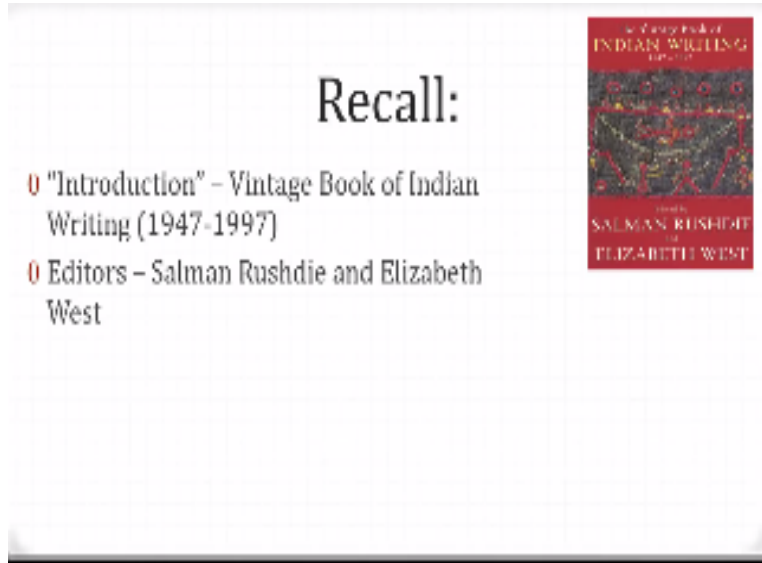


Indian Fiction in English
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Lecture – 04
Indian Writing in English: A Background

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So, we begin today, in the previous session if you remember, we had taken a look at what; Ranjan's introduction to anthology and we also saw in certain ways this anthology particularly the way in which he placed that introduction, the way in which he had titled his anthology Indian literature in English, a best of Indian literature in English, it also illustrated that in certain ways he was constructing a sense of history.

He was also trying to make a canon because anthologies are also a particular kinds of literary history, it is not as if anthology is entirely separate from a sense of you know historicising, anthologies also contribute to that in certain ways, so we looked at the ways in which Rushdie was positioning Indian writing in English and other way in which he was focusing mostly on fiction.

And how he was drawing a dichotomy between Indian writers working in English and the writers writing in vernacular languages you know producing Porsche literatures, he also drew our

attention to a number of related issues about our translation about the original and the translation are being you know not so good, as good as the original one and about more importantly this idea of one catering to say a parochial form of writing and the other to a more cosmopolitan kind of writing, yeah.

So, all of those issues were discussed and we will also very interestingly see that Mehrotra's introduction to his history of; this is a proper literary history which focuses on particular writers and particular period in a very systematic way, he will also give a chronological account of Indian writing in English and we would see that not way he is surprisingly that he also talks about a number of these issues.

So, what exactly is a different, how do we draw a distinction between the way in this anthology talks about Indian writing in English and the way in which the literary history begins to position Indian writing in English and if you remember there was also a way in which we all were very uncomfortable with the kind of articulations, the kind of judgement, the Rushdie was making and here we in with Mehrotra introduction, we also begin to analyse the series of historical events which were perhaps associated with this kind of articulation.

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References for this lecture

0 *Indian Writing in English* by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar
(1962)

0 *History of Indian Literature in English* by Arvind
Krishna Mehrotra (2003)

The; which is sort of generated a number of subtexts which are evident in Rushdie's writing about these 2 camps being generated; one about Bhasha writers and Bhasha literature and the

other one about Indian writers to use these own words, Indian writers working in English, yeah, so he talks about these 2 based on a number of historical, incidence of number of historical facts which we begin to realise when we look at a proper literary history.

Such as one by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, are you aware of any other literary histories of Indian writing in English; it is that 2 canonical works which existed even before Mehrotra's work came out, how do Srinivasa Iyengar; yeah he is considered as the you know the maker of the history of Indian writing in English, his work Indian writing in English, the title is also Indian writing in English and the fourth edition came out in 1984.

And this was part of a course that he started teaching at the University of Leeds and again you know it was not taught initially in India, he was teaching at the University of Leeds in the 1960s and eventually this work was also an offshoot and extension of a course that he was teaching where he also designated this term, Indian writing in English to talk about a particular kind of writing that evolved from the subcontinent at a particular historical juncture.

So, Indian writing in English, seen as the you know most canonical acceptable kind of literary history of this kind of writing, an MK Naik, he was in fact commissioned by the Sahitya Akademi to write another literary history and that was in 1980, 1982, yeah, so these 2 works have been considers as you know the foundations of the historical with the 2 works that laying the foundations of this Indian writing in English, yeah.

And there was also an other work which came out in 1990 by William Walshe but that generally not considered very acceptable because according to Mehrotra's himself, it is very sketchy it only focuses on the 20th century, it does not give a proper sense of history of how this entire kind of writing evolved, what were the historical connections, social cultural connections that one can begin to make in relation with the sort of writing that emerged, yeah.

