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Research Article



Globalization and Global Literatures: Deconstructing the Genres

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Abstract

Post world-war life across the Globe has witnessed a sustained series of metamorphoses which has, consequently, caused cerebral turmoil. A lot of academic disciplines have come into existence and along with them have come a lot of new terminologies with promises of many new academic avenues wherein prospects of new, changed and “revolutionary” discourses have crept into. Diaspora, Multiculturalism, Ethnicity, Identity, Techno-culture and Globalization are certain fields which have caused a huge quantity of inking down a plethora of pages, seminars, anthologies and discussions. While, undeniably, these terms solicit newness because of its extensive innovative use, but the semantic domain, it tends to address may not be regarded as quite new, because they have been duly preceded by precedents. It is pertinent to understand the

subterranean threads of such terms and its urgency why these terms have been so much in the lime light in the Postmodern and Poststructuralist discourses. The present paper intends to look into the warp and woof of Globalization and Global literature and what changes they foreground in the current swelled-tide of academic discussions. Is Globalization an entirely new concept or process or has it been a part of our existence and civilization for long, it has been one of the focal points of this paper.

Keywords: Globalization, Global Literature, Capitalism, Postmodernism, Deconstruction, Deglobalization, Subaltern, Marginality

*“Andazen bayan zindagi ko naya rang deti hain,
Verna is zindagi me naya to kuch bhi nahin.”* (Saifuddin Saif)

The tantalizing prospects of certain new implications in the discourse of Global literature in the high time of Globalization are rare and can be concretized only with deep rumination on the issue and that to without any certainty. After the extinguished fire of the theoretical revolution of 80s and 90s many of the ideas enjoyed a shooting star or meteoric existence in the academic parlance. This meteoric existence has to be questioned and complicated by the equally strong alternative born out of the ashes and destined to die as quickly as possible. Stanley Fish postulates, approximately, reasons for such quick exchange of templates assisting in interpretations of texts in purview of Postmodern theories, “literary critics have been given the freedom of expression to say whatever they liked within the confines of their particular language game” (19). In contrary to his suggestions, it is pertinent and justified, that the current research paper can be read in three different sections. First, the term Globalization has to be explicated with every minute detail around it and then, second, a deeper exploration may be initiated regarding the subsequent term Global literature. Finally, third focusing the interconnectivity between the two in shaping each other.

The term Globalization is derived from the term Global which simply and overtly postulates a condition wherein every object or idea or entity or product tend to exceed the local, regional, national and even continental limits of its foundation, or it has started to influence and operate on a wider Geographical scale in the last resort, on a transcontinental scale. In a Multicultural dawn the academic fraternity, much goaded and designed by the business tycoons or the top economic classes, has given a call for Globalization. The phenomenon of Globalization is impregnated with various beliefs and ideas because of its multidisciplinary usage. It is important, then, that attention must be concentrated towards some of the beliefs and ideas. The very first and foremost thing that emerges on the surface is a moot point. A departing point for this discussion is to view Globalization as an economic process catapulted by business interests in academia. Paul Bairoch defines the term strictly in such direction when he says, “Globalization refers to a situation when industrial and commercial companies increasingly operate transnationally, in other words, beyond national borders” (Bairoch, 197). This definition denotes the term of Globalization simply as a process with which we can share and exchange “ideas, knowledge, information, goods and services all around the world” (Pohlmann &). In business, people use the term generally in an economic context to describe integrated economies marked

by free trade, unrestricted flow of capital among several countries and an easy availability of foreign resources including labor market to greater returns and larger benefits for the common good. Globalization is specifically marked by the interdependence of cultural and economic systems. This convergence promotes and, in some cases, necessitates increased interaction, integration and interdependence among nations. The more countries and regions of the world become intertwined politically, culturally and economically, the more globalized the world becomes. Policies that promote free trade, open borders and international cooperation drive economic globalization. They enable international businesses to access lower priced raw materials and parts and take advantage of lower cost labor markets and access larger and growing markets around the world in which to sell their goods and services.

