

Indian Literature in English: An Introduction

Modified Course Overview

Introduction

17th April Lecture 1 Introduction

24th April Lecture 2 Problems of Literary History

[1st May: Maifeiertag + Himmelfahrt]

8th May Lecture 3 Anglo-Indian Literature

Kipling, *Kim* (1901)
Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924)

[15th May: Pfingsten]

[22nd May: Fronleichnam]

29th May Lecture 4 Guest Lecture (1)
Gerhard Stilz (Tübingen):
Indian English Poetry, before and after Independence

Before Independence

5th June Lecture 5 Indo-English Literature:
Genres and Conditions

12th June Lecture 6 The Emergence of the Novel

Chatterjee, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864)
Anand, *Untouchable* (1935),
 Coolie (1936),
 Two Leaves and a Butt (1937)
Rao, *Kanthapura* (1938)
Narayan, *The English Teacher* (1945)

After Independence

19th June	Lecture 7	Self-Conscious Narration Desani, <i>All About H. Hatter</i> (1948) Rushdie, <i>Midnight's Children</i> (1981) Tharoor, <i>The Great Indian Novel</i> (1989) Jha, <i>Fireproof</i> (2006)
26th June	Lecture 8	Visions of Bombay and Terrorism Kiran Nagarkar, <i>Ravan & Eddie</i> (1995) Tyrewala, <i>No God In Sight</i> (2006) Chandra, <i>Sacred Games</i> (2006) Mehta, <i>Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found</i> (2004)
3rd July	Lecture 9	Globalising India: Terror and the Postcolonial Exotic Rushdie, <i>Shalimar the Clown</i> (2005) Nagarkar, <i>God's Little Soldier</i> (2006) Roy, <i>The God of Small Things</i> (1997) K. Desai, <i>The Inheritance of Loss</i> (2006) Dasgupta, <i>Tokyo Cancelled</i> (2005)
10th July	Lecture 10	Guest Lecture (2): Meenakshi Mukherjee (Hyderabad): title t.b.a.
17th July	Lecture 11	written exam (only B.A./M.A. candidates, not Staatsexamen/Magister; also Landeskunde/Cultural Studies)

Lecture 2: Problems of Literary History

- 1) Basic Coordinates of Literary History
- 2) The Paradigm Shift into Modern Literature and the Limits of Its Global Reach
- 3) World Literature?

1) Basic Coordinates of Literary History

mimetic theories (Plato, Aristotle)

pragmatic theories (Horace)



expressive theories (Romanticism)

objective/reflexive theories (modernism/postmodernism)

(Abrams 1953ff.)

The Western Tradition

Antiquity (c 500 B.C. – 500 A.D.):

mimetic and pragmatic criteria begin to dominate the production and reception of art and literature

⇒ the traditional Western attitude

The Middle Ages (500 A.D. – 1500 A.D.):

break in continuity because of cultural difference perceived as 'poverty' in the Renaissance period.

Modernity (1500 A.D. - ????):

⇒ modern (Western) attitudes

marked by an ongoing negotiation of

traditional "objective", i.e. mimetic and pragmatic dimensions of cultural meaning
--

on the one hand and

modern "subjective", i.e. expressive and reflexive dimensions of cultural meaning

on the other

Art and Literature in Modern Culture: A Systematic Approach (c. 1500-2004)

traditional criteria for art and literature
(based on the ideal of objective truth)



mimetic criteria----->
pragmatic criteria----->

expressive criteria----->
reflexive criteria----->



modern criteria for art and literature
(based on the emerging interface of
subjectivity and mediality)

Modernization: Renaissance Romanticism Postmodernism
Re-Traditionalization: Neo-Classicism Modernism
----->
1500 1660 1800 1900 2000

Periods of English Literature (Nünning/Nünning 2001)

