

## GLOBALIZATION AND FICTION: EXPLORING POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE AND LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

**Dilip Barad**

Prof. & Head, Department of English,  
Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji  
Bhavnagar University, Gujarat. India

### Abstract

*This research article delves into the intricate relationship between globalization and fiction, shedding light on how literature serves as a powerful medium for exploring the multifaceted dimensions of this global phenomenon. Drawing on a range of literary works, including Don DeLillo's "Cosmopolis," Robert Newman's "The Fountain at the Center of the World," Ian McEwan's "Saturday," Arundhati Roy's "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," and Aravind Adiga's "The White Tiger," we examine the portrayal of global movements from both pro- and anti-globalization perspectives. These novels provide a unique window into the complexities of globalization, addressing issues such as economic dominance, resistance, social justice, and the personal experiences of individuals caught in the tide of global change.*

*The analysis also encompasses the viewpoints of prominent thinkers like Joseph E. Stiglitz and Noam Chomsky, who offer critical insights into the economic and political ramifications of globalization. Through these literary and intellectual lenses, the article explores how globalization shapes society, culture, and individual lives, sparking debates about its consequences and the possibilities of a more equitable global order. In a world where globalization is an undeniable force, this article underscores the significance of fiction as a tool for deeper understanding and critique, ultimately highlighting the intricate interplay between literature and the globalized world.*

*The power of storytelling has historically extended beyond mere entertainment, serving as a reflection of society, a chronicle of culture, and a prophetic voice for the people. As we enter an era marked by "Global Social-cultural Awareness," it becomes imperative to employ postcolonial tools and techniques to critically analyze globalization through the lens of fiction. This research article delves into the multifaceted aspects of globalization, drawing connections to significant global events such as the 9/11 phenomenon, the emergence of the New American Empire, and the ensuing Global War on Terror. We contend that these violent occurrences are integral to the phenomenon we commonly refer to as "Globalization."*

**Keywords:** *Globalization, Fiction, Literature, Global Movements, Anti-globalization, Pro-globalization, Postcolonial Critique, Economic Dominance, Social Justice, Resistance*

## GLOBALIZATION AND FICTION: EXPLORING POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE AND LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS

- Dilip Barad

### Introduction:

**G**lobalization, a complex and ever-evolving concept, challenges traditional postcolonial frameworks that rely on notions of margins and centers. (Loomba) In the words of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their work 'Empire,' they argue that Empire, unlike imperialism, lacks a fixed territorial center of power, operating instead as a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus that progressively encompasses the entire globe within its expanding frontiers. (Hardt and Negri) "In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentered and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges, through modulating networks of command." (Hardt and Negri) Empire, they argue, manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command.

### Understanding Globalization:

Nobel laureate Joseph E. Stiglitz, formerly Chief Economist at the World Bank, criticizes globalization for its imposition on the world by institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, coining the phrase "Market Fundamentalism." (Stiglitz, Globalism's Discontents) "The international financial institutions have pushed a particular ideology – market fundamentalism – that is both bad economics and bad politics; it is based on a premise concerning how markets work that do not hold even for developed countries, much less for developing countries. The IMF has pushed these economic policies without a broader vision of society or the role of economics within society. And it has pushed these policies in ways that have undermined emerging democracies. More generally, globalization itself has been disadvantageous to developing countries, especially the poor within those countries." (Stiglitz, Globalism's Discontents)

According to Stiglitz, this ideology, based on the premise that the market is the panacea for all of humanity's problems, disregards national, cultural, geographic, and

religious boundaries, making it a form of religious fundamentalism in itself. (Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work)

"Friedman is right that there have been dramatic changes in the global economy, in the global landscape; in some directions, the world is much flatter than it has ever been, with those in various parts of the world being more connected than they have ever been, but the world is not flat ... Not only is the world not flat: in many ways, it has been getting less flat". (Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work)

P. Sainath's 'And Then There Was the Market' highlights the devastating impact of Market Fundamentalism, transcending borders and contributing to the rise of various religious fundamentalisms. (Sainath)

"Market Fundamentalism destroys more human lives than any other simply because it cuts across all national, cultural, geographic, religious, and other boundaries. It's as much at home in Moscow as in Mumbai or Minnesota. A South Africa —whose advances in the early 1990s thrilled the world —moved swiftly from apartheid to neoliberalism. It sits as easily in Hindu, Islamic or Christian societies. And it contributes angry, despairing recruits to the armies of all religious fundamentalisms. Based on the premise that the market is the solution to all the problems of the human race, it is, too, a very religious fundamentalism. It has its own Gospel: The Gospel of St. Growth, of St. Choice." (Sainath)

It underscores the need to employ postcolonial critique to scrutinize the exploitation of third-world countries and the lives of their inhabitants by global multinational and transnational corporations, which operate under the umbrella of globalization.

