



LITERARY GLOBALISATION

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ABSTRACT

Great literature has the ability to transform and sow the seeds of courage and build knowledge. Indian English literature is also nevertheless a gala of the transcended modern India reflecting the various shades of globalisation. Of late, the realistic, modernistic, pessimistic mode of the first three decades of post-independence writing is giving way to a non-representational, experimental, self-conscious and optimistic literature. Sanyal (1987) too claims that Indian writing represents a new form of Indian culture. It has been assimilated and even became a dynamic element of the culture. Meanwhile, the themes of hybridity and multi-rootedness have become increasingly prevalent in literary texts. Many Indian English novelists like Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth etc. reside in the west. Even those who live in India like Sasi Tharoor and Arun Joshi are products of different cultures, residing in one, educated in another, moving from one country to another, partaking different cultures and presenting what Will Kymlicka calls a “multicultural citizenship” in a globalized world.

Globalisation, like good and evil, is nothing in itself,” Le Clezio said in the speech. As Hamlet expressed, ‘but thinking makes it so,’ literature, in particular, is an art which is an unconditional confession of universal cultural inheritance. Even those who oppose globalisation, it would seem, participate in it unknowingly. The anti-globalisation movement, for instance, is quite efficiently globalized. In India, there is a great deal of awareness that globalisation is a mixed, contradictory, and heterogeneous phenomenon. One can’t simply dismiss or accept it. Like all grand narratives, one has to negotiate with it. Through this paper, we observe some key texts in Indian English literature which explicitly reflect or engage with the phenomenon of globalisation. The article concludes by signifying how globalisation transmits even world literature, and suggests that contemporary theories and



criticism must distinguish globalisation from terms such as neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism.

Key Words: *globalisation, reflection, culture, Indian English literature.*

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation leaves no stone unturned. With sinuous globalisation, India is shining in nearly every prospect. Indian literature is renowned throughout the world for with the range of fiction reflecting the incredible diversity of India itself and engaging with the forces of globalisation and modernity which are reshaping their country. The visible impact of globalisation can be found in the metropolises across the world which have suddenly become cosmopolitan and metro-cultural. The various means of telecommunication, social media, and most importantly the internet has a big role to play in the spread of globalisation. On one hand, many researchers scrutinize and explore works of literature to verify the realities of globalisation through literary forms. On the other hand, literature and literary studies are developed into a platform for supporting, evoking and interpreting different social, political, literary, and cultural concepts within the globalisation realm. From such a starting point, we shall focus on the changes that happened in literature, culture and society in India, which are related and closely interconnected. This analysis is what I intend to do in this article. We will identify and study some key texts in literature which explicitly reflect or engage with the phenomenon of globalisation.

ENGLISH – THE SURROGATE CHILD OF GLOBALISATION

Yet another path breaking aspect of globalisation was the arrival and permeation of English language as the major means of communication for educated and later, the mass. English, of course, is the quintessential global power-language. Not only English has become an expression for authors to establish their nationalism but also to manage their linguistic and cultural hegemony in the globalised world. Now, English has occupied the place of Indian language. Consequently, this language has become cultural language in current situation and if one writes in English, he/she becomes “Indian writer”, at the same time, gets name and fame at the world wide (E.g.: Salman Rushdie, Aurandhati Roy, etc). Whereas, one who writes in Modern Indian languages, he/she is to be considered as only ‘regional writer’. The value and power of English is very powerful than all Modern Indian languages. Speaking at the inaugural session of western and southern writers meet organised by the Sahitya Akademi, Arun Sadhu, a Marathi writer advocated flexibility, stating that the people in remote villages are comfortable with a mixture of English and vernaculars. Therefore, English is the cultural capital in all the functional domains of the Indian Society.



McKay (2002) contends that the number of people using English today is vast and these numbers are growing. India is the third largest English book-producing country after the United States and the United Kingdom, and the largest number of books is published in English for wider access. Indeed, according to the words of an Indian critic Iyengar, Indian English literature is "one of the voices which India speaks...it is a new voice, no doubt, but it is as much Indian as the others". The angry Independent Indians anxiety of helplessness or restlessness is still intact in the core of Indian literature, which however has taken towards fresh directions gradually under globalisation and its influence onto Indian literature. It is a haven of hope in this era of spiritual poverty and leaves some evidence of life. Besides opportunities certain challenging issues regarding culture, tradition, and ethnicity are also rising in the recent decades of the 21st century due to globalisation. The major English writers of most of the developing nations live in the west. Hence, the modern Indian English Literature considers the trends that have emerged in Indian society by thematically focusing on the challenges faced by the Internationalised Indian lives. It is in this context of globalized cultural regimes and exploitation of multiple displacements, new forms of writing and cultural practices emerge. The Diaspora writing from the west thus assumes greater importance in the context of globalisation.

