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Emerging Trends in Post Modern Indian English Fiction



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ABSTRACT

Post-modern Indian English fiction differs from traditional Indian English fiction in the sense of content and narratology. The work of three great English Indian doyens i.e. Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R K Narayan and others like Anita Desai, Kamla Markandya differ from the

post-modern fiction of Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Arvind Adiga Kiran Nagarkar, Rohinton Mistry and Faruq Dhondi to name some of the few. This paper aptly highlights the post-modern characteristics and dimensions of Indian English fiction

RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

When Indian writing is concerned, fiction is in abundance and dominates. It is because as a nation we are fond of storytelling, and fiction allows greater experimentation and exploration Indian English fiction has a significant tradition to be proud of The three doyen of the first tradition - R K Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand took it to the great height R K Narayan, who stood for the happiness and sorrows in the life of the common man carved his imaginary Malgudi world where is famous novels like *The Guide* and other take place in Raja Rao was influenced by Gandhian and in his famous novels, & **Kanthapura**, people of all, castes take-part-the freedom struggle in Gandhian way, but his second novel *The Serpent and the Rope* is quite mystic. Mulk Raj Anand was also influenced by Marxist and Gandhian philosophy quite reflected in his novels - *Untouchable* and *Coolie*. This tradition has some unique interventions like Khushawant Singh's *The Train to Pakistani* Mánohar Malgaonkar, K.A. Abbas and others. The women novelists were not for behind they have also contributed a lot. Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*, Kárnala Markanday's *The Nectar in a Sieve* are unique examples.

At this backdrop quite deservedly Indian English fiction has attracted a lot of attention since the post—modern period i.e. 1980s. Something different has been 'happening to the post—modern. Indian English fiction and it was noticed in the international awards won by different novels. The major first attention stealer was and also 'has now proved is Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* which won the coveted Booker Prize in 1998 and after 10 years it has won the much more coveted Booker of Booker Prize in 2008. And last year again the Booker Prize was bestowed on Arvind Adigia for his experimental epistolary. Novel *The White Tiger*. and previously on Kiran Desai for her novel *The Loss of Inheritance* (2007) and on Arundhati Roy for her novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). In such a way the post—modern era was more significant for Indian English Fiction because this period was dominated by fiction with major novels several of them prize winning - Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1993) and *Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), Vikram Chandra's *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* (1995), Githa Hariham's *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1993) and now *When Dreams Travel* (1998), Allan Sealy's *The Trotter—Nama* (1998), and *Everest Hotel* (1998), Vikram Seth's

1349'- page novel A Suitable Boy (1993), An Equal Music (1999), Rushdie's The Moor's Last Sigh (1995) and The Ground Beneath Her Feet (1999), Shashi Deshpande's A Matter of Time (1996), Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize Winner The God of Small Things (1997), Rohinton Mistry's A Fine Balance (1996), Meena Alexander's Fault Lines (1993) and Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters (1998), which has been awarded the Commonwealth Prize for the First Novel. In 1998 the two home grown prizes have gone to two playwrights', the Gyanpith Award to Girish Karnad and the Sahitya Akademi to Mahesh Dattani.

A different type of novel 'has spawned recently which attracted the critical attention like The New Novel in English: A Study of the 1980s (Karpal, 1290). This decade wise study stops the earlier study which 'were historical overviews the evolution of the Indian novel. Indian novel begins from the latter half of the 19th century, Meenakshi Mukharjee's The Twice Born Fiction (1974) stops with 1960. breakaway from Indian novels before the 1980s then a host of the formal and If Midnight's Children signified a. major thematic and technical linguistic experiments were done in post modern Indian novels. Vinay Kirpal (2002:56-57) aptly comments:

The postmodern novels focus same attention on women, and religious and linguistic minorities. The post-modern novel exploded the exclusively Hindu male world view (emphasis added) of Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand; (the post-modern) novels foreground and represent the notion of a non-Hindu female / minority world view; (it) draws upon characters, from different world countries.

These books are metro-centric and experiment with reading----making double reading possible.. These text present multiple perspectives and fragmented identities: most of the novels are family history and even provide a family tree at the beginning. Rushdie has done it consistently so have Shashi Tharoor in Great Indian Novel (1989) and .Vikram Seth in A Suitable Boy (1993). The character are so numerous and their lives so intertwined that the post-modern novel is indeed a crowded place. Storytelling is a technique and narrational. principle in the post-modern novel. The names of Rushdie, Tharoor, Amitav Ghosh, Githa Hariharan, Vikram Chandra, and many others come to mind.

Post-modern novel re-writes Indian history- it minors the felt pain of the imposition of Emergency between 1975 and 1977 given, to the writers of the times. The post-modern novel exhibit a shift from national to international on the one hand and another there is movement to from national to regional Novelists like Rushdie and Bharati 'Mukharjee show a tendency for a movement for internationalism. Both Rushdie and Mukharjee belong at once "nowhere" and "everywhere". This gives their work the complexity and range that indigenous writers lack. Because of their positional statement, NRI writers notably have questioned the 'notion of Indianness both in their fictional and critical texts\$ The Moor's Last Sigh it is ' difficult to conclude weather Moraes Zogoiby is Spanish, Portuguese, Indian, Christian or a mix. Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines, Vikram Seth's An Equal Music, Anita Desai's Journey to Ithaca, Bharti Mukharji's Jasmine are all examples of this notion.

