

The Regional Novel in India: Its Emergence and Trajectory

Authors : Aruna Bommareddi

Abstract : The journey of the novel is well examined in Indian academia as an offshoot of the novel in English. There have been many attempts to understand aspects of the early novel in India which shared a commonality with the English novel. The regional novel has had an entirely different trajectory which is mapped in the paper. The main focus of the paper would be to look at the historical emergence of the genre of the regional novel in Indian Literatures with specific reference to Kannada, Hindi, and Bengali. The selection of these languages is guided not only by familiarity with these languages as also based on the significance that these languages enjoy in the sub-continent and for the emergence of the regional novel as a specific category in these languages. The regional novels under study are Phaneeswaranath Renu's Maila Anchal, Tarashankar Bandopadhyaya's Ganadevata, and Kuvempu's House of Kanuru for exploration of the themes of its emergence and some aspects of the regional novel common to and different from each other. The paper would explore the various movements that have shaped the genre regional novel in these Literatures. Though Phaneeswarnath Renu's Maila Anchal is published in 1956, the novel is set in pre-Independent India and therefore shares a commonality of themes with the other two novels, House of Kanuru and Ganadevata. All three novels explore themes of superstition, ignorance, poverty, and the interventions of educated youth to salvage the crises in these backward regional worlds. In fact, it was Renu who assertively declared that he was going to write a regional novel and hence the title of the first regional novel in Hindi is Maila Anchal meaning the soiled border. In Hindi, anchal also means the region therefore, the title is suggestive of a dirty region as well. The novel exposes the squalor, ignorance, and the conflict ridden life of the village or region as opposed to the rosy image of the village in literature. With this, all such novels which depicted conflicts of the region got recognized as regional novels even though they may have been written prior to Renu's declaration. All three novels under study succeed in bringing out the complexity of rural life at a given point of time in its history.

Keywords : bengali, hindi, kannada, regional novel, telugu

Conference Title : ICCLC 2023 : International Conference on Comparative Literature and Culture

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : November 27-28, 2023