



## Diasporic voices in social media and contemporary English writing

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### Abstract

Nowadays, diasporic communities use social media to share their stories, emotions, memories, and hardships in this digital age. In contrast to more conventional forms of media and literature, online communities provide expats a sense of belonging, visibility, and connection. The term “digital diasporas” describes the ways in which communities that have been forcibly removed from their homes use online platforms to communicate with one another, keep cultural traditions alive, and negotiate identities that transcend geographical and ethnic lines. This research delves into the ways in which diasporic voices shared on social media platforms interact with modern English literature. The study demonstrates how online platforms impact storytelling styles, introduce new narrative forms, and challenge conventional literary boundaries by reading digital narratives alongside selected literary texts. Previously silenced voices are now able to have their voices heard, take part in public discourse, and influence cultural and political conversations thanks to social media. Social media has drastically altered diasporic expression, according to this study, which draws on ideas from cultural studies, digital media theory, and diaspora studies. Once reserved for a select few in the literary world, this conversation is now open to all and visible around the world. The paper takes a qualitative and multidisciplinary approach to analyze how journalism, digital platforms, and modern English literature are interacting. It finds that digital spaces are changing literary expression and diasporic identity in the modern world.

**Keywords:** Indian diasporic writing, social media, digital space, modern English, marginalized people, homeland, identity crisis

### Introduction

Postcolonial literature, especially that written in English by people from countries that have experienced colonization, has long focused on diaspora. Poems, novels, and memoirs penned for affluent literary audiences typically dealt with diasporic experiences such as displacement, nostalgia, exile, and cultural loss. But diasporic identities are built, expressed, and circulated differently now than they were before the rise of social media. Literary works published by metropolitan presses are no longer the exclusive domain of diasporic subjects in the digital age. Rather, they are highly engaged in online communities where everyday stories, cultural recollections, political views, and personal narratives are shared instantly and on a global scale. Because colonial power structures and patriarchal norms in both their home and host societies further silenced diasporic women, these platforms have taken on added importance for them.

This paper contends that digital culture is fundamental to any understanding of modern English literature. Through its many uses, social media platforms serve as a literary laboratory that enriches, challenges, and broadens the horizons of canonical English literature. Looking at these digital narratives through the perspective of postcolonial feminism, we can see how power, gender, race, migration, and gender all play a role in the formation of Diasporic subjectivities. Digital narratives created by diasporic communities today offer a different kind of literature, one in which gender, race, culture, and power interact intricately through personal testimonies shared on social media, online memoirs, migrant blogs, activist hashtag movements, and

hybrid creative forms such as digital poetry and spoken-word performances. These stories highlight the gendered aspect of diasporic experience by expressing concerns about cultural alienation, racial discrimination, emotional labor, and negotiating one's identity that are frequently downplayed in popular literature and media. Diasporic subjects, especially women, challenge patriarchal, racial, and colonial systems in traditional literary production by reclaiming narrative agency through the strategic use of English alongside native languages, visual imagery, and performative modes of expression. The digital texts in question serve as counter-narratives, as seen through the perspective of postcolonial feminism, that challenge the prevailing narratives around migration and belonging. They show how diasporic subjectivities are not fixed by national or cultural boundaries, but rather fluid, hybrid, and constantly transformed within transnational digital spaces.

### The Origins and Ascent of Indian Diasporic Literature

Stories, memoirs, and novels written by Indians have chronicled their harrowing experiences of migration, displacement, and emotional turmoil since the early days of Indian migration overseas. By reading these works, we gain insight into the social and historical climate of the period as a whole, as well as into the lives of specific individuals. Using first-hand accounts from his travels across Europe and India, Sake Dean Mahomet penned *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1794), one of the earliest known works by an Indian diasporic writer. Looking at the first interactions between India and the West through the eyes of a migrant is a fascinating and instructive read. Curiously, there was

literary output in India prior to the publication of Indian writings in English outside of the country. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*, widely considered the first Indian novel in English, was published in 1864, although the first English text written by an Indian resident of India, Kylas Chunder Dutt's *A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours: A Fragment of the 1835 Revolution*, came out in 1835. This timeline implies that many writers from India's diaspora were involved with English literary expression before many writers from India itself.

The Girmitya people, who were taken as indentured servants to colonies like Mauritius, Fiji, and Trinidad, contributed significantly to the diasporic literary tradition. Diasporic literature owes a great deal to the many who took up English as a literary language and whose descendants continued the tradition. One prominent family whose writings are essential to Indian diaspora literature is the Naipaul family. A posthumously published but culturally and historically significant work, *The Adventures of Gurudeva and Other Indian Tales* was written by the Indo-Trinidadian writer Prasad Naipaul.

