

One of the most significant developments in American literature of this phase is the Native American Renaissance, which began in the 1960s and flourished in the 1970s. It was a project to revive the literary and cultural traditions of the native tribes; ignored, marginalized, and excluded, since the arrival of the Europeans. The major novelists were M. Scott Momaday (*House Made of Dawn*), James Welch (*Winter in the Blood*) and Leslie Marmon Silko (*Ceremony*). The poems of Diane Glancy, Mary Tallmountain and Esther Belin reflected the communitarianism, spiritual beliefs and alternate mythology of the Native American people against the materialism of the USA.

The **Postmodern period** denotes literature from the 1970s to the present. It is a period in which writers continued the experimentation in fiction and poetry, which began during modernist period. Literature, during this era, is characterized by metafiction, fragmentation, faction, pastiche, intertextuality, selfreflexivity, minimalism, maximalism, recontextualization and so on. The important novelists of the period include Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Donald Barthelme and Kathy Acker. The verses of Jayne Cortez, Stephen Rodefer, William Corbett, Lorenzo Thomas, David Shapiro, Eileen Myles and David Trinidad expressed the various themes and forms of the postmodern in poetry. In theatre, Sam Shepard, David Mamet, Tony Kushner and Wendy Wasserstein attempted to fragment the realistic, with newly conceived stages and anti-theatrical plots.

In short, it seems safe to state that the contemporary American literature has become more multi-dimensional, multi-ethnic and polyphonic and will continue to be so.

## **AFRICAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

Africa, in the Middle ages, was described as the dark continent. It was also believed that the continent lacked uniformity of any kind in terms of ethnic origin, language and cultural practice. In the domain of literature, during the pre-colonial period, this continent had a history of 'orature' rather than literature. Poetry of the period includes narrative epic, occupational verse, ritual verse, and praise poems to rulers and other prominent people. One popular form of the traditional African folktale is the 'trickster' story, where a small animal uses its wits to survive encounters with larger creatures. Myths, according to Oyekan Owomoyela, usually "explain the inter-relationships of all things that exist, and provide for the group and its members a necessary sense of their place in relation to their environment and the forces that order events on earth" (*African Literatures: An Introduction*). Most

well known of the African oral forms is probably the proverb, a short witty or ironic statement, metaphorical in its formulation, that aims to communicate a response to a particular situation, to offer advice, or to be persuasive. It must also be noted that oral literary forms must not be conceptualized as simply pre-colonial, ancient, or traditional. Oral literary forms, such as folktales and praise-songs, flourish in contemporary Africa.

With the arrival of Islam, Africans were introduced to Arabic traditions. The literacy campaign in Africa also had a second wave with this historical development. The University of Timbuktu contains some of the manuscripts, written in Arabic and native languages like Fula and Songhai. Swahili literature, though inspired by the Islamist tradition, followed an indigenous way of narration in poems, describing the life of Mohammed and his exploits against Christians.

The colonial period of African literature began with the arrival of European powers in Africa. This encounter through trade relationships, missionary activities, and colonialism propelled the third wave of literacy in Africa. Though England was only one of the major European powers, English was interpreted as the language of liberation and culture. The missionaries attempted to translate the Bible and the basic principles of Christianity into the native languages. One of the genres that was originally African in this phase was the historical slave narratives and Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) was a remarkable work.

As to the Indians, English was 'a language of science and wisdom'. The western colonial project aimed at the spreading of English across the globe. One's entry into the language in the colonies ensured a class change. Rudyard Kipling famously wrote about the 'white man's burden' of civilizing the brute, barbaric parts of the world.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Britain established Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast etc as colonies. The colonized Africans, in the coming decades, appropriated English (as well as French) and demanded decolonization (Liberation, independence and Negritude were the significant themes of literature in English during this phase). Negritude writers, like Aime Cesaire, wrote poetry in French in which they presented African traditions and cultures as antithetical, but equal, to European culture. Chinua Achebe showed the effects of colonialism among the tribal people of Africa in novels like *Things Fall Apart* (1958), written in the Nigerian context. Novels such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*, Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, and Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* are a few of the novels that

might be described as 'literatures of testimony' attempting to respond to derogatory representations of, and myths about, African culture.