So, having said that if we begin to looked through the set of event that he begins to detail; Mehrotra's begins to detail in his introduction, he begins with a; which is the date that he begins with, he talks about the convenient date, 1800 and why is it a convenient date, **“Professor –**

student conversation starts” Yes, and he also talks about consolidation of British domination, yeah in a way you know in the first few paragraphs, if we try to segregate his introduction to different segments. **“Professor – student conversation ends.”**

The first few paragraphs, they talk about the colonial encounter, how the colonial history in India particularly, the British domination was instrumental in giving rise to this kind of writing, he does not directly begin to talk about this kind of writing that he proposes to historicise Indian literature in English instead he begins with certain sense of political history, the kind of changes that that came about in governance and the social cultural paradigms.

How you know different forms of literary and non-literary writings also could be seen as interventions in this process so on and so forth and he also talks particularly about a moment when English begins to be introduced as a language yeah, not just officially but also English gets you know oven into the cultural and the political fabric of the nation which was being colonised by the British.

And in this process you know, he briefly talks about one particular work, he says you know published in 1794, the travels of Deen Mohammed and that is also seen as one of the earliest and narratives published in English and there is a brief history about which he gives as well, so we will not go into details of this and he talks about the various stages of the political and social domination of English language.

He talks about the number of pioneers in different fields, he talks about you know how different kinds of say, comparative philology, lexicography, translation, there is a way in which you know different kinds of grammatical text, dictionaries all of that begin to emerge, how this also a dialogue, an on-going dialogue between English language and Indian languages, he talks about how the colonisers learn the colonised; the colonisers learn the language of the colony.

And the coloniser themselves you know they also learn the other language there is a way in which Indians begin to learn English and the British begin to learn number of Indian languages purely for the sake of you know politics and also for Governments, yeah, and he also talks about

a set of people whom we now know label as orientalist, yeah and about Sir William Jones and some kind of that a sense of that history also we get about how Indian languages also gained a lot in this process; in this colonial encounter.

Here, in fact, if you compare this rhetoric, this presentation with that of the presentation by Rushdie, it is a very non-judgemental way in which he presenting this colonial encounter, it is not about you know who gained more and who was more privileged of course, there is a certain privilege associated with the colonising country but other than that he is trying to talk about this in as far as possible in a very neutral tone, yeah without judging one or privileging one over the other.

And he; in the similar ways in the first part itself in the first segment of his discussion he also begins to talk about Henry Derozio, certain events such as the founding of Hindu College in 1870 and here he also talks about you know the 25 years before the founding of Hindu College and 20 years after that how that may be roughly about you know 45 to 50 years were very important in setting a certain kind of the stage for this sort of literature to emerge, yeah.

And also if you look at the series of events that he is presenting whether it is political or social, cultural all related to the very directly related to the colonial governments, we begin to see that all of those events also had a very significant bearing in the way literatures began to be produced in English at multiple points of time, yeah for the same reason even when you begin talking about the actual text which were produced, the novels which were produced, time and again you will either find the references within the text.

Or you will see that you will need the framework of the colonial framework to be able to access these works, yeah, so which is why you know it makes perfect sense to talk about Indian writing in English as a postcolonial writing and particularly from the moment Rushdie happens, it is a very typical kind of postcolonial writing which is been generated and coming back to Mehrotra's introduction, there are certain sort of sign posting that he does with Rammohan Roy, yeah.

Then, Macaulay's minutes 1835 and he talks about how from 1820s onwards even before McCauley minutes begin to officiate and legitimise this process of introducing English language to Indians, he talks about how Indians had begun to master English language in various ways and there are also the these names that he mentions; Lal Behari Dey and Krishna Mohan Banerjee and particular periods between 1872 and 1876.

Then about our one work, the persecuted which was published in 1831 and he talks about the range of things all of these pioneers writing in English are engaging with, it is about you know different kinds of social realities, maybe they are also responding to particular political moments which are happening, so he is not giving one particular sudden abrupt starting point for Indian literature in English.

On the other hand he is actually setting a stage for a certain kind of writing to emerge and 1835, yeah what is other than the Macaulay's minutes, what else happened in 1835, he talks about the publication of one particular work by Kailash Chunder Dutt, which is his work; **“Professor – student conversation starts”** louder, yes rani, what this Mehrotra’s says this text is about; yes, Mehrotra does not really said this is first novel but it is an imaginary narrative about a some kind of the insurrection. **“Professor – student conversation ends.”**

And this instantly look at the year also 1945, he also talks about you know, it is almost close, it is so close that you know it is the coincidence is very surprise, quite close to 1947 and he also talks about the elements of instruction, the elements of subversion which are beginning to be seen over there, here though the Mehrotra does not really say that he is actually drawing our attention 2 elements over here.

