Upamanyu Chatterjee is a social realist for whose creative endeavour the over-arching theme of identity and its plight in a hostile world forms what may be called the bed-rock. He has written three novels - *English August: An Indian Story* (1988), *The Last Burden* (1993) and *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000). The common thread that binds all the novels is the anti-heroic image of the protagonists and other characters. The concept of anti hero which we find in the novels of Chatterjee is central to the colonial disruption of the urban Indian educated personality in terms of multiple splits. There are splits between man and his traditional moorings, between man and his family, between man and his environment; and lastly the split between man and his inner being. Chatterjee in his novels is deeply concerned with the consequences of the encounter between the British colonialists and the Indian society.

According to R. P. Singh, anti hero is a product of the (post) modern socio-cultural condition. The purpose of the study of Upamanyu Chatterjee’s antiheroes, it’s quite relevant to assess what the elite of the colonial moment did to transform itself from being ‘native’ to becoming ‘foreign’. While discussing the societal roots of the antihero, he mentioned the Bengali *bhadralok* which signified a social class. The antiheroic protagonists of Upamanyu Chatterjee and their milieu find clarity of intelligibility when put in the perspective of the influence which the *bhadralok* culture exercised in a long process of acculturation. A close reading of the socio-cultural realism of Upamanyu Chatterjee, as manifested in all the three novels provides us a hindsight which creates a sense of dramatic irony in our mind. The concept of anti-hero as reflected in the major characters of Upamanyu Chatterjee’s novels rests on this divorce of the urban educated man from the different segments of society and its institutions. The most devastating and so most potent factor in creating fertility for the production of anti-heroic denizens of society is the exhaustion and collapse of the force behind motivating ideas and ideologies. In the post-modernist jargon, these have been collectively called ‘grand narratives’ or ‘meta narratives’. The fictional world of Upamanyu Chatterjee is a postmodern world marked by the visible symptoms like collapse of the grand narratives of Indian values and an emphasis on consumerist style of living. It is remarkable, in the context of Upamanyu Chatterjee, that the postmodernity which we encounter in his novels is just a socio-cultural condition which traps the anti-heroes, not an intellectual stand adopted by serious postcolonial thinkers. The unmistakable
message from the novels of Upamanyu Chatterjee is that antiheroes like Agastya Sen, Jamun and their lesser varieties are bound to appear in the Indian society, bound as it is with the global cultural dynamics.

Upamanyu Chatterjee has emerged as one of the most compelling new voices in the domain of Indian novel in English. His debut novel English, August: An Indian Story is a fascinating metaphor of contemporary English educated Indian urban youth’s failed quest for self-realization. Agastya Sen, the antiheroic protagonist of the novel English, August: An Indian Story is a victim of the bureaucratic system he comes to join. Agastya Sen the antihero represents his time, i.e., the last quarter of the twentieth century Indian urban life at multiple levels. The focus of Upamanyu Chatterjee in the novel English, August: An Indian Story is on the fact that the urban Indians like August are victims of an alien cultural discourse which has been internalized by them in the course of their educational cultural nurturing. The concept of anti-hero as we find in this novel reflects very sharply on the pathological careerism of modern Indian youth. One very important aspect of this novel is the message that the Indian society did not undergo cultural decolonization. The central opinion of Upamanyu Chatterjee in this novel is that the careerist English educated Indian urban youth suffers alienation at his deeper psychic level from his roots and becomes doomed to a life of unhappiness and boredom.

The novel, The Mammaries of the Welfare State (2000) is a sequel to Upamanyu Chatterjee’s debut novel English, August: An Indian Story (1988). The novel The Mammaries of the Welfare State is a mirror in which the multi-departmental decay and depravity of the Indian state gets reflected in their bitter details that are horrifying. The title is quite suggestive in the sense that it conveys the resourcefulness of the corrupt elements managing the politics and bureaucracy to milk the system in the interest of their own personal and familial aggrandizement. The central fictional emphasis here is on the antiheroic turning upside down of the putative system of the state bureaucracy as a system of delivery of benefits to the deprived sections. The very title of the novel suggests, in its suggestive bareness, a routine of daily, rather hourly, milking of the docile, inexhaustible and seeming land of abundance that is the ‘Welfare State’. A close reading of these novels reveals that their antiheroes and their families have failed to understand the meaning of reality, having forever mistaken the trapping for the real thing. The dominating presence in this novel is of the antiheroic deeds of the mandarins and politicians of the Welfare State, because the purpose of this novel is to display a canvas of sordid personalities indulging in their sordid deeds. Upamanyu Chatterjee created the anti-hero Agastya Sen in English, August: An Indian Story and devoted another novel The Mammaries of the Welfare State to his dull, unchanged and insipid life.

In the novel The Last Burden (1993) we see the anti-hero as trying to shed the ‘burden’ of family ties, the terrain of his operation being the personal world of familial relationships. The antiheroic protagonist of The Last Burden, Jamun, reflects the average Indian growing up in an Indian megapolis and feeling constantly that he will be more at home in New York or London than in a small place of India. The antiheroic protagonist of The Last Burden is born into a
family which is hate-filled. The social realism of Chatterjee turns its focus to the issue of relationship in an ordinary middle class family, thereby exploring the state of Indian antiheroic personality. After a close textual analysis, one can’t help the impression that in the novel *The Last Burden* the family relationship itself appears to be a