

INDIAN LITERATURE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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ABSTRACT

This article explores how current Indian writers use language to reflect their culture and tradition. This term refers to authors, particularly novelists, who offer many perspectives on life events, ranging from delicate to corrective. Writing in a language that feels reliable and comfortable is a valuable way to express oneself through literature. Indian writers draw inspiration from their rich cultural background and historical context to explore diverse life situations, both positive and negative. Indian writers value English as much as other Indian languages and literature. They express themselves clearly in English while maintaining respect for their mother tongue.

Novelists who capture the whole range of life's experiences, both soft and hard, benefit from the rich idioms of our indigenous languages, making them valuable assets for English-language authors. For Indian writers, Literature in English language is regarded with the same validity and importance as any other Indian language and its literature. They convey their distinct viewpoints in English without dilution, while simultaneously respecting their mother tongues. The depth of our native languages, characterized by their vivid idioms, provides a significant asset for those crafting narratives in English. Despite the Western tendency to dismiss our native languages as 'vernaculars' - suggesting a notion of inferiority-these languages have the capacity to reinforce our dignity and cultural identity yet standing high and erect in the new millennium of Indian Literature.

KEYWORDS: Millennium, LGBT Perspectives, Dalit Literature, Slumdog Tales, Eco-Narratives.

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This article explores how Indian literature continues to preserve its culture through the words of contemporary writers. The article highlights a few writers and their exploration journey.

Indian literature in English established English as a progressive educational medium promoting imperial interests on the subcontinent. Early attempts to use English for creative expression were fragmented, but still considered exploratory.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who wrote the first Indian book in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), preferred to write his forthcoming works in his mother tongue. English-language novels in India gained popularity in the 1930s and have grown greatly since the 1980s, becoming a notable literary form. Indian writers use their cultural history and historical backdrop to explore a range of life situations, including both positive and negative ones. They like expressing themselves freely and create excellent literary works. Aesthetic sensibility and verbal inventiveness.

Modern Indian Literature showcases the unique growth of the Indian English novel as an artistic expression without Western influences. Indian writers have successfully defied projections about the Indian English novel over time. The writer's unrelenting belief in the art form has resulted in a vibrant and creatively rich environment. Concurrently, conversations about Roland Barthes although the idea of "The Death of the Author" has emerged, the relationship between an author and their work is still a crucial feature of creativity. This signifies a shift in critical perspective that may sometimes overwhelm the author's voice.

Writing in a language that seems natural and comfortable is a great way to express one-self through literature. According to Rajan, "If that happens to be English, the creative choice should be respected and judged by findings rather than pessimistic predictions of what the outcome must be". Elif Shafak, a Turkish novelist renowned for her novel 'The Bastard of Istanbul' (2007), writes her works in English. This illustrates that the challenge of conveying experiences with authenticity and understanding is a universal issue faced by writers across all languages, whether they are native or non-native speakers. Ultimately, what matters is the writer's linguistic proficiency in expressing their experiences and the quality of that expression.

For Indian authors, English holds the same legitimacy and significance as any other Indian language and its corresponding literature. They express their unique perspectives in English without compromise, while still honouring their native tongues. In fact, the richness of our indigenous languages, with their expressive idioms, serves as a valuable

resource for writers working in English. Although the West may derogatorily label our native languages, or Bhashas, as ‘vernaculars’-implying a sense of inferiority-these languages possess the potential to affirm our dignity and cultural identity.

Our regional and tribal languages represent a vast cultural reservoir. Indian English writers should exercise restraint to avoid adopting counter-cultural perspectives, ensuring that their vision remains grounded in their heritage and that they do not overlook historical contexts, especially when addressing critical issues of cultural conflict or synthesis.

Moreover, British English itself is enriched by influences from Irish, Scottish, Scandinavian, and other European dialects. As C. D. Narasimhaiah notes, its “cosmopolitan character” is defined by “Celtic imaginativeness, Scottish vigour, Saxon concreteness, Welsh music, and American brazenness”. Why should one feel hesitant when R. K. Narayan’s works resonate with Tamil influences, Raja Rao’s and A. K. Ramanujan’s embody Kannada traditions, Bhabani Bhattacharya’s reflect Bengali nuances, V. S. Naipaul’s incorporate West Indian dialects, Jayant Mahapatra’s poetry resonates with Oriya rhythms, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) carries a Malayalam essence, and Amitav Ghosh’s *Sea of Poppies* (2008) features Bhojpuri sounds that reverberate in the “dham-dhamak-dhamakaoing thunder” of his *River of Smoke* (2011)?

These elements signify the increasing selfassurance of Indian authors who utilize Bhasha determinants to authentically convey Indian experiences, eschewing Western or English lexical substitutes and without the need for a glossary. This phenomenon parallels Edward Said’s exploration of political subtexts, Michel Foucault’s insights into the power dynamics inherent in texts, and Antonio Gramsci’s observations regarding the hegemony present in literary works. The notable practice of code-switching or code-mixing exemplifies the interplay between English and the linguistic richness of India.