One, you know the Indians are the; Indians have been introduced to English language and on the other hand, the Indians who are well-versed in the language and who are beginning to creatively express in this language, they using this as a tool of subversion, it is not as if they are being Macaulay's and also it happens in the same year, 1835, when Macaulay wanted to do perhaps just the opposite, yeah.

But instead of that there is a very native kind of expression and native kind of politics and native kind of subversive writing which is beginning to emerge regardless of the language in which it is being expressed and a number of works in fact also talk about this work by Kailash Chunder Dutt that is one of the earliest you know prototypes of the novel in English and he also talks about you know the simultaneous kind of transformation that happens in a number of Indian languages.

And he also talks about you know with the introduction of English, how the Indian languages begin; they begin to understand the potential of prose writing, how to use a prose writing in various forms and maybe for the same reason in the 1840s, we find a number of journalistic experiment in Marathi, Telugu, Bengali and Urdu and around the same time, this massive phenomenon now known as the Bengal Renaissance also happens, yeah.

There are lot of contestations about you know Bengal Renaissance was actually a national Renaissance or not, whether you know this needs more you know privileged discussions than the kinds of Renaissance's which were happening in different parts of the country, regardless of that we begin to see that Bengal Renaissance played a very definite role in the shaping of this new kind of literature which was yet to emerge, yeah.

And there are particularly 2 names at Mehrotra's talks about; Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Rangalal Banerjee and he talks about how they could also be seen as the products Bengal Renaissance could also be seen as products of intellectual and cultural awakening in the nation and again you know a little later, we will also soon begin to see how this ties up with the nationalist awakening also, yeah.

How this also becomes one of the forums through which nationalist articulations are also being projected and there are also though English becomes gets introduced in 1835, there is a way in which you know Indians begin to participate in this process of learning the language rather officially and also they are also being made to build a new nation in the you know, in the way in which the coloniser imagine.

All of this is happening and at the same time rather than producing, beginning to produce literatures in English all of a sudden there is a very different kind of awakening which happens in the scene of a novels getting published in the vernacular and this happens as Mehrotra's put at between 1866 and 1889 and this period in fact is also seen as a period which witnessed the awakening of vernacular literature in multiple ways.

Because just like Bengal Renaissance, there is a kind of Renaissance which happens in different languages though your know states were not really formed, it is easier to because of that it is easier to talk about different languages yeah, he talks about these moments of awakening which happens in vernacular literature, in Bengali, in Tamil, in Telugu, in Malayalam and also a little later in Gujarati.

And he devotes some time to talk extensively about what happen in the scene of Malayalam novels, he talks particularly about the success of which work; Indulekha, which was published in 1889 and here you know again see this connection, 1835 is a time when McCauley's minutes is being introduced, there is also a way in which a certain class of Indians also have access to official English education, yeah.

So, if you calculate this on the basis of the time elapsed between say 1835 and the late 1880s, it is also evident that a particular social class was also getting trained in a English language just like you know they were getting well versed in their own languages, yeah as many other critics and historians would time and again point out the ones who were writing in English and the ones who were writing in the vernacular time, both of them were equally well-versed in English language, yeah.

It is a matter of choice that they begin to exercise, yeah and it is also evident by the fact that the author of Indulekha, Chandu Menon yeah in 1889, he does not directly make an attempt in writing this novel. What was the first attempted? In translating Disraeli's novel, Henry at temple and he fails in it, he decides why not write a similar kind of narrative in within the canvas that I am more familiar with, yeah, it also shows that he is also well-versed in perhaps you know writing at least a prototype of a novel in English, yeah.

And the way in which you know the characters are being shaped, the characters are being positioned within Indulekha, it also about you know a set of people who are English educated, a set of people who are willing to embrace a number of things which are part of modernity without really giving up certain set of traditional things, so it is the same kind of people who are beginning to write both in English and also in the number of other vernacular languages.

So, here we do not even find a tension operating, it is not even about divided loyalties, it is about certain kinds of choices they begin to exercise for various reasons that Mehrotra will soon be talking about and even if you talk about the vernacular novel particularly again we were talking again about Indulekha because Mehrotra discussed extensively about it, he talks about how Indulekha in spite of being a regional novel, it is also credited as the first novel in Malayalam.

In spite of being a regional knowledge, it arises out of a he says a colonial situation, yeah, so it is not entirely about language but also about the kind of politics which is operating as a subtext, yeah helping the production of a certain kinds of texts or the other and arm and it also talks about how at this point of time, by the end of the 19th century, the Indian reader was also ready to accept a new kind of writing was also ready to accept a kind of writing which was about things that he or she experiences on a daily basis, yeah.

So, a number of things are being lined up over here, the way Mehrotra's puts it across systematically, is not about a set of colonial political things happening but also about a new kind of sensibility that the readers are developing, a new kind of demand which is being generated and accordingly, a set of writers, a set of you know, English educated writers who are also equip to respond to this need keeping in mind the you know the demand for a native kind of a novel which talks about things which the readers are more familiar with, yeah.

