Mapping the Postcolonial Mind: A Digital Analysis of Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy

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Abstract:
As literary educations navigate the "Digital Turn," the mixing of Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a transformative lens for decoding complex narrative structures. This paper executes a computational analysis of two pillars of Indian postmodernism: Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children and Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things. By utilizing Transformer-based Natural Language Processing (NLP); specifically, the RoBERTa model, this study quantifies "postcolonial irony" and linguistic hybridity. The research transitions from traditional close reading to "distant reading" (Moretti, 2013), mapping the emotional volatility and character networks which define the "postcolonial mind." Results indicate that AI can successfully identify the fragmented "staccato" emotional arcs and the "chutnification" of language that characterize the Indian postmodern experience.

Keywords: Digital Humanities, Chutnification, Historiographic Metafiction, Large Language Models, Trauma Cluster, Context-Aware Cleaning.

Introduction

The postcolonial novel is not merely a story; it is a site of linguistic and structural resistance. In the context of Indian Writing in English (IWE), the 1980s marked a departure from the "**gentle realism**" of earlier pioneers like R.K. Narayan. This turn, directed by Salman Rushdie and later polished by Arundhati Roy, introduced a postmodern aesthetic well-defined by fragmentation, irony, and the subversion of colonial language.

Though, the analysis of these works has remained largely qualitative, dependent on the subjective interpretation of the critic. In the "**Digital Age**," the arrival of **Digital Humanities (DH)** presents an opportunity to treat literature as data. This paper finds to quantify the "**Postcolonial Mind**" by putting on AI-driven sentiment analysis and text mining to these seminal works. By treating the novel as a "high-dimensional vector space," we can reveal patterns of "**hybridity**" and "**memory**" that remain invisible to the naked eye.

Literature Review: From Chutnification to Distant Reading

The Postmodern Shift in India

The Indian postmodern novel is inextricably linked to postcolonialism. *Midnight's Children* (1981) of Salman Rushdie novel, introduced **Historiographic Metafiction**; a style that pens history, at the same time questioning the validity of historical records. "Chutnification" (Rushdie, 1981) of Rushdie, the English language-mixing Hindi, Urdu, and regional languages into the foreign tongue, served as a primary tool for decolonizing the mind.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) turned the focus from "**Big History**" to the "**Small Things**." Her prose is characterized by its sensory-heavy and non-linear language structure, which scholars like Homi Bhabha (1994) would describe as "hybridity," a third space that exists between the colonizer and the colonized.

The Digital Crack

In the last decade, the field of **Digital Humanities** has challenged the hegemony of 'Close Reading'. Franco Moretti (2013) proposed **"Distant Reading,"** which involves using computers to scan thousands of pages to find macro-patterns. While critics argued that computers cannot "understand" literature, the rise of **Large Language Models (LLMs)** and **Transformer architectures** has closed this gap. Modern AI can now detect; nuance, irony, and sentiment with a degree of accuracy that rivals human experts.

Methodology: The AI-Driven Pipeline

To map the postcolonial mind, this study employs a three-tier computational pipeline using the Python programming language and state-of-the-art AI models.

Corpus Preparation and Cleaning

The digital versions of *Midnight's Children* and *The God of Small Things* were tokenized using the spaCy NLP library. Unlike standard text mining, "Digital Age" literary analysis requires **context-aware cleaning**. We specifically avoided removing "stop words" that convey cultural weight in Indian English (e.g., "ji," "baba," or unique repetitions like "small-small").

Sentiment Volatility (RoBERTa Model)

Standard sentiment analysis tools (like VADER) often fail with postmodern texts because they cannot detect irony. This study utilizes **RoBERTa (Robustly Optimized BERT Approach)**. RoBERTa is a "Transformer" model, meaning it looks at the entire sentence simultaneously to understand context.

We calculated the **SV (Sentiment Variance)**, a metric designed to measure how rapidly a text shifts between positive and negative emotional states. In postmodern literature, high SV indicates narrative fragmentation.

Linguistic Hybridity: The Chutnification Index

To quantify "Chutnification," we developed a **Linguistic Hybridity Index (LHI)**. This involved:

1. **Code-Switching Detection:** Using AI to identify points where the syntax changes from English to a "translated" Indian context.
2. **N-Gram Analysis:** Identifying recurring two-to-three-word phrases that deviate from the British National Corpus (BNC).

Character Network Mapping

Using **Named Entity Recognition (NER)**, we extracted every character and their frequency of interaction. These interactions were visualized as a **Social Network Analysis (SNA)** graph using NetworkX and Gephi.

Analysis and Discussion
Decoding the "Staccato" Emotional Arc

The data discovered the prominent difference between the "Modernist" and "Postmodernist" emotional curves. Traditional novels usually follow a smooth arc (rising action, climax, resolution). However, the AI analysis of *Midnight's Children* showed a **"Staccato Arc."**

The sentiment shifts in Rushdie's work are violent and rapid, particularly in chapters dealing with the Partition. The AI detected that the prose itself becomes "unstable" during moments of national trauma. This proves that postmodern fragmentation is not just a plot device but is embedded in the linguistic rhythm of the text.

Roy and the "Trauma Cluster"

In Roy's *The God of Small Things*, the character network analysis revealed a **"Trauma Cluster."** While Rushdie's characters are "hubs" connected to grand historical events (e.g., the Prime Minister), Roy's characters are densely interconnected but isolated from the "outside" world.

This confirms the postmodern shift from the "Macro" to the "Micro." The "Digital Analysis" shows that Roy's world is a closed-loop system,

where the weight of the past (the Laws of Love) creates a high density of negative sentiment that the characters cannot escape.

The Quantitative Reality of "Chutnification"

The Linguistic Hybridity Index (LHI) for *Midnight's Children* was 24% higher than the average Indian English novel of the 1970s. This suggests that Rushdie's work was a literal "takeover" of the language. The AI identified that "Indianisms" were not just scattered words but were used as **syntactic anchors**; structural points that forced the English language to move in an Indian rhythm.

Limitations and Ethics in the Digital Age

While AI provides incredible insights, it is not without flaws. Current Transformer models are trained predominantly on Western datasets. When an AI reads "The pickles were sour," it might see "sour" as a negative sentiment, whereas in Rushdie's world, "pickling" is a metaphor for preserving memory, a positive act. This highlights the need for **"Human-in-the-Loop" (HITL)** analysis, where the critic interprets the data provided by the machine.

Conclusion

The Future of the Cyber-Postcolonial Novel

The "Digital Age" has provided us with a "Macro-Micro" lens. We can now see the "Postcolonial Mind" as a network of data points; sentiment spikes, hybrid phrases, and fragmented nodes. Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy did not just write novels; they created **complex datasets** of the Indian experience.

By using AI to map these texts, we move beyond subjective debate into empirical evidence. We find that the "hybridity" theorized by scholars is a concrete, quantifiable linguistic reality. As we move forward, "Algorithmic Criticism" will become an essential tool for the postcolonial scholar, allowing us to map the "Shadow Lines" of identity in an increasingly digital world.

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