

Glocalizing the Narrative: Linguistic and Cultural Mediation in Ammaraj Joshi's *Short Stories*

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Abstract

This paper discusses linguistic and cultural negotiation in *A Nights Drama* by Ammaraj Joshi in the wider framework of Global English and Expanding Circle World Englishes. Placing the text in the context of the emerging canon of Nepalese English Literature, the paper examines how Joshi uses the concept of glocalization as a literary practice to find a middle ground between the local faithfulness and the global intelligibility of the culture. The analysis is built on the Kachru's ideas of linguistic nativization and bilingual creativity and the Roland Robertson theory of glocalization that is set out to four significant stories *An Uncertain Journey*, *The Bond of Blood*, *The Dying Father*, and *A Nights Drama*. The results reveal that Joshi nativizes the English language in a strategic manner in three levels: linguistic, cultural, and discursive. Linguistically, he legitimates the creative independence of the Expanding Circle with the help of lexical borrowing, syntactic transfer, and metaphors carried within the culture and echoing the rhythms of Nepali speech. His stories serve culturally as acts of translation, delivering Nepali social reality, including caste structures, Ratedi folk practices, and rural life to transnational readers without exoticization. Joshi, discursively, makes use of the English as a global language to express sharp remarks on the Maoist insurgency, labor migration, and gender inequality. Finally, the paper states Joshi's stories can be discussed as an illustration of the Nepalese English maturation as writers of the Expanding Circle are not passive receivers of Inner Circle norms but co-creators of their own, more globalized forms of literature.

Keywords: Cultural translation expanding circle, glocalization, literary nativization, socio-political.

Introduction

The historical process of spreading English all over the world during the past century has turned it into the multi-centred, multi-level linguistic phenomenon. English is no longer restricted to its own historical centres of Native, but is dispersed on into other sociocultural landscapes serving as a tool of instruction, administration, business, and literary manifestation. Such a shift has created a new theoretical paradigm of World Englishes that confronts monolithic and deficit-based conceptualizations of non-native varieties of English. This has been shown by researchers like Braj B. Kachru who have shown that English is adjusted to the local linguistic ecologies with resulting context-specific forms that are able to express indigenous identities and communicative requirements. In this, English is not imposed, borrowed, it is redefined, captured, and indigenized.

Nepal has a peculiar stance in this world of languages. Nepal falls into the category of the Expanding Circle of the English use as it does not have the colonial past that many English speaking communities in South Asia have. However, English is gaining more grounds in education,

administration, media and creative writing. The development of Nepali writing in English, especially following the revival of democracy in 1990, is an indication of a new literary domain where the local is expressing themselves using a global language. This emergence poses some significant questions concerning linguistic legitimacy, media representation of culture and narrative mediation.

Roland Robertson has come up with the concept of glocalization which is critical to the understanding of this phenomenon. Glocalization is defined as the interplay of the global aspects and local practices in which global forms are altered to fit local situations. In literature, glocalization refers to the use by writers of genres and languages that circulate on a global scale but which are enclosed in locally specific meanings. Instead of viewing English as a homogenising power, glocalization prefigures the role of local writers who strategically borrow and make use of English to convey indigenous worldview.

The collection of short stories by Ammaraj Joshi *A Nights Drama* is born in this changing cultural environment. As a Nepalese writer who writes in English, Joshi is in the overlap zone between worldwide linguistic expression and local social context. His narratives explore the themes of family compulsory, socio-economic disparity, ethical warfare, caste disparities and generational antagonism, problems that are well-established in Nepali culture. However, these discourses are mediated with English which is a language of global modernity and transnational audience. This situational dualism calls upon a questioning stance on how English is not only a means of communication but a place of cultural negotiation.

The literature on Nepali English writings has also reported the linguistic nativization processes, including lexical borrowing, hybridization and the code switching. The socio-political themes covered by Joshi in her fiction have been explored in other research, especially the conflict over classes and gender oppression. Nevertheless, an immense gap still exists in the study of the functioning of Joshi short stories as glocalized texts, works which facilitate the exchange between the cultural particularity and the global circulation of the texts. This is not just whether Joshi writes in English or not, but how English can be used to hold the Nepali cultural meanings without losing its particularity in his narratives structures.

