

FOREWORD

Raja Rao makes a significant point when he says “I am no scholar. I am a ‘creative’ writer. I love to play with ideas. It is like a chess game with horses, elephants, chamberlains, and the kings which might fight with one another. The game is not for winning. It is for rasa-delight. I enjoy the juxtaposition of ideas. I play, I end, I have been taught, is not a question of success of defeat, but the abolition of contradiction of duality and of the place it should bring to me. I play the game knowing I am the game. That is the meaning of India.” The fact remains that the contemporary Indian English Literature is a telling comment on the external realities as well as the inner-most regions of human-psyche. Writers as diverse as NayantaraSehgal, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Ruth PraverJhabvala, Arun Joshi, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, ManjuKapoor, Kiran Desai, to name only a few, have worked as the globalization of social and cultural values that come out from the sense of rootedness and ruthlessness. Indian writers have produced path-breaking works– and these works transcend the limits of space and time.

The present volume is brilliant collection of critical essays. This work will be crucial for students and teachers of Contemporary Cultural Studies. It is a wonderful stimulating book which deals with dimension of writers who contribute to Contemporary Indian Writing in English.

I congratulate the editors for taking out this book and I hope to see more of your work in the future.

- Shruti Dutt Sharma

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*“The person who influences me the most is not he,
who does great deeds, but he, who makes me feel that I can
do great deeds”*

- **H.P. Follett**

This anthology is the outcome of so many people's generosity, co-operation and encouragement. We are delighted to have the opportunity to express our acknowledgements and heartfelt gratitude to each and everyone who has been a source of inspiration behind the completion of this book.

It would be our sacred duty to express our deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Rajinder Singh, Principal of the college, for providing us an opportunity to plan and organize a National Seminar in no time at all. It was only due to his motivation, guidance and support that we could organize this Seminar successfully.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to Professor Shruti Dutt Sharma for his spirited guidance, constant encouragement, inspiration and healthy criticism throughout the compilation of this book. We are also grateful to Professor Shrawan Kumar Sharma for his support and guidance in organizing this national Seminar.

Words are inadequate to acknowledge the extraordinary debt we owe to Professor Kalpana Purohit and Professor Sudhir Nikam for their invaluable suggestions and incessant encouragement.

Eternally grateful we are, to our colleagues in the Department of English; Mrs. Harroop Virk, Mr. Tajinder Singh, Mr. Pankaj Kumar, Dr. Jaideep Chauhan, Dr. Sonika Sethi, Mrs. Neetu Bala Bakshi, Ms. Anandita Sharma, Dr. Bhawna and Mrs. Aparajita Dhir who in their capabilities extended full cooperation in arranging

this seminar. They all kept us going, and this book would not have been possible without their assistance. We are also thankful to Dr. Ruchi Sharma, Assistant Professor in Computer Science and other supporting staff of our college for monitoring the technical issues all through the day of Seminar.

Last but not the least, our sincere gratitude goes to the writers who contributed their time and expertise without which the book would have been a distant dream. There are many more people we could thank, but time, space, and modesty compel us to stop here.

Editors

- Dr. Alka Sharma

- Dr. Satinder K. Verma

INTRODUCTION

Indo-Anglian Literature brought tremendous changes in the attitude of the Indians. Many Indian writers have chosen English as a medium of expression and left a great impact on different forms of literature. Early Indian writers have used many Indian words and the experience throughout their work of art. RK Narayan has created Malgudi similar to Thomas Hardy's "Wessex". Indian writers do comment on the social issues like "superstitions, casteism, poverty, illiteracy and many other social evils that were eating the vitals of Indian society. India has seen noteworthy communicators who inspired the everyday citizens for advancement by great informative means in different fields. Pondering back through the ages, we can bring into concentrate how the considerable men like the Buddha, Ramkrishna, and numerous others attempted to uphold changes both in human and social part of life just by influence and correspondence.

The first Indian novel in English was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) which highlighted the virtue of renunciation over self-love. Salman Rushdie referring to the same sense of artifice and discomfort of the earliest users of the English language calls this first novel written by an Indian in English a 'dud'.