His sons, Shiva and V. S. Naipaul, continued their father Prasad Naipaul's literary work. Shiva Naipaul's writing demonstrated outstanding potential and profound intellectual complexity despite his untimely demise at the age of forty. V. S. Naipaul, his older brother, became a literary giant, whose works and characters have stood the test of time and captivated audiences around the globe. Themes of identity, exile, personal freedom, and the psychological aftermath of colonialism and its aftermath are explored in works like *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *In a Free State*, *A Bend in the River*, and *The Enigma of Arrival*. V. S. Naipaul won the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Booker Prize for his literary achievements. The intricacies of postcolonial and diasporic life are profoundly reflected in his writing. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is another name belonging to the group of diasporic writers. *Sister of My Heart* and *The Mistress of Spices* are two of her works that have been adapted into films. She sensitively incorporates Indian culture into her work. Along with stories of immigrant women's courage and abuse, she explores issues of rootlessness, alienation, and inequality. She also discusses emotional isolation and non-communication. In her first collection of short stories, she explores the experiences of women who are torn between two worlds, including their despair, disappointment, and adaptation to this situation. The immigrant experience especially that of women, is beautifully and unambiguously reflected in the characters of Sumita, Jayanti, Meera, and Abha.

### **Diaspora and Digital Space**

The term diaspora has evolved from its original meaning of forcible migration—mostly in Jewish history—to encompass a wide range of migrant experiences impacted by colonialism, globalization, and transnational mobility. Stuart Hall and others in the academic community view diaspora not as a static identity but as a dynamic process characterized by cultural negotiation, fragmentation, and hybridity. The rise of digital diaspora is a reflection of how diasporic life has changed in the era of the internet. Migrants can engage with host societies through digital platforms while still keeping emotional, cultural, and political ties to their homelands. Vertical communication, collaborative writing, and live storytelling are all made

possible by social media, in contrast to more conventional forms of media. From a cultural standpoint, online communities serve as repositories of diasporic memory, housing oral histories, linguistic materials, musical compositions, gastronomic tales, and political arguments. By highlighting transnational and hybrid identities, these spaces also question culture from a national perspective.

### **Expressions of Postcolonial Feminism in Diaspora**

Within postcolonial societies, postcolonial feminism challenges patriarchal nationalism as well as Western feminist universalism. Bell hooks, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and other scholars stress that racial, class, and colonial, and migratory structures interact to shape women's oppression. Diasporic women are in a very precarious situation. They must navigate gender conventions, family expectations, and cultural traditions passed down from generation to generation while grappling with racial prejudice and cultural alienation in host communities. By empowering women to express themselves freely and bypassing institutional barriers, social media amplifies and diversifies these expressions, which have been previously addressed in traditional diasporic literature.

Through their use of digital platforms, diasporic women are able to share their stories of resistance to political oppression, sexuality, motherhood, cultural policing, and domestic labor. The patriarchal silences within diasporic communities and the colonial stereotypes of "Third World women" are both broken by these narratives.

### **The Emergence of Social Media as an Artistic and Literary Platform**

New narrative forms have emerged on social media, which pose a threat to established literary standards. Blogs, vlogs, micro-narratives, and digital essays all work together to make it difficult to distinguish between digital essays, journalism, autobiography, and literature. These forms value raw emotion, group involvement, and immediate gratification more than formal prose. What constitutes literature is a crucial question that this change brings up from the standpoint of English literature. Does anyone have the authority to share tales? What changes to language and form can we expect to see in digital narratives? Visual imagery, oral storytelling, code-switching, and multilingual expression are common techniques used in diasporic social media writing. These characteristics pose a challenge to colonial linguistic hierarchies because they more accurately reflect real-life experiences than standard literary English.

### **Topics that Touch on Modern English Literature**

The widespread impact of digital culture is becoming more apparent in modern English literature, especially in works that deal with diasporic subjectivities. Fragmented identity, cultural surveillance, algorithmic visibility, and transnational belonging are some of the themes that many diasporic writers first discuss in online spaces before developing them formally in literary works. Even though they write in more traditional literary forms, authors such as Meena Kandasamy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie consider the emotional and political aspects of displacement in ways that are highly relevant to digital narratives. Thematic concerns in Lahiri's and Adichie's fictional and non-fictional works are shaped by their respective online discourses on linguistic exile, self-

translation, hybrid identity, and cultural loss. Adichie's essays and public digital interventions on race, feminism, and migration have been widely circulated through social media, TED platforms, and blogs. Similarly, Kandasamy uses digital rhetoric to critique caste, gendered violence, and postcolonial power structures in her politically charged poetry and prose, drawing directly from the urgency and aggressive tone of social media activism.

As a platform for writers to experiment with form, social media allows them to share micro-narratives, autobiographical fragments, personal essays, and political commentary, all of which can serve as inspiration for longer works of literature. Online blogs, social media sites like Twitter and Instagram, and other microblogging services provide writers, especially women and oppressed diasporic subjects, a way to circumvent the traditional publishing system and assert their narrative power. An example of this trend is the proliferation of digital short-form writing, spoken-word poetry on platforms like YouTube and Instagram, and personal blog essays that blend forms of literature, activism, and digital testimony. Digital diasporic voices transform narrative form, authorial voice, and modes of representation in contemporary English writing from the margins, as demonstrated by the reciprocal relationship between online expression and print literature. From a postcolonial feminist perspective, these intersections show how diasporic women writers use online platforms to fight censorship, gain visibility, and rethink literature as a global, collaborative, and politically active activity.