This paper thus puts the short stories of Joshi in the larger theoretical paradigms of World Englishes and glocalization. It explores the way in which English, in an Expanding Circle sense, is culturally incorporated and narratively indigenized. Through the analysis of linguistic strategies, thematics, and narrative forms, the study aims at proving that the stories of Joshi are an example of a process of cultural mediation in which the global and the local are not the opposing terms of literal creation but the dimensions that constitute each other.

By doing this, the research paper is relevant to three connected academic debates: the emergence of Nepali English literature, the use of the World Englishes theory regarding the Expanding Circle literary setting, and the larger issues surrounding glocalization as a cultural and narrative practice. In these terms, the short stories by Joshi are not perceived as a peripheral imitation of the representative of metropolitan English fiction but rather as an active member of creation of a specific Nepali variety of a global narrative.

Review of Related Literatures

The theoretical traditions of World Englishes, English as a global language, and glocalization provide the theoretical framework of the current study and understand how English can be localized and mediated by culture in the literary production.

Historical works on non-native varieties of English, by Braj B. Kachru, *The Alchemy of English* (1986) and *The Other Tongue* (1992), criticize the deficit views of the varieties of English used by non-native speakers. The sociolinguistic expansion of English to other areas of the world is plotted in his Three Circles model: Inner, Outer, and Expanding. Nepal is part of the Expanding Circle which lacks the institutionalization of English as a language but is used as the medium of education and literary creation. Of particular relevance is the notion of "bilinguals' creativity" (159) presented by Kachru since the author predicts the agency of multilingual authors who reconfigure English to express culturally distinct experiences. Even though the initial work of Kachru focused on the contexts of Outer Circles, his model can be applied to Expanding Circle literary production, such as the short fiction by Joshi.

In the book, *English as a Global Language*, David Crystal highlights the pluricentric and globalized English and states that "nobody owns it any more... has the right to use it in the way they want" (Crystal 2-3). According to Crystal, English is an apt medium that can be used to transmit various cultural meanings across boundaries. Although such a view offers a logical explanation of the functional value of English to the Nepali writers, this paper contends that the English used by Joshi goes beyond the levels of neutrality and turns into a place of cultural mediation.

It is also the process of interaction between the global and local forces, which is described by Roland Robertson under the term of globalization, where the former is shaped by the latter and altered accordingly, and he writes, "global outlooks adapted to local conditions" (Robertson 28). Such adjustment is not done by outside authorities, but is made by local speakers themselves, in linguistic contexts. Sharifian goes further to argue that speakers of World Englishes are actively re-creating English so as to mirror local conceptualizations of culture. He observes that different communities "glocalize" English differently based on local modes of social cultural existence (Sharifian 138). This agentic localization is the key to the interpretation of the narrative techniques of Joshi.

Alastair Pennycook makes the issue of diffusionist models of language spreading more complex when he argues that global forms are necessarily locally embedded. He suggests that "multiple, heterogeneous and simultaneous histories" (199) as opposed to a center-periphery model. It is in this light that the stories by Joshi can be read as not based on imitative borrowing of Western forms of literature but rather as a result of the intersection of cultures between Nepali oral culture and the patterns of global narrative.

The politics of writing in English can be discussed using the help of postcolonial theory and especially the notions of "appropriation" and "abrogation" (37) as formulated by Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin. This is because Nepal was not colonized by Britain, though, so the work of Joshi does not particularly focus on the act of "writing back" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 96), but rather on gaining access to the world literary space via English. So, glocalization provides a better interpretative scheme in this paper.

The use of Expanding Circle English is also justified by research of English as Lingua Franca (ELF). According to Mauranen, "ELF is a systematic and innovative global communication and not a bad usage" (17). On the same note, Vetchinnikova argues that Expanding Circle Englishes acquire "stable features by means of repeated local use" (37) which are processes of nativization not error. This scholarship confirms the reading of the stylistic patterns of Joshi as being culturally significant, as opposed to linguistically deviant.

Most empirical studies of World Englishes theory in literature have concentrated on Outer Circle works like the Indian and African English literature. In comparison, the production of Nepali English literature has not been properly investigated.

In Karn, the research into nativization of Nepalese English literature records the strategies which are "lexical borrowing, hybridization, code-switching and translation of cultural expressions" (31). He places authors such as Ammaraj Joshi in a wider context of indigenising English in Nepal (Karn 30). Nevertheless, his work does not theorize these strategies relating to the lens of glocalization.

