

Indian Fiction in English
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Lecture - 05
Introducing Indian Fiction in English

So we will begin with a very quick recap of whatever we had been discussing so far in the last couple of sessions.

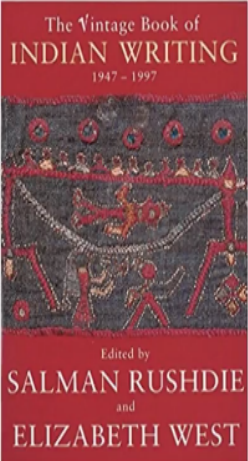
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Recall readings from last week

- 0 Rushdie's Introduction to *Vintage Book of Indian Writing*
- 0 Srinivasa Iyengar's *Indian Writing in English*
- 0 Arvind Krishna Mehrotra's *Illustrated History of Indian Writing in English*

Mostly we had been taking a look at the ways in which historically this journal has been located in particular ways and we also began with this very controversial remark by Rushdie in his *Vintage Book of Indian Writing* which he also co-edited with Elizabeth West.

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	<p>“The prose writing both fiction and non-fiction created in this period by Indian writers working in English, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 ‘official languages’ of India, the so-called ‘vernacular languages’, during the same time; and indeed, this new, and still burgeoning ‘Indo-Anglian’ literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books”</p>
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This is what he said the pro is writing both fiction and nonfiction created in this period and is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than the all the you know official languages the writings in the vernacular and this also represents he concludes the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books and there is also a range of things that he talks about which we you know some of those things we try to you know situate the historic nature of those articulations.

We also tried to see from where this biases against Indian literatures in other languages are coming from, what was the historic need to locate 2 different camps, Indian writers in English versus Indian writers in other languages and in order to do that we also access certain works.

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We had particularly taken a look at 2 works, one edited by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English and the other an earlier work and the pioneering work by Srinivasa Iyengar and M.K. Naik's work though we have not really taken a look at work per se in detail, we also in the discussions got a sense that M.K. Naik pretty much articulates and reiterates most of the things that Srinivasa Iyengar said.

What makes Naik's work more distinctive is perhaps the fact that it was a Sahitya Academy Publication. He was commissioned by the Sahitya Academy to write this particular literary history. So there is a way in which Naik also further legitimises the many things that Iyengar talks about in his Indian Writing in English. There was certain observation, certain similar sorts of tracing that we located in all of these works.

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And when they all try to locate the origins of Indian writing in English this invariably had a very similar kind of trajectory though their articulations the rhetoric of it deferred the way in which you know they accented particular things rather than other things or those things perhaps differed, but other than that there are these similar origins. First of all, you know they speak about colonial encounter particularly with a very emphatic accent on the aspect of modernity about colonial modernity.

And also there are differing ways in which you know you can talk about colonial modernity those are perhaps you know discussions that you can come back to when you talk about individual works and authors and there is also an emphasis being placed on English education in the role of English education not just as you know a formal set of education, but also in the way in which the Indians who are educated in English were also getting familiar with a number of works published originally in English in the Western context.

So all of those things collectively they seem to have a major input in producing various kinds of new kinds of prose writings and novel writings in English and vernacular languages. So it also brings our attention to the role played by the vernacular languages and literature which all of them interestingly agree about maybe the sort of accents that they place on the degree of the influence that may differ.

But otherwise you know there is a general consensus about how with the advent of English education with this advent of modernity there is also a particular kind of vernacular literary

tradition which was also emerging and that in certain ways it also exists as a parallel to the Indian writers and Indian writings in English and Mehrotra and Srinivasa Iyengar they also draw our attention to these.

Where it kinds of things which are happening, the emergence of you know how printing presses not really the emergence of the printing presses but particularly how the emergence of a certain kind of print culture in English it also you know accelerates this process there is this journalism activities happening not just in English but also in a number of you know in Indian languages about the missionary activities though there is we do not find a particular kind of an emphasis placed on the missionary activities that is also being discussed.

There is nationalist history and nationalist movement of course with you know Gandhi and many other nationalist reformers, they are also being designated this the title of the say the ones who wrote the first biographies, it is the Ram Mohan Roy or the ones who inaugurated the certain literary tradition of writing in English so on and so forth and Gandhian influence is something that you know that needs to be underscored throughout.

And it also comes back to visit us in multiple ways when we talk about the novels of the 1920s and 30s and also the novels of the 1980s, which revisit the nationalist history. The language debates, they also take such an enormous proportion that they are constitutional interventions which are needed in the form of language bills, it needed to contain the debate, the various problems, the issues related to communities, linguistic communities say getting at loggerheads with each other.

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Moments, events and figures

- British domination
- Orientalists
- 1835 Minutes
- Rammohun Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Hindu College, Derozio, Bengal Renaissance
- 1857 revolt
- Kailash Chunder Dutt, Shoshee Chunder Dutt
- The 'first' novels in regional languages

So there are also certain events, moments and particularly literary, non-literary figures who are being foregrounded such as you know the British domination and the various ways in which happens, if you remember you know there is an emphasis that they all plays on event such as The Battle of Plassey, The Battle of Buxar, about you know the granting of this Diwani.

