

GROUNDING THE TEXT OF POSTCOLONIALISM: CULTURAL STUDIES AND LITERATURE

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Abstract

This research paper aims to introduce Postcolonial theory and its implementation that focuses on the intense interaction between the cultural studies and literature. This piece of writing stresses on defining the terms like- the imperialism, the colonialism and the neocolonialism and the postcolonialism in order to emphasize the cultural aspects of postcolonialism. The conception of postcolonialism in the literary field is not the same as imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism for the prime centre on culture. In basic, it is an amalgamation of literary study and cultural research which presents new perceptions to revise literary masterpieces from the cultural view point. With the spread of multiculturalism, globalization and cosmopolitanism, to a greater extent the intellects will pursue the pathway of the three pioneers – Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi K Bhabha. Postcolonialism will persist to be a significant theme for literary studies. And the implementations of postcolonialism, particularly the cultural aspects of it, will outlook the impact of the research of the world literature for an extensive stretch of phase.

Key words: Culture, Orientalism, Hybridity, Subaltern, Postcolonial theory, Identity

Introduction

Colonialism across the globe has faded but it's after effects can still be felt and experienced by everyone at some point or the other. The impact of colonialism has been so strong that it is still stamped on the psyche of the people. The word 'Postcolonialism' is often used as one or with hyphenation. The hyphenated expression 'Post-colonialism' describes a chronological era that initiated a new period with the end of colonialism after the Second World War. The un-hyphenated expression 'Postcolonialism' suggests several different forms of values and representations. The modern day intellects are fascinated by the term without bothering enough about the issues regarding it and its implementation. The terms like Post-colonialism, Postcolonialism, Postcolonial Studies and Postcolonial Literatures are implemented in a manner that confuses the contemporary intellects but everybody aggresses and acknowledges the repercussions of 'Colonialism'. As per Jaydeep Sarangi text's, G. Rai states- "Postcolonialism is an enterprise which sucks emancipation from all types of subjugation defined in terms of gender, race and class. It does not introduce a new world which is free from the ills of colonialism; it rather suggests both continuity and change" (Sarangi 30).

If we go by the history, Postcolonialism refers to the phase in which the colonies got de-colonised and the colonisers withdrew their rule from the colonies, hence leaving them free to have their own people's rule and make free-will decisions in the field of politics, culture, society and religion in their own country. Jaydeep Sarangi quotes, Mishra and Hodges definition of Postcolonialism as "an always present tendency is any literature of subjugation marked by a systematic process of cultural domination through the imposition of imperial structures of power" (Sarangi 30)

Therefore, it will not be wrong to say the postcolonialism is actually a process that helps us study the after-effects of the resistance of colonialism in the field of literature and it represents the nature of colonised and their cultural values by voicing the unvoiced that is yet not available in colonialism.

There were basically two types of colonies, i.e., the ones that were invaded and ruled and the second is that of the settlers. The colonies that were invaded by the imperial power with the intention to territorial

supremacy or for resource exploitation of selfish motives suffered a lot at the hands of imperial power. One such example of an invaded colony is India. On the other hand, the settler colonies came into existence as a result of desire for domination by the imperial power. But when the settler colonies realised being dominated, they raised their voice for the freedom of expression and action that ultimately resulted in their freedom and independence. The famous examples of the settler colonies are USA, Canada and Australia.