It was at the end of the 19th century, when famous Indian writers who wrote mostly in their mother tongue, began to try their hand at writing in English. In the early 20th century, Rabindranath Tagore began translating his works from Bengali to English. Starting in 1917 Dhan Gopal Mukherji wrote many children's stories that were set in India. Soon after, a new generation of Indian authors, who wrote almost exclusively in English, hit the bookshelves, beginning in 1935 with R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends*, Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* and Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* in 1938.

What made Narayan, Anand and Rao's writings different from the Indian authors before them was that their stories were about

the contemporary common man's apathy on the street. There was also an Indianness to their work, in terms of the words they used and their style of writing. This resonated with the new, but growing ranks of Indians reading English literature.

Some writers of the mid 20th century like Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and Khushwant Singh have also made their presence felt on the scene of Indian Writing. Anita Desai is one of the established writers of this period whose works, *Cry the Peacock*, *Clear Light of the Day* and *Fire on the Mountain* (for which she was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978) were well received by readers worldwide. Arun Joshi has four big novels to his credit: *The Foreigner*, *The Strange case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice* and *The Last Labyrinth*. Both these writers represent the modernist-existential strain in Indian Fiction in English. Khushwant Singh's two novels: *Train to Pakistan* and *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* depict the human tragedy behind the Partition of India in 1947. The next line writers, Sarojini Naidu, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Shashi Tharoor, Shobha Dey, Kamla Das, Nissim Ezekiel, Jayant Mahapatra also contributed to the growth of Indian writing in English. Their works were the forerunners to the magnificent diversity of Indian writing in English that we see today.

Since its inception, Sanatan Dharma College aims to provide a platform for the academicians, teachers, researchers and students to identify and explore the issues, opportunities and solutions to various problems in society, environment and industry using cutting edge areas of literature, science and technology.

The aim of the National Seminar was to foster the participation of academicians and literary personalities across the globe thus creating awareness among the coming generation.

The Seminar also invited the participation of young and enthusiastic undergraduate and postgraduate students to present their ideas, concepts, and proof of works through an interactive session. The Seminar also aimed at providing researchers to delve into the area with participation in sessions dealing with specialized topic covering interdisciplinary areas.

Although, nearly 100 research papers were submitted for this

seminar, the editors had an uphill task in selecting the stand out papers from the lot. Honestly speaking, there was no iota of doubt that almost all were brilliantly written and it was an arduous task for us. We sincerely apologize to all those whose papers we couldn't accommodate in this volume but we do hope to have a long and successful association with you.

A brief summary of each of the papers included in this anthology follows:

Professor Kalpana Purohit in her paper "*Indian Diaspora through the lens of Socio-Cultural Constructs*" opines that multiculturalism is that parcel of civilization which has continued to ignite varied human emotions, creativity and societies reforming and resisting the orders of life. Diaspora is all about the creation of new identities, spaces for growth, boundaries to limit and explore, resolution of conflicts and a new culture, either composite or plural. She concludes that Diasporic writings are constructed not on the principles of harmony but on the principles of simultaneity.

Professor Shrawan K. Sharma in his article "*Post colonial Concerns and Indian English Literature*" states that the new voices of contemporary Indian English literature have emerged and explored a place and space for themselves and these new voices have constructed and changed the contexts of the contemporary Indian English literature by making a protest against power structure, by making a challenge against patriarchal and institutionalized social and cultural frameworks; and by making a privileged stance against indigenous and regional writers. They have aggression and peace, utility and creativity, competitive egoism and impersonal viewpoint, glamorised world and the realization of the great spiritual Unity of Man in their writings. The return to roots is an attempt to gain a measure of self-affirmation that is not tainted by colonialism. They use Indian classical myths, legends, and images as living vocabulary to narrate the nation.