And also the role played by the orientalist and whom Srinivasan Iyengar also refers to as the Brahmanised Britains with the kind of role that they played in elevating the status of the Indian languages, Indian culture though with an orientalist accent of course and then they celebrated Minutes by Macaulay in 1835 and a series of figures associated with Bengal Renaissance and this again we also recall this could be a contested notion.

But nevertheless it is also a very important historical moment to be reckon with featuring say Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the emergence of the setting up of Hindu College in early 19th century 1817 and the role played by Derozio, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, so it is an amalgamation of many things literary and non-literary coming together, institutional and non-institutional practices coming together to eventually lead this towards the history of Indian Writing in English.

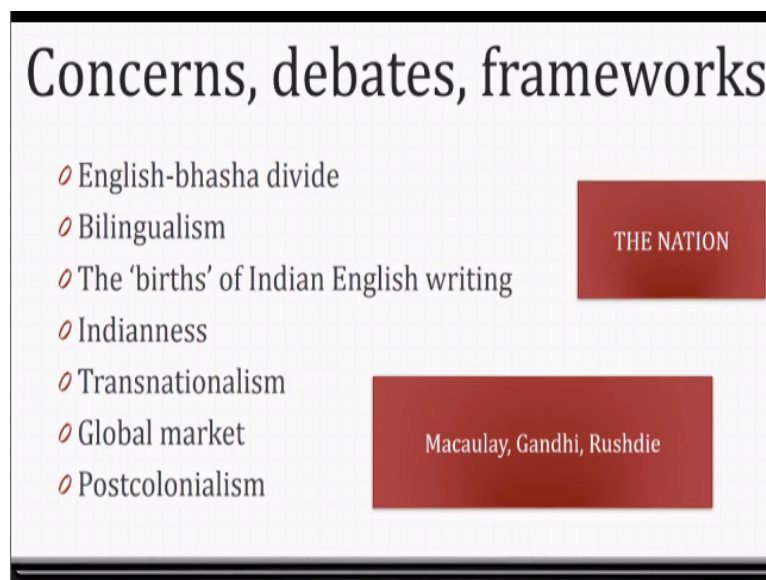
And there is this moment 1857 Revolt which is responded to in multiple ways by historians as well as there are these 2 early writings which are being made possible by Kailash Chunder Dutt and Shoshee Chunder Dutt, who talk about the possibility of an insurrection, who talk

about the need for aversive kind of narrative in the context of the anti-colonial movement. There is also this discussion about the first novels which appeared in regional languages.

Mind you we are not really talking about the Indian writing in English, but also about the regional novels. So there are lots of discussions about the first novels which appeared, what were their characteristics and how do they also act as a corollary to say 1835 minutes or the British domination or the multiple ways in which they engage with modernity and the kinds of Renaissance which were being made possible.

So in that context it is also important to remember, later when we look at Meenakshi Mukherjee's essay the beginnings of the novel, she talks about how every language was vying with each other for this position of being the first, the very first novel. So that she also you know talks in detail about the many things which made the first is possible.

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So moving on, some of the concerns debates in frameworks that would emerge from these discussions and this would also continue to dominate the many discussions that we would be having about Indian writing in English particularly about Indian fiction in English. The most important one is the English-bhasha divide. This is either engaged with within the narratives of particular works or we may be using that as a framework as one of the concerns.

Or it could be one of the debates on which you know the discussions are being made staged. This could also take another dimension in terms of the translations and translations not just from Indian languages to the English, but there are also these translations of iconic novels

written in English such as you know some of the recent controversies would be the translation of a Suitable Boy.

So there were certain elements which are omitted in particular regional translations and how various critics and translators respond to that, those are certain debates that we would be visiting in course of this our discussions and the idea of bilingualism about you know the authors writing both in English and in the regional writers also being forced to take a certain position about Indian writing in English or about regional writers.

And this also has a historical context as we have already noted in some of the discussions that we had and we also saw these many births which are being spoken about and these moments, these historic moments become important for us when we talk about Indian writing in English in terms of the canon, in terms of the literary tradition.

So again you know this becomes important because these birth, there is a certain canonical, traditional, conventional way in which certain convenient moments, convenient dates have been given as starting points as births, but the moment you intervene with something like Dalit writing or you intervene with say something like feminist writing or women writing.

So suddenly you realise that there is something wrong, there is something inherently flawed about these conceptions, these starting points. So it also this framework it need not necessarily always you know cast in stone, carved in stone, it could also be certain platforms to for us to ask newer questions to challenge the existing yardsticks or frameworks in many different ways.

And these discussions about Indianness, Meenakshi Mukherjee has an entire essay about the anxiety of Indianness and how you know she locates a certain anxiety in the Indian writers in English to be Indian more than the others. This is like the, it is also an offshoot of the bilingualism, the bilingual practices that some of these authors had about English being part of a colonial residue and the native vernacular tongue being part of a more traditional and a more loyal nationalistic approach.

