Joshi faced problems with the limited possibility of the publication of Indian English writing during pre-Independence period, and agreed that the scope was limited in India; but still he maintained in an interview with M.R. Dua on 3 Sept., 1971:

I can't imagine a foreign publishing firm being interested in my type of writing. Even if they were I am not sure I would want to give it to them. I guess it would hurt my national pride. (Jain, 2010, 92-93)

The themes of his short-stories have cross-section of post Independence Indian society- ranging from a college principal to an immigrant Indian physicist, from a soldier to a prostitute, from unemployed middle-class youth and eve-teasers to a sex-obsessed rustic servant, and from the old man searching for his youth to a middle-aged travelling sales-man attached to his crippled daughter. He unhesitatingly uses in his fiction Hindi and Urdu words, even Sanskrit Slokas. Clear realism of his narration from simply telling a story to an experiment with the first person narrative, to Omniscient narration, to presenting a story in the form of criminal case diary have established Joshi as a leading short-story writer in contemporary Indian English literature. His novels present men belonging to upper crust of Indian society.

“Dr. M. K. Naik in his book, A History of Indian English Literature, describes the short stories written in Indian English as ‘mostly a by-product of the novel workshop [lacking the] variety and fecundity of the post-Independence novel.’” (Naik, 1982, 247)

However, Arun Joshi is aware of the importance and the function of the short story as an effective literary form and of its difference from the novel. In his interview with Purabi Banerjee, he remarks:

Each has its own place. In my case it is the theme which determines whether it would be a short story or a novel. For example, I wrote a short story called 'Gherao' which was about students gheraoing a principal. Thematically I would not like to handle a novel about the academic world which I don't know about; so a short story. The world which I know well is the industrial world which has not so far been handled in a novel. (Kumar, 2003, 171)

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