In "*Voices from Cages: Deconstructed Self*" **Alka Sharma** makes an attempt on focusing on a character called Monisha from the novel *Voices in the City*, where Anita Desai tries to clearly depict the feelings of a newly married woman, who finds herself as an alien because of the new ambience into which

she steps in after her marriage. Anita Desai depicts women who are isolated and dejected whom past fails and present offers no consolation. **Alka** concludes that violence against women has its genesis in a set of specific social arrangements that simultaneously foster a high prevalence of violence and thwart the development of both individual and collective human potential. This violence may involve an attempt to annihilate the partner's voice and presence, to erode or deconstruct her sense of self and reality and even her faith in humanity. Monisha in *Voices in the City*, is pitted against a cruel, unrelenting and insensitive social environment which betrayed, bartered and then brunt her.

Sanjeev and Satinder K. Verma in their paper "*Performative Representation of Myths in Poile Sengupta's Thus Spakeshoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni*" investigate how Poile Sengupta has used or misused the ancient myths for performative representation in contemporary theatre. The two characters from two dissimilar epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are juxtaposed against each other in a contemporary common situation of a sudden meeting at an airport while waiting for a delayed flight. The woman in the play is Shoorpanakha who questions her mistreatment by the two brothers and dismantles our prejudice against her as a woman of easy virtue or a *rakshashni*. Shakuni, the man in the play, objects to the negative connotations attached to him by the characters in *Mahabharata* and pleads for justice in the contemporary world and demands to be understood as a man of wisdom, intellect and cleverness.

"*Petrol Energy in fictions and Modern Modernity*", an article by **Kalyan Shidram Kokane** highlights the significance of oil in every human being's life and playing a crucial role in every country's economy as well. It is oil that is heavily invested in social, economic, cultural and linguistic lives. Today's culture is a Petro and hydrocarbon culture and the relation between oil and literature is invisible. Without oil the entire progress of the world will collapse. It is the thing that developed and declined the wakes of life of people. This modern dependency of modern man on petrol and the subsequent extraction of oil from the mines of Gulf countries by the

oil companies, the exploitation of indigenous people as well as the Diasporic workers have been contemplated by the writer in the present paper.

Neeru Dhull in her paper "*Politics of Truth and Power in the Selected Novels of Vikas Swarup: A Postmodernist Study*" attempts to investigate the nature and status of truth in the postmodern era. Swarup's writings seem to follow the postmodernist thought advocated by various postmodern thinkers like Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida, and Baudrillard. He examines how truth is constructed in society, who determines and controls it and how it shapes the lives and experiences of individuals. Swarup has presented multiple truths in the postmodern society. According to the postmodern thinkers, there is no absolute truth but there are multiple narratives of truth. The concept of eternal truth is dismantled and it is realised that truth is a constructed entity and is constructed by those in power.

Jimmy Sharma in "*Aspects of Art and Vision in Nayantara Sahgal's Novels*" explores Sahgal's humanistic vision and self-conscious engagement with the vision of feminism. Sahgal's fiction encompasses her observation of state of affairs, advocacy of humanist values and writing of social documentaries which dictate her standpoint: the human person. The paper attempts to provide a fresh perspective to the fictional works and aspects of Nayantara Sahgal's writing skills. Her novels are imbued with strong plots, round characters, precise narrative form, political complexity and acute sensitivity to the gender politics of family and society. Her narratives evolve with her characters resisting and finding new life under oppression.

Jaideep Chauhan in his paper "*Representation of Cultural Values in Indian Fiction in English and The Rise of the Novel in India: An Introductory Survey*" examines the relationship between culture and literature and the representation of cultural values in a literary work of art. The profound changes in the intellectual development of humanity were one of the causes for the growing awareness of culture as a significant component of society both during the 19th century and especially during the 20th century. **Jaideep** concludes that Man and everything else on earth

is presented either as the offspring or the component of the cosmological system in the cosmological mythology. This system represents the opposite of disorganized chaos.