According to a study by Dewan concerning the Nepalization of English lexis, there is massive Nepali lexical borrowing, such as kinship, cultural and religious references. According to Dewan, the speakers of Nepali English "transform the vocabulary and structure to meet the needs of local communication" (15). Although his findings are mainly linguistic, they give a platform to study the way such features work in the narrative form of Joshi.

The Marxist interpretation of *A Night Drama* by Dhakal explores the theme of conflict of classes, and socio-economic oppression in the chosen stories. He claims that the fiction written by Joshi portrays the "exploitation of the marginalized characters and structural inequalities of the Nepali society" (Dhakal 45). Although the paper by Dhakal provides a very useful socio-political perspective, it fails to answer the question on how English is used as a mediating language to reflect such realities.

The bibliographical analysis of Nepali writing in English after 1990 by Pun places Joshi in the "middle of an emerging literary trend" (36). Even though he has written about the growth of the English literary production in Nepal, he fails to examine the narrative and linguistic strategies.

Collectively, these works support the existence of nativization and socio-cultural critique in the Nepali English literature yet fails to critically analyse the short stories of Joshi as glocalized narrative spaces. There are a number of gaps in the existing scholarship. The socio-political analysis by Dhakal fails to deal with linguistic mediation. Dewan and Karn record the process of nativization but fail to discuss its narrative and aesthetic capabilities. In addition, although sociolinguistics and globalization studies have widely discussed the glocalization theory, they have not been applied to the short fiction by Joshi in a systematic manner. This paper is thus a combination of World Englishes and glocalization theory to refer to short stories by Joshi as places of cultural mediation. It looks at the process through which English in an Expanding Circle scenario is localized, how Nepali socio-cultural facts are incorporated in global narrative modalities and how Joshi balances local particularity and global intelligibility. In this way, this study adds to the Nepali English literary studies and broadens the application of the glocalization theory to the Expanding Circle literary productions.

Methodology

In this research, a qualitative, interpretative study design with close textual analysis is utilized to investigate linguistic and cultural aspects of Nepalese literature in English. The theoretical paradigm on which this analysis is anchored is based largely on the model of World Englishes (1986) by Braj Kachru with his ideas on the concept of nativization, bilingual creativity and contextualization. The framework proposed by Kachru gives the means to determine how the cultural peculiarities of a source language fill the lexical gaps of a target one. The paper combines the Roland Robertson's theory of glocalization, and David Crystal's concept of pluricentricity to complement this model of linguistics. Although the model of Kachru clarifies the process of linguistic transfer, the theory of Robertson is used to understand these transfers as strategic cultural negotiations where the global literary forms are modified to convey the local socio-political needs. Also, S.K. Karn scholarship on Nepalese English is used to place the writer in the context of the particular historical and literary surrounding.

The Primary texts used in this paper are selected short stories from the collection of Ammaraj Joshi *A Nights Drama*. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the narratives which demonstrate a high concentration of the linguistic innovation and socio-cultural particularity. The chosen stories that are analyzed in detail are the following: *A Nights Drama*, *The Dying Father*, *An Uncertain Journey* and *The Bond of Blood*. These stories were chosen as they offer a full cross-cut slice of the Nepalese experience, between traditional folk rituals and caste hierarchies, to contemporary problems of labor migration and civil strife, and therefore offered an abundance of data on English in different registers and social situations.

The analysis of stories was carried out in three levels of categorical coding that is reflective of the thematic structure of the study. To begin with, there was a scan of the text based on Linguistic Nativization that isolates the cases of lexical borrowing, code-mixing and syntactic transfer to get the idea of how the author creates a particular rhythm in the narrative. Secondly, it concerned Cultural Translation, the way in which the author turns culturally specific objects, including the Ratedi performance or caste-based interactions, into something that a global reader can understand without losing their local flavor. Lastly, it was considered as Glocalized Discourse and deconstructed the way the global medium of English is reused to express the specially local critique of political corruption, gender inequality, and the Maoist insurgency.

