



**THE UNCHANGING CHANGES ON INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE
WITH RESPECT TO GLOBALIZATION**

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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 globalization. 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.

Globalization, 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 globalization, it would seem, participate in it unknowingly. The anti-globalization movement, for instance, is





quite efficiently globalized. In India, there is a great deal of awareness that globalization 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 globalization. The article concludes by signifying how globalization transmits even world literature, and raises a new literary history with new forms and trends of writing as far as the Indian English literature is concerned.

Key Words: globalization, reflection, culture, Indian English literature.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization leaves no stone unturned. With sinuous globalization, India is shining in every aspect. Indian literature is renowned throughout the world with the range of fiction reflecting the incredible diversity of modern India after globalization which is reshaping the country. The visible impact of globalization can be found across the country which have suddenly become cosmopolitan and metro-cultural. The various means of telecommunication, social media, and most importantly the internet have a big role to play in the spread of globalization. On one hand, many researchers scrutinize and explore works of literature to verify the realities of globalization 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 globalization 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. I shall also identify and study some key texts in literature which explicitly reflect or engage with the phenomenon of globalization.





ENGLISH – THE SURROGATE CHILD OF GLOBALIZATION

Yet another path breaking aspect of globalization 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 globalized world. Now, English is identified as one of the most widespread Indian languages. Consequently, this language has become the language of literarians and if one writes in English, he/she becomes “Indian writer”, at the same time, gets name and fame worldwide (E.g.: Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, etc). Whereas, one who writes in other common Indian languages, he/she is to be considered only as ‘regional writer’. The value and power of English is very powerful than all Indian languages. Speaking at the inaugural session of western and southern writers meet organised by the Sahitya Akademi, Arun Sadhu, a Marathi writer stated that even the people of remote villages are comfortable with a mixture of English with their vernaculars. Therefore, English becomes the cultural capital of 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 day by day. India is the third largest English book-producing country after the United States and the United Kingdom. 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 once found angry independent Indians anxiety of helplessness or restlessness as the core of post modern Indian literature, however has taken fresh directions gradually under globalization and its influence onto India. 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 globalization. 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 globalization.

WRITERS OF INDIAN DIASPORA LITERATURE

Diasporic Literature is a very vast concept and an umbrella term that includes all those all those writers, who write outside their country but remained related to their homeland through their works. It has its roots in the sense of loss and alienation, which emerged as a result of migration and expatriation. Indian Diaspora with its diversified form and presence is taking the world by storm. It has almost become mainstream English literature. Indian Writers like Naipaul and Rushdie contributed chiefly in this regard. They are not “Indians” 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. V. S. Naipaul’s characters like Mohun Biswas from *A House for Mr. Biswas* or Ganesh Ramsumair from the *Mystic Masseur*,





are instances of persons who are generations away from their original homeland, India, but their inheritance gives them a realization of their past. Naipaul's characters are not governed by actual displacement but by an inherited memory of dislocation. For them, their native land India is not a geographical space but a creation of the imagination. Cross-culturalism lies at the heart of any diaspora and Naipaul 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 other diasporic authors' problem was rootlessness, Rushdie's was of multiple roots. This is evident in his next two writings, *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. In his novel *The Satanic Verses*, his approach towards depiction of migration by adopting the technique of magic realism is noteworthy.

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. Her novel, *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 globalization 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). These writers also depicted the positive aspect of displacement. There are benefits of living as a migrant, the opportunity of having a double perspective of being able to experience diverse cultural modes. It is often this advantage that enables diasporic Indians, particularly of the second generation; face the dilemma of dual identities. Such ambivalence produces existential anguish in their psychology

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).





Diasporic experience often comes from memory— a memory of the loss of leaving the home and not having any soul-connection with the host country. 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. Acceptance of hybrid identity is suggested to the problems of dislocation and thus diasporic literature always acts as a kind of bridge between two different cultures. It 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. Now is the appropriate time to acknowledge it and take pride in their achievements.

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. The emergence of multinational corporations in the country with surprising speed, produce “digerati” elite, that





is, people with expertise or professional involvement in information technology. 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 these technocrats of ‘Silicon Valley’, and are garnering accolades for their creativity and 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 that 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 Arudhanti 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 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 poor 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 globalization is a mixed, contradictory, and heterogeneous phenomenon. The impact of western culture through English Language on Indian life thus becomes inevitable. In fact in the era of globalization, 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, it's quite understood that some negative impacts are also alarming the country. One





can't simply dismiss or accept it. One has to negotiate with it and need to budge very cautiously with the globalization process to preserve our nation's pride and to 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 never ending changes owing to Globalization and its various effects. Globalization phenomena will continue to stride into the future; it is our urgent task to examine the checks and balances of the globalization 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 globalization 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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