

Rajasthan Association for Studies in English (RASE)

XV Annual Conference on

Embracing the 'Other': Exploring New Literatures

November 17-18, 2018

Organized by

Department of English

Government College, Ratangarh, Churu, Rajasthan

Concept Note

New Literatures in English, used always in plural, refers to that body of literature which has been traditionally treated as literature of the 'other'. These 'other' are the people who live in the erstwhile colonies of the then British Empire and used the language of their colonial rulers to fight back and create their own histories and narratives using that language. It is the literature of the people of countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Oceania, and some other countries like Canada where a large number of people learnt English to meet the challenges of their lives and then used it to voice their feelings through writing in English. New English literatures, is a body of literary writings that reacts to the discourse of colonization. It often involves writings that deal with issues of de-colonization or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. It is also a literary critique to texts that carry racist or colonial undertones.

Katja Sarkowsky and Frank Schulze-Engler maintain that the New Literatures in English are not that new altogether. They have emerged from a process of colonization that transformed large tracts of the world from the late fifteenth century onwards, and some of them can trace their beginnings to the nineteenth or even late eighteenth century, when English, Irish or Scottish settlers in the Caribbean, Canada or South Africa first began to create an 'overseas literature,' and enslaved or colonized people first began to reflect on their current situation and future perspectives utilizing the medium of what was then 'the colonizer's tongue.' Katja Sarkowsky and Frank Schulze-Engler further state that Other literatures in English are indeed new,

sometimes startlingly so: as distinct literary fields, West African literature in English emerged in the 1950s, East African literature in English in the 1960s, indigenous writing in Canada, Australia and New Zealand in the 1970s, and Black and Asian British Literature in the 1980s. There may be different opinions about the dates as not many histories have so far been written about these new voices in English Literature. In the present times people belonging to these countries have emerged as powerful players in the affairs of the world. More than that, their literature written in English has also been recognized as a powerful voice that can neither be ignored nor wished away.

It is true that New Literatures emerged as an aftermath of Colonial rule but the kind of literature that was produced swiftly flitted away from the shadow of the past to engage itself with bigger questions of the contemporary geo-politics. The east-west question was shelved to develop a new discourse on the north-south divide and narratives of dominance and exploitation in these regions. The ideas of creolization, hybridization, globalization, Global Englishes: Colonial Legacies, Multiculturalism, Diaspora and New Diversity became important ideas with which New Literatures engage. In both research and teaching, transnational and Transcultural Exchange Processes and developments (historical and contemporary) are foregrounded rather than specific national literatures. Accordingly, issues of cultural plurality and hybridity, as well as literary negotiations of colonization and decolonization, migration, Diaspora, and social inequality are central lines of inquiry and research. Critical studies in New Literatures are therefore practiced as transcultural and comparative analyses of texts from a broad variety of national and cultural contexts; literature, with its specific aesthetic forms, is understood as part of larger cultural and societal constellations, and connections to other forms of cultural productions (e.g. film, photography, painting) are frequently included.

Learned research papers are invited on some of the topic of the conference. Some themes and areas are stated below for the convenience of the delegates. However, they may choose any other theme related to the topic for writing their papers.

- a. Major concerns in African Fiction
- b. African Poetry and Identity Issues
- c. African Non-fiction Prose

- d. New Literatures and Indigeneity
- e. Racial Prejudices and Cross cultural migration
- f. The Language of resistance
- g. Australian Literature in English
- h. Caribbean Literature and Nostalgia
- i. Multiculturalism in New Literature
- j. Asian Literature in English
- k. Globalization and Nationalism
- l. Cultural homogenization versus ethnic assertion
- m. Canadian Literature in the contemporary
- n. Changing contours of Diaspora Literature
- o. Voices of Minority and the marginalized
- p. Desert in Literature – Special Session

Research Papers following MLA handbook VIII edition guidelines typed in Times New Roman font size 12 may be sent to the Organizing Secretary Dr. Sumer Singh, HOD, English, Govt. College, Ratangarh, Churu .