Analysis and Interpretation

The short stories by Ammaraj Joshi of *A Nights Drama* are a crucial example to the creative extension of the World Englishes model into the Expanding Circle as it depicts the process of glocalization as a literary practice. The paper discusses the ways in which Joshi uses the concept of strategic nativization to build his own voice that is both local and understandable to the global audience. The discourse is divided into three subthemes, namely Linguistic Nativization, Cultural Translation, and Glocalized Discourse.

Nativization of Linguistics in a Situation of Expanding Circle

The active process of integrating local terms into English enables Expanding Circle authors to be culturally true to themselves, even as they have to negotiate the world literary standards. According to Kachru (1986), "the lexis of a language is open to the greatest intrusion from a language in contact...

a process that allows bilingual writers to fill the lexical gaps” where the target language lacks equivalence (42). In “A Nights drama”, Joshi has introduced a character who wears “white *daura surabal* the typical Nepali combination of tight jodhpurs, with overshirt and waistcoat and a black Kashmiri coat” (3). Incorporating the Nepali word *daura surabal* and an immediate parenthesis gloss, Joshi manages to fine-tune the immersion of the reader, reaching the level of preservation of the cultural specificity without losing the accessibility.

Contextualized borrowing helps authors to use culturally charged terms without any direct translation, but the meaning is provided by the narrative frame. Kachru (1986) refers to it as contextualized borrowing observing that in the case of bilingual writers, “the meaning becomes clear from the co-text” (41), and therefore direct translation is not necessary. In “The Dying Father”, Joshi narrates that “those who had earned money by selling ghee or other farm products would go to the market to get things for their own use” (127). In this instance, the word ghee is smoothly incorporated into the economic setting of the sentence, showing that Joshi does not want the local things to be exoticized, but he rather believes the global reader and assumes that the latter can draw their own conclusions based on the agrarian nature of the contextual situation.

The reduplication method enables authors to deal with the complicated social stratifications by using local terms in conjunction with explanatory clauses. According to Karn (2012), this approach makes the text “comprehensible for both English and Nepalese audiences” (37) by offering markers and definitions of cultural meanings at the same time. In “The Dying Father”, the dialogue of Saroj is organized in this very way: “That is why you are a Doom - one of the untouchables” (128). This particular syntactic construction compels the reader to deal with the particular Nepali caste category (Doom) and then at once makes the reader deal with its dehumanizing English counterpart, thus rendering the local reality of caste prejudice without blurring its local origin.

The practice of code-mixing by using untranslated proverbs is used to affirm a unique bilingual identity, which is not fully assimilated to the target language. According to Kachru (1986), he notes that “the use of proverbs and idioms from local languages in English texts... provides cultural authenticity and establishes the author's bilingual creativity” (43). Joshi has added the Nepali saying “*chokta khana gayeki budhi jholma gayera mari*” (110) in “An Uncertain Journey”. It is mentioned in a discussion of foreign employment. The fact that Joshi never translates this proverb into the context where the danger of migration is explicitly spelled out makes the international reader realize that it is on Nepali diction that they are reading this text, and it is through the incomprehensibility of the source language that the wisdom of the characters is underscored as culturally rich.

Syntactic nativization is where the grammatical rhythm of the English language can be used to reflect the emotional and physical topography of the local context. According to Kachru (1986), syntactic transfer happens when the underlying patterns of an immediate language impact on English causing the outcome of a “distinctive stylistic effects” (43). In “The Dying Father”, Joshi reflects the slowly rising wrath of Saroj using parallel form: ““Saroj kept recalling Piram's promise. The more he remembered Piram's words, the more infuriated he became” (128). This rhythmic enhancement probably inspired by Nepali rhetoric models, shifts the fixed English language into a container that transports the concrete and rising pace of the wrath of the character.

Expanding Circle fiction invents specific stylistic conventions, which puts the idea of 'learner English' into question by confirming the non-native syntax as a means of philosophical expression. Crystal posits that due to the pluricentricity of global English, it is possible to "the development of distinct stylistic norms in different cultural contexts" (172) that are legitimate rather than deviant. The syntax used in the dialogue of Aakriti in "An Uncertain Journey" is a balanced aphoristic one: "Earth and its base metals are not enough; love, wisdom and virtue do count" (113). This formal nearly archaic syntax is the indication that Joshi is borrowing the English language to build a high-register moral discourse that embodies Nepali values of spiritual fulfillment instead of material enrichment.