In its social and cultural context Goran Therborn specifies Globalization with a changed semantic domain, "It is fruitful to define globalization as referring to tendencies to a world-wide reach, impact or connectedness of social or cultural phenomena or to a world encompassing awareness among social factors" (Therborn, 154). All these traits and characteristics are materialized in the contemporary world with advancements in technology and transformation in means of transportations. Through Jet travel, telecommunication and internet the world has shrunk and the game of particularization of universalism and vice-versa has come into existence. Nay this only globalization is a special concept-metaphor with the temporal dimension virtually erased, which may tempt the analyst to sidestep or belittle the historical antecedents of the process of globalization. It is generally taken to embrace at least the following notions; "the redefinitions of national sovereignty, the growth of a market within and between the states, the collapse of the Soviet Union and global movements such as anti-terrorist campaign of America, Greenpeace and environmental organizations, movements related with women empowerment et al. Thus, globalization emerges as a certain concept of an idea, a signifier that we want to nail down to a fixed, signified" (Matti, 315). It is a part of a discursive practice, a configuration of names with its displacements and deferrals.

Having reached this stage of development, Globalization then had a different façade too in which it was further complicated. Critics like, Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak and McLuhan argue that globalization is not that much new or have come into existence all of a sudden rather it is a new avatar of process of historical Imperialism. Aijaz claims that even in the mid-70s the process of Decolonization and a remarkable expansion of communist and socialist bases in many of the poorer countries were still going on, but undeniably and unquestionably the winner in the struggle between Imperialism and Socialism has been Imperialism. It clearly explains that "the historically unprecedented growth, unification and technological power of capitalism itself, with its fully globalized circuits of production and circulation, with its increasing modernization of travel, transport and communication technologies and concomitant far reaching consequences for the International division of Labor" (Aijaz, 192). In the overall financialization of the globe, the Subaltern groups of the 3rd World are the losers, especially the subaltern women like the tribal women in the fringes of the modern state of India, or the Bangladeshi women working in sweet shops of the eastern frontiers of London. In the acerbic words of Gayathri Spivak, "the general ideology of global development is racist, paternalism.... its general Economics, capital intensive investment, its broad politics, the silencing of resistance and of the subaltern" (Spivak, 373).

With such unjust economic and social provision of globalization may be added a critical and crucial distinction between Globalism and Globalization, as offered by Ulrich Beck (1997). In his vocabulary, globalism points to the current new liberalist ideology which declares globalization as a natural and inevitable process, always going on. By Globalization, he means the liberation of capitals, trading and entrepreneurship from taxation, social duties and government regulations. But such an economical phase of globalization has not de-fertilized the natural predilection for individualism among human beings in common. Beck quotes Jean Paul Sartre's words that in our time people are "increasingly condemned to individualization" (37). It simply suggests a condition when social structures along with age old customs, norms and fixed points fail to hold its command specially in a rapidly changing time and when collective values and habits also no longer regulates people's lives in detail. They are simultaneously both free and obliged to construct their lives for themselves, each in his or her own individual way.

Heretofore, the focus has been on explicating Globalization with its all-possible nuances and implications. The term Globalization has been decided what it actually stands for and a clear mapping of its flexible semantic domain has been drawn. Another significant expansion of this term has been witnessed in cultural and literary front and without elucidation of it, there will be difficulty in a general and complete understanding of the term. First of all, it becomes inevitable and desirable to clarify whether this idea of globalization is truly and completely new, or it has its antecedents in history. According to Therborn in the history of humankind, there have been 6 different phases of globalization:

1. The spreading of religions from one nation to transcontinental civilization like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
 2. At the turn of the 16th century, European states started their colonial conquests and expansion.
 3. The power struggles between certain European states, especially between France and England in the 18th century.
 4. The heyday of European Imperialism from the mid 19 century to 1918.
 5. Cold War globalization after the Second World War, when the Socialist bloc of the Soviet Union came in binary opposition to the liberal and capitalist bloc of the USA.
 6. The current wave of globalization running since 1990s with the praxis of new liberalism.
- Therborn in the same book traces the intermittent phase of "deglobalization" in the world History, like the Dark Age before the Renaissance, between the two World Wars and for a short span in the 50s and 60s of the previous centuries.

