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## PORTRAYAL OF POLITICS IN THE HISTORY OF INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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### Abstract

*This paper is trying to explore the knowledge of Indian English Literature novels based on the political issues. It traces the history of political novel in Indian English Literature and the significance of the political themes. Through literature, Writers creates awareness to the reader that what happens in and around the country. It also explores the commitment of the Indian English Writers through their work of art. The present paper may divided into two parts, thus, the first one deals with importance "Political Novel" in the history of Indian English Literature novels. Second one, is the textual analysis of some of the novels of Indian English literature. .*

**Key Words:** Political Novel, History and Politics

The term "Political novel" is "a novel with a political narrative, or concerned with politics or political themes" (Oxford). In *The Fiction of Navantara Sahgal*, M. K. Bhatnager says on the political novel in Indian English Literature,

Indo-Anglican novel, right since its beginning, has had inextricable bonds with

the socio-political milieu wherein it took birth and has been written since. The

nascent national political consciousness in India which was slowly percolating to

the grass-roots has been faithfully mirrored in the novels in English in India. (28)

That the reputed Indian English Writers have to show the dominance of the form "political novel" in Indian English Literature. For instance, Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*, is political novel that focuses on patriotism, the meaninglessness of partition and the 1964 communal riots occurred in Calcutta, Dhaka and Khulna. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* "In this novel, interestingly, the birth of the protagonist coincides with the official birth of the nation. Saleem Sinai, the protagonist declares at the outset that he is "handcuffed to history". (Sarma) and Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things* examines the historical roots of realities of Indian history and politics and that develops insights into the ways in which human desperation and desire emerge from the confines of a firmly entrenched caste society. In India, class was a major issue in many parts of India, which reflected in this novel.

In the book *The Indian Novel With a Social Purpose*, Venkat Reddy says in the introduction "The socio-political situation existing in the country is faithfully mirrored right

from the early phase of reformist exuberance to the growth of a revolutionary consciousness among the common masses of India". (1) He remarks that political novel is not alone a literary practice, but it is an artistic response to the situation existing.

The growth of the Political Novel in Indian English Literature was from the nineteenth century. It too extends the fictional values and elements like quality, plot and ideologies. It dealt with socio political issues. In a way, political novels help to analysis the political influence in the society or country.

Later on the independence, Political developments in India are the holocaust of the division and the merger of the provinces, the assassination of the Mahatma and the wars with Pakistan and China during 1960. These became the subject matter of the political novels.

The great deal of novels exists throughout the history. The early story of English literature begins with the works of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayanan. From the early history onwards the subject of political begun. Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* dealt with a force of Gandhian struggle for freedom in the thirties. It reflects Gandhi's efforts for Harijan upliftment and his public speech against the callous attitude of the British Government. Through this novel he described the caste discrimination through his roles. *Coolie* is another novel, which deals with the theme of social and economic exploitation of the poor people under political background. It sees the oppression of a peasant boy in the hierarchical order. It describes the injustice and the oppressive tendency of the rich to the hapless. It reflects politically embroiled society.

Next, Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* deals with the Gandhian Civil Disobedience Movement. It creates an awareness of Gandhian teachings among the coolies. The protagonist of the novel Moorthy who fights against injustice and social inequality and becomes a faithful supporter of Gandhi. In the end, Moorthy continues to struggle for independence. This novel also evidence of political novel in the early history.

R. K. Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* is a novel which depicts freedom struggle with Mahatma Gandhi in his life as background. Though this novel is in gentle comic style. In this novel, Narayan presents Mahatma Gandhi as a character. The impact of political issue discussed in this novel.

The first female writer who influence in the history of Indian English Literature is NayantaraSahgal. Her novel *Rich Like Us* is a political fiction dealt with political disruption and social re-arrangement. The major themes of the novel, Political corruption, Political Ideology, Colonialism and Power politics.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* explores how the humble affairs that touch on people's behavior in their spirits. It probes the historical origins of political realities and develops human desperation. On the surface, it was the wisdom about the political realities of India.

Later, Salman Rushdie, and Amitav Ghosh are the greatest contributors of Indian English Literature. The primary target of their writing to discover the history and politics through their characters or novels.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a novel deals with India's colonization, independence, and the division. This novel is the demonstration of many literary theories like post colonialism, postmodernism, and magical realist in literature.

*The Moors last Sigh* is the another novel by Salman Rushdie. In this novel Salman Rushdie talked about the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992. Sunday Times magazine reviewed this novel as "Salman Rushdie's greatest novel... held me in its thrall and provided the richest fictional experience of 1995."

Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* is the story of Alu, an eighteen years old Bengal boy with a huge head. It is a personal life and political world around him. Amitav Ghosh's language is natural as the description of characters. It is the first novel by Amitav Ghosh with the magical realist mode. Ali has been encountered along the way of casting the other characters in this novel. This novel has the integrity and spirit of a philosophical exploration of reason to peripatetic wanderings across

south Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East. This novel shows the importance of social identity and the impact of migration and dislocation.

In the history of Indian English Literature, Politics is not exclusively presented in novels and also other kinds of literature. For instance, Kamala Das's "An Introduction" is the best case for this understanding. It portrays the adult females in the patriarchal society. The politics behind the male centered society. There are poetic line express her concern over women.

I am Indian, very brown, born in Malabar,  
I speak three languages, write in  
Two, dream in one.  
Don't write in English, they said, English is  
Not your mother-tongue. (Kamala Das)

The Portrayal of themes like Politics in the novels are not a tranquil. In some cases, this leads to exile. PermalMurugan's *One Part Women* created recent controversy pertain to freedom of expression. The writer dealt with one particular myth in his novel. In worldwide, it became popular because of the protest to ban the book. Finally the writer decided to give up his writing career completely. This is related to the mythology, but think of the portrayal of politics in novels.

In Conclusion, These writers are the representation of their age. Indian English Literature dealt with Multiculturalism, pluralism, magic realism, historicism culture, and politics. That gives a special substantial important to this literature. Moreover, the commitment Indian writers towards a country takes on an important part in the history of Indian English Literature. In addition, the writers took a challenge to respond the political issue through their novels.

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