And in the third part of Mehrotra's introduction, he talks about the exposure to English, the exposure that the educated Indians were getting to this English language and English; the exposure to English language also led them to new; to experiment with new kinds of journals,

new kinds of writings such as you know they are being introduced to realistic novel, to blankers, yeah, to the sonnet form.

These are all very western journals and also keep in mind this fact that you know, if you remember the history of novel that you did in the previous semester, it is also about how novel was a young journal related to the making of the nation, litter the emergence of the nation even in the western scenario over here we find this getting replicated, yeah, the young intellectuals of the nation who are being exposed to these new things.

They also begin to experiment in these various forms which are predominantly western but around this time in fact, a certain sense of misgivings about writing in English also begin to develop and it is in this he also; Mehrotra also wonders whether this is because you know the coming together of many factors like Macaulay's minutes on one hand and also this emergent mother tongue syndrome and nationalist movement.

And also a certain kind of nativism, which he does not really promote, yeah he wonders whether this is the result of all of these things put together, here again want to think about how Mehrotra talks about this aspect and how Rushdie talks about it, Rushdie talks about the sense of parochialism or nativism that he thinks only the regional readers are capable of you know discipline, he talks about that as a vice which is inherently part of their intellectual tradition the kind of linguistic choices that they make.

But here on the other hand, we get a more balanced view of both these elements working together because he also talks about the politics, the nationalist feelings which are in operation behind this you know this set of misgivings about writing in English, it is not about; it is not always about certain personal belief systems but it is also about how certain personal belief systems come in conflict with what they see as more nationalist or you know anticolonial.

So, here we also get a sense of how certain attitudes against English language or against writers in English language began to develop, it was in the context of nationalism, it was in the context of very anticolonial feeling and are having said that he talks about you know the emergence of a

proto-nationalism, the intervention of Gandhi in particular, how Gandhi also, it seems had an opinion about writers choosing to write in English or in one of the native languages, yeah.

How those opinions also influenced particular choices and he talks about you know how the national movement yeah, particularly mentions a Tilak, how he also felt this need for a common language in order to fight for a common national costs, yeah and we all know how you know, all of those not really become a practical solutions in the long run, how English eventually became almost a national language, though it is not really a still not a common language for the rural and the urban India connecting all of them together.

There are lot of contestations and debates that one could have about it but it is equally significant to note that the same status was not achieved by any vernacular language either, so it is a very complicated, complex political situation over here, it is not as simple as say, Rushdie would make it out to be in his introduction, it is not as simple as in the sense you know it is not as if all the vernacular languages, they all can sit together comfortably without any conflict with each other.

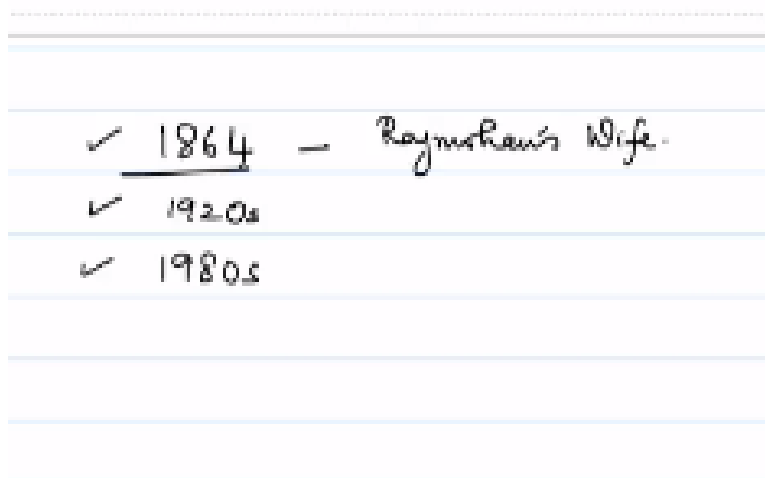
Mehrotra gives us a detail about you know the anti-Hindi agitations, the need for the language will; how an intervention; a constitutional intervention was also needed to resolve the situation, it was not just about certain feelings that people had, it is not just about certain personal choices, it was about you know a number of things which were at play, yeah, so this sort of a sense of history is very important to us when we address Indian writing in English, yeah.

Because it is also important to get a sense of how though disconnected all of these forms of writing are, it is a shared history from which the politics, the postcolonial politics which informs both regional writing and writing in English, yeah it all emerge from like you know one of the commentators would say from the same crucible of colonial modernity and the same thing if you undertake a more serious reading of your own you know literatures, yeah, literatures in the vernacular.

And for an understanding of the history of those writings also you need to go back to the colonial history perhaps, yeah so think about you know some of the earliest novels that you are familiar with, how they respond to certain colonial realities or certain nationalist realities and how that is different from the way in which say Indian writing in English response to maybe these are some of the things that you can also consider as your assignments.

