

Migration and Literature

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Abstract

Migration and Literature are very closely related terms. Migration or moving of people from one place to another for the betterment of their life(both economically and socially) has made a big impact in literary field also. Hence, a new term the literature of migration has come into existence. Migration in literary fields has been seen not in India alone but in most other parts of the world. The migrant authors lose the four great roots- the root of place, language, community and culture.

Keywords: Migration, literature, community, culture.

Migration and Literature

The process of migration has made a big impact on humanity. Human beings feel more chances of progression in their life standards after displacement to new areas. Migration to areas more prone to advancement is now very common and fast increasing movement. The rate of migration is at such a large scale and at such a big speed that it has become a type of movement. Literature shows the signs of migration throughout the world. Literature has a very close relation with this movement. Several means of communication--- internet being the biggest one---have played a big role in making our age the age of mobility and borderlessness. Stain P. Moslund gives some very clear picture of the 20th century facing the problem of migration--“it seems that we are witnessing a massive international and transnational defeat of gravity, an immense uprooting of the origin and belonging, an immense displacement of borders, with all the clashes, meetings, reshaping the cultural landscapes of the world, countries and cities.” The impact of migration is not on literature alone, it can also be seen on the changing cultures. Hence, a new term the literature of migration has emerged nowadays.

The literature of migration is particularly applied to that kind of literature which discusses the multi experiences and the difficulty of adaptation faced by the migrant authors. The theme and structure of the migrant literature consequently becomes diverse. The migration in the field of literature is not limited to particular countries. It has also affected the developing as well as the developed countries. Countries such as Ireland, Spain, Greece and old Soviet Union show the signs of the migration of the intellectuals. Several authors like James Joyce, Milan kundera and Joseph Conrad have gained universal fame. James Joyce, the novelist is noted for his experimental use of language and exploration of new literature methods in such large books of fiction as *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) . James Joyce's nationality was Irish and citizenship was British. After World War I James Joyce returned for a few months to Trieste, and then at the invitation of Ezra Pound in July 1920 he went to Paris. His novel *Ulysses* was published there on February 2, 1922 by Sylvia Beach, proprietor of the bookshop Shakespeare and Company. 'Ulysses' is constructed as a modern parallel to Homer's 'Odyssey'. All of the action of the novel takes place in Dublin on a single day (June 16, 1904). The three Central characters- Stephen Dedalus, the hero of Joyce's earlier 'Portrait of the Artist', Leopold Bloom, and his wife, Molly Bloom- are intended to be modern counterparts of Telemachus, Ulysses, and Penelope. By the use of interior monologue, Joyce reveals the innermost thoughts and feelings of these characters as they live hour by hour, passing from a public bath to a funeral, library, maternity hospital, and brothel.

In Paris Joyce worked on “*Finnegans Wake*”, the title of which was kept secret, the novel being known simply as 'Work in Progress' until it was published in its entirety in May 1939. In addition to his chronic eye troubles, Joyce suffered much due to prolonged anxiety over mental health of his daughter, Lucia. What had seemed her slight eccentricity grew into unmistakable and sometimes violent mental disorder that Joyce tried by every

possible means to cure, but it became necessary finally to place her in a mental hospital near Paris. In 1931 he and Nora visited London, where they were married, his scruples on this point having yielded to his daughter's complaints. The fifteen short stories collected in "Dubliners" mainly focused upon the sordidness of Dublin life, but 'The Dead' is one of the world's greatest short stories. Critical opinion remains divided over Joyce's last work, "Finnegans Wake", a universal dream about an Irish family, composed in a multilingual style on many levels and aiming at the multiplicity of meanings but, although seemingly unintelligible at first reading, the book is full of poetry and wit, containing passages of great beauty. Joyce's other works - some verses (Chamber Music, 1907, Pomes Penyeach, 1907; Collected Poems, 1936) and a play "Exiles"(1918)- though competently written, added little to his international stature.

