

City as a Character in Contemporary Indian Fiction

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Cities have been crucial to the plot in fiction. In literary studies, cities are often used as epithets and are associated with authors; like Dickens' London, Hardy's Wessex, Joyce's Dublin and so on and so forth. While their primary function was to serve as a backdrop, a setting, cities turned out to be more than just being that. Cities became montages of life and times and evolve as characters in their own right which could be analysed and understood through the lenses of time and space in which these were set. Contemporary fiction continues to explore city as a character by focusing on how cities have been changing and what these stand for the ones that live in cities. Rapid changes in economic and social dynamics have turned cities into sites of interrogation as diverse interlocutors continue to become part of cities and stake their claims in urban spaces.

This paper will read select Indian novels in the light of 'City as the Southern Question' as cities take the centre stage in Indian Fiction as underbellies of rapid changes sweeping India as it continues to become more urban than it ever was.