Or your as topics for your presentations to think about you how there is a way in which you can bring both these elements together rather than seeing them as 2 different kinds of writing who are perpetually in two different camps in conflict with each other, yeah and yes he talks about 3 different moments, 3 different kinds of bursts that happen in connection with particularly the production of the writings in English language; Indian writings in English language.

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Which are those 3 moments; which is the first moment, the first, when does the first novel in English gets published; 1864, what happens, yeah, Rajmohan's wife, there is a very little debate about whether this is the first novel or not, there seems to be fairly you know a wide consensus about accepting a Rajmohan's wife as the first English novel but what happens with the author after that it is more interesting in terms of you know specially analysing this language debate, yeah.

He does not write anymore in English, yeah because he gives up writing in English not because the novel did not fare well because he thought he was; it was against his personal convictions, against his personal political convictions, he also it seems you know encourages other writers such as Romesh Chunder Dutt to not to write in Bengali telling him that in the long run none of these will survive the writings in English will not survive.

It is only the writings in Bengali will survive because that is more closely tied with the nation with the idea of the native, yeah and which is the second moment that he identifies; yeah it is in the 1920s and 1930s, again there is very, very little debate about this moment as well, 1930s is seen as the starting point of Indian English fiction because if you can you know at some level dismiss what is like Rajmohan's wife has probe to novels; novels in proper, they began to emerge in the 1930s.

It is also you know, if you look at this period in terms of the larger scheme of periodization in English literature, when does it fall; 1920s and 1930s, which is the literic period, modernism, yeah and most of these writers, a well-known canonical writers of Indian writing in English were writing in the 1920s and 1930s, they were also apparently in close touch with the leading modernist figures in Britain, yeah.

So, they adopt all kinds of Western standards but it is not as if they begin to write modernist novels because we are still beginning, 1930s is still the starting point for us, whatever happen in Britain in 18th century happens in India in the early 20th century, so it is not really as if a thematically they begin to write modernist fiction but they write nationalist fiction and nationalism at that moment it had all narrowed down to a single man; who was that; Gandhi.

It was Gandhian fiction, so whatever it was easy to; the camps were very, very clear at that point of time either you are with Gandhi or you are not with Gandhi, it did not even really matter who you were with, the only thing that concern was whether you are with Gandhi or not with Gandhi, yeah, so it is in this context that we also need to see the emergence of alternate literature, yeah, we are not really digressing but I want you to keep this point in mind.

When you talk about the emergence of different kinds of literatures, which did not become part of the care in the 1920s and 1930s, it was also the kind of literature which spoke about a different kind of nationalism, a different kind of post coloniality which was yet to come yeah, for instance Dalit literature, for them this was not Gandhian fiction, this framework of identifying Gandhi as the starting point, Gandhian fiction as the starting point, we will not sit well with say for example Dalit writers, yeah.

Because for them it was a different kind of nationalism that different kinds of emancipation that Ambedkar and Gandhi were talking about, yeah ,so these differences, these loopholes and omissions with in this history that Mehrotra presents to us that also something that we need to be very, very alert to, this is not the only kind of history which is available but unfortunately for whatsoever reason we find all kinds of canonical histories related to Indian writing in English talking about this pattern, yeah.

About you know 1864; 1864 again you know end of the 19th century is also the beginning of a certain kind of anticolonial revolts, yeah, 20s, 30s very typically nationalist and in the third moment is; which is the third moment; yeah, 1980s, so they is 1964, 1920s and 1980s happening and these 3 moments have been repeated, they have been legitimise, they have been solidified as proper history in terms of the story of Indian writing in English especially a fiction is concern.

Because if you take a look at all these moments, yeah, whether it is 1864 or 1920s or 1980s, we are talking about the history of Indian writing in English, Indian literature produced in English but we are also talking about only one journal, which is it; fiction, we are talking about the big moments that the writers of fiction had, the production of fiction had, yeah, we are not talking about; we do not have another set of moments, another set of you know eruptions for the other journals, it is poetry or for drama, yeah.

It is all dependent on what kind of success, what kind of you know rise and fall that the writers of fiction and the production of fiction had, yeah, so this is again you know something that we will be coming back to time and again the kind of history telling which is also a corollary to the

different kinds of productions that fiction yeah and again if you look at 1920s and 1980s, there are 2 different yardsticks which are being used to, say prioritised 20s and 80s.

In the 20s, it is about nationalism movement, in the 80s it is about a global market which has functioning, yeah it is about Rushdie, why does midnight's children become a big event because of what did you get; because if the event of the booker, yeah and also you know coming back there is a preface that Mehrotra gives; editor's preface just before the introduction. I think you have the last para of it in the first page.

He talks about this work and enterprise, which is this which tries to cover all the important literary ground from Rammohan Roy to Arundhati Roy, so the way he bookens this, yeah, it is just from the nationalist event from a nationalist figure to booker event, so and also if you look at any canonical discussion on Indian fiction, there is a way in which you know they always conveniently bookend it, if you are talking about late 20th century from Rushdie to Arundhati Roy.

