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Title: 'Development from nineties to present' in Indian English readers in the light of Umamanyu Chatterjee's novel'

Abstract:

Development which is seen from the nineties is the presentation of the western world to the Indian readers. The western world is presented in the novels of almost all the Indian writers whether it is Salman Rushdie or Vikram Seth; Amitav Ghosh or Upmanyu. The main focus of the novels after the nineties is to show Indian born people, rather the expatriate in different countries of the globe and how they reacts against or for the society of that particular country. In this way Indian novelists open up the door of the western world to the Indians and the vice-versa. In Vikram Seth's 'An Equal Music', Upmanyu's 'English, August', Amitav Ghosh's 'Calcutta Chromosome', Salman Rushdie's 'Ground Beneath Her Feet' and 'Enchantress of Florence', etc. the western influence, rather the global journey is very much evident. Now, the question which automatically arises before us that whether the exposure of the western world or the East-West relationship in the novels after nineties a bane or a boon for the Indian writing in English Naturally it has its positive as well as the negative aspects. The global journey, in the one side gives us the scope to roam without physical journey to see the world through the black letters of the novels and to think and evaluate the cultures of the different countries with our culture and habits on the other way, critics are also of opinion that such a journey mars the intrinsic merit of the novels because the novels based on journeys on a foreign land seem more a travelogue or itinerary rather than a compact work of fiction.

Keywords: Indian fiction, Upamanyu Chatterjee's style in his novels

Introduction:

The problem of unity and disunity in structures, themes and content appears from the very issue as we are discussing in the previous section that whether the global journey a boon or a bane for the Indian English novels. Critics like M.K. Naik are of opinion that “such an excessive journey as is evident in the recent novels down from Anita Desai or Shashi Deshpande will create disorder, chaos and frustration in a particular fiction”.⁷ The problem of unity and disunity should be understood in its detail because it is the core of essential good writing whether it is fiction or poetry; prose or short-stories. The particular problem rises due to the rapid growth of ideas as ‘globalization’, ‘hybridity’ and ‘diaspora’. For all its revolutionary and therapeutic benefits there are, as Fanon has written, many pitfalls to national consciousness. Foremost among these are uncritical assertions and constructions of cultural essentialism and distinctiveness. Fanon, as Bhabha points out, “is far too aware of the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial culture to recommend that “roots” be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or by homogenizing the history of the present”⁸. The entrenched discourse of cultural essentialism merely reiterates and gives legitimacy to the insidious radicalization of thought which attends the violent logic of colonial rationality. Accordingly, the unconditional affirmation of Indian culture reinstates the prejudices embodied in the unconditional affirmation of European culture.

Significance of Study:

Clearly, the nationalist work of psychological and cultural rehabilitation is a crucial and historically expedient phase in the liberation of a people consigned, as Fanon puts it, to barbarism, degradation and bestiality by the harsh rhetoric of the colonial civilizing mission. Nonetheless, aggressive assertions of cultural identity frequently come in the way of wider international solidarities. Ideally, national consciousness ought to pave the way for the emergence of an ethically and politically enlightened global community. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension. The same thing is evident in the neo-novelists of the Indian diaspora. The fake nationalism inspires disunity within the structure and theme of a particular fiction but according to Salman Rushdie, “the unity can be achieved through the management of themes into a particular framework so that the effect of globalization would not affect the unity”⁹.

Literary Review:

The problem of unity and disunity is a complex problem to comprehend for a layman who doesn't have enough literary nourishment. But it is a serious problem and that is why, we discussed it in a comprehensive way. The recent novelists of Indian origin and the European novelists of the twenty-first century concentrate also on this particular problem and it is also the Ulysses' bow of criticism among erudite personalities.

Now, the last section of the chapter will briefly discuss Chatterjee's reactionary nature especially of the novels he wrote from 'English, August' to 'Weight Loss', whereas the very first novel 'English, August' is itself revolutionary in nature, the other novels also follow the same

trend. In ‘English, August’ Agastya Sen is a young Indian civil servant whose imagination is dominated by women, literature and soft drugs which is quite blasphemous in the Indian scene. To discuss a personality belonging to the highest administrative post in a vociferous manner is not an easy task for any writer but Chatterjee has showed it time and again in the particular novel. So also ‘The Mammaries of the Welfare State’ is comic and Kafkaesque. It is a master work of satire by a major writer at the height of his powers. The reactionary nature is revealed when we find the fiction a searing, savage passage through bureaucratic India. It is a book of laughter and disgust, a four-letter rejoinder to the grotesquery of governance. The wit, satire, lampoonery, piquancy and plain ridicule pervade the pages of this novel which make the novel quite an off-track one. It is also raunchy and tough, smooth and almost facile. It shares with all good satire its power to simultaneously shock and amuse. ‘The Last Burden’ is a novel which flits back and forth in time and space, and is written in a language of unsurpassed richness and power.

Result of the Study:

Upmanyu Chatterjee presents a funny, bitterly accurate and vivid portrait of the awesome burden of family ties. Chatterjee is a mercilessly gifted observer as is evident in the fiction. Last but not the least ‘Weight Loss’ is a dark-comedy, a masterpiece of satire. It is also self-doubling and humane, a nightmare shot through with tenderness. These anti-theatrical lines itself prove the reactionary nature of Upmanyu Chatterjee’s novels. In the introductory chapter we have tried to present a brief picture of Indian fiction and how it is metamorphosed gradually in the last decade of the century. The detailed analysis and hair-splitting

research will be pursued in the next chapters to show the essential merit of Chatterjee.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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