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LITERATURE : CHANGING VALUES IN INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION



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ABSTRACT

This research explores the Indian human values like "nationality," "religion," "secularism" and "society" reflected in Indian English Fiction. The paper maps the trajectory of Indian English Fiction in brief, stressing the contribution of the three great doyen of the first generation - R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao and then encompasses the contribution of the Contemporary Indian

English Novelists in inculcating the Indian values through their fiction. The Indian Women Novelists in English have the unique place with their Feminist Concerns and so it is also explored thoroughly. The controversial points about the dignity of Indian English Literature are also raised. To sum up, this research paper pinpoints the changing Indian human values as found in Indian English Fiction.

RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

India belongs to one of the ancient civilizations and cultures in the world. The Indus Valley Civilization had been contemporary to the then great civilizations in the world like Babylonian and Egyptian Civilizations. India has always been proud of its rich cultural heritage and values and stood as guiding star the world. The spiritual doyen like Swami Vivekanand and Eastern Indian Philosophy has always influenced the world. Through the history of mankind India had suffered many assaults from foreign from time and again, but India had fought with them courageously and withstood them from the Mughals to the earliest British rulers. Both of them ruled India for a large span of time, and at last India got freedom from the British in 1947. One of the dominating and unique quality of Indian culture is its large tolerance. It has assimilated many cultural qualities even from the rulers. India borrowed the architecture and music from the Mughals and when the British left we inherited the legacy of English language which created a special field of Literature called "Indian English Literature".

When we explore the changing values in Indian English Fiction, it has gone a rapid change and come to a full circle. This research paper tries to highlight these significant aspects. As literature reflects society, or as it is called the mirrorsociety, literature will reflect the pros and cons in it. So Indian English Literature reflects the values in Indian society in a better way. The protagonist, Raju, the guide of R.K. Narayan's one of the first generation's greatest Indian English novelist, novel, Guide, commits forgery, deceives his beloved Nalini, the dancer. So he jailed and after the punishment tries to become a Mahatma to pray raingods and scarifies is life for the people. The protagonist of Arvind Adiga, who won this year's Booker Prize for his novel The White Tiger, Balram Halwai, commits more heinous crimes, he kills his master and runs with his lakhs of rupees and becomes an entrepreneur in Benglore where he is hiding because there are his posters to catch him. And from his hiding place he writes letters to the Chinese Première, So from R.K. Narayan the first doyen novelist to Arvind Adiga the today's modern novelist the wheel of human values has come to circle. What are the human values in these two novels from two poles are forgery in one case, and murder and robbery in another. So from the starting to the present the norms of the human values remain unchanged. Further in search of the human values of nation, society, secularism and religion we find a changing ethos. The first generation of Indian English Fiction and the three doyen., R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao had their different philosophies to propagate through their fiction. R.K. Narayan stood for the happiness and sorrows in the day to day common man's life. As exemplified above his notable novel Guide he is an extraordinary example depicting the ethos in the life of a common man, Raju, the guide, how the dancer Nalini enters his life, how they become lovers, how he becomes significant from an ordinary man and how money corrupts in him. He commits forgery, is jailed, but after the punishment he is purified and tries to become a

Mahatma and prays the rain gods and devotes his life for the people. Mulk Raj And was particularly dominated by the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi which is reflected in novels *The Untouchable* and *Callie*. He tries to expose the bad customs in the society. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* is a patriotic novel which depicts the people of all castes and creeds participating in the Independent Movement in Gandhian way. His other novel *Serpent and Rope* is highly symbolic and philosophic. There were other notable novelists like Manohar Malgaonkar who wrote *The Princes* on monarchy, Bhawani Bhattacharya, Abbas and Khushwant Singh whose noted novel *The Train to Pakistan*, a critique on partition, and others who continued the tradition of Indian English Fiction. On this backdrop when we explore the panorama of contemporary Indian English Fiction, the picture on other hand is not gloomy but optimistic. Two personalities in Indian English Literature won accolades in the world on whom the highest prize in the world of literature i.e. Nobel Prize for Literature were bestowed are Rabindranath Tagore and Sir Vidya S. Naipaul. Rabindranath Tagore, basically a Bengali writer and a versatile personality was conferred the Nobel Award for his collection of poems *Gitanjali* which was translated from Bengali into English and introduction was written to it by the notable British poet W.B. Yeats. Recently the controversial writer of Indian origin Sir Vidya S. Naipaul, a prolific writer who sometimes ago observed India as *An Area of Darkness* is said to have conferred the award for his "Cultural Brahminism." India being a multicultural country, people of different religions, castes, creeds, ethnic origins, speaking different languages live together harmoniously since many contrary in different states or regions so the human values of one 'nationality' or 'nationhood' is found reflected in Indian people and so in Indian English Fiction. The other human values like equality of mankind, Gandhian philosophy are also found reflected in Indian English Fiction from the great doyen to contemporary writers. In the post 1980s Indian English Fiction, Vikram Seth's voluminous novel *A Suitable Boy* was a hallmark in this period. Similarly the other contemporary novelists like Upamanyu Chatterjee, Amitav Ghosh, Faruq Durrani, Faruq Kanga, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Vakil, Rohinton Mistry, I. Allan Sealy, is the new breed who has achieved world accolades. Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel*, Vikram Chandra's mammoth *Sacred Games* and *Love and Longing in Bombay* and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* appealed the reading community. Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* has achieved the Booker of Booker Award for ten years in 2008. And this year Arvind Adiga has achieved the Booker Prize for his stunning novel *The White Tiger*.

The Indian Women English Novelists have never been behind. They have been always shouldering their responsibilities in a far better way. Since the earlier writers like Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Kamala Marakandaya have always upheld the Indian values of Indian womanhood. And now the young and contemporary women writers contribute in the same way, like Arundhati Roy, a writer and activist, who was honored with the Booker Prize for her novel *God of Small Things*, and last year Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai was bestowed with the Booker Prize for her novel. Similarly Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Shashi Deshpande and other women novelists are creating Indian ethos and Indian values in their fiction. Most of the Indian women who are portrayed in the Indian English Fiction is traditional, subdued, mild who accept their lot without hesitating. But we

find a new Wave of Feminism in the works of all these above mentioned women writers. These Feminist Indian English Women Novelists depict the rebellious protagonists in their works, who fight against their lot and rotten customs and traditions in the society, like Indu and Akka in Shashi Deshpande's, *Roots and Shadows* or in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve*. Even we cannot neglect Shoba De's high-class pulp fiction. The ironic phenomenon is that though Indian Literature in English is achieving praise in the country and abroad some of the Indian scholars and critics are against it they object its very existence, and are not ready to give it the statues it deserves. It is criticized that Indian English Literature is meant for the Western readers. Written as washing the dirty linen of the motherland to the world, but it is a controversial point. The truth lies in the fact that, Indian English Literature particularly and especially nourishes an Indian Etios and Indian values life "nationality", "religion", "secularism", and "society" and tries to expose the age- old customs and traditions in the country for the reformation like Sutti, Child - Marriage, Malnutrition, naked sadhus, dictatorial, Zaminadars or aristocrats who exploit the poor and the low caste people and keep and upper on them. Arvinda Adiga's *The White Tiger* is a recent and excruciating and poignant portrayal of these features.

To sum up Indian English Fiction articulates human values inculcated by Indian Civilization and Culture even though the medium is different.

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