I perceive this as a hopeful development, serving as a form of resistance against the marginalization of our Bhasha literatures-such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Dogri, Punjabi, Oriya, Marathi, Assamese, Kashmiri, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada. The emergence of elitism that accommodates the voices of the masses facilitates a connection between the act of communication and the pursuit of knowledge, both in acquiring and sharing a wealth of information. Our authors are advancing this dialogue while preserving the essence of our culture, history, continuity, and dignity, even amidst the frenetic pace of modernity or post-modernity. Casualness in tone or disorganization has been replaced by a cohesive integration of

form and content. The reader's engagement with the text may temporarily overshadow the author's voice; however, the creative inspiration of the writer remains vibrant. The current challenge differs from previous ones, as it does not directly target the author or their artistic expression, but rather the very form and medium of that expression.

This is not merely a theoretical concern but a tangible transformation. E-books are encroaching upon the domain traditionally held by printed books. This new digital format, enhanced by the internet and visual elements, undoubtedly provides broader access to readers, allowing content to appear simultaneously on various screens-desktops, laptops, and handheld devices-with just a keystroke.

However, it also necessitates a faster engagement than printed texts, which can limit the opportunity for readers to uncover deeper meanings. Furthermore, many readers find themselves at odds with the rapidly evolving nature of online reading. For Anita Nair, who cherishes the tenth anniversary print edition of her book, 'Ladies Coupe', originally published in 2000, e-reading represents a "one-dimensional experience". Indeed, e-books cannot replicate the tactile sensation of holding a physical book, a sensation that fosters both aesthetic appreciation and personal connection.

Likewise in the United States and Europe, bookstores are reportedly facing significant challenges. It is an undeniable truth that Indian English writers are producing thoughtfully constructed sentences that reflect a deep understanding of both artistic and technical aspects. Craft, after all, it is an evolving endeavour, and as Orhan Pamuk aptly notes, a novelist cannot envision every detail of their narrative from the outset. They must first navigate from the trunk to the branches to gain a more intimate and clear understanding of the leaves. The clarity of thought, along with the precision and conciseness of expression exhibited by our creative writers-qualities essential for effectively conveying experience and truth-has significantly harmonized their language with their literature.

In this context, language serves as the attire for thoughts, while literature embodies the reflections of thoughtful individuals. In India, the situation regarding literature is not as dire as it may seem. While the decline in reading habits among individuals captivated by television-often referred to by Shashi Tharoor as "the weapon of mass distraction"-is concerning, the passion of book lovers and scholars remains resilient. Concurrently, there has been a surge in fiction writing across the country. Even conservative estimates suggest that millions of stories are being crafted in Indian languages, with a significant contribution from English writers. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to observe that contemporary

Indian English novelists, particularly following the notable successes of authors like Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga, are increasingly liberated from the anxiety associated with writing in a language that is not their own.

This shift has been facilitated by the diligent cultivation of English in India, allowing it to evolve into a natural medium for communication and creative expression. This achievement can be attributed to the diligent cultivation of the acquired language in India, which has transformed it into a nearly natural medium for our communication and creativity. The emerging academics effectively captures the subtle shifts in socio-cultural realities.

Occasionally, some literary editors express scepticism towards the rising number of pulp fiction authors and Page 3 personalities venturing into fiction, suggesting that while they possess narratives worth sharing, they often lack the skilful articulation of their experiences. As a result, our readers today enjoy an extensive selection of captivating narratives that encompass both canonical and counter-canonical works, as well as traditional and innovative styles, spanning literary and commercial genres. This includes women's literature, crime fiction, horror novels, science fiction, campus stories, animal narratives, graphic novels, texts addressing disability, LGBT perspectives, Dalit literature, Slumdog tales, eco-narratives, children's literature, mythological and fantasy narratives, philosophical works, historical fiction, postcolonial and multicultural stories, and Diaspora literature.

Each of these categories offers fresh emotional landscapes, often unsettling, in their exploration of the human condition. This classification serves primarily to highlight the core themes and literary essence of the texts rather than to rigidly categorize literature, as there are no clear boundaries between genres such as science fiction and historical fiction, or between women's writing and eco-narratives.

Conclusion:

Fictional works resist being confined to fixed interpretations, and literary trends cannot be restricted by temporal or spatial limitations. With the conclusion of the first decade of the twenty-first century, we now find ourselves in its second decade.

It is essential to examine the substance, texture, and structure of this art form to articulate the defining characteristics of our contemporary novel, which is rich in diversity and set against a backdrop of varied locales, crafted by our exceptionally talented writers.

For Indian writers, Literature in English language is regarded with

the same validity and importance as any other Indian language and its literature. They convey their distinct viewpoints in English without dilution, while simultaneously respecting their mother tongues. The depth of our native languages, characterized by their vivid idioms, provides a significant asset for those crafting narratives in English. Despite the Western tendency to dismiss our native languages as 'vernaculars'- suggesting a notion of inferiority-these languages have the capacity to reinforce our dignity and cultural identity yet standing high and erect in the new millennium of Indian Literature.

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