And there is also a certain kind of a sense of lack soon after Arundhati Roy because you do not know whom to talk about because there is a way in which just like nationalism dictates particular kinds of canon formation, the global market it begins to dictate cannon information from the 1980s onwards, very briefly Mehrotra also draw their attention to it, yeah and coming back to the way in which Mehrotra positions this entire thing, he talks about the battle over language.

And he gives a fairly sequential account of what all happens you know in terms of language reforms, how there are these various interventions which are happening, Gandhi you know, he is advocating Hindi over other languages and we have Nehru talking about the need for English language and before that you know just as we mentioned Rammohan Roy in the beginning of the discussion, Mehrotra also talks about how Rammohan Roy wanted to you know privilege English over Sanskrit.

Because you also thought that you know Sanskrit would further pull you down into darkness, so these debate, the debates which were about language, which were about the kind of community,

class or the kind of intellectual tradition that particular languages would produce, it was always at the heart of you know the discussions related to the literature produced in English and he also briefly draw their attention to Gandhi's opposition to English.

He talks about you know something Gandhi wrote in his what; young India in 1921 but at the same time, there is also another picture that we get over here that Gandhi also it seems told the author of untouchables; who is the author of untouchable; Mulk Raj Anand yeah languages; just a medium of communication, it is all about you know how well you want a communicate language does not really matter at all.

So, we do not really know whether Gandhi was always like against writing in English, there is if sense of privileging he had given politically to Hindi but we do not get a sense of whether he was against writing in English or not, again you know as an extension of the language discussion which is now part of you know lot of Dalit literature also, they have a very different idea about this language debate happening.

If you look at the body of work you know produced by Gandhi and the body of work produced by Ambedkar, yeah, do you have any idea in which language both of these people wrote? In which language did Gandhi write mostly; Hindi or Gujarati and most of his work has translated, yeah for that to become you know available to a wider public. In which language did Ambedkar write mostly? He wrote mostly in English.

But think about the accessibility and availability of the works, Gandhi's work is part of a wider corpus, it is part of a wider narrative though you know it had to be translated and made available into different languages but Ambedkar's even at a later stage of independence yeah even until the last you know 2 decades, if you take into account, it was a very late kind of an effort to bring you know Ambedkar's works into more visibility with the you know, the advent of more interventions from Dalit writers, Dalit intellectuals so on and so forth.

So, at some level, it is not even about the accessibility of a particular language, it is also about the politics which is associated with the language and the articulations which are being made in

that language, yeah, so the language question in fact the way Mehrotra puts it a very neat account of the language debate that we get, yeah and he talks about you know how that this language which in plays, it talks about of you know for the first 15 years, we can continue to use English as well.

And then after that we know, now we know, it is not as English is entirely gone away, in multiple ways English has come here to stay, it is more or less like an official language to, now in fact you know, if you take the case of whatever has been happening in the last couple of years, there is a way in which the commentators trying to introduce Hindi, a long side English in terms of you know the forms; government forms you know in such platforms and so on and so forth.

So, it is not as neat as if Mehrotra is presenting it to be, yeah, so to get a sense of that complicated problematic history, maybe you need to access it from other alternate spaces such as you know Dalit writing, yeah, so coming back to this here again you know talks about how the language question is a very interesting expression, Mehrotra says it is a Siachen of Indian literature, yeah that it is not yet been resolved entirely.

It comes back to haunt is in multiple ways, it is part of a lot of debates, it is part of a; you know if you read the surveys of all of these see literary festivals which have been happening at some; in some way or the other the language question comes back to be at the forefront of the debate and moving on, in the fourth section he talks about the animosity towards Indian literature in English, he also talks about how in that sense English is also associated with certain elite privileges.

Again, about this aspect also the Dalit writers have a very different take because for them Macaulay's is not a villain, the way in which nationalist conventional history has been present in Macaulay, it is a position of a villain that he has been accorded to because he spoke about generating a set of Indians who are more or less like clowns of the British, clowns of the colonial thinking.

But on the contrary there are a lot of Dalit writers, a lot of Dalit intellectuals who consider Macaulay as the saviour because if Macaulay's had not brought in this alternative language of

English, what would have been the; what is the say, what is your alternative that we have, is it Sanskrit, then it is always already the language has got there by accessible to only a certain classes, certain community, certain sets of people.

So, in certain ways you know, the language debate that we talk about as part of the history of Indian writing in English, the history of nationalism movement, it is again you know, its narrated in a very lopsided way, yeah, so again you know I encourage you to include these things when you think about your projects, your assignments and your you know presentations to get a holistic view of and also a more inclusive view of these debates.