And also certain things which Mehrotra particularly drew our attention to and these 3 aspects in fact will continue to be it will continue to resonate with most of the works that we will be

talking about, the idea of transnationalism, how global market plays a certain kind of a role. There is a way in which you know certain critics again you know we go back to Meenakshi Mukherjee as an immediate reference.

She talks about certain passages and how they were not written for the Indian audience. She talks about you know certain exotic India is being generated in the descriptions for a western audience for a predominantly western audience and the description she says, a writer who is writing in one of the vernacular tongues, one of the regional languages would not have resorted to this particular description.

We will come back to those details at a later point and postcolonialism is an interesting phenomenon and a very, very important framework within which we will be looking at some of the later novels, but also you would have noted though we spoke about postcolonialism, though postcolonial moments were used as an intervention in some of the discussions that we had in the last couple of sessions.

These writers per se, the historians per se had not really refer to, had not really you know underscored the postcolonial moment much and also in talking about the major frameworks within which we will be understanding most of the text that we are talking about nation is a very important event over there and it becomes impossible to talk about most of these novels without referring to the nation.

And also nation (()) (12:39) becomes both an advantage as well as a very delimiting component in some of the discussions and these 3 figures, Macaulay, who is a colonial administrator, Gandhi who is the leader of the nationalist movement and Rushdie who is an author in this postcolonial globalised market, who is catering primarily to the Indian writing in English.

These 3 figures we realise that you know there is an uncanny way in which they come together in this field of study in Indian writing in English and Macaulay if you remember in the introduction to Mehrotra's literary history, he talks about and accept from one of Rushdie's book, where Rushdie refers to bloody Macaulay's Minutes.

Bloody Macaulay's Men, so there is a way in which a rejection of Macaulay and an adoption of Gandhi becomes very important to stage certain debates, to talk about certain kinds of Indianness and the absence of certain kinds of modernity. In the same way Gandhi also becomes a problematic figure, an uncritical you know acceptance of Gandhi also becomes a problem.

We noticed that particularly in the post 1980s novels where they are critiquing the very idea of the nation and also the ways in which the nation has been narrated and Rushdie for a very different reasons, he becomes a Framework because he becomes the trend setter in a certain way, he becomes the yardstick against which the others are being evaluated, though he is not really asked for it, Rushdie becomes the image, the face of postcolonial writing.


And he also become such a towering figure that it becomes either you know either have to be like Rushdie to match up to that sort of a standard or you have to be continually in a position of being marginalised because you are not writing like Rushdie and others are writing. So these 3 frameworks and these 3 very divergent frameworks they continue to inform most of our understanding of Indian writing in English particularly fiction.

And also the evaluation, evaluatory practices that we, you know we meet out to these sort of writers as well as writings. So today you know we begin looking at some of the things that Meenakshi Mukerjee talks about. I hope you have had a chance to at least you know go through the 2 chapters from realism and reality.

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Tribute to Macaulay's Minutes

o "It is not an accident that the first crop of novels in India in Bengali and Marathi, appeared exactly a generation after Macaulay's Educational Minutes making English a necessary part of an educated Indian's mental make-up were passed"



This is considered as one of the significant interventions that Meenakshi Mukherjee makes in *Realism and Reality, The novel and Society in India*. She also wrote another book, an earlier work entitled *Twice Born Fiction* in which she engages only with Indian fiction in English, but then she feels that you know it is an important moment, in the 1980s she identifies an important moment to also look at the history of Indian novel in general.

Because she thinks just like there is a particular tradition associated with the western novel. It is very important to see a novelistic tradition, which is native to India as well. So this is seen as a very landmark kind of text, not just for Indian writing in English, but also for you know Indian novels, the scene of the Indian novel in general. So she also begins on a very similar note. So I hope you have had a chance to look at Meenakshi Mukherjee both the works.

Her work also begins with this you know a tribute to Macaulay's minute. So in that sense she is also not really departing from the major things that the other historians and the other critics had been talking about. There is this something that you would find right at the outset in her the first chapter from *Purana to Nutana*.

She talks about it is not an accident that the first crop of novels in India in Bengali and Marathi appeared exactly a generation after Macaulay's *Educational Minutes* making English a necessary part of an educated Indian's mental make-up where passed. So her focus is on the educated Indians and how that becomes that moment of the emergence of the educated Indian also becomes an important moment for the emergence of certain kind of writing.

So moving onto the details what Meenakshi Mukherjee in her preface also you know if you take a look at it, she says her objective is to give a broader framework, broader perspective.

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Meenakshi Mukherjee 1985

- A broader perspective
- A theoretical framework – to trace the development of novel in India
- More than a 'literary exercise'
- More than a 'legacy of British rule'
- 'born out of the tension between opposing systems of value in a colonial society, and modified by certain indigenous pressures'

And also a theoretical framework to trace the development of novel in India because these 2 things are clearly absent even in the beginning of the 1980s. There is no sort of you know, there is no way in which you know you can approach Indian novel in general from a broader perspective just like you could approach perhaps you know the British novel from a broader perspective.