WRITERS OF INDIAN DIASPORA LITERATURE

Indian Diaspora with its diversified form and presence is taking the world by storm. It is a result of the increasing acceptance of the West and its eventful growth has a very powerful presence in literature. It has almost become mainstream English literature. Indian Writers like Naipaul and Rushdie contributed chiefly in this regard. They are not "Indian" alone; they are "global citizens". Many Indian English novelists like Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth etc. reside in the west. Even those who live in India like Sasi Tharoor and Arun Joshi are products of different cultures, residing in one, educated in another, moving from one country to another, partaking of different cultures, presenting what Will Kymlicka calls a "multicultural citizenship" in a globalized world. These writers are cosmopolitan in outlook and even celebrate in their writings the fluid condition of the hybrid possessing multiple identities and transcending national barriers.

V.S. Naipaul stands tall amongst all Indian Diasporic writers. He seems to epitomize the term 'Indian Diaspora'. In 1961, he published one of his most acclaimed novels, *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Throughout the novel there are elements connecting to the memories of Naipaul's childhood. He had to "Re-learn everything he knew" (Naipaul58). He cannot have that sense



of belongingness anywhere because of his sense of alienation. Cross-culturalism lies at the heart of any diaspora and Naipual is also no exception to that.

Another great name which comes in to mind when talking about Diasporic writing is, Salman Rushdie. Salman Rushdie was born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay but in 1967 his parents moved to Pakistan, a move which Rushdie never accepted whole-heartedly. Thus he belonged to three countries and yet to none. Again a sense of displacement hovers over the works of him. His debut novel *Grimus* deals with the plight of alienation and a sense of estrangement. While flapping Eagle's problem was rootlessness, Rushdie's was of multiple roots. This is evident in his next two writings, *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*.

Amitav Ghosh, another writer of the Indian diaspora, is also noteworthy. Born in Calcutta on July 11, 1956 he later moved to Delhi for higher studies and now lives in New York. In 2008, he published *Sea of Poppies*, the first part of the famous Ibis trilogy, which deals with the colonial period of India and the novel has the descriptions related to the first wave of migration of those indentured labourers. Ghosh's vision thus takes shape in the historical records of the first generation of workers who left their native land never to return again, to settle in a foreign country where they would never again find their true selves.

Jhumpa Lahiri, in her novels showcased the crisis of identity and belongingness. Lahiri, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, was born on July 11, 1967 in London and later her family moved to the United States. *The Namesake* (2003) deals with the life of Gogol Ganguli, the American-born son of Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli. The unwelcoming American society takes Gogol as its victim and he tries utmost to break free from the shackles of Indian traditions in order to be accepted by the American World. In her latest novel *The Lowlands* (2013) Lahiri has again portrayed the same sense of dislocation, through the story of two brothers Subhas and Udayan. Thus, home and dislocation appeared again and again as the central themes in the writings of Indian diasporic writers. Some other texts which deal with globalisation are – Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995), Mohsin Hamids *Moth Smoke* (2000), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000).

Diasporic experience often comes from memory— a memory of loss, of leaving the home, of not having any soul-connection with the host country and thus diasporic literature always acts as a kind of bridge between two different cultures. The true essence of Diaspora literature is reflected in the remark of Jasbir Jainas when he remarked, home and nation and Schizophrenia and/or nostalgia are the preoccupation of these writers as they seek to locate themselves in the new culture.



Poetry too projects themes of rootlessness, diasporic consciousness and a confident internationalism. Younger generation of poets have no anxiety or guilt about the lack of centre. Sudeep Sen's *anthology Lines Review* (1996) includes a number of young Indian English poets like Chitra Divakaruni, Sudesh Misra or Hoshang Merchant who either lead a diasporic existence or travel widely, dividing their time between India and abroad. They are the cultural elite familiar with the best in art, literature and culture across the world. They are truly international. A typical instance is that of Sujata Bhatt who was born in Ahmedabad, India, moved at twelve to USA, married a German and started living in Germany. She speaks of India, Europe and North America as the three different worlds of her imagination and her works – *Brunizen* (1988), *Monkey Shadows*(1991) and *The Striking Rose* (1995) fuse different cultures, environments and perspectives, employ different linguistic variations and multilingual mixings (Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit, English, German and Spanish) She says"...I consider myself to be an Indian writer, but I like to think of myself as living in "the world" as opposed to in any one country" ("from Gujarat to Connection to Breunan" 1988,4).

Thus, Indian Diaspora is more than a term in parenthesis and acts as a bridge between two countries and strengthens their bi-lateral ties. India and its Diaspora can enrich each other in a spirit of mutual interest. The distinct Indian flavour was back in the English language and thus the works of the modern Indian writers reflected the Indianized English. Be it Salman Rushdie, Shahshi Tharoor or Amitav Ghosh the deconstruction of the British of English was quite evident. The regional languages were freely used in the prose forms; thus once again breaking, restructuring and adding a new twist and dimension to the traditional narrative patterns. For instance, Mulk Raj Anand's work is replete with Hindi and Punjabi words like `haanaai`, `saalamhuzoorii`, `shabashshabash` (Coolie). Most path breaking is Arundhati Roy's use of untranslatedmalyalam words in day to day conversations in her *The God of Small Things* like `chacko sir vannu`, `she is very beautiful sundarikutty`, `oower, orkunniley, kushambi`. Though diasporic authors are influenced considerably in content by the western philosophy and thought, they simultaneously know how exactly to maintain its unique Indian flavour and assorted richness. In the arena of international literature, Indian Diaspora literature occupies a superior position for its sumptuous affluence and originality. We must feel pride in the achievements of them and it is the apt time for us to acknowledge it.