And how it operates at multiple levels and coming back to Mehrotra, he also draws our attention to the aspect of bilingualism because he talks about the set of writers who write both in English and then a vernacular tongue and he talks about how bilingualism is not just about two languages, it is also about 2 literary traditions being part of 2 literary traditions and maybe this the 2 camps that Rushdie identifies about Persia writers and about writers working in English.

Maybe the differences also, there is a need for 2 camps not just because it is 2 different languages or one language and many other languages, it is also because it is too intellectual traditions because after a while, the shade origin is not invoked much, they become part of 2 entirely different traditions and from the 1980s onwards, the market also plays a major role in dictating the terms of these 2 traditions.

And he talks about you know how Mehrotra talks about how there is a lot of resistance of Indian writing in English in the contemporary, yeah that something you know, if you want to say, make a case for Indian writing in English, if you are writing a paper on that and if you try to access a number of scholarly journals or even you know newspaper articles, the discussions in the media all of that it may be easy to get a set of arguments which are you know out rightly against Indian writing in English who are arguing that there is a way in which this is removed from a reality.

This is exotic writing for the west, it is very; the readers are not neither the writer nor the potential readers reside in India, these are the number of arguments which you can come up

against this kind of writing, which has been emerging, so maybe one of the challenges of this course, as is when you are going through different material as in when you are going through the texts, novels is also you know not push past these closure kind of understanding, in terms of language debate, in terms of you not the elite English versus the traditional parochial *basha*.

So, maybe one of our challenges is also to push past beyond this and see what are the various ways, what are the new possibilities of engaging with this form of writing as a postcolonial form of writing, talking about the popularity that Indian English writing enjoys in the contemporary, he quotes a number of, father as Mehrotra and he also attributes this to the postcolonial times and also postcolonial times along with the intensified conditions of globalisation.

That is what he; it is these twin forces which are responsible for ensuring the success, fame, popularity and the on goingness of Indian writing in English, yeah then he talks about you know there is also the role played by the marketplace, publicity, west centrica, readers so on and so forth, so to sum up Mehrotra says this is also about when you try to trace the history of Indian literature in English, it is a scattered history, yeah, it is a very discontinuous history.

Because if you try to survey the way in which the trajectory that the Mehrotra takes, when you begins you know, it is a very neat beginning, there is 1800 and there are particular moment that he situates but after once he locates, these 3 moments are; 1864, 1920s and 1980s, then neatness is all disrupt, it is a very discontinuous history from that moment when actually Indian writing in English begins to emerge.

So, Mehrotra is very right when he sums up with these of notions that it is a scattered history, it is a discontinuous and most importantly its transnational, so even when we talk about the nation which is being narrated as part of the Indian English a fiction, after a while it becomes a transnational history, it becomes impossible which is why you know it is right and wrong to talk about Indian writing in English as a perfect postcolonial site maybe those are the things that we shall come back to discuss in detail when we look at particular text.

And he also makes this distinction, Mehrotra says is in the 1960s, Indian writing in English it was leading nowhere because after the 1920s, 1930s after the big Gandhian moment, he is not giving a detailed account of what happened but by 1960s, he says it was not leading anywhere but then by 1990s after the big moment of Rushdie dictated by the market forces, dictated by the postcolonial framework and all of that put together.

In the 1990s, they are also writing for export which is again you know, it is seen as the good thing and also as a bad thing, good thing in the sense we are there in the literary map, we are there in the postcolonial global map, the writers are again you know forces names to recognise with but again the flip side is also that is this at the cost of the many other post-colonialities that the regional writers are also writing or capable of producing and is it at the cost of the visibility that they also could have perhaps reset.

So, these are the; this is the outline that Mehrotra gives, again you know there are ways in which some of the chapters of this his own collection has departed in significant ways from some of the things that he talks about, they have come back to reiterate the some of the things, so we shall not be focusing entirely on Mehrotra, what we plan to do is throughout this course, we will be talking about these particular moments in the history of the Indian English fiction.

And we will also be talking about certain seminal texts which correspond to that moment and time and again, we will also visit these introduction, these introductory statements that we made as part of you know literary histories, anthologies etc. For the next session, I wanted to read yeah, because before we begin with a normal proper because before we begin analysing novels, I want you to be thorough with the sense of history which has been laid out.

The stage setting which has been done for these set of writings because we will not be coming back to look at history once we begin talking about novels, so maybe for 2 more sessions, we will focus on what are the others have spoken about the literary history, can you read the material that have begun right after this, I think it is a title beginning, it is from Srinivasa Iyengar, okay the beginnings Rammohan Roy.

And leave the article right after this because we will discuss at later, beginnings of Indian novel Meenakshi Mukherjee, if somebody wants to talk about Mukherjee's article in relation with anyone of the novels, please let me know, you can take it up for your presentation otherwise, we can discuss it in class, then for the next session, I want you to take a look at making English in India, it is a chapter from Priyamvada Gopal's work and making English India, in fact it does not really talk about new things.

