



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 6.865 (SJIF 2023)

A critical review of Indian English Literature

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DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doi/10.2023-66186467/IRJHIS2312003>

Abstract:

"Anglo-Indian writing" refers to English-language literary works about India and its people. English journalists, educators, administrators, and monarch guests wrote about India. Many English people were fascinated by Indian life and wrote poems, novels, and short tales with Indian characters in Indian settings. Anglo-Indian Literature is English-language literature authored by Indian Englishmen. Rudyard Kipling's poems, short stories, and novels are important in Anglo-Indian literature. E.M. Forster's work A Passage to India depicts Indian life from a Western perspective. The user's material is too short for academic rewriting. Due to its 175-year history, Indo-Anglian Literature differs from Anglo-Indian Literature. After the East India Company conquered a large part of India, Indo-Anglian literature emerged. C.V. Boriah, a prominent Indian author.

Keywords: *Literature, Industrialisation, Anglo-Indian literature, Post-colonial literature*

Introduction:

Literature serves as a comprehensive representation of various facets of human experience and encapsulates the prevailing ethos of a particular era. Literature serves as a reflective medium that mirrors an individual's life experiences. Literature is widely regarded as a reflection of society, with literary artists serving as active participants within the societal framework. The relationship between literature and society is inherently interconnected, with a fundamental correlation existing between the two. De Bonald thinks that literature acts as a reflection of the societal context in which individuals must reside and operate within the framework of said society. The poet or writer is

frequently motivated and impacted by a variety of personal experiences and the societal environment when creating their creative works. According to Mathew Arnold, literature may be understood as the critical examination of life, and it serves to enhance our understanding of history by revealing the external influences that shape the development of human civilization. Literature provides a profound understanding of individuals' cognitive, emotional, and ethical state.

The phrase "Anglo-Indian writing" refers to the literary works produced by English individuals in the English language, specifically concerning India and the experiences of its inhabitants. English individuals who travelled to India in various capacities such as journalists, educationists, administrators, and guests of the monarchs documented their initial writings centred around Indian subjects. A significant number of English individuals exhibited a curiosity and fascination towards the lives of Indians, resulting in the creation of poems, novels, and short stories that featured Indian characters inside an Indian setting. The literary corpus produced by Englishmen in India, written in the English language, is sometimes referred to as Anglo-Indian Literature. The literary works of Rudyard Kipling, including his poetry, short stories, and novels, constitute a significant component of Anglo-Indian Literature. A notable example within this genre is the novel *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster, which offers a portrayal of Indian lives as perceived through the lens of the Western world. The user's text is too short to be rewritten academically. Indo-Anglian Literature can be distinguished from Anglo-Indian Literature due to its significantly longer historical trajectory, spanning approximately 175 years. The emergence of Indo-Anglian Literature may be traced back to the period after the creation of the East India Company in India, during which the Company expanded its dominion over a significant portion of the country. C.V. Boriah, an Indian author of national significance, authored the pioneering work titled "An Account of the Jains in English" in the year 1809.

A significant proportion of educated individuals in India have utilised the English language as a means of expressing their explorations and conveying their life experiences. The realm of creative writing has evolved into a significant corpus of literature, commonly known as Indo-Anglian Literature. Several notable Indo-Anglian writers include Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Aurobindo Ghosh, Mahatma Gandhi, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao. Indo-English Literature refers to a distinct category of literary works that involves the translation of Indian language literatures into the English language. The process involves the translation of literary works from an individual's native language into English, which is typically not the primary language spoken by Indians. Prof. Gokak, a renowned scholar, classified Indo-English Literature into two distinct periods based on its temporal origins: Classical Indo-English Literature and Modern Indo-English Literature.

The phrase "Indian English Literature" or "Indo-English Literature" refers to literary works

composed in the English language by authors of Indian origin. Anglo-Indian Literature, produced by English individuals residing in India, is notably distinct due to its preoccupation with India's romantic and exotic aspects, which serve as the principal focus in their writings. Indian English Literature is the product of the amalgamation of two rich civilizations, namely Indian and English, wherein Indian writers have contributed both prior to and following the country's independence. Indian English Literature encompasses all the literary works produced in English by Indian authors, starting from the times of Raja Ram Mohan Roy up till the present day. The artistic expression under consideration exhibits a spontaneous and potent manifestation of various nuances of emotions, thoughts, and feelings that are emblematic of the intellectual prowess and cultural identity of India. Indian English Literature is an intriguing manifestation and articulation of the pragmatic encounters, which are no less than the imaginative brilliance, of the Indian populace. In recent times, individuals from India have increasingly engaged in the act of writing and continue to do so presently, utilising the English language as a means of communication both within their own community and with the global population. This linguistic choice enables them to effectively convey their unique artistic abilities rooted in Indian culture. In the preliminary comprehensive investigation conducted by K.R. Srinivasan Iyengar, there was a notable emphasis placed on the use of the term "Indian Writing in English." In 1968, two notable compilations of critical essays on Indian Writing in English emerged as pioneering works in the field. One of them was Indian Writing in English Critical Essays, authored by David McCutcheon. The other significant publication was Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English, edited by M.K. Naik, S.K. Desai, and G.S. Amur. The term "Indian Writing in English" has been criticised for its circumlocution, while the word "Indo-English Literature" is praised for its concise nature, as it denotes the translation of Indian Literature into English by Indian authors.