Ekta Dewangan in “*Ecological Feminism in Amrita Pritam’s novel The Skeleton (Pinjar)*” attempts to take an in-depth study from an eco-feminist perspective. Feminist theory denies all patriarchal systems and tries to understand and explain the difference between men and women. In the feminist setting, the exploitation of the environment has also been added to the exploitation of women by men. With this a new word has been created, Eco Feminism. **Ekta’s** objective in this study is to recognize the eco-feministic aspects of female protagonists of Amrita Pritam’s novel ‘*Pinjar*’. The study was done through literary reviews based on eco-feminism which is important to evoke the society against the exploitation of women and the environment by awakening the sensitivity and humanity among them.

Priyanka in her paper titled, “*Idea of Trishanku: Fractured identity in Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Namesake (Diasporic literature)*” discusses the plight of diasporic persons’ by using the term Trishanku to indicate their condition in respective host country. The host country is the symbol of prosperity and opportunities but as the same time it also becomes the space for cultural dislocation, fractured identity, nostalgia, homesickness, inferiority and otherness. Jhumpa Lahiri is one such writer who writes about his/her condition by using his/her mouthpiece in her works.

In “*The Survival of Human Dignity in Kamala Markandaya’s Nectar in a Sieve*” **Neetu Bakshi** observes the struggle and despair of the farmers realistically. They are desperate because of the vagaries of natural calamities, the resultant constant hunger, ruthless machines and heartless men. When an Indian village is on the threshold of industrialization, the peasant community suffers both physically and mentally. Nathan and Rukmani are representatives of millions of tenant farmers in India and their life is an example of the havoc caused by industrialization. Poverty, hunger and starvation gnaw at their very vitals. *Nectar in a Sieve* is much more than the story of the life and suffering of Rukmani and Nathan, a faceless peasant couple, symbolic of rural dwellers all over the

country. Kamala Makandaya establishes the fact that poverty, hunger and starvation followed by innumerable sufferings, can lead families to terrible degradation.

Jyoti Sorout in “*Quest for Homeland in Jhumpa Lahiri’s The Lowland*” critically analysis of various problems associated with physical displacement and psychological dissociation of people who move from one country to another dreaming for better prospects of life. The paper deals with numerous experiences of immigrants who in search for imaginary homeland generally feel the pangs of alienation, rootlessness, loneliness, and nostalgia. **Jyoti’s** study focuses on the quest for homeland of two major characters, Subhash Mitra and Udayan Mitra. In addition to this, the dilemmas of female characters, Gauri and Bela, have also been studied here.

In “*Sowmya Rajendran’s Girls to the Rescue: Breaking Patriarchy at its Root*” **Astha Parashar** endeavours to make significant contribution towards this hitherto underexplored area of study by analyzing the riveting retellings of six classical fairy tales from Sowmya Rajendran’s *Girls to the Rescue* from feministic perspective. She says that keeping focus on the fairy tales, if we trace the historical development of the literary fairy tales, the myth of raising the genre to the stature of being the best therapy in the world for children gets debunked. The inquisitive and imaginative authors tend to revisit this classical literary treasure by re-imagining it for a new generation of introspective and gender-conscious readers. The author proves that though these modern retellings of fairy tales have entered into the literary domain, they are still lagging far behind than their original versions in terms of popularity amongst the masses. The reason for the same is the lack of criticism of these modern retellings.

Seema Sharma in her research paper “*The Transgender can Speak - A. Revathi’s The Truth about Me*” attempts to unearth the truth as seen from the perspective of a Hijra, that lies under our social structures based on hierarchy as depicted in this heart rending novel. A very interesting question is posed in the novel regarding the place and position of a eunuch in Indian Society. The protagonist of the novel, Doraisamy/ Revathi, a Hijra by choice in his own way tries to come to terms with the realities of life which are very much

different from the gender oriented concerns of society. This hard hitting novel is indeed a landmark in the way that it draws reader's attention to the never revealed and ever mysterious chronicle of a Hijra life and also paves way for such iconoclastic critiques.

In "*Repression and Resistance in Indian Middle Class Society: An Analysis*" **Geeta Goyal** attempts to bring out the struggle and resistance of the protagonist against the societal norms and exposes the hollowness of the middle class moralities. An attempt has also been made to examine several pertinent issues such as rights of women, meaning/importance of freedom for a woman in a tradition bound patriarchal society, institution of marriage for a respectable life etc. The issue of women's vulnerability in our society has been highlighted through Benare, the protagonist. She represents thousands of women who face discrimination inside and outside their homes, at workplace, in society and are specifically targeted due to the narrow mindset of the contemporary middle class.

