

networks and negotiations of sociocultural diversity within an increasingly globalised world. At their core lies the pervasive impact of colonialism—rooted in plantation slavery, European settlement, and imperial conquest. English, functioning as a global lingua franca and pragmatic denominator, became central to this process. Today, with more than seventy nations adopting English as a primary language of reading and writing, its global spread reveals how colonial legacies, multiculturalism, diaspora, and globalisation collectively shaped Anglophone literature.

The diffusion of this literature occurred primarily through two historical channels: Settler Colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand), where English became the national language of predominantly European populations, and Invaded Colonies (India, Nigeria, parts of West Africa), where English was imposed upon indigenous societies. In both contexts, writers composed in an acquired, often alien language, resulting in the erosion of native languages, as seen in South Africa, the West Indies, and among African slaves and Indian indentured labourers. Yet English was not merely imposed; it was appropriated, revitalised, and reinvented by writers such as Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul.

Indian Writing in English exemplifies this dual identity of English as both foreign and imposed. The introduction of English education is often associated with Thomas Babington Macaulay, whose policies aimed to westernise Indian education and produce administrative intermediaries for the colonial state. Initially marked by imitation and translation, Indian Writing in English gained literary maturity with the pioneering trio—Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, and R. K. Narayan—who indigenised English by embedding Indian philosophy, mythology, social structures, and cultural heritage into their works. They established a paradigm for future generations.

Within this trajectory, feminist voices occupy a crucial analytical space. Alongside dominant male figures like Naipaul and Rushdie, Indian women writers such as Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Mahasweta Devi, Shashi Deshpande, Ismat Chughtai, Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das, Indira Goswami, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Kamala Markandaya, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Shobhaa De articulate concerns of gender inequality, social justice, patriarchal oppression, marital discord, economic dependence, early marriage, and marginalised identity. Some wrote originally in regional languages and were

later translated into English, yet their thematic concerns converge in articulating women's lived realities. Thus, the genesis of New Literatures in English is not merely historical but dialogic—marked by resistance, adaptation, and continuous reinvention.

It is better to have a look at the historical perspective of Indian Writing in English. D. Ramakrishna, in the Preface of *Indian English Prose: An Anthology*, maintains that: "Indian English prose, historically speaking, is older than Indian English poetry. Its beginning may be traced to the pre-Independence days, even before the British introduced English in India." (11)

Account of Jains (1809) of C.V. Boriah was preceded by 'drafts, letters, dispatches, and notes with the British masters in English,' this was followed by Macaulay's '*Minute*' (1835). Even before C. V. Boriah, we have the evidence of another book titled, '*The Travels of Dean Mahomet*,' a travel narrative (travelogue) written by Sake Dean Mahomed, published in England in 1794. Most often we quote *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee as the first Indian English novel which carries the long suffering of a middle-class Hindu wife. This common social portrayal is followed by works of political themes (*The Prince of Destiny: The New Krishna*, 1909, by Sarat Kr Ghosh), of religious life (*The Greatness*, 1925, by B. R. Rajan Iyer), of historical romance (*The Battle of Panipat*, 1884, by Mirza Moorad Alee Beg), etc. The period of 1920 – 1947, termed as the Gandhian Age by M. K. Naik, in his book, *A History of Indian English Literature* (Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1999) which includes *Civil Disobedience Movement* of the thirties produced writers who incorporated the theme of the Gandhian framework. M. K. Naik maintains in his book *Indian English Fiction: A Critical Study*:

A society compelled into self-awareness like this provides a fertile soil for fiction. It was, in fact, during this period that Indian English fiction discovered some of its most significant themes such as the ordeal of the freedom struggle, East - West relationship, the communal problem and the plight of the untouchables, the landless poor, the economically exploited, etc. (15)

The appearance of the trio on the horizon of Indian English novels has been explained by G. N. Devy in his article titled *The Indian English Novel 1980*

– 90: *An Overview* as: “Anand as a pontification of social reformist, Raja Rao as the formalist in search of the meaning of illusion, and Narayan as the novelist of life’s iron ordinariness” (18).

Besides, the social novel, political novel and historical novel, we have some other types of novels raising their heads in the contemporary soil, such as, the ethnic novel *Twilight in Delhi*, 1940, by Ahmed Ali, autobiographical novel, novels of Partition, and its terrible aftermath, the merger of the princely states into Indian Union, novels based on the wars with Pakistan and China, East West confrontation, the clash between the Western oriented rationalism and the traditional religious faith, experimental novel (G. V. Desani), handling of sex themes accompanied by new frankness (Sasthi Brata, K. V. Trishanku, Saros Cowasjee, Kamala Das, Vikram Kapoor, etc.)

