



TRAVEL AND DIASPORA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN TRAVEL WRITING

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Abstract

Travel as a purported displacement has a long history throughout the onward march of human civilization. Different cultures have migrated on geographical planes to another in search of greener pastures. Along with it individual human beings have moved out of their cultural space to unknown lands for adventure, spiritual upliftment and individual curiosity. While in the beginning of modern age, such travels were propelled by material gains, scientific discovery and conquests. This paper on the topic Travel and Diaspora: Issue and challenges focus on the various issues arise and challenges faced by different travel writers. The purpose of this paper is to provide a conceptual overview of Diaspora, its Issues, challenges and government initiative. Keywords: Migration, Diaspora, India, Government, Policy, Country.

Introduction

Travel literature in European fiction tradition has its roots in picaresque novels which popularised travel fiction and contained within it some of the basic ingredients of modern travelogues. Fielding's Joseph Andrews and Smollett's The Expedition of Humphry Clinker were some worthy precursors of travel fictions which gave travel writing seriousness and a large audience. In the later part of the 20th century there was a virtual revolution in travel writings which led to emergence of travel literature as an interesting field of study. With writers such as William Dalrymple, V.S. Naipaul, Bill Bryson, Paul Theroux etc. a new dimension in travel literature was introduced.

A brief overview of the major works on travel writings on India would give us an orientation regarding the cardinal thrust area of research done on travelogues on India. While Michael Fisher in his book Beyond the Three Seas: Travelers' Tales of Mughal India discusses the images of Mughal India in some selected travelogues, Paul Fussell's. Abroad:

British Literary Travelling between the Wars explores the genre of literary travelling between two world wars and finds it circumscribed by imperialistic impulses.

There have not been many sustained critical works on travelogues of Mishi Saran, Tahir Shah and Monisha Rajesh except some stray articles. An assessment of the above discussed critical works makes it apparent that within the genre of travel writings on India there is an absence of sustained engagement with gender of the traveller and its impact on the cultural images of the travelled land. Further, it is also visible that divergence between the narrative view-points of diasporic writers and foreign writers has not been fully explored.

The diaspora population maintains a communal memory, vision, or myth of their original homeland - its physical location, history, and accomplishments, and, frequently, its miseries. The dispersed group believes that they are not, and possibly cannot be, entirely accepted by their host

community; as a result, they feel partially estranged and isolated from it.

Differentiated at home and abroad, diasporic women felt compelled to create a unique strategy to articulate their displacement and subaltern status. In both their artistic and analytical efforts, Indian female diasporic voices have highlighted the plight of diasporic women.

Globalization is a major enabler of transnational lifestyles, and it has been observed that crossing borders has evolved into its own lifestyle. Due to cheaper plane travel and technological advancements such as the internet and highly technical devices, it is now easy to retain relationships with both the home country and the host country.

In the new transnational constellation, 'routes' have become more significant than 'roots' and 'fluidity' has supplanted 'stability,' yet the concept of 'home' and 'homeland' has not entirely vanished from the diasporic community. The new diaspora is a heterogeneous group that is fragmented not only by religion, geography, and language, but also by caste and class. In spite of these obstacles, the Indian diaspora is becoming an economic and political benefit for India.

Transnational Feminisms and Practices:

The term transnational developed as "a method to designate the significantly rising movements of people, goods, images, and ideas across the borders of nation-states throughout the 'globalisation' era". Transnational feminist perspectives centre on the diverse experiences of women who live within, between, and at the margins or boundaries of nation-states around the world; they transcend nation-state boundaries and speak to a vast array of interacting forces that influence gendered relationships and experiences in a geopolitical context. In addition, they include "border work" and communication across traditional global boundaries; may occur in global, regional, and local contexts; and include the experiences of immigrants, refugees, displaced persons, those who have experienced forced migration, members of a cultural diaspora who may

be dispersed across multiple regions, as well as those who identify as third-culture persons and those who are attempting to integrate multiple cultural identities .

The philosophy and practise of transnational feminism stress intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, social activism and justice, as well as collaboration. They seek to destabilise the notion that women across the globe share the same experiences, oppressions, forms of exploitation, and privileges; they investigate differences and inequalities among women, such as different priorities and ways of understanding gender issues and different ways of conceptualizing agency. Transnational and postcolonial feminisms emphasise social-structural issues that accentuate power disparities, such as colonialism and neocolonialism, economic realities, and global capitalism. Postcolonial feminisms oppose colonial and imperialist powers, reject Euro-American feminisms that universalize women's suffering, and are shaped by the unique social, political, and historical settings and oppression of women.

It is challenging to establish appropriate, polite terminology to describe regions and countries with greater money, power, and privilege and those with less wealth, power, and privilege, without reinforcing binary frameworks, distortions, and stereotypes. Words cannot adequately portray the complexities and fluidity of reality.

Principal Themes in International Feminist Practice

In the sections that follow, we address a variety of transnational feminist concepts and their significance to transnational feminist practise. We utilise titles that start with verbs to emphasise the dynamic and ever-changing nature of these identifying characteristics. (a) practising reflexivity; (b) employing intersectional lenses; (c) defining global and transnational feminisms inclusively; (d) crossing borders; (e) valuing diverse forms of agency and resistance; (f) decolonizing theory, knowledge, and practise; (g) creating and sustaining egalitarian collaborations; and (h) centralising theories and practises that support critical consciousness and social change. Many of these qualities overlap with many viewpoints on social justice in psychology;

nevertheless, within transnational contexts, these themes tend to take on special implications. In this introduction, we present a quick overview of fundamentals, describe international applications of these themes, and connect them to instances from the articles in this special issue.