With this historical background and a threadbare exploration of the term globalization now it is appropriate to shift the focus, attention and direction to the subordinate part of this research article where a discussion of global literature under the aegis and impact of Globalization is to be done. Global literature, indeed, is a new term for discussions in the literary circle, but it carries with itself much of the trends of Modernism and Postmodernism. For instance, some theorists and researchers like Erkki Sevanen and Ahmed have understood "postmodern society as a global world society largely inhabited by diaspora writers" (123). While showing their linguistic, geographical and historical experiences, these diaspora writers take their readers to a multicultural world in an alternative space of different geography. Likewise, the questions of identity are still important and quite obviously more central than several decades ago. In the

1980s identity theories did not always differentiate between a cultural and personal identity. At that time, it was above all the post structuralist and their proponents, who often theorized in the first place about a personal and sexual identity. Thereby, neglecting questions of cultural identity and its sub concepts like ethics, national and local identity were sometimes eclipsed by the poststructuralists. These issues together constitute the cardinal concerns of global literature. Arjun Appadurai perceives that the flow of people (immigrants, refugees, tourists) and the flow of the ideological images and cultural information have shaped the perception of the global writers like Salman Rushdie, V S Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri and others. It is through their writings we see a frequent criss-crossing between the local and the global. This reciprocal interaction between the two produces something that in Ronald Robertson's phrase might be called as "the Glocal" (42).

Here comes another new and significant term which has thrived in the academic forum now. A Global factor is combination of the former global and currently local factor. Presence of a local entity/object/ideas on an international level is Glocal. As far as globalization, in cooperation with certain other processes, has produced globalization, people's original, old and local identities and consciousness have been replaced or they will be replaced by new global identities and consciousness. The concept of local identity means a state of mind in which a person's consciousness of the rest of the world genuinely shapes his or her local identities and gives to it new qualitative ingredients. And conversely, in this state of mind, local people increasingly understand themselves as citizens or members of the whole globe. An echo of a much older idea hinted by Oliver Goldsmith in his essay National Prejudices, "a citizen of the Globe." Consequently, people, including writers, develop double or hybrid identity that contains elements and ingredients from different cultures. Salman Rushdie and Naipaul are particular example of such phenomenon. Rushdie as a child, born in India, had an Islamic upbringing and he was taught to speak both a local Indian language and English. Later, he moved to Great Britain, received a university education at Cambridge and his identity thus is rooted in two different cultures. Naipaul has accepted this situation wholeheartedly and he has done it for the better prospects in his writings:

It may be said that writers in my position, exiles or immigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated in the pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge which gives rise to profound uncertainties that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India of the mind. (Naipaul, 18)

These fictional creation and assimilation of the local on the global level exposes the duality of globalization. It implies that globalization does not produce similar responses in different parts of the world, but it incorporates a local aspect. Otherwise, it could not exist in a new environment. Different variants of the Ramayana in Thailand and Malaysia are an apt example of it. It also supports Robertson's claims of "glocality in literature," which breaks down the seemingly oppositional poles of the global and the local to become a mutually supportive and interrelated pair. The global is included in the local and vice versa, and forecasting the breakdown of traditional centre-periphery relation. This is the fulcrum of global literature, a synonym to

