

## PREFACE

Leading Indo-Anglian scholars and authors valorize an Indian national identity in Indian writing in English that is based finally on essentialist notions of Indianness. This dissertation would examine selected Indian novels in English by R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie, and Bharati Mukherjee to show that nationalist claims to Indianness have limited, rather than expanded, the scope of Indo-Anglian studies. The novels of an earlier generation of Indian writers coming out of British colonialism have been privileged by Indo-Anglian critics because they supposedly express strong nationalist identifications. But critics have not taken into account the problematic, disrupting status of the English language in these novels.

My reading of Narayan's *The English teacher* demonstrates that Narayan's nationalist identifications waver between a deep affiliation with the British humanistic tradition and an abstract resentment against colonial power. Narayan's use of translation in *The guide* elides the categories of social class and gender when it is these categories that provide access to a stratified India that is more 'real'. My study of Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* shows that Rao's essentialist nationalist identifications are delineated at the expense of castes other than the Brahmins and without any consideration of gender. His experimentations with the English language in *Kanthapura* do not produce a viable Indianization of the English language.

The writing of a more recent generation of Indian immigrant Writers has been largely ignored by the nationalist critics because it calls into question the essentialist truths of nationalism that have been traditionally ascribed to Indo-Anglian literature. In *Midnight's Children*, Salman Rushdie examines Indian nationalism as an ideological construct that cannot be disengaged

from its discursive practice; his use of translation indicates, rather than disguises, the social categories of class and gender.

In *Wife and Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee outlines a project that is intended to challenge both Indian and North American nationalist discourses of femininity and “the melting pot” respectively. Finally Amitav Ghosh in *The Shadow Lines* and Anita Desai in *Bye Bye Blackbird*, have endeavored to erase those areas of ‘representational’ and ‘ideological’ separateness that give rise to segregation among nations.

Indian colonial and post-colonial writing in English is massive in its scope. Furthermore, the inclusion of certain writers in literary studies such as this one entails the exclusion of others. For this reason, the work of, say, Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Bhabani Bhattacharya, V.S. Naipaul is not discussed. Among these, Mulk Raj Anand deserves a much more extensive study because his Marxist belief and his radical experimentation with the English language mediate his nationalist identifications in complex ways. Contrarily, V.S. Naipaul, an immigrant writer in Britain, tends to minimize and so hugely problematize his nationalist identifications that he is outside the scope of this study.

The present study is basically analytical in nature. Analyses of books, both primary and secondary, have helped in a major way to formulate my primary idea. Documents, statements and resolutions relating to nationalism and nationalist discourses have helped to assemble my notion. References from secondary sources and data collected on the internet have been of immense help. I have tried to acknowledge my debts to them by citing them, where apposite, as sources for my information. I have prepared a bibliography following the instructions as laid down in the M.L.A. Handbook.

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