Figure of speech in nativized literature broadens the visualization of English, that is, it attracts metaphors of local agrarian and craft economies. According to Kachru (1986), "contextually embedded metaphor" draws on local cultural contexts to create images that "enriches English by expanding its figurative resources" (41). In "A Nights Drama", Joshi says that a snoring man resembles "an ironsmith's leather bellows" (7). This metaphor establishes a sense perception, a sound linkage between the auditory sense experience of the character and the visual sense of the rural Nepali village life which grounds a universal human experience (snoring) on a local material world.

This adaptation of English metaphors based on the specific environment conditions in the places makes the reader to have a special sensory feeling. According to Crystal (2003), the worldwide status of English enables it to be "adapted to express any cultural content, any human experience, including the geographical facts of various geography" (115). The Himalayan winter in the story "The Dying Father" is presented with the following expression: "Nails of frost protruded on the sides of the trail, forming a slippery canopy" (128). The fact that Joshi invented the image of the nails of frost gives a sense of touch and violence which makes the landscape hostile in a better way than the meteorological terms would have done.

Cultural Translation: From Local Artifact to Universal Theme

Local systems of stratification need to be translated into the world so that the socio-economic contexts can be understood by the global audience. According to Kachru, "social hierarchies require extensive contextualization...as the lexical resources of Inner Circle varieties may lack equivalent terms" (104). In "The Dying Father" Joshi describes the winter salt migration saying that villagers "came home only to learn that someone in the family had passed in those twenty days" (126). It is this contextual framing that renders the Nepali subsistence economy extremely precarious so that the reader is able to appreciate why a debt of a few rupees can result in the dehumanizing conflict that ensues thereafter.

Specific local vocabulary of prejudice can be turned into the general narratives of human cruelty through the literary narratives. According to Kachru (1986), explicit moral framing can help to create even the strongest impression of local social realities without causing any intelligibility loss (133). In "The Dying father", Saroj extends to dismiss the dying man by saying: "Anyhow, if he dies, the sky is not going to fall in. Every old man has to die" (129). When Joshi translates the caste-specific indifference of the schoolteacher into plain, earthy English, he is altering the sophisticated systemic system of oppression of the caste system into a universally familiar image of individual inhumanity.

Glocalized storytelling functions according to the principle of employing localized forms of rituals to organize narratives that deal with global subjects of performance and gender. According to Robertson (1995), "the global is not an opposition of the local but constituted by the local" (28), that is, the local cultures actively influence the interaction with the global ideas. In "A Nights Drama", the narrator talks about a performer who has "tits resembling tiny pimples on the pink mound of her breasts" (7), only to later on reveal that this is a Ratedi (wedding night) by a man. By not revealing the cultural background of the cross-dressing ceremony until the conclusion, Joshi employs the local culture to confuse the international reader in the same fashion as the child-narrator himself is confused and the whole issue of gender performance must be re-evaluated.

Stylistic adaption of the prose in the English language can reflect the psychological burden of gendered suffering in the male-dominated societies. Kachru (1986) examines the concept of stylistic nativization as a technique that allows the "use of rhetorical patterns of the local language to determine the structure of the English prose in order to reinforce cultural assumptions" (43). In "The Bond of Blood", the life of Manorama is presented in a cumulative list: "Hunger was her friend; scarcity was her company, humiliation was her shadow, worries her breathing" (134). The repetitive, parallel type of sentence structure translates the dullness of the monotony of the twenty years of widowhood of the character and enables the syntax itself to bear the weight of her strengths.

In translation of ethical systems, authors must work across the divide between the moral wisdom of the local and the international individualism. According to Kachru (1986), ethical translation is the translation process in which the "local moral wisdom is rendered in terms accessible to international readers while preserving its cultural authenticity" (139). The last advice that the father gives in "The Dying father" is as follows: "Do not ever displease anybody, Babu. Life is very short for all these things" (130). This succinct commandment embodies a particular South Asian fatalistic/social harmony ethic that compares to the litigious, transactional ethic of the present-day world embodied by Saroj.

Glocalizing Discourse: Broadening Circle Critique in Global Stage.