Employing Reflexivity

Similar to other researchers and practitioners committed to social justice, transnational feminists stress the significance of self-reflection and critical analysis of their positionality. Reflexivity is the activity of "taking stock of one's assumptions, values, perspective, and social settings in order to determine how they may impact one's views of others". Reflexivity within the transnational context entails investigating, analysing, and deconstructing how Northern or Euro-centric knowledge, such as psychological knowledge, is produced and distributed, with a focus on how this process relates to gender-related experiences. It also necessitates an analysis of the ways in which we support repressive patriarchal structures, whether knowingly or unintentionally. Deep levels of reflexivity not only inform our understanding of how cultures create us as individuals, but also how people from other cultural contexts may see us. Decolonized reflexivity leads us beyond awareness to active collaboration in the destruction of oppressive systems inside and around us.

Positionality

which is closely related to reflexivity, refers to an individual's position in the world, their many and intersecting social identities, and their sources of privilege, power, and marginalisation. Feminist, multicultural, and transnational scholars and practitioners frequently utilise positionality statements to communicate how their social identities and cultural affiliations may influence their understandings or prejudices. Many of the articles in this special issue and the "about the authors" portion of this special issue contain positionality declarations. Our goal as editors is to use our diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and transnational experiences to ensure that the transnational feminist psychologies presented in this issue are both inclusive and sensitive to diversity.

Positional awareness prepares the way for "frame shifting," which can be defined as the cognitive and behavioural flexibility that enables a person to shift between multiple perspectives and worldviews in order to function and communicate effectively across cultural contexts. **Utilization of Intersectional Lenses**

Intersectionality is a cornerstone of multicultural feminist and social justice methods, and it often refers to the complex relationships between social identities such as race/ethnicity, nationality and language, sexual orientation, religion, gender, disability, colorism, and age. Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) brought intersectionality to the legal sector to highlight the complex, multidimensional, and dynamic oppression suffered by women of colour. For instance, the combination of racism and sexism frequently produces hybrid "isms" like gendered racism (e.g., Chavez-Dueas&Adames, 2020).

Transnational feminisms expand upon the fundamental concept of intersectionality by highlighting global structural and historical factors such as economic exploitation and oppressive forces associated with colonialism, imperialism, extreme forms of capitalism, structural racism, and gendered racism, as well as other forms of globalisation that reinforce the dominance of Northern world regions. It is recognised that global capitalism and economic exploitation are important factors to transnational inequalities and intersectionalities.

Inclusively Defining Global and Transnational Feminisms

One of the earliest attempts to develop a unified worldwide feminism was known as a "sisterhood is global" strategy. This perspective has been attacked for articulating romanticised and utopian views of women around the world, for providing a singular feminist model for comprehending gender issues, and for emphasising the similarities of women's experiences and oppressions. In only limited ways were power imbalances, privileges, and oppressions among women across world locations, nations, colonial history, economic realities, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation addressed. In fact, gender-related

oppression, inequality, and power hierarchies manifest in a variety of complicated, diverse, scattered, ever-changing, and occasionally perplexing or conflicting ways. The term "scattered hegemonies" refers to the complexity and fluidity of power structures, local variations in how social power operates, and the reality that a singular approach to social change has limited applicability to the diverse circumstances and needs of women around the world.

Transnational feminisms, in contrast to a universal sisterhood perspective, strive to explore gendered realities both within and between Northern and Southern regions, understand their interdependencies, and establish global coalitions based on shared ideals. These shared objectives must be adaptable, adjustable, and inclusively defined; hence, they may be temporary or limited in scope. Transnational feminists have placed less focus on building a unified theory and more emphasis on employing lenses to recognise the diversity of gendered experiences. Instead than being limiting, the interconnections, interdependencies, connections, contradictions, and discontinuities of gender experiences across many settings are emphasised.

Transcending Borders

Transnational feminisms stress interactions across boundaries and the spaces between national limits, such as the borders and realities refugees, diasporic communities, displaced individuals, and mobile populations confront. Multiple themes, such as moving borders and boundaries, crossing borders, transcending borders, and employing borderland thinking as a source of information and strength, are incorporated into a feminist transnational . Borderland thinking is useful in numerous ways, including as a tool to explore complicated hybrid identities, comprehend oppression, conceptualise resistance and empowerment, and conceptualise activism.

Valuing Diverse Forms of Resistance and Agency

Feminists from the Global North have a propensity to regard women in the Global South as less fortunate sisters who require the skill and

insight of Northern feminists in order to overcome injustice. Women of the Southern World have frequently been portrayed as passive, misinformed victims who are reliant on Northern feminist "saviours" and their "imperial feminist kindness".

Across world regions, distortions of women's agency and resistance are frequently based on:

- (a) binary definitions of what it means to be a victim or to thrive.
- (b) ethnocentric assumptions about how agency and resistance should be defined and what behaviours and attitudes represent acts of resistance and agency.
- (c) a lack of attention to how cultural values and structural forces influence forms of agency and resistance that are valued and effective within a culture.

Conclusion

The proposed research work would yield some significant outcomes. It will give a new dimension to the portrayal of India by a selected category of female writers. By focusing on a collation between gender and travel, ethnicity and experience, the study would untangle divergences as well as impact of socio-cultural factors over the presentation of cultural images of India. The following area will be the significant contribution of the study:

1. The proposed research will add a significant point in the existing pool of knowledge.
2. It will produce some additional insights on the selected writers' presentation of finer points of the Indian culture and its people.
3. The proposed research work also contributes in giving some additional theories on the nature of travel literature.
4. The proposed research work would give a new orientation to a traveller's encounter with a foreign culture and the persistence of colonial ideology within it.

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