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Indigenous Cultures in Contemporary Indian English Fiction

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Abstract

Recently, Indian literature in English has attracted global interest both in India and abroad. It is now unanimously accepted as part of English language world literature. Fiction as the most powerful form of expression today is not only recognized in Indian literature, but is independently recognized as English language Indian fiction. Indian local languages and literatures have had unparalleled standards since ancient times. But the Indian English novel genre emerged vaguely in 1864 with the publication of Bankimchandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*. The period from 1864 to 1920 saw rare publications such as *Kamala* by Krupabai Sathhinandhan, *Stories of a Hindu Life* 1894, *Prince of Destiny* by Sarath Kumar Ghosh in 1909, S.N. Mitra's *Hindupore*, *A Peek Behind the Indian Riots: An Anglo-Indian Romance* in 1909, Bal Krishna's *The Love of Kusuma, An Oriental Love Story* in 1910 and T. Ramakrishnan's *The Dive for Death: An Indian Romance* in 1911. According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, "Indo-English fiction, the last of the various branches of Indian fiction to be born and grow" (pp. 30-31 TBF), gained momentum after the Nineteen Sixties. Establishment of the genre as an independent institution: "First, it tries to create literature in a language which, in most cases, is born rather than spoken; the language of great literature. Anand took Indian English fiction to a new level. The contributions of a number of other highly regarded novelists and these three masters firmly established the genre of world literature."

Keywords: Indian English writing, fiction, journalists, linguistics.

The interaction of many material and cultural factors has caused dramatic changes in modern times. The rapid development of the technological field and the influence of mass media have led to unprecedented interaction between different cultures. All of these factors may not lead to the emergence

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of a global village, but the development of any part of the world will certainly have immediate and significant local and global impacts. It had a profound impact on people's way of life and thinking. The intervention of these influences brought new trends to emerging art forms, including literature.

Literature is no longer confined to a particular geographical, ethnic or cultural context. Global attention and shifting paradigms affecting different art forms have transformed the nature and understanding of literature. The variety of reading materials available in the market has also changed the desires and expectations of readers. A body of writing not only demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of literature, but also gives impetus to a competition to innovate under unreasonable pressure. This has resulted in a form of writing that challenges classifications based on traditionally accepted literary canons.

There has also been a noticeable shift in the fictional work of many recent Indo British novelists. Instead of conveying typical Indian cultural background and traditional Indian cultural ethos, their works show global concerns by presenting multicultural realities. The nature of their attention has changed, resulting in an ever increasing number of their readership. The broadening of their thematic field and the development of new forms of expression have

earned them numerous prestigious international distinctions, including the Nobel Prize awarded by the United States. Naipaul. Their work has been widely praised. Instead of presenting the typical sociocultural context and typography of India, these authors focus on different ways of life in different cultures. Likewise, the presentation of traditional middleclass Indian society and its contradictions is replaced with the lives and experiences of the wealthy and largely liberated by society. Their work is not limited to representations of the epistemological world commonly experienced by the poor and the elderly in society. They work hard to create new life forms to show the many possibilities of human existence in the new world. Not only that, but their works of fiction also show a tendency to mix fiction and reality, which shows that they no longer view literature as an artistic social document. Salman Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth Namita Gokhale, Kiran Sohni Writers such as Sawhney and Shobha De showed this tendency in their works. Besides the interest in global attention which tends to broaden the scope of the novel, there are other factors which indicate a new trend in Indo British fiction. These factors relate to various changes in life and shifts in paradigms of understanding in literary theory and practice.