So her's is like you know she is in her work you can see that she is both a literary critic as well as a historian. She assumes both these positions to talk about the framework that she hopes will eventually evolve and she also you know identifies this novel in general as a second youngest narrative, which is the youngest narrative she says film, cinema. She says you know novel is the second youngest narrative which is available to the you know for consumption in the 20th century.

And this entire thing she begins to locate this at a level which is more than the literary exercise and this is where she departs from all her literary ancestors that she wants to locate the idea of Indian novel as more than a legacy of British rule. If you look at the frameworks which we had taken look at the ways in which the historical, you know reasons certain etiology had been set.

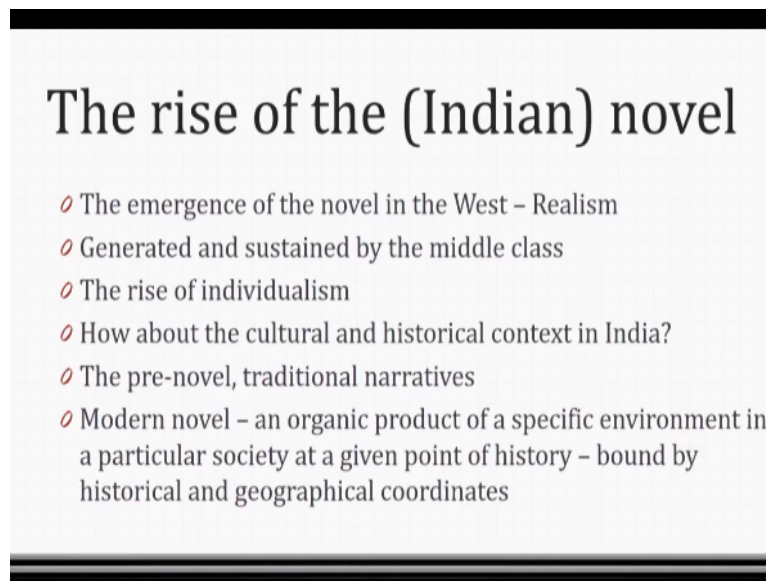
It is predominantly within the colonial framework, predominantly within a legacy of British rule. She is not necessarily departing entirely from that but she is also drawing her attention to the need to be aware about certain other things which are outside of you know the colonial modernity, which are outside of these many things that we usually talk about, in her own

words the Indian novel in general has been seen is born out of the tension between opposing systems of value in a colonial society, and modified by certain indigenous pressures.

But these modifications by indigenous pressures had not been dealt with in detail until the early 1980s. Meenakshi Mukherjee is the one who initiates us into such a discussion where it is possible to bring both of these elements together, the tension between opposing systems of value in a colonial society and also the indigenous pressures which also you know played a major role.

And again in the first part also in identifying the tension between the opposing systems of value in the colonial society she further fleshes that aspect out and draws her attention to certain things, very nuance things which had perhaps been overlooked by other critics and other historians.

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The slide is titled "The rise of the (Indian) novel" and contains a list of six bullet points. The text is as follows:

- o The emergence of the novel in the West – Realism
- o Generated and sustained by the middle class
- o The rise of individualism
- o How about the cultural and historical context in India?
- o The pre-novel, traditional narratives
- o Modern novel – an organic product of a specific environment in a particular society at a given point of history – bound by historical and geographical coordinates

When she begins talking about the rise of the Indian novel and here you know I also want you to recall the rise of the novel that you have learnt in the western context about you know about how it was seen as a say a product of renewal of the middle class, it was seen as a corollary of the rise of individualism. So these things she talks about in a very brief way in just about 2 or 3 paragraphs.

She talks about the emergence of the novel in the West and how that is you know also corresponds to the various moments of formal realism and how it could be seen as you know a product of the middle class and how it also celebrates the idea of the rise of individualism

and then she asked this first pertinent question, so how do we begin to situate the same, the same journal when we begin to talk about that in the cultural historical context of India.

What does it imply? What are the consequences? So for that initially she draws her attention to certain pre-novel or traditional narratives. She speaks about you know some particular works, the details of which we will not be going into she also does not really intend to stay on to discuss these, the pre-novel traditional narratives if you go through it a later point you know, if you still not taken a look at it from the end of page 8, page 9 and page 10.

She draws her attention to certain pre-novel narratives which were available even before the advent of colonial modernity in India. As an offshoot from those discussions she begins to talk about what makes the modern novel. She is not necessarily saying in a blind way that the pre-novel narratives were the actual say in those pre-novel narratives we can actually locate the origins of Indian novel.

She is not really trying to say that either. She is initially, in fact you know most of Mukherjee's essays if we go through the (()) (21:34) there is a systematic way in which she lines up a number of things. She not just tells us what she intends to you know what her primary objectives in the study are. She also draws her attention to why she is not taking them any other alternative routes perhaps you know we would also be contemplating about.

