

“Socio-Political Consciousness and Literary Expression in the Works of Roy, Desai and Adiga”

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Abstract

The realization of the complexity of human life in the ordered systems of power has been long an effective conduit through literature by which to express socio-political consciousness. Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga have been thoroughly interested in not only contemporary social political realities in India but also elsewhere in the world. In this paper, I will discuss how these authors employ literary expression to critiques such issues as disparity in classes, globalization, migration, marginalization and the remnants of colonialism. By exploiting narrative techniques, characterization, and thematic complication these authors create methods of aiding to see the contradictions that exist within the society of the contemporary world. In the stories of Roy, Desai and Adiga, issues of state those of social injustice, anti-colonial alienation, cultural miscegenation, shattering of the illusions of mighty countries, and rising of the less privileged are addressed. In the examination of the select texts, this paper refers to the way literature may be seen as a space of resistance and reflection as a part of larger discourse of social-political issues.

Keywords: Socio-political consciousness, Indian English literature, marginalization, globalization, postcolonial identity, class conflict, literary expression

Introduction:

The use of literature as a reflection of the society with some reference made to the tensions, conflicts and changes which form the human life. One important aspect of establishing the purpose of the narrative and the direction of its thematic focus, within the framework of the modern Indian English literature, is socio-political awareness. The authors have emerged as a stark light challenging the socio-political aspects of the modern Indian society, among the prominent authors are Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga.

A rapid economic liberalization, urbanization and globalization in India have occurred at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. Despite the new opportunities created by the developments, the same has brought about new problems of inequalities, social disorder and identity crisis. The notion that literature may be treated as the tool with the help of which writers may challenge mainstream ideologies and voice the concerns of the oppressed group of people has become the hallmark of this type of art since the end of the 20th century.

Among the foreground issues discussed by Arundhati Roy in her works, particularly, *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), one should highlight such issues as caste discrimination, political violence, and environmental concerns. Her stories have a personal and political past, and an emphasis upon the interrelationship between individual and institutional oppression. *Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai narrates the story of how globalization has affected its victims and the psychological impact that it has had on its victims. *The White Tiger* (2008) by Aravind Adiga provides a pessimistic view with regard to the problem of class struggle and corruption in a fast-growing economy, and brings to our attention the dark side of the India growth story.

This paper aims to review how these authors are developing a social-political consciousness through writing their literary works. It also attempts to learn how narrative features and the issue concerns can result in a more substantial critique of the contemporary social facts.

Literature review:

The literature on the works of Aravind Adiga, Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy have its grounding and foundation very well established on the postcolonial theory, the socio-political criticism, and the studies of the India English literature. The chosen primary works, and important theoretical approaches, offer the extensive basis of the investigation of the socio-political consciousness and the literary expression.

The White Tiger (2008), by Aravind Adiga has been popularly read as a stinging critique about the Indian problem of inequality and also as an indication of the darker sides of the process of

economic liberalization in India. Critics emphasize the representation of the resounding contrast between the elite, the privileged, and the non-privileged masses, in the novel. The ascension towards both wealth and authority of the main character has been interpreted as rebellion against conventional old-fashioned morals, the moral downfall that is necessitated by systemic oppression. This confessional narrative voice with which Adiga tells his story as well as dark satire highlight the inconsistencies inherent in a society that is rapidly evolving. Adiga elaborates this argument in the book *Between the Assassinations* (2009), when she provides the readers with the interconnected narratives concerning a fictional town, that shows the real struggles of the discounts people. The work is characterised by the decentralized nature of the work and the obsession with daily life in the foundation of political turmoil, social stratification and financial distress.

The Inheritance of Loss (2006) by Kiran Desai has largely attracted scholarly attention because of its exploration of the issues of globalization, migration and crisis of Identity. It has been criticized that the novel brings about the emotional and psychological impacts of displacement especially to those individuals in between cultures. Comparing the storylines of the characters in both India and the rest of the world one can see how unevenly effects of globalization may be provided as there are people and places where opportunities and challenges are created respectively in the context of the globalized world order. The subject of the novel also explores the postcolonial identity since it also can be traced in the face of a modern social setting and personal subjectivity of individuals regardless of whether they exist in a national, regional or international context. Researchers emphasise a subtle form of how Desai depicts the concepts of hybridity, the clash of cultures, and intergenerational tensions.