Klaus Schwab's concerns regarding "Globalization 4.0" are noteworthy. In his book 'The Fourth Industrial Revolution,' Schwab explains that this new phase of globalization involves the fusion of technology with every aspect of life, blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. He distinguishes it from previous industrial revolutions and emphasizes the exponential pace of change, heralding transformations in production, management, and governance. Globalization 4.0 represents a new approach to the global economy, requiring a departure from false dichotomies such as "free trade" vs. "protectionism," "technology" vs. "jobs," and "growth" vs. "equality." (Schwab)

Table 1: Klaus Shwab: The Fourth Industrial Revoltion (Schwab)

4 <sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution	Globalization 4.0
1 <sup>st</sup> IR – used water and steam power <b>Mechanical Production</b>	Globalization 1.0 – About countries and muscle power – 1492-1800 <b>Countries Globalizing</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> IR – used electric power <b>Mass Production</b>	Globalization 2.0 – Great Depression + WWI-II – 1800 – 2000 <b>Companies Globalizing</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> IR – synergized electric and IT (electronic) <b>Automated Mass Production</b>	Globalization 3.0 – MNCs – 2000 onwards <b>New found power for individuals for collaboration and to compete globally</b> <b>The Flat World (Thomas Friedman)</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> IR – digital – fusion of technology with everything; blurring lines between physical, digital and biological spheres <b>No parallel with previous revolutions in ‘Speed’; evolves exponentially rather than linear pace; ‘disrupts’ all industries; herald transformation of entire system of production, management &amp; governance; 3D printing, A.I., iot, robotics, auto-vehicles etc</b>	Globalization 4.0 – the advancement of 4 <sup>th</sup> IR shall be incorporated – for which our mindsets are not yet ready – <b>a new approach to the new economy - this is not a matter of ‘free trade’ or ‘protectionism’, ‘technology’ or ‘jobs’, ‘immigration’ or ‘protecting citizens’, and ‘growth’ or ‘equality’. Those are all false dichotomies, which we can avoid by developing policies that favor “and” over “or,” allowing all sets of interests to be pursued in parallel.</b>

Supporters of globalization, such as Thomas Friedman in 'The Lexus and the Olive Tree,' perceive globalization as an international system with its own rules and logic. (Friedman) They argue that understanding the interactions shaping the world is essential for strategizing effectively in this globalized era.

However, challenges associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution coincide with ecological constraints, multipolar geopolitics, and rising inequality, ushering in a new era of globalization. Whether this globalization will improve the human condition hinges on adaptive governance at corporate, local, national, and international levels.

To counter the arguments of globalization proponents, Noam Chomsky's 'Globalization and Its Discontents' posits that corporations prioritize profit and market share over social welfare. Chomsky criticizes trade deals with countries like China, suggesting that they primarily benefit privileged sectors in both nations. He highlights the protectionist elements inherent in "normal trade relations." (Chomsky)

#### **The Theme of Movements and Protests in fiction dealing with the concept of Globalization:**

As 'Globalization' remains a protean term, it is essential to explore its various facets. Suman Gupta's chapter on 'Movements and Protests' in the book 'Globalization and Literature' offers a valuable perspective, emphasizing the literary representation of global movements from

both pro- and anti-globalization standpoints. (Gupta) Several literary examples illustrate these themes, including Don DeLillo's 'Cosmopolis,' Robert Newman's 'The Fountain at the Center of the World,' Ian McEwan's 'Saturday,' Arundhati Roy's 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness,' and Aravind Adiga's 'The White Tiger.'

The theme of the literary representation of global movements, both pro- and anti-globalization, serves as a compelling lens through which to examine the complex interplay of ideas and ideologies in the context of globalization. Here, we expand on the examples mentioned to provide a deeper understanding of how these novels engage with the theme:

### **1. Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003): Anti-globalization Protests**

In "*Cosmopolis*," Don DeLillo explores the world of anti-globalization protests through the character of Eric Packer, a young billionaire. The novel unfolds against the backdrop of a tumultuous anti-globalization demonstration in Manhattan. DeLillo vividly depicts the chaos and confrontation as protesters clash with the forces of globalization. The description of protesters barricading streets with burning tires and the police response with rubber bullets encapsulates the intense conflict surrounding globalization. Eric Packer's contemplation on the end of the global era, marked by the disappearance of stretch limousines from Manhattan streets, reflects the novel's underlying theme of the decline of excess and the consequences of unchecked globalization. (DeLillo)