Here since she drew her attention to the pre-novel narrative she is also telling us in very systematic, in a very illustratory fashion that they cannot be the origins. You cannot trace it back directly to the pre-novel narratives from Sanskrit or from various traditions available to India from multiple sources because modern novels in her own words is as an organic product of a specific environment in a particular society at a given point of history and is also bound by historical and geographical coordinates.

She also tries to differentiate say these fables and the works of the oral tradition from that of the novel arguing that the fables and the pre-novel narrative, the traditional narratives need not be necessarily have a proper setting. The story could have happened in province A or province X or in an entire empire. Such where the characteristics of you know, those sorts of narrations, the plot arrangement so on and so forth.

So here she is drawing her attention to this modern novel, it is in page number #5, talking extensively about you know how novel is not like a medieval tale. So she is also pre-empting the possibility of anyone later on coming in saying see, it is not essentially a modern thing, it is also an off-shoot of the many, many kinds of narratives that we had from the ancient literary traditions onwards.

And that is also something that she does very systematically with a lot of clarity and here after having situated her definition of the novel after having said that I am also talking about a modern novel with you know proper historical and geographical coordinates, I am talking about modern novel which is an organic product of a specific environment. Here in this case you know the historical and social cultural context being whatever has been foregrounded by the Indian subcontinent.

After having said that she goes on to make that this thing what she does you know this move away from the pre-novel traditional narratives to situate the modernness of novel as we are now aware of, that is very important thing to do for her because she is also convincing us that I am talking about the same set of things that you are also talking about. I am not necessarily talking about the need for a different kind of a historicity all together.

I am not trying to necessarily define novel in a new way for you, I do, we are in the same page when we talk about novel, yes, I mean novel when I talk about novel it is the same thing that the western tradition also spoke about, but I want to differ in the way in which I situated historically. So the way in which she situates it historically it is within the world of the educated Indians.

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The world of the educated Indians

- The significance of the Minutes
- The society in the English novels vs. the cultural background of the readers
- Novels written in urban areas by English educated people
- A 'discontinuity'
- The problem: to reconcile two sets of values – one obtained by reading an alien literature and the other available in life
- Egs: *Manjughosha* (Marathi), *Indulekha* (Malayalam)

It is her own phrase, the world of the educated Indians you know, how that changed at the wake of the colonial modernity that begins, that is the starting point of her discussion. She gains you know begins with the significance of the minutes as we noted earlier also and then she goes on to talk about the educated Indian readers and the kind of text that they were consuming at that point of time.

Yesterday if you remember you now from Priya Joshi's article, I showed you a table, the kind of translations of the 19th century text which were available to the Indian, educated Indian in the 19th century itself. It is a very formidable impressive list. So the educated Indian reader that same leader who also later went on to write full length novels, who also went on to inaugurate a novelistic tradition within India.

They were in fact caught within a certain kind of a dilemma because the world, the society that they were reading from those British novels which are predominantly productions of the Victorian society and the cultural background that was there immediate reality, it was very, very different. So these novels you know were also even today Meenakshi Mukherjee's novels are written in urban areas by English educated people.

That is, you know that also remains one of the severe contestations against Indian writing in English. So that aside this particular society that these readers were getting used to which was not really tying up well, which was not really sitting well with the reality that they were used to that actually gave, it gave rise to a discontinuity in tradition, or discontinuity in approach

because they knew very well that even if they are very, very impressed by the kind of novelistic productions in of Victorian England.

Even if they wanted to write something like that, they cannot imitate the same pattern because the societal immediate cultural social realities are very different. She elaborates this further with 2 examples, the one of the earliest Marathi novels, Manjughosha, any Marathi speakers over here, no, are you familiar with this novel, Manjughosha, okay and also one of the earliest novels in Malayalam Indulekha.

How many of you are familiar with Indulekha? Familiar in the sense you have read the text? That does not matter, in fact these discussions are also quite important and maybe if we have time next week we will also have a talk by one of the research scholars on Indulekha and what it really did to the Indian novelistic tradition.

So coming back to this discussion, when Meenakshi Mukherjee is talking about these examples Manjughosha and Indulekha, she is also being drawing our attention to a central problem that these writers of novels were facing because they were consuming a certain western product they were trying to produce the similar kind of a product for a different kind of an audience.

So the problem was to reconcile 2 sets of values. One obtained by reading an alien literature and the other available in life. This was you know as she also says you know maybe it is the same reason why only certain kind of novels where becoming popular in India. Can one of you read out that brief passage, page #10, the last line of that paragraph.

“Professor - student conversation starts” It is not surprising (()) (28:11) novels most popular among the early generations (()) (28:16) and the repair of (()) (28:19) both of which emphasize moral qualities rather than narrated moral adventurous in realistic settings of the (()) (28:29) **“Professor - student conversation ends”**

So the popularity of those novels also dependent on the kind of you know the cultural, the emotional setting of Indian readers. So she is you know further telling us what this problem of reconciliation between 2 sets of values is because the dilemma was that the Indian writers in English they were writing in a form that required individualism.