As against the international personality the post-modern novelist write about the local, the regional, and the religious and linguistic minorities. Hence a number of writer of this period have tried to represent the non-Hindu communities and world of values, beliefs and practices. There are novels about the Parsi protagonist (Such a Long Journey) and about the Muslim and Sikh and the Jew. These novels consciously try to bring all the marginalized ones to the centre of the stage. This includes women and children, and low-castes, slum-dwellers, and servants. These novels give these human dregs of societies readies herself a speak the police about the violence on her daughter Kalpana In Trying to Grow Daryrus 'Brit' Kotwal, the osteo child narrator is born handicapped But Firudas Kanga prefers to tell the story, of boy-with-brittle bones rather than more 'whole' characters In Baumgartner's Bombay the protagonist is a foreigner - a Jew on the run from German holocaust In God of Small Things, the unhappy twins Esther and Rahel get Arundhati Roy's undivided attention So does, Velutha, the social pariah Alan Sealy writes About the Goan Christians, in The Trotter-Nama Rohintan Mistry and Boman Desai celebrate the Parsis, while Kiran Nagarkar spans his camera in Rawan and Eddie to the Hindu and Catholic characters in the CWD chawls

Roy, accused of some,..historical inaccuracies has represented a certain sect of Christian and Nambrodrpads in The God of Small Things Her locale is verdant Kerala She does not write about metropolitan cities Similarly the focus in Vikram Seth's A Suitable Boy, is also a small town So Vmay Kirpil (2002 60) properly observes.

The predilection for the small, the local or regional and subaltern can be called the centripetal tendency, i.e. an intense inward movement (The post-modern novel) therefore shows double movement of the centrifugal and the centripetal tendencies.

In fiction there are mix continuities: one of them is the engagement with history, both national and personal, history of lives of institutions, family- sagas, the freedom struggle, gender discrimination. Incidentally, cartography is a prominent trope right from Salman Rushdie through Amitav Ghosh to Mukul Keshvan. Maps are of significance problematizing the nation and national as is. also examining the span of individual memory. The narratives are full of family sagas - Nina Siba's Yatra (1987), Gurucharan Das' A Fine Family. (1990) and now Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters. These family 'sagas become, in a manner, of speaking, a concern with lineage, and heredity, with genealogical histories. In Arnav Ghosh's Shadow Lines the marginalised categories • surface on the national scene. This happens. in Allan Sealy's The Trotter Nama. Suddenly it is no longer Hindu India, but it is also the Parsi, the Anglo-Indian, the Eurasian, and the Dalit India. History and family sagas also facilitate an analysis of institutions like family and marriage, institutions linked ever so closely to the question of gender. Engagement with history necessitates a lot of researching not necessary of historical events as in Chaman . Nahal's Azadi for Kamla Markanday's The Golden Honeycomb. There are novels about Partition and Emergency by several writers like Sahegal, Rushdie and Mistry. Rohinton Mistry dwells upon the Emergency in the great detail in A Fine Balance.

Religion continues to be a major concern. It is dominant strand in Partition novels and no else dealing with the freedom struggle The issue of conversion is highlighted in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things and earlier Rushdie's Midnight's Children emphasizing both the divisions of country exciting to halves. Twins who have shared parented who are like India and Pakistan.

— Where marital relationships are concerned, if adultery is confronted squarely, second marriages, (bigamous relation) are also debated from different angles. Rose in Sahegal's Rich like Us (1985) has a successor in Manju Kapur's Viniitri in Difficult Daughters (1998). Sealy's Trotter Nama also deals with bigamous 'marriages. But by writing about them it is not necessary that, they are accepted; only their presence on the social scene is recognized.

The question of diasporic surfaces. Rushdie in his introduction to the Vintage Book of Indian Writing (1997; co-edited with Elizabeth West). There are a whole lot of writers on the scene. Bharti Mukharji who disowns; Meena Alexander and Suniti Namjoshi fine writers both who are seldom discussed in India. Then they are others like Amit Choudhari, Sunetra Sengupta, Leela Dhingra, and Meera Syaal. Diasporic presence pushes stay-at-home writer to (JJ the periphery (specially on the international scene and critical discussion) Market forces, publicity hypes and awards are some of the forces which shape critical interest.

Another intervention is the increase in translation of contemporary writing from Indian languages Macmillan, Katha, Rupa . & Co, Kali for Women, Penguin India (Gyanpeeth, Sahitya Akademi, National Book Trust) are some of the publishers bringing out translations. These translations of very contemporary writing - like Mahasweta Devi's Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Ma. (Mother of 1084) or Kiran Nagarkar's Seven Sixes Are Forty-Three lead us to reconsider as Jasbir Jain (2002:18) observes:

The whole question of a literary tradition and the relationship of are to tradition. English language writing in India is now firmly located in double tradition (emphasis added) - the linguistic tradition and the cultural tradition. The perspective is sharper if it is viewed as Indian literature rooted in Indian reality no longer conscious of the use of English.

The carton, a vague overused word in itself, needs to be redefined. First, our own sensibilities, then our cultural and political need for decolonization. Literary history provides evidence that several major writers in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, Kannada and other languages have been teachers of English literature like Firaq Gorakhpuri, Harvanshrai Bachchan, . Sant Singh Sekhon, U.R. Anantha Murthy, Bhalchandra Nemade, and a host of others. But now increasingly either they write in English or their use of the two language (English and their mother tongue) is spontaneous and natural.

The process of decolonization is often traced to Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan's edited volume *The Lie of the Land* (1991) and Gouri Vishwanathan's *Masks of Conquest* (1989). It would, be simplistic the post-modernism as lacking imagination and written stuff, written for the West it would be little them, as they did some experiments. But it is unfortunate that the stamp of approval is awaited from the West.

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