It problematizes some many of the things that say Rushdie and Mehrotra talk about, so it is you can sort of glimpse through this entire thing to talk about the; you know look through the various things that she highlights, how she problematizes them and same with Iyengars beginnings, I have given the Iyengars material to see you know how there is a consensus about this beginning, whether it is Mehrotra writing or Iyengar writing.

Or whether it is the anthology that Rushdie is you know producing, there is a certain consensus about the starting points, they are not in different pages may be the rhetoric with which they talk about the first but otherwise the beginnings remain more or less the same and interestingly, the starting point placing Rammohan Roy as the starting point of Indian writing in English, again it is a very strange phenomenon which is again become strangely acceptable also.

It perfectly suits the common sense; it perfectly suits that grammar of nationalism very well in connection with Indian writing in English. Rammohan Roy was not a creative writer, he was a reformer and he was also someone who is closely associated with the nationalism movement though not really during the period of Gandhi the movement which was you know beginning momentum from the 19th century onwards its largely attributed to a number of things that Rammohan Roy and other social reformers did.

So, how does he become the starting point, how do the beginnings become tied with say, a figure like Rammohan Roy and even in the 1980s when we talk about Indian writing in English, when we talk about you know a sense of tradition that even Indian writing in English of course it is again you know can be traced back to the things that they got from the time of colonial modernity.

In order to see how this is a very; this is not the only kind of narrative which is available again you know we have to access it from say certain other points from feminist writing or from Dalit writing to see how there are certain flaws which are also inherent in these starting points, so these article that are part of your course material, if you are interested in doing anything related to any work related to these periods or these themes that we talk about please let me know in advance, so you can book your slots also accordingly, right, okay.

Is anything that you want to add to; not that I have given you plenty of time to talk, are you getting a sense of historical and chronological sense of you know how the stage is being set over here, again you know I mean in the first class, when we started talking about Rushdie it is not as if you know, we are never in a position to entirely praise Indian writing in English that is something very strange about Indian writing in English.

The more you know you look at it from the postcolonial perspective you also see how there are certain gaps, omissions and silences that we are very, very uncomfortable with for that reason you know this course, I think you know the unlike many other courses, we talk about this object called Indian writing in English and again totally unable to completely accept it, we are in no point maybe in every other session, we will be talking about a lot of nasty things about Indian writing in English.

And again come back to look at it so, what is this compulsion, so if you do not like this space, we are uncomfortable with this space, why are being forced to look at these space over (()) (51:31), so these are other questions perhaps we would begin to not really answer, begin to engage with and begin to resolve towards the end of the course, what is so special about this object called Indian writing in English particularly Indian fiction in English that you know you have to engage with it in a scholarly way, you feel compelled to do that.

And at the same time, you are also trying to line up criticism against this one after the other, you are not always like in agreement with whatever the Indian English writers say or whatever the field projects, you are not eulogising this you know this kind of writing at all, so we do not know

whether this is the postcolonial predicament that we are being forced into, yeah we are also a part of that in multiple ways, yeah Radhi's market forces at work, Radhi's various realities that are operating, you do not know whether to embrace one at the cost of something else.

If you think about you know many things which are happening to us at this moment again you know just at the risk of you know diagnosing really a lot when you talk about say something like post-modernism and post-colonialism, there is a way in which they cannot sit together because just like you know Marxist critics, yeah, the postcolonial critics are also little uncomfortable, okay as a moment of post-modernism arrived or not.

Or is it a moment, is post-modernism or moment to completely you know destroy the new kinds of storytelling that the postcolonial communities are being now say enable to do so, this I feel that you know this field of Indian writing in English particularly Indian fiction, there is an impossibility to look at it unless you are aware of this postcolonial predicament that we are forced into as part of you know the set of people who are residing here.

But at the same time, we know there is not enough tradition in us to call as you know has part of the vernacular quote and quote traditional writers and we also feel that our modernity is incapable of dealing with the kind of dismissive attitudes that say people like Rushdie have, so we have perhaps you know caught in between maybe at the heart of this also lies are inability to say accept someone like Chetan Bhagat, again you know wholeheartedly accept risky Rushdie with all of his controversies.

So, these thing, the choices that we are making in terms of curricula, in terms of the syllabi, in terms of the frameworks that we are using for discussion, so I wanted to continually you know be in this mode of questioning throughout this course because there are maybe you may find that the entire set of material that I bring to class, it is not agreeable to you at all, so do we need a different framework altogether to talk about this.

For example, you know you may realise that you really like say a text like shadow lines, you are really fond of how Rushdie writes but at the same time it does not really comfortably sit with

some of the things that you believe in some of the things that you have already assumed about the postcolonial nation, so is the discomfort a part of yourself is the discomfort; a discomfort being you know injected into you by some other forces, some other kinds of writings.

So, be open to all of these questions and I wanted to actively engage with those sort of questions when you are making presentations, you are working on your assignments right, so I guess we will call it a day then, okay, so see you all in the next class.