Pooja Rani in her paper "*Multiculturalism: A Sociological Critique of Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*" discusses the loop holes in Indian multiculturalism as represented in the novel and further tries to find the way-out to make a better society. In Indian context multiculturalism is found in the very concept of 'unity in diversity'. However, in postmodern era, religious, cultural and socio-political conditions of various groups in India doesn't appear upto the mark. In post-independence Indian literature, one can go through enough instances which create doubts about integrity of Indian culture.

Sumita Ashri in "*Quest for Immortality- Good or Evil?: A Review of Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy*" refers *Shiva Trilogy* as a story of an ordinary tribal from Mount Kailash and his journey toward becoming the *Mahadev* i.e., the God of the Gods. From the times immemorial, long life and immortality has been a yearning on the part of Humans and there are ample evidences in literature. Some authors assume that scientific progress will eventually lead to immortality. Amish has dexterously designed the journey of this ordinary man to Mahadev- the God of the Gods. People had been waiting for ages for Mahadev, they believed in the selfless blue throat man- Neelkanth as their redeemer, as their saviour, as their

protector and as destroyer of the evil, who is coming to put the evil out of equation, but what is that unknown evil, nobody knows.

Deepti Sharma's paper "*Displacement and Self-transformation in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Sister of My Heart and The Vine of Desire*" aims to highlight Divakaruni's writings which raises the themes of alienation and self-transformation at various levels and tries to answer questions pertaining to Diaspora and its influence, identity, displacement, disillusionment with special reference to *Sister of My Heart* and *The Vine of Desire*. The paper also throws light on the aspects of identity connecting literature and life.

In "*Communal Violence in Shashi Tharoor's Riot*" **Ashok Kumar** focuses on the contemporary social evil communalism which our country has been facing since the ancient times. Shashi Tharoor's novels focus on contemporary social and political issues that affect not only the common man but the whole nation also. *Riot* focuses on the riot due to the communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims. It is set against the historical background of religious tensions in India over the Babri Masjid, which was demolished by the Hindu zealots in 1992. The writer demonstrates how the clashes between two religion result in a riot in which a number of innocent lives become the prey. By presenting voices from both the Hindu and the Muslim communities, he tries to prove how history is exploited for vested interests. In this novel, Tharoor tries to show the dark reality of communalism and subsequent riots and suggests the need for change in the mindset of people.

Shelly Mannan's paper "*Glocalisation and Cultural Hybridity in Diaspora Writing with Special Reference to Bharti Mukherjee*" not only focuses on Bharti Mukherjee as a celebrated women-novelist of Indian Diaspora who tends to re-interpret the local culture through her fiction but also draws attention to the strong interconnection between the world of words and the contemporary reality. The chronological order of Bharti Mukherjee's *Wife* and *Jasmine* not only validates the metamorphosis of the novelist, in particular but also offers a testimony towards the acceptance of glocalisation of culture, in general. **Shelly** propounds that

Glocalisation is the simultaneous presence of global culture and local culture. Information technology and easy access of information across the globe has somehow proliferated keen interest of people in local languages and culture. Diaspora writing not only celebrates hybridity and multiplicity but also successfully projects the split psyche of the immigrants across the globe. While living on the borders of two nations, the expatriate writers blend local with global and create new identities who glocalise boundaries and create temporary and spatial metaphors.

