

A Critique of Emerging Trends in Twenty First Century English Literature
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Abstract

Twenty first century English literature is still developing phenomenon. Literature today is shaped by globalization, technological advancements, and a shift toward inclusivity. It is transnational as it is written within a global perspective. Moreover it is varied in matter and manner. It is not limited by national boundaries. It is also characterised by bold experimentation in matter and manner. It is also inclusive as it voices concerns women, Afro-American, Asians and LGBTQ community. Technology has influenced contemporary literature in more than one ways. It gave birth new forms of literature. Cosmopolitanism plays an important role in contemporary literature.

Key Words

Globalism , Cosmopolitanism, hybrid genres, cross-cultural interactions, Inclusivity, Postcolonial voices, decentralization, Technological Influence, The digital revolution, Environmental Awareness, Eco-poetry

Twenty first century English literature is still a developing phenomenon. It is very dynamic and varied in nature that deals with all the aspects of human life from anthropology, culture, to climate change, alien life and space exploration. Recent trends in international politics, globalisation and cosmopolitanism play a very pivotal role in the 21st century English literature. The changed cultures across the globe also play an important role in shaping this literature. This intermingling of cultures also gave birth to hybrid genres and sub-genres. Technological advances have also changed and redefined the very notion of literature and give birth to new forms of literature. The cultures of the 21st century are radically different from the mid twentieth century or mid nineteenth century because of globalization and technological advancements. With the end of British raj the centre of power and culture has also been shifted ,it has been decentralized. This give birth to postcolonial literature and postcolonial theories of literature with emerging voices from third world countries stamping their authorities. The voices of the once colonized people echo in the 21st century English literature . With the collapse of British raj literature become more inclusive. 21st century English literature is a medley of different and varied voices across from the globe. It includes Caribbean , African, Indian , Afro American literature. The rise of women literature and LGBTQ+ literature also added new dimensions to 21st century English literature.

So contemporary English literature is characterized by global perspectives. It has moved beyond the traditional boundaries of class ,gender, race and nationality. The most distinctive feature of this literature is multifaceted views and perspectives on the world. It is dynamic and always under the pressure of hybridization. So contemporary literature is much more complex, multifaceted and transnational than literature in the 20th century. It is written within global context providing new perspectives of looking at the world. Globalization gave birth to cosmopolitanism. The protagonist in a cosmopolitan literature is not bound by religion, race or national identity. He is a global citizen in the true sense of the world .

Cosmopolitan writing is also characterised by hybridisation .So we find cross cultural interaction in literature. The setting in cosmopolitan literature is always provided by capitals of nation and metropolitan cities. One more feature arises out of above observation is that Twenty first century literature is topical in the sense that its focus is on pressing problems of the contemporary world. It tries to throw light on and understand the evolving cultures , global challenges and rapid and massive technological advancements. It shows the complexities of the current era of the interconnected world.

Though postmodernism weaned out in the last century, some of its tendencies and influences still persist in 21st century literature such as intertextuality, magic realism and deep irony. Metanarratives and metafiction are prominent features of 21st century literature. Man is always fascinated by and attracted to the past. The writers in the present Era are no exception to eat. Many writers wrote about history and the past. There are two trends visible in the writing about the past. In the first Trend the writer wrote about his own past life. The main focus of such writing is the trauma faced by an individual against a backdrop of some historical calamity such as war or environmental or man made hazards. In the second instance the nation's or community's past is laid bare before the readers. Mythical framework is used by writers to give significance to such writings.

There is a rapid spread and growth of the internet all over the world in the 21st century. Now everyone has a smart phone and internet connectivity. This digital revolution has also affected how literature is produced and enjoyed. For ages we are accustomed to read printed books. Digitalisation has changed this altogether. Birth and growth of social media has also affected the literature. Information technology companies published books online which give an opportunity for new authors to publish their work at a very low cost. Companies like Amazon and Google offer e-reader apps for readers to read books online. Then there are some companies which offer interactive story books online. The birth and rapid growth of digital libraries have changed the literary landscape. By paying minimal fees readers can now enjoy billions of books from comfort of their homes. With birth of AI and digital technology new kind of literature is produced. One such instance is hypertext fiction. Hypertext fiction allows every reader to enjoy fiction differently by clicking on hypertext. Interactive story telling is another new development in 21st century fiction. In an interactive story books the reader is able to choose their own experience by interacting with the story. The readers are free to choose the direction and outcome of the story. They can shape story in their own way

After the turn off millennium English poetry has also changed its course and took a new direction. Contemporary English poetry has responded in its own way to the world characterized by globalization, cosmopolitanism and pluralisation. Contemporary poetry is very different in its tone, subject matter and sensitivity than that of poetry written in the 20th century. Today poetry is written on the variety of subjects including but not limited to problems of contemporary society, spirituality, relationships and writing of poetry itself. Even poems are written on technological developments and even some poems are on unearthing and celebrating ancestry and fore fathers. The trend of the deromantication of English poetry that began in the late last century even continues in the 21st century English poetry. We don't find grand poetical objects and subjects in the 21st century, rather poetry is written on mundane subjects in mundane settings. For contemporary poets all objects, subjects and experiences are material for writing poetry.