The title "Indian English Literature" has been acknowledged by the Sahitya Academy as the most suitable designation for this particular form of literary expression. The term coined highlights two significant concepts: firstly, that this body of literature encompasses numerous streams that are connected to the overarching ocean known as Indian Literature, and despite being written in different languages, it possesses an undeniable unity. Secondly, it is a product of English language influence that reflects the sensitivity of Indian culture. Indian English Literature continues to be a significant literary phenomenon that warrants serious consideration, despite being often referred to by its name. The utilisation of themes pertaining to the pre and post-independence periods by Indian writers continues to enjoy popularity, while contemporary novelists are actively exploring novel issues. Currently, there is a scarcity of literature that explores novel perspectives on established topics. In the 18th century, there was a notable rise in the popularity of novels, leading novelists to engage in more thorough and earnest examinations of society. The text pertains to the exploration of

individuals' experiences in navigating or escaping societal influences.

The 18th century witnessed the emergence of notable novelists such as Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, and Laurence Sterne. These literary figures are credited with producing the earliest examples of classic English novels, which set a benchmark for future works in the genre. Collectively, they are often referred to as the four pillars of the English novel tradition. The development of Indian English novels can be categorised into three distinct elements. The first aspect focuses on historical novels, while the second aspect explores socially and politically conscious themes, commonly known as Social Realism. The third aspect encompasses a type of novels that delve into the human psyche, known as physiological novels. The practise under consideration pertains to the incorporation of artistic elements into the routines and activities of individuals, hence fostering a symbiotic connection between the human experience and the broader social fabric. In his novel "A Summary of Actual Life," Meredith characterises it as encompassing both the internal and external aspects of our being, with the terms "within" and "without" denoting the components of human existence. According to E.A. Basker's History of the English Novel, the novel can be defined as a work of prose that portrays real life or a similar representation thereof. It possesses unity and coherence as a result of a plot or plan, or due to a clear goal and attitude of the author.

The novel is a literary work that is expressed through prose and distinguished by its adherence to realism. The novel stands out from other forms of prose fiction due to its distinct characteristics, particularly its emphasis on realism, which is often overlooked in other genres. Indian English novelists encounter numerous scenarios that provide them with opportunities to document their practical experiences in an artistic manner, so showcasing the creative brilliance of the Indian literary community. According to contemporary writers, time serves as more than just a feature of the physical universe; it also acts as a formative influence on both individual and societal histories. Modern novels are the result of a distinct cultural context within a particular society during a certain era. Realism portrays an unblemished representation of the Earth and might be perceived as an accurate reflection of reality. According to Salman Rushdie, the concept of realism can be understood as the process of constructing a comprehensive understanding of the world that resonates with a sense of authenticity. In order to achieve this objective, it may be necessary to employ highly imaginative visuals, provided that their intention is not to evade reality but rather to encapsulate it. This approach aligns with the principles of realism, in my perspective. The work serves as a reflection of human existence and the societal milieu, as the author has a predilection for exploring various facets of life and employing commonplace occurrences to depict ordinary experiences. Realism entails the portrayal of society in a manner that faithfully represents its actual state, devoid of any embellishments or imaginative elements. It encompasses the depiction of genuine events,

nations, groups of individuals, cultures, and modern periods. According to Friedrich Engels, it can be argued that typical characters exhibit certain characteristics in typical conditions. Social realism is a kind of art that portrays the various aspects of life, offering a sociological perspective and highlighting the struggles faced by marginalised groups within society. The primary motivation for this uprising is directed towards challenging the ruling class and the negative facets of life within a capitalist system, such as poverty, pain, greed, conflicts, and the precarious state of the working class society. The novelist adeptly depicts the mundane aspects of daily existence, faithfully transcribing the intricacies of both the human experience and societal dynamics in a realistic fashion. The emergence of Indian English novels can be traced back to the 1990s, 1920s, and 1930s, a period during which many regional literatures in India had already attained remarkable maturity, particularly in the realm of fiction that captured the collective awareness of societal transformation and the enduring national aspirations. Since the 1920s, the Indian novel has been composed in the English language, which has not only taken root in the indigenous literary landscape but has also been at the forefront of incorporating innovative concepts and engaging in novelistic experimentation. Subsequently, belief in the Indo-Anglian novel progressively accumulated and solidified autonomously. Furthermore, it has attained an autonomous position within the intricate realm of Indian Literature, establishing a direct connection with the thoughts and emotions of the Indian populace.