### **2. Robert Newman's *The Fountain at the Center of the World* (2003): WTO Protests in Seattle**

In this novel, Robert Newman provides a detailed and engrossing account of the celebrated protests organized in Seattle during the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in 1999. The narrative unfolds as a day-by-day description of the protests, offering readers a front-row seat to the events. Through fictional characters traversing borders, Newman seamlessly weaves factual details into the plot, shedding light on various aspects of globalization's impact. These include the South American disease 'chagas,' the role of video news records, the perils of working in Mexican factories, the political and economic situation in Mexico, and the workings of global power forums. By intertwining these elements, Newman's novel paints a comprehensive picture of the complexities and controversies surrounding globalization. (Newman)

### **3. Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2010): Global Conflict and Personal Struggle**

"Saturday" by Ian McEwan delves into the interconnectedness of global events and personal lives. Set on February 15, 2003, the novel captures the life of London neurosurgeon Henry Perowne. Against the backdrop of his everyday activities, the story delves into two significant events: an encounter with a gang of aggressive youths and their subsequent reappearance at his home. These events mirror the larger global conflict—the invasion of Iraq by US-UK-led forces—and the global protests against it. Perowne's role as a healer and humanist in

overcoming adversity and saving a life parallels the broader themes of reconciliation and resolution in a world marred by conflict. (McEwan)

#### **4. Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2018): Social and Political Unrest in India**

Arundhati Roy's novel weaves together the narratives of diverse characters, including activists and marginalized individuals, to explore themes of social and political unrest in India. Through these characters, Roy delves into issues such as the displacement of communities due to development projects, the struggles of Kashmiri separatists, and the impact of globalization on the marginalized. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" provides a lens into the complex relationship between globalization and social justice in the Indian context. (Roy)

#### **5. Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008):**

Adiga's novel offers a satirical take on globalization's impact on India. Through the character of Balram Halwai, a chauffeur who rises to prominence, the novel explores themes of social mobility, corruption, and inequality in a globalized India. Balram's journey reflects the aspirations and challenges faced by individuals navigating a rapidly changing society shaped by globalization.

In these literary works, the authors engage with the theme of globalization by depicting a range of perspectives, from those who resist its effects to those who benefit from it. Through rich storytelling and compelling characters, these novels provide valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of globalization and its impact on individuals and societies around the world. (Adiga)

#### **Five Perceptions of Social Movements and Protests:**

Discussions surrounding social movements and protests reveal key insights: these movements are symptomatic of a larger and deeper phenomenon, exhibit common objectives on a global scale, retain diverse and fragmentary characteristics, and can co-opt the norms championed by globalization proponents. Suman Gupta (*Globalization and Literature*) identifies following five characteristics of the movements and protests

#### **First - Surface Manifestations of Deeper Phenomenon:**

Discussions surrounding social movements and protests often emphasize that the increasing frequency and visibility of such protests are merely the tip of the iceberg. These visible protests and demonstrations serve as symptoms or surface manifestations of a larger and deeper phenomenon. Beyond the immediate causes that spark these protests, there are underlying structural and systemic issues that contribute to societal unrest. These issues can range from economic inequality and political disenfranchisement to cultural clashes and environmental concerns. Social movements draw attention to these underlying problems and demand systemic change.

**Second - Global Scale and Commonality of Purpose:**

Social movements in the contemporary globalized world frequently span across borders, making them global in scale. This globalization of social movements presents an opportunity to identify some degree of commonality of objective and purpose among them. Activists from different parts of the world often find common ground on issues such as human rights, environmental protection, and social justice. The interconnectedness of the world through communication technologies enables the sharing of ideas and strategies, fostering a sense of solidarity among diverse groups striving for similar goals.

**Third - Diverse and Fragmentary Character:**

Despite the convergence of diverse interest groups within social movements, they often retain their diverse and fragmentary character. Each group within a movement may have unique motivations, concerns, and strategies. This diversity can be a source of strength, as it brings together a wide range of perspectives and expertise. However, it can also lead to internal tensions and challenges in maintaining a unified front. Balancing this diversity while pursuing shared objectives is a constant challenge for social movements.

**Fourth - Balance Between Convergence and Divergence:**

The balance between convergence and divergence in social movements reflects a complex dynamic. Social movements may initially emerge to oppose certain norms and practices associated with globalization, but over time, they may incorporate or co-opt some of the norms championed by globalization advocates. This adaptation can be seen as a strategic move to gain broader support or as a pragmatic approach to address specific issues. However, it can also be seen as a potential dilution of the movement's original goals. This balance between adopting certain elements of the globalized world while maintaining a critical stance is a central tension within social movements.