The poets think that poetry is a way of knowing the world and all the subjects are good material for writing of poetry. Today poetry is not written only on pretty and agreeable. So we find much experimentation and innovation in 21st century poetry which involves breaking of convention in both manner and matter of poetry as can be seen in concrete poetry, visual poetry, digital poetry and poetry of witness. One of the most important features of 21st century English poetry is eco poetry. Though Eco poetry has its origins in late 20th century, it is established as a dominant form only in 21st century. The 21st century Eco poetry is different from nature poetry written in earlier periods. The Eco poetry arose out of awareness of human beings of the damage they have done to environment. There are number of man-made causes that have contributed to environmental damage such as pollution caused by industries and vehicles, large scale deforestation, exploitation of the natural resources and population explosion. Eco poetry

is different from traditional nature poetry or pastoral poetry. It does not describe natural beauty but throws light on men's relation with nature and natural resources. It shows that men's very existence is dependent on nature. It argues for an eco-centric perspective in poetry. It warns us that if we don't preserve ecological system it could lead to an ecological catastrophe and human extinction. Instead of describing nature's beauty, it talks about problems and issues of nature, ecology and environment. They raise awareness about environmental issues and plead to mitigate environmental damage.

Cross-cultural relationships is important character of 21st century human life. These relationships are born out of economic systems and varied experience of contemporary world that form background of human life. The result is the globalisation of literary studies. The poetry born out of their varied experience truly represents new internationalism. This shift in subject matter and manner of expression and sensitivity is very significant as this made poetry more inclusive as diverse voices from different cultural background express the emotions and concern to a truly global audience. Their stories now reach every nook and corner of the world. This has made all human experience is truly global. Digital poetry also known as e-poetry is a distinctive feature of 21st century English poetry. It is an amalgamation of creativity and digital technology. This kind of poetry is a new medium of expression. Along with poetry it incorporates digital elements such a sounds, hyperlinks and animation. Sometimes it also used videos and graphics and animation. According to element of digital technology incorporated in production of poetry there are various kinds of digital poetry such as generative poetry , hypertext poetry and kinetic poetry etc.

Seamus Heaney is the prominent voice of English poetry in the entire world in the early 21st century . He wrote about Irish past, Irish struggles and daily chores at farm in his poetry. Evan Boland, Tom Paulin , Michael Longley are other prominent figures from Ireland. Boland's work often focused on the lives and experiences of Irish women. The setting in her poetry is provided by urban centres. She wrote about the mundane lives of women living in cities. But she still finds it a fascinating subject for writing her poetry. She wrote about the silenced lives of women, with a particular focus on their domestic and social experiences, gender exploitation, and motherhood. At the beginning of her career, her poetry was rooted in her personal experiences as a young wife and mother. Don Paterson and Edwin Morgan are two important poets from Scotland who greatly contributed to 21st century English poetry. Both are known for the experimentation with form and language of poetry . Don Paterson has written sixteen books of poetry, criticism and other subjects. *Nil Nil, God's Gift to Women, Landing Light* are some of his important books of poetry. He has won many prizes including T. D. Eliot prize. Alice Oswald is great poet of nature in Twenty first century English poetry. She has written eight books of poetry . Her important books of poetry are *Dart, Memorial, Falling Awake and Nobody*. Main themes in her poetry are ecology, environment and nature. She has won number of prizes for her poems . Carol Ann Duffy was made poet laureate of Great Britain in 2009. *Standing Female Nude, Mean Time, The World's Wife, Rapture* are some her important books of poetry. She wrote on various subjects such as women's problem, environmental issues and war.

The Twenty first century English novel is characterized by formal and thematic experimentation. It is also transnational and Cosmopolitan in nature. It challenges the traditional motion of realism and explores the new ways of presenting reality. It is also characterised by aesthetic experimentation and structural innovation. The Novel represents various cultures around the world. The protagonist of this novel is always a cosmopolitan who is not limited by race or ethnicity or nationality. We find the mixture of and interaction among cultures in the novel. The issues and themes related to racial identity, ethnicity and immigration dominate the novel . So twenty first century novel is

multicultural and cosmopolitan by nature. Moreover the novel has displayed flexibility as regards to the narrative techniques and stylistic experimentation. It has absorbed, faced and in some cases challenged the enormous changes in culture, technological advancements and society. It has successfully responded to changes and challenges that are taking place rapidly in the contemporary world.

It tackles all the changes in political and cultural landscape ushered in at the turn of century. It deals with and shows the predicament of human being in the era of artificial intelligence and danger of nuclear war. The political landscape of the world had changed after 9/11. The world has entered a new age of cold war. The climate change has posed a serious danger to the existence of human race. The contemporary novel discusses all these problems. All these changes has made world in general and human life in particular a web of complexities.