The God of Small Things (1997) by Arundhati Roy is frequently talked about as the pioneering text in Indian English literature and especially regarding its initiation into caste, gender and political violence. Critics note that the non-linear narrative employed by Roy as well as highly symbolic language have been used to challenge traditional storytelling approaches as well as reflect the other fragmented realities of the marginalized communities. The main emphasis on the prohibited relations and social taboos in the novel stresses the rigidity of the caste system and social norms. Her socio-political emphasis is further expanded in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), where Roy discusses the issues of religious strife, the state violence, and marginalization of the minority populations. The academic fraternity considers the novel as a larger political canvas that finally integrates the multiple stories to create an unmistakable picture of a socio-political reality of present-day India.

The theoretical premises presented by the postcolonial critics are very useful in the interpretation of the given literary works. In *The Empire Writes Back* Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) understand the concepts of postcolonial literature as one that has a role to play in the form of resistance against the colonial rhetoric through reassertion of cultural identity and upsetting the dominant discourse. This position can be considered especially when we think about the fact that Roy, Desai, and Adiga are speaking and writing against those forces which hegemony imposes.

The notion of hybridity discussed in *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) is an understanding of the negotiable fluid nature of postcolonial identity. Thoughts can be used to explain the cultural displacement and identity disturbances that were experienced by the characters in the works of Desai and Adiga. In the same way, the crisis of representation and disempowerment of the voices of marginalized groups can be foregrounded by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) in her seminal essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* The structure is important in analyzing how these writers are seeking to give voice to such people who are on the peripheries of the society.

Orientalism by Edward Said (1978) can provide critical theory which can be used as a basis to criticize Western Cultural representations of the East and the power structures of Western representations of the East. Despite being more so colonial discourse, through his work, Said continues to influence postcolonial interpretation of the contemporary literature, especially in the context of understanding of how identities are formed and represented.

The role of critics in India in this area has provided a significant input as well. In her book titled *The Perishable Empire*, Meenakshi Mukherjee (2000) discusses the formation of Indian English literature and how the Indian English literature has changed its paradigm to effectively respond to the social-political reality. She proclaims that context undertaking of literary narratives is significant. M. K. Paranjape (2013), provides rather closer overview of the Indian English literature and she brings out the fact that the Indian English writings are thematically diversified and it is due to their intermittent interactions between the writers and the readers that the thematic diversity of the Indian English writings comes out well-illustrated. In the works I am studying, in *Modern Literature and Literary Criticism: An Anthology* (2011), Pramod K. Nayar (2008) uses critical instruments to analyze themes, such as globalization, identity, and resistance.

Collectively, the literature review has demonstrated that works by Roy, Desai and Adiga are rather entrenched in socio-political factors and may be regarded only through the prism of the postcolonial theoretical frameworks. Though both authors employ a different narrative style, thematic value, both authors, play a larger role in a bigger debate about inequality, identity, and resistance. The review pinpoints the critical voices that informed the paper at hand and confirms applicability of these texts to a means of addressing the current socio-political realities.

Analysis of the study:

Socio political awareness Awareness of the social and political structures determining the life of human beings. In the literary scene, it poses as a critical involvement towards issues of power, inequality, injustice and resistance. The authors whose socio-political consciousness is rather high, do not simply illustrate the stories, but attempt to criticize the system of domination, and unveil the reality that is often neglected or suppressed by the dominant discourse. Such consciousness is particularly of importance in a society where a history of weaknesses has been a common feature in the society and where radical change has seemingly taken its toll on the society such as in India.

Indian English literature offers a rich platform on which the socio-political consciousness can be explored. It is a product of a kind of colonial past and the transmigration of post-independent realities in its uncertainification of a more traditional place and a more modern place. A few of the themes that the authors of this tradition concentrated on are castes suppression, gender discrimination, economic inequality and political corruption. The fact that it is now a medium also means that such narratives now have an opportunity to reach an international audience in which such issues may now be placed in the context of a wider international audience. Thus, English literature in India is created as a cultural aspect to critique and be against change.

The concept of marginalization plays a key role in the socio-political discourse and portrayal in literature. It is what transpires to relegate certain groups to the margins of the society with no chance to get resources and opportunities besides being recognized. The Indian concept of marginalization is multidimensional and scales off on the basis of caste, classes, gender, religion and ethnicity. One of the tools to ensure that these voices which have been marginalized are brought into the limelight is literature. Writers step beyond the hegemonic discourse and assert the systems, which continue to perpetuate inequality, by depicting the real-life situations of the people, who have been oppressed. Not only is stalemation of marginalized communities an act of representation but it is also a form of resistance towards the marginalization agentic that belongs to the perspective that provokes it.

A global process as it is in economic and cultural processes, globalization has had a significant effect on the modern literature. It has caused more interconnectedness, migration and exchange of cultures but it has also seen an increase in the disparities and identity conflict. In the literary works, globalization is typically brought about as a two sided sword. It gives to the movement as well as to the development, and converse it brings about the sense of alienation, loss as well as dislocation. One would not be surprised to note the characters who are undecided at both ends about both the incoming values of the past, and their future aspirations. Literature is then a location where the psychological and social implications of globalization can be investigated.