**Fifth - Transformative Agendas and Historical Context:**

Combining ideas of radical change with existing understandings of social movements often recalls transformative agendas rooted in the history of Marxism and the international working-class movement. Social movements are conceptualized as vehicles for replacing and correcting the problems associated with historical exploitations of industrial, agrarian, and colonial capitalism. They retain the spirit of historical working-class movements that sought to address issues of economic inequality and workers' rights. In contemporary social movements, there is often an aspiration to promote universal human interests, drawing from the historical struggles against oppression and exploitation.

The discussions surrounding social movements and protests reveal the complexities of these phenomena in the context of globalization. They serve as visible manifestations of deeper societal issues, offering opportunities for common objectives while grappling with diverse

and fragmentary characteristics. The dynamic between convergence and divergence underscores the adaptability of social movements, while their historical roots in transformative agendas highlight their enduring commitment to addressing systemic injustices and promoting universal human interests.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the theme of globalization encompasses economic domination by multinational corporations and resistance through diverse global protests and movements, addressing issues ranging from climate change to traditional concerns such as racism, sexuality, class, caste, and colonialism. As globalization continues to shape our world, the analysis of fiction becomes a powerful tool for understanding its multifaceted impact on society and culture.

The theme of globalization encapsulates a multifaceted discourse that extends far beyond its economic dimensions. It serves as a lens through which we can comprehend and analyze the global landscape, touching upon a myriad of interconnected issues.

### **Economic Reasons - Dominance and Hegemonic Attempts:**

At its core, globalization is marked by the economic forces that drive it. These economic dimensions reveal a complex interplay of power dynamics, where big multinational corporations often take center stage. The theme of globalization sheds light on the dominations and hegemonic attempts of these corporate giants. These entities, equipped with vast resources and global reach, wield considerable influence over economies, politics, and societies. Their pursuit of profit and market share can sometimes lead to exploitation, economic imbalances, and a concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. The theme of globalization forces us to confront these economic realities, raising critical questions about fairness, equity, and the role of regulation in a globalized world.

### **Resistance - Diverse Protests and Movements:**

However, the theme of globalization is not limited to economic dominance alone. It is equally characterized by the resistance it sparks around the world. Globalization has given rise to diverse protests and movements that span the globe, driven by a multitude of concerns. These movements represent a powerful response to the challenges posed by globalization, addressing not only economic issues but also an array of pressing global challenges. The protests encompass traditional themes of racism, sexuality, class, caste, and coloniality, highlighting the ways in which globalization intersects with various forms of social and cultural oppression. Moreover, contemporary global movements also focus on critical issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, and social justice, making them essential actors in advocating for a more equitable and sustainable world.

In essence, the theme of globalization serves as a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate web of economic interests, power dynamics, and global resistance

movements. It invites us to critically engage with the consequences of globalization while recognizing the agency of individuals and groups who strive for positive change in a world shaped by economic, cultural, and political interconnections. By examining both the dominations and the resistance inherent in globalization, we gain a more profound appreciation of the complexities and challenges of our interconnected world, inspiring dialogue, and action for a more just and inclusive global future.

### Works Cited:

- Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. India: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2008.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Globalization and its Discontents*: Noam Chomsky debates with Washington Post readers. *Washington Post*. 16 May 2000. 2022 Feb 1. <<https://chomsky.info/20000516/>>.
- DeLillo, Don. *Cosmopolis*. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the olive tree*. United Kingdom: Anchor Books, 2000.
- Gupta, Suman. *Globalization and Literature*. Germany: Polity Press, 2013.
- Hardt, M and A Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism / Postcolonialism: New Critical Idiom*. 2nd. Special Indian Edition: Routledge, 2009.
- McEwan, Ian. *Saturday*. United Kingdom: Random House, 2010.
- Newman, Robert. *The Fountain at the Center of the World*. United Kingdom: Verso, 2003.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. United States: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2018.
- Sainath, P. "And Then There Was the Market." *India-Seminar* no 497. India , 2001. 2022 Feb 1. <<https://www.india-seminar.com/2001/497.htm>>.
- Schwab, Klaus. *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2016. <<https://www.weforum.org/about/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab>>.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalism's Discontents*. *American Prospects*, 2002. 1 Feb 2022. <<https://archive.globalpolicy.org/globaliz/econ/2002/0114stiglitz.htm>>.
- —. *Making Globalization Work*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2007.