“world- literature” (“Weltliteratur”). The term “Weltliteratur”, a term coined by German writer Goethe who used it to clarify that piece of writing which by dint of its merit transcended the barrier of nation and is celebrated equally in other nation too (Online Oxford reference). Goethe felt that after the ravages of Napoleonic war, Europe needed authors in various countries and nations who would make an attempt to notice and understand each other. If they didn't wish to love one another, they would at least learn how to tolerate one another. Goethe's world literature offered a free trade in ideas and feelings particularly articulated in literature from folk songs to belle letters that was to contribute to the well-being of all mankind. This is a projection of cosmopolitanism with tolerance and mutual understanding between nations. Homi K Bhabha's suggestion for the re-inscription of Gothic's notion of “Weltliteratur” is very useful here. He suggests that “the study of world literature today might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projection of otherness” (12). In this day and age, transnational histories of migrants, the colonized or political refugees, may be the terrain of world literature. The displaced, the exiles, the diasporic these are several names for people who cross linguistic, cultural and national borders. Toni Morrison, Asia Djebar, Salman Rushdie, V S Naipual, Hanif Qureshi, Michael Ondaatje, Khalid Hosseni would qualify for this group. There are some other writers like Ilyas Kennedy, who has lived in Vienna and London and writes in German and the recent Nobel Prize winner, Gao Xingjian, working in Paris, Nagugi, who has abandoned English and is writing in his native language, would also be representative of world literature. Bhabha has maintained that “unhomliness”, the condition of extra territorial and cross-cultural confrontation, is paradigmatic colonial and postcolonial condition. These conditions are exactly the moment when things left behind and involuntarily forgotten come to the surface and demand to be accounted for. The Postcolonial intellectuals, writers and artists of today are deeply immersed in coping and negotiating with the whole complex issue of cultural difference between the 1st and the 3rd world. Likewise, the indigenous language should have a fair share in the constellation of global literature with, indeed, the problems of translation and the cost of publication (Spivak, 267). In the global time, new literature in indigenous or even formerly suppressed national languages are being created or strengthened even invigorated. Introducing U. R. Anantmurthy, Mahashweta Devi, Premchand and many others to the western audience is a part of the same global phenomenon.

To achieve “transnational literacy” as advocated by Gayathri Spivak or to employ “contrapuntal reading”, as Pamela rated by Edwards said (1993), requires a great deal of work in the form of actually finding and unearthing alternatives or even silenced sources of information and disseminating that information to others. It also requires a constant vigilance and self-reflection of our complicity with the formation of the resultant information. Literature becomes global by giving weight to the local, but at the same time, by also paying attention to the larger perspective, picking out exclusion and teasing out parallels and comparisons. The sole practice of critics of literary and cultural studies is to subscribe to ethics of knowledge, not only about the global world, but also of the local ethos inheriting from the past. Indian culture, for instance, has never been constant, linear or monolithic. Therefore, it needs to be redefined in the hands of both native and diaspora writers of today. The cosmopolitan attitude revealed through the Indian English text should be brought together with the local traditions. As Jhumpa Lahiris, *The Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* are much more concerned with the development of

the Indian Diaspora in a different world than dealing with the tradition and culture of India. Similarly, Rushdie's novels are more about the economic and cultural globalization than about the urban or rural India with all its characteristics. Arvind Adiga's Booker Prize winner *The White Tiger* narrates the successive story of a Machiavellian protagonist, G.N. Devy and other nativist thinkers go to the extreme while saying, "Just as it is desirable to leave Naipaul out of our accounts, it is also desirable to leave our writers like Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry and Bharti Mukherjee out of any consideration of Indian English literature" (176).

Such extremist views can be mitigated only by cultivating truly local attitudes in literature. Thus, to recapitulate it may be asserted that literature is a cultural ambassador and it disseminates cultural values, heritage and identity wherever it reaches. Since the Renaissance it has carried out this duty infallibly. In this era of globalization everything including culture is gauged, glorified, modified and even mocked on global level with literature written with different objectives. Globalization of Culture and literature is an apt corollary of the movement of people by force or by their own will. It has led to the development of what is generally referred as multiculturalism or hybridization of cultures in many areas. It may be seen as something that is going to change the ethnic landscape and transform the old ethnic and indigenous groups into something new and different. So instead of cultural standardization and uniformity, this global literature is leading cultural heritage and identity towards hybridity and global mixing. These are premonitory signs of gradual erosion of our age-old cultural heritage and identity. As the primary articulation of Modernity, Globalization appears to be an ambiguous process which has changed the pattern of consumption, identity-formation, allegiance, the local and the nation. Concurrently it has to be borne in mind that still the process and formulation of a framework for Global, National and the local are yet to emerge and still there is scope for embracing this new avenue in literature while being fully conscious of its dubious shades.

Endnote

Weltliteratur is defined as found in (<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803121736102>)

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