There is a close connection with the idea of globalization; it is called postcolonial identity. The postcolonial literature is expressed with a view of finding out the long term consequences of the colonial rule on cultures, identities and sources of power. The people and the societies in the post-colonial are struggling to redefine their identity with individuals and societies constantly having to balance the native tradition and an imposed western practice. The postcolonial identity is therefore defined as being hybrid, conflicting and negotiation. Exploring the problems of belonging, cultural memory, and opposition, the authors demonstrate how the legacy of colonialism continues to find its reflection in today reality. They also aim at recovering voices and histories that were forgotten as marginalized during the colonial rule.

The other important theme which overlaps into socio-political consciousness is the conflict of the classes. It can either be defined as the strain and conflict between different socio-economic classes and in this instance, the advantaged and the disadvantaged. In societies which are expanding rapidly, the resulting economic growth is likely to lead to greater separations between the rich and the poor. All these differences are present in literature in the form of presenting the harsh reality in which people at the bottom of the social hierarchy are. With vivid use of characterization and narration, writers highlight the elements of exploitation, inequality and a desire to move up in the social level of stratification. Class struggle in literature was not only as a result of the economic condition but it also introduced the ethical aspect of justice, moral and human dignity.

The gushing out of these themes is through literary expression, which becomes the weapon of questioning of these themes. It entails techniques, styles as well as narrative techniques used by authors to articulate their ideas. Be it in the form of realism, symbolism, satire or experimentation; literary expression allows an author to appease his or her readers emotionally and intellectually. It aids in making abstract socio-political constructions to be more tangible to human experience, and to render them more accessible and effective. More so, with the help of literary expression, writers can perform on the current ideologies and also propose other forms of conceptualizing world.

However, in some sense, these ideas are very intertwined. Socio-political consciousness informs the thematic issues of Indian English literature but in itself provides ways of responding to the diverse issues of marginalization, globalization, postcolonial identity, and the conflict of the classes through a diverse range of literary expression. They have cumulatively produced a rich and dynamic body of work that not only reflects societal realities but also the body of work has contributed towards ongoing dialogues about justice, identity and transformation.

Conclusion:

In the works of Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai and Aravind Adiga, the exploration of the socio-political consciousness in the writings of these women reveals how deeply a literature may turn to exploring and commenting on the realities of the contemporary society. All their writings testify to the fact, that literary expression is not only an artistic activity but also the very strong tool of social consciousness and protest. In their efforts to illuminate such issues as marginalization, globalization, postcolonial self and the clash of classes that dominate modern India, these authors come in helping shed some light on the complexities and contradictions that characterise India today.

The plots of Arundhati Roy are the plots of the future, the plots of the voices of the oppressed the plots of the challenges to the established systems of power, in particular, the caste, gender and state power systems. Her writings fail to distinguish between the personal and the political and drive the importance of the fact labeled as personal life as strongly influenced by the other socio-political fact known as the personal life. The opinions, voiced by Kiran Desai, are quite more inward-looking in a sense that emotional and psychological are backed up as the aspects of globalization and migration. Her way of coping with displacement and cultural hybridity brings out the inner conflicts of people as they tend to strike a compromise to varying identities in an increasingly interlaced world. Aravind Adiga establishes a pessimistic and often

disheartening perception of the economic segregation, and ethical confusion, which reveal the true face of class division, and the darker aspects of the progress of capitalism.

Despite their various approaches to narration and their various focus, the three authors share one point as they do not disrespect their aim to unveil the hidden truths and to challenge the ideologies. Their works arouse the readers to solve the problems of awkward reality, reconsider the traditional standards. The various literary specifics of Roy, Desai and Adiga make them contribute to a more complete and critical comprehension of socio-political issues.

Moreover, the paper highlights the importance of Indian English literature as an evolving domain that opposes to local and global issues. It shows how the society is changing whilst at the same time making an impact on the discourse of the people. By placing their contribution to putting a light on the marginalized experiences, challenging the presence of inequality structures within the literary tradition and making a crucial contribution to the formation of a more inclusive and socially conscious literary tradition.

In conclusion, the publications by Roy, Desai and Adiga are good samples of how literary works can be applied in order to come up with important findings and conclusions. Their interaction both the aesthetic appeal of their writings and the socio-political consciousness viability not only enhance the aesthetic value of their writings, but also strengthen the value of writing in terms of the issues of our time. Their writings are a challenge to our memory to retell stories and to resist relying on it as part of energetic resistance, in addition to encouraging change.

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