NEXT TO DIASPORA – IT'S POP LIT

Cyberspace that connects the world contributes to the obliteration of national and geographic boundaries and fosters the new global culture and literature. Multinational corporations consequently settled in the country with surprising speed, offer the emergence of "digerati" elite. This group of English-educated digerati whom sociologist Shehzad Nadeem calls



“Macaulay’s cyber-children” appears to form a substantial segment of the target audience for pop-Lit. Hoards of young writers of fiction from both cities and small-towns are making beeline writing about the technocrats of ‘Silicon Valley’, and are garnering accolades for their creativity and their contributions in the growth of this contemporary lit, popularly termed as Pop-Lit or Call Centre Lit.

Pop-Lit attempts to jolt multicultural, as well global award-winning Indian English fiction writers out of their complacency. It is evidently a saga of their determination and hard work which eventually leads to their triumph. The book-market of popular fiction respectfully bows down to the overarching presence of both prolific Indian writers of international repute such as Chetan Bhagat and Aravinda Adiga in academic forums and bookstores across India, and bestselling authors credited with one or two novels such as Parul Mittal. It seems there is space for every writer of pop-lit in bookshelves across India.

One of the dominant thinkers of the new millennium, Chetan Bhagat’s writings has created a new philosophy for a modernised young India. The novels of this young writer aims at evaluating what comes next for Indian writing—the new beginnings—the new trends which are emerging from the intertwining of the current global, cultural, economic, and political scene with writing technologies. Donald Greenless has claimed that, “Chetan Bhagat might not be another Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy, but he has authentic claims to being one of the voices of a generation of middle class Indian (New York Times).

Aravinda Adiga’s *The White Tiger* was published in 2008, and it had made its author famous throughout world. This 2008 Booker Prize winner novel *The White Tiger* studies the contrast between India’s rise as a modern global economic giant and the protagonist, Balram, who comes from rural poverty background. Past six decades have witnessed changes in Indian society, and these changes, many of which are for the better, have overturned the traditional hierarchies, and the old securities of life. A lot of poorer Indians are left disturbed and perplexed by the New India that is being formed around them. However fast Indian economy may be growing, the lives of the poor people still show the grim picture of rural India. Therefore, it is clear that the major theme of the novel is to present the effects of globalization on Indian democracy.

In due course, Pop Lit writers “analyse some of the complex issues facing modern India, offers solutions and invites discussion on them”. Through their illustrious works, they question the corrupt social set up and encourage the young to change this. Thus, pop-lit by presenting the problems of modernised multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and pluralistic society, expects to change the attitude of young modern minds and to elevate their lives. “Though India is getting a global recognition and slowly moving towards to become a



major economic and political strength, still many basic problems like rural poverty, corruption and political instability remained unsolved (Chaterjee).” So this is mandatory on our part and predominant duty to work for integrated development of our Nation. The Y and Z generation through destroying the prevailing cultural inhibitions, religious hegemonies and gender bias should pave the way to create united India.

CONCLUSION

Being global means a change in one’s view of looking at life, Values, Culture & Language. In India, there is a great deal of awareness that globalisation is a mixed, contradictory, and heterogeneous phenomenon. The impact of western culture through English Language on Indian life is inevitable. In fact in the era of globalisation, no society can resist to the influence of alien cultures. That is, there will not be a country with monoculture in a decade. Indian culture has also influenced the world culture. In other words, there is the rise of global culture which has blurred the boundaries of traditional culture. With some positivity of having a generalised knowledge of the culture throughout the world and the happenings globally, still some negative impacts are quite alarming for our country. One can’t simply dismiss or accept it. One has to negotiate with it and need to budge very cautiously with the globalisation process preserving our nation’s pride and maintain our cultural prestige. This aspect has been captured wonderfully by writers all over the world. This paper also presents Indian English Writing in the light of the concept of Globalisation and its various effects. Globalisation phenomena will continue to stride into the future; it is our urgent task to examine the checks and balances of the globalisation process, and find a way to promote both regional cultures and global values. It’s high time greater efforts have been made to find a sustainable environment instead of calling the changes due to globalisation by terms such as neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism because they are not imposed but willingly accepted by the people all over the world. Any troubled insight into the minds of readers like struggling to cope with the new realities of Indian globalization, with its hybrid identities and hierarchies of English, then the new and improved India and hybrid identities enacted by globalization should be greeted with a great deal of ambivalence.

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