The story of Indian novels is altogether exclusive and all inclusive. As pointed out by Meenakshi Mukherjee, in her book *The Twice Born Fiction*:

In fact, the full development of the Indian novel as a whole, allowing for certain oversimplification of details, may be divided into three large stages: 1. Historical romance, 2. Social or political realism, 3. Psychological novels showing introspective concern with most individuals.” (30)

The influence of the West as colonizer has been immense as a strong center of power in the making of our texts. As Makarand Paranjape writes in *Towards a Poetics of the Indian English Novel*:

The fact is that influence and power are always multi – directional and not unidirectional. The shaper is also shaped. The colonizer is also colonized. The master is also a slave. And so on. This is the only real dialectic, the dialectic which asserts that the Other is the Self. (31)

The pluralistic cultural environment of India and the conflict between the traditional and the modern invite the conflict of ideologies arising out of the historical contradictions of the post-colonial society. As Irving Howes maintains in his book *Politics and the Novel*: “The conflict is inescapable: the novel tries to confront experiences in its immediacy and closeness, while ideology is by its nature general and inclusive” (20).

However, the fate of English poetry is slightly different, which has been condemned by Gordon Bottomley as ‘Matthew Arnold in *sari*’, quoted by K. R. Srinivas Iyenger in his book *Indian Writing in English* and the unacceptable suggestion of W. B. Yeats ‘to write in one’s own languages, since, no man can think/write with music and vigour except in his mother tongue’, but for our writers English became one of the many voices of India “as much Indian as others” (Iyenger 3). It is a clear reflection of the East-West dichotomy.

Undeniably true, Indian English poetry is, as admitted by Shiv K. Kumar in one of his lectures at I. I. A. S. Shimla and compiled in book form titled *Contemporary Indian Literature in English*, “...is largely derivative in that it is modelled on that of Romantic poets like Shelley, Keats and Byron.” (Kumar 1) But the scenario completely changed after Independence, as Shiv K. Kumar opines further:

We won not only our political independence but also our cultural freedom as evidenced by a distinct change of attitude in our creative writers – poets, novelists and dramatists... It is this new vision that distinguishes their work from that of their predecessors. The new poets want poetry to be authentic, intensely personal and written in a language shorn in cliches and verbosity. A poem for them, must be a skillfully structured artefact of both image and emotion, thought and feeling. (2)

Subsequently, the elements of irony, East - West cultural encounter, religious orthodoxy, etc. are introduced and we may witness the rise of a number of women poets, delineating the relationship between man and women, age old social practices and prejudices, male chauvinism and the emancipated women compromising with their counterpart.

The treasure of Indian English Drama is a bit poor. Certainly, it has drawn its inspiration from the rich heritage of Sanskrit drama, it banks mostly on the translations of the plays written originally, in some regional language. So, we have playwrights like Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, etc. and from the latest Mahesh Dattani, with a new theme of transgender.

In the recent years, Indian Writing in English has acquired status which entertains the elements of not only the post-colonial status of post modernism

and its abundance of emerging trends and ingredients that is all inclusive. The recurring themes available today are that of identity, exile, displacement (geographical, cultural, social, linguistic, etc.), racial identity and conflicts, migrancy, difference, alienation, rootlessness, belongingness, decolonisation, dimensions of relationships, history and mythology, cultural and national specificity, etc.

Feminist Women Writers of Indian Writings in English

Our concern should not be that of the women writers writing in English only, rather we should try to delve into the writings in several regional languages or Hindi, which were, subsequently, translated into English, for instance, Amrita Pritam, Gitanjali Shree, Banu Mushtaq, Krishna Sobti, Mahasweta Devi, etc.