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What is the dilemma?

- Writing in a form that requires individualism as a value and writing about a society that denies it.
- "As stated at the outset, my object is to write a novel after the English fashion, and it is evident that no ordinary Malayalie lady can fill the role of the heroine in such a story. My Indulekha is not, therefore, an ordinary Malayalie lady" – O Chandumenon
- The novel projects into the future – does not / cannot reflect a society known to the author

p.15 – the persistence of the pre-novel conventions

Because that is the historical connection of novel with the middle class and the rise of individualism. So they were trying to write in a form that required individualism as a value, but they were also writing about a society that denies it. This is where perhaps you know the most significant departure, the significant contribution of Meenakshi Mukherjee comes in. She draws her attention to the world of the educated Indians.

The dilemma was not really about colonial rule and the national movement. It was not about a choice of say whether Macaulay or Gandhi. It was more about the choices that one was making internal. The tradition modernity conflict was about a certain worldview that one wanted to embrace and the reality that one was part of. This in fact you know that also sets the stage for a lot of discussions it becomes easier.

What Meenakshi Mukherjee also does is, it becomes easier for the other critics and readers to engage with this problem after that, because until that point of that they knew that there was something tricky about the situation, but they do not know how to articulate it and she gives us example from the Chandu Menon's novel, Indulekha.

He mentions in the preface, as stated at the outset, this is Chandu Menon talking, as stated at the outset, my object is to write a novel after the English fashion and it is evident that no ordinary Malayalie lady can fill the role of the heroine in such a story. My Indulekha is not, therefore, an ordinary Malayalie lady, and you know if you I think it is somewhere in page #15 or a little earlier.

So if you go to that section and read through. She gives further illustrations from the novel Indulekha and she talks about how the novel is not really reflecting reality, just like it did in the western tradition, it was not, there is realism as a narrative technique as a prose technique, but it is not about a society, a set of men and women that the author was encountering in his daily life.

It was about the kind of men and women that he would like to encounter as products of modernity, as men and women who are English educated and who are individualistic who can make their own choices in terms of relationships, in terms of career. If you are familiar with the narrative, the plot of Indulekha it is also about the kind of choices that an English educated woman is making about her relationships.

About her you know about the way she would like to lead her life, about the critics which are being offered against a number of traditional practices in terms of marriage, in terms of career choices, in terms of you know how the protagonist, the male protagonist also challenges the taboos against travel, how you know he exposes himself to range of things which otherwise caste wise his occupation does not allow him to.

So it is about a modern society, a modern Malayali society that Chandu Menon has in his mind. It is not about the Malayali modern society that Chandu Menon has witnessed. So here there is an inherent problem in the way realism gets depicted not just an Indian novel in regional languages, but also in by extension in Indian writing in English. Now can you now recall the themes of those 2 earlier proto novels of Shoshee Chunder Dutt and Kailash Chunder Dutt.

They were talking about the possibility of an insurrection because whatever they were saying in and around them it did not really lend itself to such a realist mode, it was difficult to narrate that for whatsoever reasons we will not get into those things, but because you know again coming back to Chandu Menon he is talking about a novel which would project into the future.

His novel, the character, the setting, the emotional dilemma, the sort of resolutions that the protagonist and the plot in general arrives at it is all about something that he foresees. In that

sense you know the novel if you take say Indulekha or an example from any other languages there is an impossibility to connect with the society known to the author.

And that is not entirely anybody's fault, because in some form they are trying to mimic the west form, they also realise this is not a form, this is not a society which is you know the society is not yet ready for those sort of individualistic concerns that the western novel is used to articulate.

And in page #15 in fact you know she also interestingly draws our attention to a certain paradox inherent in Chandu Menon's work. Did you want to read out page #15 from say Chandu Menon who proclaimed in the introduction to Indulekha, are you all there, page #15, somewhere in the middle of the page, the first paragraph.

“Professor - student conversation starts” (()) (33:36) in the induction to Indulekha is (()) (33:39) Malayalam, a realistic novel in the English style (()) (33:42) the intention by the time he finished the story. The (()) (33:48) with which the order recited of the Puranam traditionally ends. All the characters mentioned have reached the Summit of human happiness and now may God bless us and all who read this here.

The last line of this passage you need persistence of the free novel conventions of narrative in spite of the orders conscious adoption of the European mode and is (()) (34:10) imagination **“Professor - student conversation ends”**. So it is these details that Mukherjee pays attention to that makes her own study, her own you know analysis very, very interesting. I also want you to take notes about you know the kind of approach the methodological and the systematic approach that Mukherjee makes.

It is also useful you know when you practice your own sense of writing, how you know she draws from these multiple things and she is also not a free to contradict herself, not afraid to point out the contradictions which may damage the initial arguments that she is making, because she is open to the citation of a new inconvenience even when she is making a very pressing argument which also you know read out this.