The global reach of English is often used in nativized literature to reveal and criticize the latent local social divides. According to Kachru (1986), "nativized Englishes often become vehicles for social critique" (42), so the writers can discuss local injustices to two different audiences. The story "The Dying Father" inherits the bias of the protagonist: "Negative thoughts about Piram's class of people - the lowly ironsmiths circled in Saroj's mind" (128). Joshi makes an English diagnosis of the pathology of caste by directly naming the thoughts as negative and associating them with a category of people, making it not only a cultural characteristic but a structural social failure.

Global English could be a powerful tool of ridiculing the hypocrisy of local politics that tries to disguise authoritarianism. Robertson cautions against failed glocalization in which rhetoric of locating is being used to legitimize practices of oppression (30). In "An Uncertain Journey", Aakur challenges official rhetoric: "People are beaten with batons brutally and you say we do have democracy" (108) the status quo is defended where a minister says that "democracy with our own indigenous flavors" (108). Joshi employs this term to mock the politicalization of indigeneity and how

local cultural terminologies are arms with which to fight off universal norms of human rights and democratic responsibility.

Narrative fiction is capable of bringing the statistical abstractions of labor migration in the world to life as corporeal, individual tragedies. Kachru (1986) attests that the phenomenon of narrativized social critique is when individual narratives are used to expose the injustices of the system (46). In the story 'An Uncertain Journey', Joshi talks about four coffins at the airport, "one of the dead was the only bread earner of two surviving brothers studying in Kathmandu...second was only one son of his mother living in Siraha...third was only child of aging parents living in Anarmani... and forth dead had lost his parents in Madi bus blast" (117). These particular biographical facts shatter the anonymity of the migrant worker, and it turns a worldwide economic phenomenon into a pair of separate, tragic Nepalese stories.

The typification of characters provides the authors with an opportunity to incarnate national trauma in the physical contacts of family members. According to Kachru (1986), in the nativized literature, typification enables individual characters to serve as a representative of society at large (148). In 'The Bond of Blood', Joshi states that "many thought that Madhu and Rupak were twins" (135), which underscores the fact that the two brothers are indistinguishable as they later take sides in the civil war. This bodily parallel is a political metaphor, which indicates that the war of the state (Madhu) against insurgents (Rupak) is a fratricidal war with the same entities, which makes the violence provide something absurd and tragic.

The local cultural symbols can be combined with the universal literary allusions to formulate the extreme grief through the use of glocalized imagery. According to Robertson (1995), the strength of glocalization in images is those images, which "appeal to local symbolism to gain the universal resonance" (32). In 'The Bond of Blood', Manorama finds her dead sons and the story goes further to mention: "She tried to pull one son from the other. But the clotted blood refused" (142). This picture of blood merging the victim and the perpetrator into a whole is an effective commentary on the civil war, which indicates that after the bloodshed, the differences in ideologies are melded into one indivisible tragedy.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that the *A Nights Drama* by Ammaraj Joshi is a dynamic location of negotiation of language and culture in the context of Global English and World Englishes. Via linguistic nativization, Joshi transforms the English language to receive Nepali lexicon, kinship, caste terms, and culturally constructed speech patterns, which confirm the power of an Expanding Circle writer. At the same time his stories engage in the process of cultural translation, making the social stratification of Nepal, the crisis of migrations, rituals and political conflicts, understandable to a wide audience around the world without weakening their locality. In this regard, the collection supports the theory of localised Englishes Braj B. Kachru, and supports Alastair Pennycook, who believes that global Englishes are always plural, hybrid, and local. In the fiction of Joshi, English is not a forced linguistic form, but a creatively borrowed form that serves to give an expression to Nepali memory, moralities, and identity.

In addition, dramatizing the issues of caste discrimination, civil conflict, labor migration and democratic disillusionment, the stories can be discussed as the examples of the glocalization introduced by Roland Robertson, when the global discourses are interacting with the local realities to create new cultural meanings. The prose of Joshi shows how the world political terms, economic structures and ideological streams are translated through the Nepal experience creating both localized and universal tale. Finally, *A Night's Drama* leads to the establishment of a unique Nepali English literary voice, undermining the assumptions of what Global English research usually considers to be the center-periphery dichotomy. The collection confirms that English, instead of being homogenizing in terms of cultural expression, can be a more open and dialogic area where the voices of the marginalized negotiate, redefine and reinterpret their role in the global literary space.

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