Actually speaking, the root cause of all these upheavals lies in the erratic concept of gender inequality which proliferates into multiple twigs and labelled otherwise. So, it needs a bit of elaboration. The discourse of gender inequality has been a venerable trend, which keeps on haunting the minds of intellectuals for a pretty long time. We may observe the fact that this is an aberration from the authentic imaginative track and we may take it as a misconstrued wave that has nothing to do with the mission that it professes. Though there are basic differences in the oriental and occidental dimensions, and orientations of this understanding, the fundamental ethics and formulation remain the same, which idealises its basic tenets and disseminate its forbearing constitution bound to erosion and final collapse. Right from Plato up to the present, we have several thinkers and philosophers in the West whereas in the East all the ancient scriptures are full of such outbursts, which vindicate the judicious gender status and condemn its fragile inconsistency. That is why, we have jargons such as ‘third world women,’ ‘native women,’ ‘gendered subaltern,’ ‘female individualism,’ ‘feminist credentials,’ ‘colonial sexual binaries,’ ‘intermediate sex,’ etc. to recompense such promulgation. The serious interrogation is about our destination, which is ill defined and highly vulnerable attracting political, social and economic onslaught, compelling creative artists to go for an alternative joyous, safe, and sound world.

However, the Indian women writers in English who are known for their gender concern to initiate the movement but fail to deliver the most sought

alternative world; they wish to establish and are left disillusioned and disenchanted; thus, instituting the fact that the very concept of gender inequality has an erroneous founding. The best work to nullify the possibility of an alternative world, away from the existing, is available in Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* where the attempt to create an alternative world by the protagonist collapses desperately. And here is a woman with a resolution: "To be a tree, no more and no less, was all she was prepared to undertake" (Desai 4). Kamla Das's world of poetry unfolds the same story of patriarchal mayhem including sexual mismanagement, yet unexplored. It gives rise to trauma literature and the birth of a writer like Banu Mushtaq and her book of stories *Heart Lamp*. She is a strong progressive writer who voices the suppressed language of Muslim girls and women, fragile and vulnerable, imprisoned in the Muslim community and appears as a mighty rebellion, against the social custodians, in different guises, as husbands, as maulvis, as grandmothers and religious teachers. She questions, not a man but his so-called creator, in the beginning of the story, *Be a Woman Once, Oh Lord*:

After creating crores and crores of tiny organisms like me over lakhs and lakhs of years, after establishing heaven for our good deeds and hell for our sins, oh lord who sits waiting for us: Prabhu you must be on your way now to enjoy the sweet fragrance of the garden of heaven. Or perhaps you are issuing orders to the angels, who stand there with hands folded, radiant faces glow. I may be a mere tiny fragment of your soul, but I do have the right to make request, don't I? (199)

So goes the stories of Banu Mushtaq, and her book *Heart Lamp*. Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* and *Mai* may be cited as a typical product of such turmoil; the first projecting the family saga of an eighty-year-old woman suffering the trials of trauma of partition and the second about a woman facing the challenges of complexities of relationship in a North Indian family. *God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy is a revolt against social taboo of caste discrimination that love does not recognise it is reflected here: "If he touched her he couldn't talk to her, if he loved her he couldn't leave, if he spoke, he couldn't listen, if he fought, he couldn't win." (250) The dichotomy in relationship is evident here. Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* is an attitude of vehemence against

women and the final compromise with destiny. Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence* is the portrayal of a silent woman suffering in a patriarchal society. Instances can be multiplied right from the early days to the present time.

Conclusion

Taking into account the birth and growth of Indian Writing in English and other such new literatures in English in the world, we may infer that the upsurge of such literatures is the outcome of an attempt of decolonisation and a desire to free their writings from the clutches of the British hegemony. Actually speaking, it was taken for granted that English literature stands for moral values, and it is almost synonymous to morality and civilisation. On the other hand, Orientalism created hierarchy between the East and the West having the pseudo impression of the civilised West and the savage East. Obviously, education brought intellectual advancement of the colonised countries and could consolidate power. So, language became a tool of power and literature a manifestation of culture and civilisation. As Raja Rao writes in the *Foreword* of his book *Kanthapura*:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own; the spirit that is one's own. ——— It (English) is the language of our intellectual make-up like Sanskrit or Persian was before, but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. ——— Time alone will justify it. (v)

Consequently, adoption of English as a medium of expression even before achieving Independence became both a fashion and a compulsion. And it gave rise to several new literatures, enriching the treasure of the World of English literature. It was the beginning of the death of British hegemony, with no specific narrative of its own. It is reflected right from the Renaissance and continues till date that is termed as meta- modernism. And when we come to the world of feminist women writers of Indian Writing in English, we can trace their voice as a tool of outburst, of suppressed bulk of designs and emotions available in almost all works.

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