Joseph Conrad's nationality was Polish and his citizenship was British. He is considered an early modernist, though his works contain elements of the 19th century realism. His narrative style and anti heroic characters have influenced numerous authors, and many films have been adopted from, or inspired by, his works. It is widely accepted that his fictional works written in the first two decades of the twentieth century, have anticipated later world events. Writing near the peak of the British empire, Conrad drew on his native Poland's national experiences and on his own experiences in the French and British merchant navies, to create short stories and novels he reflects aspects of European - nominated world including imperialism and colonialism. An anchor shaped monument to Conrad at Gdynia, on Poland's Baltic Sea coast, features a quotation from him in Polish: "Nik tak nie neci, nie rozczarowue i nie zniewala, jak życie na morzu"[“here is nothing more enticing, disenchanting and and enslaving than the life at sea”- Lord Jim, chapter 2, paragraph 1]. In circular quay, Sydney, Australia, a plaque in "writers walk" commemorates Conrad's visit to Australia between 1879 and 1892. The plaque notes that "many of his works reflect his affection for the young continent". In San Francisco in 1979, a small triangular square at Columbus avenue and beach street, near fisherman's wharf, was dedicated as "Joseph Conrad square" after Conrad. The squares dedication was time to coincide with release of Francis Ford Coppola's "Heart of Darkness" inspired film, apocalypse now. In the later part of world war II, the royal Navy cruiser HMS Danae was rechristened ORP Conrad and served as a part of polish Navy.

Milan Kundera was born in Czechoslovakia (present day Czech Republic) on April 1st 1929. His citizenship was French, Czech republic. His field of work was novel. His notable works are 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being', 'The Book of Laughter and Forgetting'. In 1975 Kundera was allowed to emigrate (with his wife Vera Hrabankova) from Czechoslovakia to teach at the University of Rennes (1975 to 1978) in France; in 1979 the Czech Government strapped off his citizenship. In 1970's-1980's his novels, including "Valcik Na Rozloucenou (1976; 'farewell waltz', English translation the farewell party), Kneha Smichu a Zapomneni (1979; the book of laughter and forgetting), and Nesnesitelná lehkost byti (1984; the unbearable lightness of being), were published in France and elsewhere abroad but until 1989 were banned in his Homeland. The book of laughter and forgetting, one of his most successful works is a series of witty and ironic meditation on the modern state tendency to deny and obliterate human memory and historical truth.

In a global society which has been described by present day thinkers and cultural theorists in terms of migration diaspora, globalisation and transnationalism, Kundera's migration seems to be less typical . Kundera, while writing in French seems to encounter the prejudices of his adaptive Homeland, resistant tendencies to sideline linguistic and literary migrants.

British Indian novelist and essayist.His second novel "Midnight's Children"(1981) won the Booker Prize in 1981 and was deemed to be the best novel of all winners. His work is concerned with disruptions and migrations between eastern and western civilizations .His fourth novel "The Satanic Verses " was the subject of a major controversy. This work was vehemently protested by Muslims in several countries, even a Fatwa was called for his assassination in 1989. The British government gave him protection. In June 2007 Queen Elizabeth II knighted him for his services to literature .

Three of Rushdie's most important work 'Midnight's children, 'Shame' and 'The Satanic Verses' draw heavily on the theme of migration. By examining the life of the migrant Rushdie explores the universal mystery of being born and the puzzle of who one is. One can understand Rusdie's quest of identity by examining his life, the theme of double identity, divided selves and shadow figures in his novels and in his personality, and the benefits that many characters reap from being migrants.

Salman Rushdie was a controversial writer. He was born in Mumbai and moved to Britain as a child. He says that his experiences led him to explore the issue of migration in his award winning books. Once he spoke at the

“Hay festival of literature and arts”, ‘we live in the age of migration. There are more people now living in the countries in which they were not born than in the rest of human history combined.’ The Hay Festival runs from 31st May to 10th June. In conversation with Better Florence, founder of the festival, Rushdie said; “Look at any big city in the world and you see a pluralised, hybridized, diverse culture. The end of the monoculture is the phenomenon of our generation.” He added; “I myself am a migrant, first generation migrant to this country (Britain). A thing that happens to migrant is that they lose many of the traditional things which root identity, which root the self. Once in the Telegraph Rushdie was reported same; “the roots of self are the place that you know, the community that you come from, the language that you speak and the cultural assumptions within which you grow up.”

Infact Rushdie was speaking on the fact that ours is an age of the fast changing cultural dimensions. This is the phenomenon not limited to any particular reason or location but it covers a vast area in the world. The risk of losing one's traditional and cultural roots and consequently one's identity is most probably and compulsorily faced by the migrants. The migrants lose the four great roots - the root of place, language, the community and cultural assumptions. The big question, in this regard, is that how the migrants adapt to the different communities, an alien language, the different place and a different culture. Furthermore, the question of how much the migrants absorb from the world in which they live and how much they retain from the world from which they came. This is the most widely known transaction now-a-days.

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