(extrinsic) <-----> (intrinsic)

c. 450-1066	Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period	
c. 1066-1500	Middle English Period	
c. 1500-1660	Early Modern Period (Elizabethan Age 1558-1603) (Jacobean Age 1603-25) (Caroline Age 1625-49) (Commonwealth Period/ Puritan Interregnum 1649-60)	Renaissance
c. 1660-1785	[Enlightenment] (Restoration 1660-1700)	Neoclassical Period (Augustan Age 1700-45) (Age of Sensibility 1745-85)
c. 1785-1830		Romantic Period
1837-1901	Victorian Period	(Pre-Raphaelites 1848-60) (Aestheticism/Decad. 1880-1901)
1901-1914	Edwardian Period	
1914-1945		Modernist Period
1945-		Postmodernist Period

Periods of English Literature (Poplawski 2008)

500-1500	Medieval English
1485-1660	The Renaissance
1660-1780	The Restoration and Eighteenth Century
1780-1832	The Romantic Period
1832-1901	The Victorian Age
1901-2004	The Twentieth Century (1901-1939/1939-2004)



2) The Paradigm Shift into Modern Literature

a) The Notion of “Paradigm Shift”

(cf. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 1962/²1970)

> applied to 18th century literary history in Furst 2002

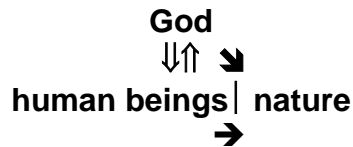
This hypothesis envisages the emergence of the new from the familiar via a gradual change of emphasis that ultimately leads to the modification of the entire structure when an innovative paradigm comes to replace the previously established one. [...] In the analysis of paradigm shift, it is not the terminus a quo or the terminus ad quem or even the chronology itself that matters, but rather the nature, direction, and main stages of the transformational process. (3)

Such a paradigm shift occurs in the metamorphosis of the eighteenth-century model in lyric poetry into the very different Romantic ideal. [...] The paradigm shift was prefigured in the prose of the later eighteenth century, possibly because prose was the genre least subject to the prescriptions of neoclassical usage, and therefore least tied by tradition and convention. (15)

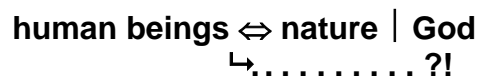
The paradigm shift [...] entails the supplanting of one favored mode of discourse by another very different one. Its total impact amounts to a break in style. But it takes place [...] through a gradual erosion and emendation of the older model, not through a sudden dissonant rupture. The ultimate assertion and emendation of the new paradigm is tantamount to a revolution, yet it is also part of a continuum; though a decisive and perceptible step, it is nevertheless one stage in a process of continuous change. (17)

b) Key Features of Change

1) The Traditional View



2) The Modern View



3) Poetic Consequences (“The Lyric Turn”)

hegemony of the external	>	interiorization
description	>	interpretation
seeing	>	perception
transparency	>	medi(t)ation
denotation	>	connotation
personification/allegory	>	symbol
metonymy	>	metaphor
message	>	meaning
rhetoric	>	‘literariness’
addressing an audience	>	addressing the scene, an object, it-/one-self

>> a new author position/ a new reader position
>>> a new mode of communication

Alexander Pope, Windsor Forest (1713)

Thy forests, *Windsor!* and thy green retreats,
At once the Monarch's and the Muse's seats,
Invite my lays. Be present, sylvan maids!
Unlock your springs, and open all your shades.
Granville commands; your aid O Muses bring!
What Muse for *Granville* can refuse to sing?

The Groves of *Eden*, vanish'd now so long,
Live in Description, and look green in Song:
These, were my breast inspired with equal Flame,
Like them in Beauty, should be like in Fame.
Here Hills and Vales, the Woodland and the Plain,
Here Earth and Water seem to strive again,
Not *Chaos*-like together crush'd and bruis'd,
But as the World, harmoniously confus'd:
Where Order in Variety we see,
And where, tho' all things differ, all agree.

[...]

See Pan with Flocks, with Fruits *Pomona* crown'd,
Here blushing *Flora* paints th' enamel'd Ground,
Here *Ceres'* Gifts in waving prospects stand,
And nodding tempt the joyful Reaper's Hand,
Rich industry sits smiling on the Plains,
And Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns.

[...]