Post-Colonial Literature refers to the body of literary works produced by individuals who have experienced colonisation or have been subjected to colonial rule. This encompasses a wide range of literary expressions composed in languages other than that of the colonising powers. R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao played significant roles in the initiation and establishment of Indian Writings in English, thereby attaining recognition and institutional significance. Currently, Post-Colonial Indian Fiction produced in English is acknowledged for its own themes and styles, which exhibit a clear departure from the themes and styles prevalent during the colonial era. Internationally acclaimed novelists such as Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghose, Rohinton Mistry, Vikram Seth, Arudhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and various more Indian writers have garnered significant recognition. Post-Colonial Indian Literatures have played a significant role in initiating a canonical and pedagogical revolution by adopting a multicultural perspective and engaging in conversation on topics such as dalits, the marginalisation of Tribal and subaltern communities, and their respective literary traditions. The twentieth century witnessed two significant eras of literary growth known as Modernism and Post-Modernism, with a relatively short time of Anti-Modernism in between. This transitional phase, characterised by opposition to Modernist ideals, emerged during the period spanning the First and Second World Wars.

The term "Post-Modernism" was initially employed in the late 1960s, and its conceptualization as a broader cultural phenomena began to solidify during the 1970s. The confluence of advancements in scientific knowledge and the innovative practises of Avant Grads in the arts contributed to a profound intellectual revolution that was unparalleled in its magnitude. Post-Modernism in literature was accompanied by concurrent developments in linguistic theory and criticism, including Post-Structuralism and Feminism, and was additionally interconnected with Post-Colonialism. The post-modern argument was initiated by French philosophers Jean Francois Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard, while the ideas put forth by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes further contributed significantly to the development of this movement. Postmodern writing has effectively employed techniques such as parody and pastiche, referencing quotations, incorporating colloquial language, incorporating elements from popular songs, utilising descriptive scenes reminiscent of novelettes, and incorporating advertising slogans. These techniques allow for the blending of diverse literary genres and the extraction of cultural and stylistic elements from various art forms. The aforementioned attributes are also observed in the contemporary literary works of Wyndham Lewis's *The Childermas* and James Joyce's *The Wake*. Additionally, the diverse range of artistic techniques and perspectives employed in Post-Modernism not only engage in a discourse with Modernism but also question its ability to delineate the dynamics of history and the concerns of the arts in the era of electrification.

The term "Diaspora" originates from ancient Greek and denotes the act of dispersing or spreading seeds. Throughout the course of history, the interpretation of India's relationship with host societies has undergone changes, particularly in relation to the migration of substantial groups of people to foreign places. Indian writers have employed Indian English Literature as a means to showcase many aspects of Indian culture, history, and experiences. Consequently, Indian English Literature has come to be recognised as a platform through which India articulates its voice. India has successfully overcome numerous challenges, providing authors with a wide range of themes to choose from. Persistent issues such as poverty, starvation, unsanitary conditions, sickness, and social injustices like as untouchability, the caste system, and dowry practises have long plagued society. In addition to these aspects, a prominent underlying motif of the work may pertain to the treatment of women within our societal framework, as well as the complexities surrounding the institution of marriage and the process of divorce.

The advent of industrialization resulted in urban overpopulation and the emergence of slums, which might serve as a central narrative element. Additionally, the challenges faced by farmers in rural areas hold significant relevance as a potential theme for a novel. Additional subjects explored in English novels include interracial relationships and the portrayal of the Indian national movement and the quest for independence, as exemplified in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura*. The partition of India,

along with the subsequent loss of life, devastation, and human anguish, is vividly portrayed in Khushwant Singh's literary work, *Train to Pakistan*. The portrayal of hunger and poverty among Indians is prominent in Bhabani Bhattacharya's literary work, "So Many Hungers." The portrayal of Indian rural life in Venkataramani's "Murugan and The Tiller" and the exploration of the struggle between tradition and modernization in Mulk Raj Anand's "Untouchable" have remained focal points for the novelist's attention. Anita Desai has explored the issue of loneliness in her two most recent novels, *Cry the Peacock* and *Voices in the City*, delving into the depths of the human psyche and the inner self. Novelists have the ability to portray narratives that explore the dynamics between various races, communities, and regions within India. They delve into the conflicts that arise from the clash between tradition and modernity, as well as their perspectives on religion and secularism. Additionally, they examine the contradictions that arise when Gandhian ideals coexist with materialism, selfishness, and corruption in our society. Furthermore, they explore the complexities of East-West confrontation and synthesis, among other themes.

Indian English writers have demonstrated a keen focus on these topics by selecting them as important themes in their literary works. Moreover, the Indian context serves as a prominent element that seamlessly integrates into the fabric of many Indian English novels.

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