Traditional ideologies that hold the world and human life together are rapidly disintegrating. The human life in the face of these uncertainties is coloured by pessimism and helplessness. The novel helps human beings come to terms with these uncertainties and pessimism. The contemporary novel has portrayed all these complexities of the present world. While doing this it has undergone some radical changes in relation to the form, matter, manner, technique and content. There are many novel narrative techniques invented by novelists to present these complexities of modern world. Plot models have also changed in the present novel which gives birth to many sub genres of the novel.. Cosmopolitan culture has given rise to hybrid and innovative narrative techniques and genres. Traditional plot models and narrative forms cannot do justice to these new realities and complexities. Political- social- economic relations between Nations have changed drastically in 21st century. The western philosophy and ideology is being constantly interrogated by third world countries. The local become glocal in the present era. The world today is characterized by cultural hybridity. The racial, ethnic distinction is on the verge of collapse today. Contemporary English fiction celebrates this hybrid cultures, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism and internationalism of literature. The aspirations of people today are not limited by national boundaries.

Another prominent feature of 21st century English fiction is that setting of the novel is provided by urban centres in most of the cases. We find protagonists observing and contemplating the interaction between human and urban environments. These novels serve as a valuable document of urban life and experience. They also focus on pros and cons of human beings living in the urban centres. The novels show that massive infrastructure developments in urban centres make them an attractive and desirable destination for living. The rigid class divisions that we find in rural areas get dissolved in the crowd of urban populations. The novels also discuss social issues and problems created by cosmopolitanism, globalisation and migration. Some of the novels also depict and deal with the loneliness and alienation of migrated people in these metropolitan cities. They focus on marginalised lives of women, Asian people, working class people and poor of the cities which are excluded from the mainstream living of the cities.

Digital technology and new communication methods have posed a great challenge and danger before literary studies. Digital Story telling method is matter of concern for novelist today. Traditional narrative methods have failed before the digital story telling. Narrative methods of last century are not capable of delineating and responding to changed notions of reality and life in 21st century. Many novels adopted newer forms of narrative techniques. Moreover notion of temporality has also changed drastically. Today there is no distinction between past, present and future. So they have subverted the traditional linear narrative and classical succession of time. Novelist have also adopted new forms of characterization. Digital technology have also given birth new kinds of novels such as e-novel and twiterrative. Social media changed how novels are produced

delivered and read. One more feature of the 21st century novel is that it was dominated by women novelists. Genre fiction is also very popular form of novel in the Twenty first century.

Zadie Smith is one of most important novelists of 21st century. *On Beauty, The Autograph Man, Swing Time and NW* are her novels. She has won many prizes in her career. Primarily she writes about life in the modern cities with its complexities and multiculturalism. Two important novels of Kazuo Ishiguro are *Never Let Me Go* and *The Buried Giant*. His most important novel *The Remains of the Day* won Nobel prize of literature in 2017. Jeanette Winterson has penned more than twenty books. She is one of the most prolific novelists of the 21st century. She is known for bold experimentation in storytelling. Class division in the society, Women's problems and gender identity are important themes in her novel. David Mitchell has written nine novels. *Cloud Atlas, Ghostwritten, Number9dream* are his important novels. His novels are known for their complexity and structure.

Britain saw decline of theatre as an aftermath of the world war II. The causes of this decline were political, economical, cultural as well as social. Many theatres were destroyed during World War II. The interest of audience shifted from theatres to cinema halls because of popularity of films and as a result theatres destroyed during world war II were rebuilt as cinema halls.

Conclusions

The Twenty first century English literature landscape is a dynamic and evolving field shaped by globalization, technological advancements, and a shift toward inclusivity. Moving beyond traditional boundaries of race, gender, and nationality, contemporary works are characterized by multifaceted perspectives and transnational themes. Literature today emphasizes a "glocal" perspective where characters are often global citizens not bound by specific religions or national identities. This has led to the rise of hybrid genres and cross-cultural interactions. Postcolonial voices from the Caribbean, Africa, and India, along with emerging LGBTQ+ and women's literature, have decentralized the traditional "centre" of literary power. The digital revolution has redefined how literature is produced and consumed, giving birth to new forms like hypertext fiction, e-novels, and interactive storytelling. Eco-poetry has emerged as a dominant form, focusing on the human relationship with nature and warning of potential ecological catastrophes. Contemporary writers continue to engage with the past, either through personal trauma narratives or by exploring a community's mythical and historical framework. While postmodernism has waned, its influence persists through techniques like intertextuality and metafiction. Today's literature serves as a complex document of modern life, addressing pressing issues such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and the anxieties of an interconnected world.

Poetry Moves away from "grand" subjects toward mundane, everyday experiences; incorporates digital elements like hyperlinks and animation. Fiction Challenges traditional realism with formal experimentation, non-linear narratives, and a focus on urban, multicultural complexities. Drama Experienced a decline post-WWII as many destroyed theatres were rebuilt as cinema halls due to the rising popularity of film.

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