

Representation of Culture in Literature

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Abstract

Literature helps people to recollect whatever that has happened or happening in their life. It is one of the main aspects through which the lives of the people are brought into limelight. There are many aspects that are dealt in literature. Culture and tradition are the two important themes that are highlighted by many writers and their dealing with these themes envisages the roots and heritage of any society. In 'Indian English Literature' writers like R.K.Narayan, Shobha De and Chetan Bhagat belong to a different period of literature dealt with these themes. The novels of these writers portray the society of different periods and through which the readers may get the knowledge of culture and it has been changed from time to time. Language, rituals, living pattern and the story line posters the cultural that has been adopted in the period which the story takes place. These writers are common in portraying the life of people in a realistic manner. The cultures represented in their novels are the sources which helps us to understand the life of the people of the particular era.

Key Words: Culture, Realism, Literature, Language and Theme.

Reference to this paper should
be made as follows:

Dr. K. Mahalakshmi,

*Representation of Culture in
Literature*

Notions June 2020,
Vol. XI, No. 1,
pp. 29-33

Article No.7

Online available at :
<http://notions.anubooks.com/>

Introduction

Literature is one of the main sources, which constantly envisages the life of people all around the world. The writers are acting as telescope in bringing out the happenings of the society in their perspective. Though there are some imaginative factors that are included in the writings, most of the writings represents the society we live in. Literature constitutes all walks of human life and the concepts which are taken into consideration of the writings are social, cultural, psychological, emotional, scientific, domestic and aesthetic part of the life of life. All these elements are connected together and make a life as a whole. The writers focus on writing which ever part is appealing to them.

Indian writing in English has commended unstinted admiration in both home and abroad, is now in its full swing. It has carved out a new track, a new vision – a vision that is replete with an un answering faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites etc. If we dive deep into the works of the Indian stalwarts of English fictions, it is revealed that their works are not an imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. They have given a new shape and color to English literature in the same way as the Australians and Americans have evolved their own literature in their respective countries.

Culture in Literature

Culture is the set of rules that are followed in a society; it varies from society to society and even community to community. “Culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization that operate unconsciously and define in a basic ‘taken for granted’ fashion an organization’s view of its self and its environment.” - Edgar Schein

The people who are portrayed in literature speak about their society through the language, rituals and behaviours’ which they adopt to follow. Though they are many genres in literature, fiction is one of the foremost genres that help the writers to bring out the culture of their society in an in-depth manner. Thus culture and literature go hand in hand through which everything is being represented and taught to the society.

R.K.Narayan

The writers are the very important source of energy who acts as the messenger to highlight the proceedings of the society. The society which they portray may sometimes make the readers to aware of the brighter, lighter and harder part of the life. All the literatures in common represent the society and culture which prevails all around the world. In ‘Indian English Literature’ there are many writers who has

contributed to the development of the literature in terms of language, themes and concepts of their age. The three triumvirs R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao in 1940's portrayed the society which are very appealing to the common people, they portrayed the British Indian society of ordinary which speaks about the lives of people of south India. They brought out the culture through the simple language and the living of the people in everyday life.

R. K..Narayan's novels represented the people's lives in a simple way; he created the village called 'Malgudi' which encompasses all walks of life in the society. To highlight his unique way of writing, his novel 'Swami and Friends' depicts the everyday life of a school going boy Swami. In this novel he creates the world of school going children, their conversation, trivial activities in school, home and society and how they get acquainted with each other. Hence he has described the life of the children in a new perspective and it has given the readers a new variety. One of the main aspects of his novels is that they speak about the life of the common people in a very simple Indianised English.

Throughout Narayan's writing, the town of Malgudi never completely aligns itself with the mystic organicism of the kind metropolitan imagination assigned Oriental cultures for centuries—that exhaustive epistemological “othering” set out by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). The ceaseless collusion and collision of the agrarian and the urban in Malgudi is presented as neither an exotic mix of distinctly “Indian” and distinctly “Western” strands of culture, nor entirely as a periphery caught in mid-development towards capitalist modernization: it contains both and more at various moments. As Raju explains, “Malgudi, I said, had many things to offer, historically, scenically, in modern developments [...] some want a waterfall, some want a ruin, some a god to worship, some look for a hydroelectric plant.”

Shobha De

Further, in 1960s many writers emerged to represent the world which has come out of the clutches of Britishers. The writings have gone into new shape. Shobha De is one of the other writers who have got a new perspective towards looking at life. Her novels portrayed the life of the people who belongs to media and especially cinema. She brought out the realities of the glamorous world. The story, theme or portrayal of the characters is something new to the common people. It is very important that the readers may find something different and new.

Shobha De is very keen on looking at the life of women who lives or struggles in the world of cinema. She has thrown light on the hidden realities that highlighted a new language, culture and living pattern. It is definite that her novels are the examples

to understand the redefined relationships in media, cinema, friends and domestic circle. Cultural changes have been drastically highlighted and the realistic portrayal of all the elements in the novels of Shobha De make the audience frown because of the open narration of sexual lives of the characters. Here it is evident that how the world has been changing into time to time. Ashish in his article highlights that, Shobha De's fiction portrays the contemporary reality of the rich elite people whether they are rich businessman, politicians, Bollywood actors, producers, doctors and industrialists. She delves deep into the hearts of the people and exposes the reality to the world without aiming to harm anyone. She is straight forward and talks with guts and fearlessness focusing her work to rule out the dangers developing in the society and to bring the awareness in the society. Her work is unique, innovative and interesting. (54)

Chetan Bhagat

Chetan Bhagat is one of the eminent writers of the 21st century Indian writers. He is famous for his simple narrative and adaptation of a very common flow of language that is very familiar to the generation of people he lives in with. His writings always attracts the young generation because the stories which are handled by the author is very appealing to their lives. The culture which has been shows cased by Chetan Bhagat is very new and it encompasses the lives of people who live in 21st century.

Rachana Sareen in her article opines that, Chetan Bhagat by presenting a novel *One Night @ the Call Centre* raises questions about the advantages and disadvantages of call centres and those who are related to it. Here in this novel the writer depicts one of the bright sides of globalization is that Indian youth are getting good job opportunity in western countries. He also shows the dark side of our society that as a result of privatization in policy, a very few industries provide a job security and exploitation of their employees as well. (214)

Conclusion

It is very important to note that the language, style, theme, culture, storyline, portrayal of the characters and perspective of writing has seen a drastic change from time to time. Thus culture is one of the essential component of the society that changes every day, it may be because of science and technology , western cultural impact or the changes that happens in the mind set of the people.

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