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A 'Western' novel in India?

o "whatever term for the novel was adopted in an Indian language, the formal and thematic aspirations of the early Indian novel were the same as those of the English novels read by pioneering Indian novelists. The English educated generation which came of age in India around 1860 was brought up on Victorian novels of the time and seems to have been influenced by these"

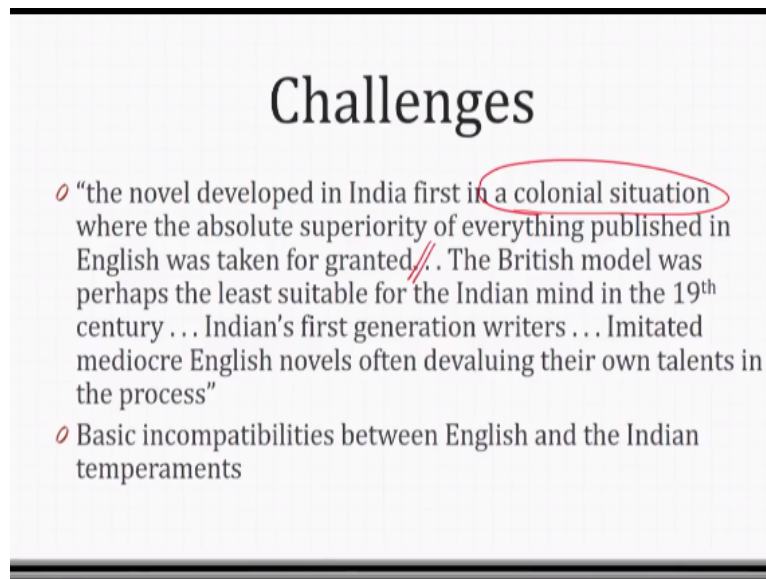
Could can one of you read out this quote about you know western novel in India. **"Professor - student conversation starts"** Whatever term for the novel was adopted in an Indian language, the formal and thematic aspirations of the early Indian novel were the same as those of the English novels read by pioneering Indian novelists.

The English educated generation which came of age in India around 1860 was brought up on Victorian novels of the time and seems to have been influenced by these **"Professor - student conversation ends"**. So she again you know also trying to say that maybe these contestations especially within the native tradition about whether this term can be useful novel or the other term can be used which really does not matter.

Because regardless of the language in which you are writing whether it is one of the regional languages or English, regardless of the language you all had to move away from the familiar setting. You all had to write in a very different way and not necessarily you know produce a very Indian novel in that sense, you know very traditional narrative based novel you all had to mimic certain aspects but also you know mediated in particular way so that that dilemma also is resolved.

What is the challenge over here? What is the problem over here that she is again foregrounding, again to quote her own words, to talk about the incompatibilities between English and the Indian temperaments. She talks about you know she is in agreement with all the others when, she says novel initially developed in a colonial situation and where absolute superiority of everything published in English was taken for granted.

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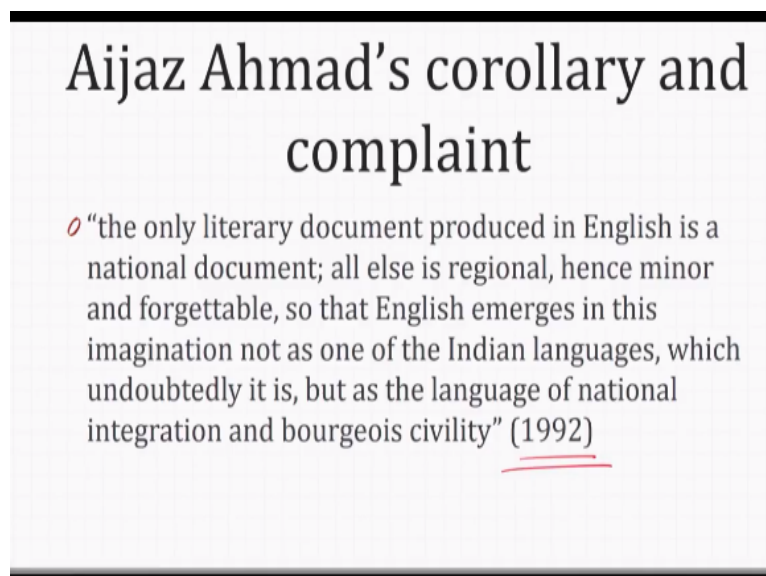


Challenges

- “the novel developed in India first in a colonial situation where the absolute superiority of everything published in English was taken for granted. The British model was perhaps the least suitable for the Indian mind in the 19th century . . . Indian’s first generation writers . . . Imitated mediocre English novels often devaluing their own talents in the process”
- Basic incompatibilities between English and the Indian temperaments

I want you to pause over here and then we will also take a look at one of the recent complaints you know 1992.