By the 1960s, most African nations had gained their independence. It was a period of literary resurgence with many of the authors from Africa, writing in both the western as well native languages. Ali Mazrui observes seven conflicts as central themes of the literature of this phase: the clash between (Africa's past and present), between (tradition and modernity), between (indigenous and foreign), between (individualism and community), between (socialism and capitalism), between development and self-reliance and between Africanity and humanity. This period also witnessed a literature of revolt. These texts move away from the project of recuperating and reconstructing an African past and focus on responding to, and revolting against, colonialism, neocolonialism, and corruption. Wole Soyinka's plays and poems, Achebe's own writings like *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Arrow of God* and Peter Abrahams' *Tell Freedom* exemplify this revolt. (Soyinka becoming the first post-independence African writer to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1986 was a definitive moment in the literary history of a continent governed by the Europeans for nearly four centuries.

Contemporary African writers move away from the use of realism and aim to develop new discourses and literary styles. Ben Okri, for example, employs postmodern narrative strategies in the Booker winning novel *The Famished Road* to represent the social and political turmoil of an African nation; reminiscent of his remembrance of war-torn Nigeria. Being a non-black, the South African J. M. Coetzee, who migrated to Australia in 2006, attempted to rewrite the ideological assumptions of European literature through novels like *Foe*, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Life and Times of Michael K.* and *Disgrace*. The works of Sony Labou Tansi, Henri Lopes, Yambo Ouloguem, and Ahmadou Kourouma, illustrate the style and content of contemporary African literatures. Gabriel Okara deals with the cultural tensions resulting from the meeting of ancient culture of Africa with modern Western Culture in poems such as 'Once Upon a Time'.

Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta, Bessie Head, Mariama Ba, Miriam Tlali, Nafissatou Dialo, Aminata Sow Fall, Zulu Sofola, Fatima Dike, Rebeka Njau and Micere Mugo are some of the women writers who defy the patriarchal nature of African literature in the present, by evoking themes which are African as well as feminine.

During the postcolonial phase, there appeared critical re-readings of European colonial texts. The finest example could be Achebe's essay 'An Image of Africa' which uncovers the racist elements of one of the

most celebrated critiques of imperialism, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Another aspect of postcolonialism indicates a version of nativism, a return to native languages, giving up English language and culture. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the diasporic African settled in America, is the chief architect of this praxis through novels like *Matigari* (1987) and *Wizard of Crow* (2006). *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon, the Marxist psychiatrist who fought for Algerian independence, were the inspiration and model for this liberation through letters.

## INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Indo-Anglian literature, one of the most important variants of postcolonial literatures, refers to the literary works of writers in India who use English language as the medium of expression, though they have one of the Indian tongues as their native language. It also takes into account the works of the Indian diaspora, such as V. S. Naipaul, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh.

India is a land with an ancient cultural as well as literary heritage. After the oral literature phase, the classical era of Indian literature includes the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the two great epics, the Vedas and Upanisads and the plays of Kalidasa and Bhasa. Throughout its history, India has produced wonderful literary works in various languages like *Ramacharitmanas* in Awadhi, *Kamba Ramayanam* in Tamil and *Gitagovinda* in Sanskrit. However, the west considered India as the Orient – an exotic Other - that needed to be colonized and thus reformed.

The history of writing in English began in India with the native people's interaction with the colonial people. The first book written by an Indian in English was by Sake Dean Mahomet, titled *Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1793), a travel narrative. Poets who were active in the early phase of Indian writing were Henry Derozio and Toru Dutt. The first Indian novel in English, *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), was authored by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. However, it was only in the twentieth century that writings in English became prominent and popular in India. At this stage, it was a literature of imitation where genres popular in English were used to tell Indian experiences.

Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan form the triumvirate of the Indo- Anglian novel. Through *Kanthapura* and *The Serpent and the Rope*, Rao narrated a literature of protest covered in the wisdom of