Similarly, the rapid urbanization of Indian society and the influence of

mass media have also brought about dramatic changes in the lives of contemporary Indians. Traditional moral values and static, all-encompassing norms of behavior have crumbled under the influence of a multicultural reality and new modes of communication, including television, cable, computers, the Internet, and print media. This is partly because the democratization of power has shaken traditional moral and social values. All these factors lead to the emergence of new life form. Mediagenerated images provide dreamy and romantic life possibilities, and their role complicates life. Thus, the form of the novel underwent a corresponding transformation to express the complexities of life. Inform that the complexities of human life find fictional expression in descriptions of multiple human selves. Human life and experience no longer follow established patterns based on predetermined behavioral norms. This suggests a change in the way the development of human living systems is presented. Rather than understanding experience based on stable norms and values, the multiple responses of different people to a given situation are more relevant. Therefore, the fictional works of most contemporary writers focus on creating different possible human situations rather than depicting major events in an epic dimension. The

narrative nature of the concentrated presentation of these situations becomes complex. And the overwhelming story element now seems to have been replaced by creating different situations and expressing the reactions of different characters in those situations. The story of Jhumpa Lahiri illustrates this trend. Amitav Ghosh has also noted this tendency by presenting aspects of self and human identity through the intervention of power in relationships.

Another aspect that is changing the social scene is the quality and nature of readership. Readers today are not traditionally educated by the middle class, but a generation nurtured by mediagenerated images and educated by MTV's cultural mix, or Western readers eager to experience new forms of Indian life. In order to meet the needs of these readers, Indo-British novelists tend to include different elements in their works that meet the expectations of the readers. They see works of fiction as other forms of art associated with popular media, with ephemeral entertainment value, such as television series and advertisements. This tendency of readers also affected the nature of Indo-English fiction. In order to make their work easy to read, these authors tend to include elements of common sense in their works of fiction. Information, if any, flashes into these words as images in quick

succession, like scenes from commercials and movies. Thus, the descriptive paragraphs and philosophical points that adorned the pages of various works of fiction seem to have been replaced by narrative details presented at breakneck speed. This suggests that similar scenes and events repeat themselves in the fictional works of writers such as Shobha De. Commercial authors have also influenced changes in the nature of modern fiction. The commodification of art is an important aspect of consumer culture. The aesthetic considerations that once determined the value of a work of art seem to have been supplanted by its commercial viability. From another point of view, the use value of everything, including art, determines its value. This commercial aspect allows the author to produce a product adapted to the market and the reader. In order to make their novels commercially viable, novelists tend to incorporate various elements into their works such as fantasy, romance, sensational events, mystery, and even pornographic material. The media play an important role in promoting the sales of different novels. And publishing, with easy access to means of production and advertising, seems to play a determining role. Large publishers tend to promote works that attract the greatest number of people. Some writers like Shobha De

openly admit that writing fiction is a project offered by certain publishers. The role of publishers in encouraging new types of fiction can also be determined from the means by which they make more money from this literary form. The emergence of reviews and celebrity status of the author long before a work is published is used as a technique to increase a work's reception. Because of this publicity, most readers decide to buy or borrow the book long before it is published. Of course, fiction that doesn't resonate with readers is worthless. But the genre of fiction that frequents contemporary Indian Publishing has developed a pure brand of pulp fiction. Commercial considerations influencing literature are well documented by the extensive use of stimulating reading material and the presentation of popular themes in the novels of Shobha De, Namita Gokhale, Shashi Tharoor and many other contemporary authors.

Along with its economic, social and cultural importance, modern philosophical and theoretical developments have also influenced contemporary fiction writing. Amid shifting paradigms of understanding, the nature of reality and its representation in literature has changed dramatically. In the context of change, reality is no longer perceived as stable, unitary, absolute and a priori. It is considered multivariate,

temporal and contextual. Consistent with these ideas, the fictional realities depicted in the literature are seen as constructed and discursive rather than mimetic and representational. In the present case, the signifier has no fixed signified. Instead, there is an endless play of signifiers that creates ultimate meaning. Incomprehensible. The historical and cultural context plays a decisive role in determining meaning. The temporality and contextuality of reality suggest the uncertainty of meaning. This means that concepts such as truth, goodness, justice, good and evil cannot be understood in absolute and ultimate terms. These concepts are inherent in the processes they tend to control. They are not fixed entities. In a sense, everything is fiction.