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Aijaz Ahmad's corollary and complaint

- “the only literary document produced in English is a national document; all else is regional, hence minor and forgettable, so that English emerges in this imagination not as one of the Indian languages, which undoubtedly it is, but as the language of national integration and bourgeois civility” (1992)

Aijaz Ahmed in one of his essays he speaks about how, the only literary document produced in English is now seen as the national document; all else is regional, hence minor and forgettable, so that English emerges in this imagination not as one of the Indian languages, which undoubtedly it is, but as the language of national integration and bourgeois civility.

So the sort of certain national status that English was being accorded to, it is not a new thing it was always already there for various reasons, she does not really, Meenakshi Mukherjee does not really explore the reasons behind that, but she says there was inherent superiority for

everything published, everything written in English and she also says maybe the problem was that we were not mimicking the right kind of English novel.

She says maybe the British model was not really suitable for the Indian mind in the 19th century maybe they had to look at you know the Russian novels which had more you know philosophical bent, more explore the psychological dilemmas rather than you know just talking about realism which is what the British fiction in the early 19th century and in the early 19th century did.

She also thinks maybe when they imitated, both the regional writers and the Indian writers in English, maybe when they imitated they imitate in the wrong kind of masters and maybe they imitate to the mediocre English novels often devaluing their own talent in the process. This is in fact you know it is a very postcolonial thing to say. This is where you know Meenakshi Mukherjee also defers and departs from the others.

Because the others have been uncritically acknowledging the influence that the British novels had on Indian writing in English. Remember the (()) (38:15) appeals that Srinivasa Iyengar was making to the you know the English writer abroad, the Indian critic abroad, the Indian reader in India for appeal of sympathy, asking for some kind of a generosity.

But here is the post-colonial critic aquatic Meenakshi Mukherjee also exposing us to perhaps the mediocre nature of the originals which were being made available for us to copy for the early Indian writers to copy and also she talks about you know how there are basic incompatibilities between English and Indian temperaments maybe which is why there are lot of unresolved dilemmas both in narration and also in the criticisms that we employ.

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The novel of purpose

- o The development of novel in India - the indirect result of the spread of English education and consequent exposure to Victorian literature
- o The 'prose' - also shaped by the colonial enterprise
- o Serampore mission press
- o Translation of the Bible into Indian languages
- o The missionary enterprise supported by administrative efforts
- o Questionable literary value?
- o Secular prose?

This is you know in the second chapter she draws attention to further a range of different other things you know such as Serampore mission press, the translation of the Bible in to Indian languages, how the missionary enterprise became important and here in fact it is in this chapter which we shall talk about in the next session perhaps. First you know there is a historical value that she reassesses.

And in the second chapter title, The Novel of Purpose, she is setting up certain literary and critical yardsticks. So Meenakshi Mukherjee also undoubtedly remains as one of the pioneers of you know who started practicing the art of criticism and using it on Indian novel particularly Indian novels in English and till date many of the formulations that we have about Indian writing in English many of the base in which we privilege one issue over the other, it is all based on the things that she wrote about.

The way in which you know she framed the issues, so you will come back to look at the second chapter, take some time out you know just read through that essay because it is also certain way foundational to approach the kinds of frameworks which are being available for us to talk about Indian writing in English and also begin to use your critical faculty when you are even reading you know critical text.

Are there places where you would differ, because you are also you know simultaneously doing a number of other courses. So does your knowledge, does your reading which you gathered from another course does it become useful to critically evaluate the critical peace

that you are reading. Do not look at the critical work the secondary source as you know something which cannot be contested against.

So because only when you begin to develop that faculty to begin to reflect in your, the form of writing also that you begin to adopt. I hope you will have more to say and I hope I will also give you more time to speak when we talk about the novels. I just said you know this stage setting is very important I feel, you know, otherwise you know if we later if we think when we discuss the novels we will come back to talk about certain issues it may not happen or that is may not be the right time.

So I thought the first few sessions I will just give you an outline of the available scholarships, the discussions which had been happening. So it also allows you to move freely, depart freely without you know coming back to the origins again and again. So in your presentation also keep this in mind, you are not really trying to go in tandem with the many things that we have speak about in the first few sessions.

But you are also trying to move away from those in certain ways, how these readings have you are not really trying to replicate the similar kind of reading in your own say in your own reading of the novels, on the other hand you are also trying to tell us how those things have informed your understanding and if there is a certain understanding that you already have and if you do not know where to trace it back to maybe that is again you know I think that you should be doing.

As I think you know I told you earlier I am not very sure about this the way in which we accept Rushdie as a canon and the way in which you know we boo something like say Chetan Bhagat, does it have something to do with the critical tradition which is inadvertently formed our reading habits. So how does you know Rushdie become part of the Booker Prize and they say Chetan Bhagat at best you know.

You buy him at the railway station book counter. So how do these things really operate, is it about language alone, is it about certain narratives that the writers are talking about or is it also about the positioning of certain authors in you know certain ways about the prices associated with it or the controversies associated with it.

So I also want you to question these notions not because these sort of questions will not just improve your understanding of Indian writing in English, but it also will allow you to question your general reading habits and how you engage with text, text not just you know in a bound book form about the text which you see around you as well, so shall we call it a day.