### **Journalism, Online Communities, and Feminists in Diaspora**

Contemporary diasporic women are taking to social media as a form of citizen journalism, documenting and sharing stories of cultural marginalization, racism, gendered violence, and exclusionary migration policies that are often overlooked or misrepresented in mainstream media. In their daily experiences with border regimes, workplace discrimination, religious profiling, and domestic precarity, diasporic women tell their stories through blogs, Twitter threads, Instagram stories, podcasts, and YouTube channels. This creates counter-narratives that challenge dominant media frames that often romanticize migrant women as cultural outsiders or passive victims. Digital interventions that prioritize first-person testimony, emotional storytelling, and community-based reporting challenge the epistemic authority of conventional news organizations.

The proliferation of digital storytelling has opened the door to new ways of knowing, one that elevates first-hand experience to the status of an authoritative source in journalism. Diasporic women's personal narratives can transform into politically powerful discourses on a global scale, as seen in hashtag movements like #MeToo, #SayHerName, and #BlackLivesMatter, as well as in region-specific campaigns that tackle Islamophobia, caste oppression, and migrant labor rights. Subaltern women are taking the lead in public discourse and policy discussions, which is a huge step forward from the previous model of representation in elite media and academic discourse, according to postcolonial feminists. Bypassing institutional gatekeeping and claiming narrative agency, marginalized voices can be heard more easily on digital platforms. This reimagines journalism as a feminist, participatory, transnational practice.

### **The Resistance Movement and Cultural Politics in Online Diasporas**

Among diasporic communities, social media has become an important platform for cultural resistance and political mobilization, especially for women who face multiple forms of marginalization. Many feminist campaigns that address issues such as gender-based violence, caste discrimination, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, and immigration injustice gain transnational visibility through the use of digital platforms. Diasporic women utilize digital tools to express collective grievances and mobilize solidarity across borders. Online activism centered on refugee rights, racialized surveillance, and restrictive citizenship laws is an example of this.

Digital activism by feminists in diaspora frequently employs a two-pronged strategy for resistance. Migrant women are not only not silenced or culturally backward, but it also challenges Western imperial and neocolonial narratives that hold these views. It also takes a stand against conservative and patriarchal practices, such as gender-based silencing, religious fundamentalism, caste hierarchies, and honour-based violence, both in diasporic and homeland communities. The multi-faceted positionality of postcolonial feminist fight in transnational spaces is reflected in the use of social media by writers, journalists, and activists like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Meena Kandasamy, and countless grassroots digital collectives to critique oppressions on a global and local level.

Diasporic women reimagine social media as a space for cultural expression, political critique, and feminist ethics via online writings, digital poetry, essays, and activist journalism. These online Diasporas serve as more than just platforms for speech; they are also contesting arenas where gender, nation, and belonging meanings are perpetually debated. By examining digital resistance in diasporic contexts through the perspective of postcolonial feminist theory, we can see how technology is changing our perceptions of culture, journalism, and feminist practice in today's globalized society by facilitating new kinds of solidarity, visibility, and political imagination.

### **Conclusion**

Literary and cultural history is witnessing a watershed moment with the convergence of diasporic voices, social media, and modern English writing. Diasporic women's voices, which have been historically silenced in canonical literary spaces, have been amplified by digital platforms, which have democratized storytelling by breaking down literary barriers. From a postcolonial feminist vantage point, diasporic women are able to use social media as a tool for political organizing and cultural preservation, which helps them to confront oppression in all its manifestations and shape modern English literature. In order to create a digital English literary studies that is more inclusive, pluralistic, and decolonized, it is crucial to acknowledge these alternative narrative spaces. Simultaneously, diaspora has changed considerably over successive generations. There is a colossal difference between the realities experienced by diasporic communities of the second and third generations and the nostalgic, alienating, and migratory experiences of the first generation. Geographical boundaries have shrunk and migration is no longer seen as primarily a loss or rupture as a result of increased awareness brought about by technological advancements. Generations after us see

hyphenated subjectivities, dual citizenship, and dual identities more as opportunities for strength than threats. In this shifting framework, diaspora is seen as a place of cultural enrichment, creative abundance, and increased liberty rather than a state of permanent flux. People in diaspora have more freedom from societal and cultural constraints because of the hybrid cultures that have developed as a result of frequent transnational movement, which go beyond fixed ideas of home and homeland. New opportunities for identity formation and literary expression have arisen as a result of diaspora, which scholars have noted now represents cultural and imaginative riches rather than deprivation.

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