The process of de-colonising post the Second World War created a thought of 'Post-colonialism' and encouraged some great mind to begin working on the 'Postcolonial Studies'. In simple words, 'Postcolonialism' is the process of studying literature of those countries that became free of colonial rule some time or the other. Hence, it will be right to say that 'Postcolonial Literature' originated because of 'Colonialism' and its effects. All the colonies suffered at the hands of their colonizers and felt betrayed by those colonisers who either pretended an image of 'friendly exploiter exploiting friendly' or 'cruel exploiter exploiting friendly'. The literature that was composed on these colonised countries came to be known as 'Third World' literature and later it was coined as 'Commonwealth Literature'. After years, it was given a more refined form and came to be called- 'Postcolonial Literature' or 'Postcolonial Studies'. As discussed Postcolonialism came into existence by after effects of being colonised, it will not be wrong to address postcolonialism literature as 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' process that took place between the occident and orient. Postcolonialism broadly discusses serious issues related to the colonised society, their cultural and national identities. The postcolonial literature and the postcolonial writers follow a strategy to voice out the issues and effects of colonialism on the colonies. These comprise of Racial Paradigm, Comparative Paradigms and the Unrepresented Territory Paradigm (Sarangi 32). The Racial Paradigm discusses the trans-national literatures, whereas Comparative Paradigm explains the comparative perception about the Postcolonial literature. The shadow of the Diasporas is still well understood by understanding Imaginary half-shaded paradigm and via Native-Nat Paradigm; the readers get a class picture of regional or native culture impacted by the colonial exploits. Some of the most important issues that are studied under Postcolonial literature are- Hybridity, Mimicry, Diaspora so on and so forth. It also brings in light the issues like gender studies, trans-gender studies, cultural studies and in the contemporary era the lesbian, Gay, and Bi-sexual studies.

The popular and famous theorists of postcolonialism are Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Franz Faanon, Homi.k. Bhabha, Aizaz Ahmad and some of the classical postcolonial literature include '*Midnight Children* by Salman Rushdie, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, and *The Wretched of the Earth* by Franz Fanon, *The English Patient* by Micahel Ondaatje, *A Small Place* by Jamica Kincard, etc.

The outlook of postcolonialism is inherited from colonialism to actually understand postcolonialism, a deep dive into the concept of colonialism is mandatory. According to Ania Loomba, "Colonialism is a forcible takeover of land and economy and in the case of European colonialism, a restricting of non-capitalist economics in order to free European Capitalist". The colonialism had both the positive and the negative effect. Positively, the colonisers claimed to civilise the colonies whereas on the negative side, it was a complete domination of one country over the other. All this gave rise to nationalism and this lead to the death of colonialism. Colonisers were successful in their motives only with the help of natives from these colonies.

Aschroft Bill in his book *Key Concepts of Postcolonialism*, quotes:

In fighting for the recognition of postcolonial commonwealth writing within academies whose roots and continuing power depended on the persisting cultural and political centrality of the imperium, and in a discipline whose manner and subject matter were the local signs and symbols of that power—British literature and its teaching constantly reified, replayed and reinvested the colonial relation—the nationalist critics were forced to conduct their guerrilla-war within the frameworks of an English critical practice. In so doing they initially adopted the tenets of Leavisite and/or new criticism, reading postcolonial text within a broadly Euro-modernist tradition. But one who's increasing and inevitable erosion was ensured by the anti-colonial pressures of the literary texts themselves. Forced from this new critical hermeticism into a sociocultural specificity by such local colonial pressures, Commonwealth anti-postcolonialism

increasingly took on a localised orientation and a more generally theoretical one, bringing it closer to the concerns of what would become its developing 'sister' stream, colonial discourses theory. {Key Concepts 53-54}

The three founders clearly notify us that postcolonialism is also a representation of race, ethnicity, culture and human identity. They are Edward W. Said (1935-2003), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-present), and Homi K. Bhabha (1949-present), them coming from different backgrounds, understanding in a different way from their indigenous and to those Western inhabitants. These three pioneers furthermore take up culture as their principle notion for literary studies and its criticism.

1. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the influential text of postcolonial studies emphasises on the colonizing First World War has fabricated the false representations and misconceptions of the Third World. These representations, misconceptions and conventional in nature, have suitably defended Western exploitation and control of Eastern cultures. Said's discussion of *Orientalism* was extensive and widespread in European philosophy. It was sort of theoretical perspectives along with an approach of concept based on existing and philosophical difference between the 'Orient' and 'Occident'. He observed the conflicting bond between the coloniser and colonised from a different point of view. In this case even Franz Fanon says that he delve into colonialism that shaped a different world. *Orientalism* results based upon expansion in Marxist theories of control, particularly, the Political belief of the Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault of poststructuralism. Said observed how the understanding or the insight that the Western Imperial powers shaped around their colonies which made it easier to defend their subjugation. Western nations like France and Britain formed a significant knowledge about their locality. Orientalism is influenced by cultural form difference between the 'Occident' (West) and 'Orient' (East). Orientalism is like a dream for the Westerners, concerning the East as a backward place, illogicality, and lack of discipline. In basic, it is a political and cultural set of guidelines formed by the West and at its best try to dominate the East- politically or culturally. All his writings consider postcolonial approach and try to put light on the imprecision's of unethical theory of cultural imperialism.

2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian literacy critic and philosopher, is well-known for deconstructive readings of imperialism and the contest of decolonization. Her finest descriptive works are- "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" (1983) and "*In Other Worlds*" (1987). Her theories represent Marxism and Feminism, and cultural identity and dialogue for women turns out to be her prime centre. She is well-known for intensifying the conception of "subaltern" presented by Gramsci. In her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Spivak writes about a young Bengali woman who commits suicide because she fails to raise her voice against patriarchal control. However, she probes the outlook if the Gramscian's "Subaltern" might have a tone of voice when the individuality of the subaltern is diverse and their tone or say is attended through the intellectual dialogue of Western cosmopolitan culture. In postcolonial theory, the word subaltern depicts the proletariat and the social classes who are at the edges of the society. These people cannot stand for themselves and their expression is depicted by others. As stated by Gramsci, the subaltern is the underclass or the lower echelons of the metropolitan working classes, being mistreated acutely by the capital society. According to Spivak, the word subaltern is equivalent word of proletariat while implementing the theory of postcolonialism. Its wide interpretation: the inferior, the subjugated and the misuse, and who has no liberty to articulate their minds and most importantly their voices must be unheard. Alfred J Lopez states, "seeks to affirm and empower the subject-position of subaltern peoples suppressed by colonial regimes" (22). Yet again in Spivak's subaltern voice, we come across the noticeable cultural imperialism and cultural hegemony.

3. Homi K. Bhabha, born in India but a Persian inheritor, currently schooling the Western campuses. Bhabha has invented a number of new expressions and fundamental concepts like – third space, mimicry, hybridity, difference, ambivalence, etc. The theory stated by Bhabha, explains in which the colonized have refused to accept the cultural control of the colonizer. Bhabha in his book, *The Location of Culture* (1994), has written from a postcolonial viewpoint about hybridity and third space. The theory of hybridity studies the hybridity as a concept of colonial concern. His theory- cultural hybridity emphasises on the amalgamation of

diverse cultures and portrays the appearance of a new culture that are form from multiculturalism. Bhabha puts forward in *The Location of Cultures*, “For a willingness to descend into that alien territory—where I have led you— may reveal that the theoretical recognition may split the space of enunciation, may open the way to conceptualizing of international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space— that carries out burden of meaning of culture” (*The Location of Cultures* 38). Bhabha exhibits clearly that his proposal on cultural hybridity other than dissimilarity, which lays concrete on the theme of multiculturalism and cultural identities in numerous literature studies.

Conclusion

In the twentieth century, people witnessed the fall of colonisation. Though these colonies were free from their colonisers but they still remained under the colonial hangover. Jaydeep Sarangi’s text quotes- Nambar Singh in ‘*Decolonising the Indian Mind*’, says, “We often define our very identity in the language of our erstwhile colonial master and not only in their language but through the very concepts constructed by them”. Therefore, it will not be wrong to say that cultural regeneration is important. In the contemporary world, diasporic feelings are the focal point of discussion in postcolonial texts. The struggle of colonialism and the feeling of anti-colonialism have played an important role in shaping up the lives of the colonizers. This anti-colonial feeling got every country on global platform and got them global justice by creating an environment for the realisation of political and cultural identity. The people of this era are not far from witnessing the times when postcolonialism will pass over painful memories of colonialism and it will become a talk of post-past colonialism.

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