Harsimran and Shubhrika argue in “*Women Writing Women: Recontextualizing Women of the Epics in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s Historical Fiction*” how the recent re-writings and adaptations have reignited the voices, fears, turmoil, secret desires, anxieties, rage, displeasure, and right to an agency to the women characters of these epics who have long been neglected and hegemonically underdeveloped by the male authors. The paper takes into account the recent renditions of Divakaruni’s *The Palace of Illusions* and *Forest of Enchantments* in the discourse of historical fiction. Soorpanakha for instance incites Ravana’s desire to woo and later abduct Sita and challenge Rama in Ramayana while Draupadi was held responsible for the greatest battle of Kurukshetra in Mahabharata. The epics written by men only speak of Soorpanakha, Sita and Draupadi women in the Aristotelian sense where the heroine is responsible for bringing destruction and massacre in the course of time. The paper, however, proposes to read the history against the mainstream narrative where the women actually are the protectors of dharma.

In “*Mythical Reworking in Girish Karnad’s Yayati*” **Anuradha** attempts to re-evaluate the presentation of myth of Yayati. The study aims at mythical reworking of social, religious and philosophical aspects present in modern society. *Yayati* is an exceptional play and is an ancient mythological portrayal of desires one has in one’s life. Myths are identified as idealistic moral standpoint from a different angle. The significance of myth is enormous not only in history but also in literature, philosophy and numerous facets of human life.

Vikram and Ritu in their paper “*Gandhi’s Theory of*

Nation in Amitav Ghosh's The Shadow Lines” attempts to trace Mahatma Gandhi's theory of nation in Amitav Ghosh's well-known novel *The Shadow Lines*. Today, the world looks to be in anari hands. The clouds of Third world War are not gone yet and everyone is performative nationalism. In such a tense atmosphere, it is imperative to look back at Mahatma Gandhi as a theorist, who has his original and genuine views about nation and nationalism. He never favours that the citizens' loyalty be judged by their stance over performative nationalism. Today's world, in fact, resembles the background when Gandhi put his critique of the aggressive version of nation and nationalism, which gained popularity in early 20th century. Recently, USA and the countries of European Union have come ahead to destroy Ukraine indirectly, and Russia is destructing it with direct attacks. In this frenzied ambiance, it is an appropriate context to go back and look at some of Gandhi's ideas and ideals as the situation of all such conflict lies in his ideas.

Aprajita's paper on “*Indian Writing in English: Latest Trends and Concerns*” displays significant potential and accurate views on recent trends. The author tries to be very careful in limiting the range of her studies to a mix of texts belonging to a variety of genres and her investigative ventures have made this academic conclusion more research-oriented and broader in the field to the academic world. This paper focuses on the changing trends in Indian writing in English with special reference to Vikram Chandra and Upamanyu Chatterjee.

Upasana and Vineet Kumar in their paper “*Preserving Native Cultural Identity in a Multicultural Society: An Evaluation of Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake*” says that in the journey from womb to tomb, every human individual passes through different stages and attains various identities during this journey e.g. national identity, religious identity, institutional identity, cultural identity and so on. Some of them are labelled from the birth of a child for example – religious identity, cultural identity and national identity and some are obtained through association with the institutions like – schools, colleges, work places etc. The present epoch is the epoch of globalization and almost every country of the world has become a multicultural space especially during and after

colonization. The United States of America is a multicultural country that witnesses immigrants across the globe in form of IT professionals, refugees, war victims, illegal immigrants etc. Their paper investigates Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* where some characters easily adopt the culture of the land while others struggle a lot to preserve their cultural identity.

In "*Subaltern Resistance: A Study of The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga*" **Sarika** aims to explore the growing subaltern consciousness and the resultant resistance registered by the protagonist Balram in the novel *The White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga. The protagonist's transformation from Munna to Balram Halwai to White Tiger and finally to Ashok Sharma is not just the portrayal of rising from the underclass, it's rather a bildungsroman concomitant with growing subaltern consciousness inside him. The conception of representation of postcolonial subaltern is based on the deliberation that discursive focus can be shifted from hegemonic to the marginalized and the novel plays a crucial role in drawing attention towards the sufferings of the underprivileged arising out of the systematic and structural marginalization.

The papers included in this anthology offer some fresh perspectives in the field of Indian writing in English. We do hope and believe that this endeavour will be beneficial to the academic, literary and social fraternity and the articles will be of more use to those who are in search of sources for research and analysis. **Happy reading !**

- Editors