

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the Indian English essay as a distinctive form of writing existing within Indian Writing in English. It tries to locate the areas of generic potentiality and uniqueness that point towards the discursive functions the form is capable of performing.

The study is based on the selected essays of R. K. Narayan, Amitav Ghosh, and Arundhati Roy which have been categorized as “the familiar essay”, “the narrative essay”, and “the political essay” respectively. The analysis is undertaken against the background of a steady development of theoretical and critical responses to the essay which have emerged in the literary academy in the past few decades.

The study shows that though the essay has faced extreme academic marginalization as a genre and has been invariably categorized as a minor form of writing, such concepts of generic majority or minority are ideologically constructed. It points out the ways in which the inherent generic potential of the three types of essays can be located by focusing on the generic functions that they perform.

The study advocates that the form of the Indian English essay should be studied seriously in view of its consistent presence throughout the history of the literature and also its growing visibility and popularity. It argues that it is necessary to do away with an axiomatic categorization of the Indian English essay as a minor form and to find an analytical framework that can do justice to its potentiality and uniqueness.