These ideas challenge the understanding of history as an objective and truthful account of historical events. Now the story appears to be a different kind of fiction. Therefore, the treatment of history in contemporary IndoEnglish novels aims to highlight the constructive and fictional nature of historical truth. Rather than offering an objective, ultimate, and comprehensive understanding of historical reality, authors tend to offer multiple perspectives on historical events. Even the treatment of contemporary Indian history in recent novels by Shashi Tharoor, Manju

Kapur and Rohinton Mistry reveals this shifting aspect. Other IndoBritish fiction writers who approach history from a different angle include Salman Rushdie, Khushwant Singh and Amitav Ghosh. Likewise, the idea that literature is not a representation of reality finds expression in the work of contemporary fiction writers in their presentation of constructed and contextual reality. Even more important is the question of how to understand the world created by these authors, what kind of world is constructed in their novels. This results in a presentation of life and experience that is not based on the mainstream reality that informs common human experience. As a result, forms of experience hitherto considered unworthy of being recorded in literature also found a place there.

New ideas are shaking up the differences between "high" and "low" culture and art. Now that everything is treated and constructed as fiction, how can one novel be better than the other.

Instead of seeing literature and culture in binary terms, see them as multiple forms of cultural expression. He also questions the distinction between commercial art and serious art. This rejection of the boundaries between high and low offers the author the opportunity to focus on marginal forms of life. Lifestyles once

considered deviant now indicate that multiple valid voices are acceptable in a given socio-cultural context. Consequently, the fictional worlds of recent Indo-British novelists also feature startlingly different, confusing and bizarre ways of life.

Novelists like Shobha De seem to have exploited this aspect of understanding the paradigm shift to gain acceptance for their fiction. As the ways of life presented in the guise of expressing voiceless voices and traditionally marginalized human experiences serve the commercial purposes of writers, more and more contemporary writers have begun to include this material in their work. Recent novels by authors such as Khushwant Singh (*A Woman's Company*), Manju Kapur (*A Married Woman*), Shashi Tharoor (*Riot Control*) also mark this trend. This means that today's fiction writers are less concerned with the expectations of critics and scholars and more concerned with the masses interested in popular fiction. The implicit readership of these authors included runaway readers, bored middle-class housewives, and casual romantic readers who fantasized about the escapades depicted in movies and featured in glossy magazines.

This tends to bring fiction closer to various forms of popular visual and print media. Therefore, the forms of fiction such as the experience of sexual

perversion, sexual exploitation in the film industry, the business world and the world controlled by mafia bosses, experiences of intimate marriage, etc.

- what normally constitutes a part of popular media is beginning to show an overwhelming presence. In literature, especially novels. Apart from this, contemporary popular topics related to recent communal disputes and political controversies also feature prominently in contemporary Indo-British fiction.

Conclusion.

The theoretical concepts promoted by different critical theories such as postcolonialism and feminism have also introduced new trends in contemporary Indo-English novels. These perspectives not only provide opportunities for expression of marginal life, but also add political color to the novel. Under the assault of new ideas, the works of fiction by contemporary writers also question the functioning of power politics in human relations. This often makes their work an act of political symbolism. Therefore, images of certain classes of people and fictional stereotypes of different cultures are presented and studied from different perspectives.

Postcolonial perspectives emphasize the experiences of the former colonies of the British Empire, leading to different perspectives describing cross-cultural contexts.

It adds a political color to literature. The colonial experience and the process of decolonization are powerfully represented in Amitav Ghosh's novels. An interesting aspect of the representation of the colonial cultural experience is the continuation of colonial oppression in different forms in postcolonial cultures. Moreover, Indian feminist novelists, especially female writers, have shown how the process of decolonization finds a broader meaning in the relations between men and women. Here again, the construction of historical truths, cultural stereotypes and notions of gender are put forward.

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