(ll. 1-16/37-42)

Alexander Pope, Essay on Criticism (1709/11)

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same;
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of art.
(Part I, ll 67-73)

Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodized;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrained
By the same laws which herself ordained.
Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress and when indulge our flights:
[...]
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy Nature is to copy them.
(Part I, ll 88-93 u. 139f.)

'Tis with our judgements as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
[...]
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgement too?
(Part I, Z. 9f. u. 17f.)

Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgement in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimmering light;
The lines, though touched but faintly, are drawn right.
(Part I, ll 19-22)

Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defense,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself: but your defects to know,
Make use of every friend – and every foe.
(Part II, ll 210-214)

In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts;
[...]
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to the admiring eyes.
[...]
Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
(Part II, ll 243f., 249f., 384f.)

Poets, like painters, thus unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
with gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;
[...]
But true expression, like the unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon;
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent as more suitable.
(Part II, ll 293-298 u. 315-319)

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
(Part II, ll 362f.)

William Wordsworth:

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1804; 1807)

[Wordsworth's 'Daffodils'] featured prominently in the school curriculum of British colonies or dominions, aimed at training native subjects, from New Zealand via India or Africa to Canada, in the idioms and icons of their so-called mother country. In a 1993 collection of contemporary women's memories of their late colonial education in the 1940s to '60's, the editors explain that "the narrative of Empire was constructed in terms of sameness" and specifically mention: "we could all recite Wordsworth's poem about daffodils, and most of us celebrated Empire Day in our schools."

But we need only ask what exactly Wordsworth's poem might have meant to school children, say, in India or Africa to understand where the fundamental problem lies with this imperial construction of 'sameness'. The Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (*1938) once remarked how a schoolboy in colonial Kenya, who could impeccably recite the poem, actually thought that daffodils were little yellow animals that live at English lakesides. Such misconception is entirely plausible, because the poem speaks of daffodils as if they were moving, dancing creatures. It is just our cultural knowledge telling us that daffodils are flowers, hence fixed in the ground, which transfers Wordsworth's description of them onto a metaphorical level. The central metaphor of 'dance' only works against a background of experience or knowledge, not necessarily shared in different cultural and natural settings where 'daffodils' are as exotic as, for us, baobabs – a signifier without a signified in sight.

(Döring 2008, 11)

3) World Literature?

[Goethe]

Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* [1999] (2005)

- the emergence of a global literary space from the 16th century onwards: Italy – France – Spain – England – other European countries – the Americas – Africa/Asia
- a global economy with universally acknowledged standards of literary value, but unequally distributed literary capital and resources
- centres and peripheries: the Greenwich meridian of modernity

Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature" (2004)

- literature as a 'planetary system'
- a unitary world system of literature which engages with difference
- modern fiction never results from autonomous developments, but marks a compromise between Western formal influences and local material

Fredric Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" (1986)

- 'third-world texts' appear anachronistic to Western readers
- they have to be read as 'national allegories' in which individual fate is inevitably linked to public/social/political/economic dimensions of third-world countries
- 'third-world texts' evoke a social world of collective cooperation which has been lost in the West

Amitava Kumar, ed., *World Bank Literature* (2002)

- literature is a commodity and thus dependent on market mechanisms
- Indian literature in English is neither a mere symptom nor necessarily a critique of neoliberal globalisation; its stories engage with globalisation from within

Globalisation (cf. Degele/Dries 2005, 180-205):

a historical transformation process with a tendency towards creating a single space/place (McLuhan: 'global village')

Phases of Globalisation:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1500-1750 | expansion of trade, beginnings of colonisation, slave trade |
| 1750-1880 | colonialism into imperialism, increased dynamics fuelled by industrial revolution |
| 1880-1945 | stagnation of globalisation process in WW I and II |
| 1945- | second wave of political globalisation (UN, NATO, USSR/Warsaw Pact) coinciding with de-colonisation movement, centre of globalisation shifts from politics to economy/communication |

Problems:

- 'glocalisation': the making of global culture simultaneously promotes regional cultures
- hybridisation vs. homogenisation?
- clash of cultures (Huntington)?

> isolation models vs. visions of world society

Bibliography Lecture 2:

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- Poplawski, Paul, ed., *English Literature in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008.