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Commonwealth To Postcolonial Literature: A Critical Review

Sukhpreet Kaur

Assistant Professor, UILAH, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali

Aditi Paul

Assistant professor, UILAH, Chandigarh University, Gharuan, Mohali

Abstract

This paper, "Commonwealth to Postcolonial Literature: A Critical Review" draws a relationship between British and English-language literature. It highlights the literary structures that arose as "opposition" to magnificent mastery, further being alluded by a variety of terms: Commonwealth Literature, New English Literature, Literature in English, third world literature, world fiction, minority literature, multicultural literature, or Postcolonial Literature. This paper analyses the benefits and impedes of every assignment and makes sense of why, the expression "postcolonial" is the more fitting thought and assignment.

Keywords: Postcolonial, commonwealth, literature, language, Gender

Commonwealth Literature, Post-Colonial Literature in English, New Literature in English and World Writing in English- these are only a portion of the terms being utilized to portray the works of 'individuals' from the previous British Empire. The expression "Commonwealth" has a long history. It was first utilized by Oliver Cromwell, subsequent to laying out the conservative government in England in 1649. In a real sense it suggested normal great or public great; a body-politic in which power is with individuals. It came into examine as a type of government for almost 300 years, till it was restored in the sculpture of Westminster 1931, when with the making of the domains, the British Empire was re-dedicated as the British ward of Nations. Republic writing idea came into training during the mid-twentieth century, there are different elements that were answerable for its development in the nineteenth century.

The idea started to develop in the outcome of the American conflict of Independence which had persuaded the British legislator that they ought to plan another methodology toward the arising patriotism in the provinces which were bound to become free states at the appointed time. To hinder a brutal separation of the Empire, in the example of what happened to its thirteen settlements in America, Britain figured it basic to follow a way of concessions and changes, and foster self-overseeing foundations in the provinces. The unmistakable element of this new gathering was that they all were states of settlement, with close ethnic associations with Britain and had embraced the British example of political establishments. This institutional structure stayed unaltered until freedom was conceded to India in 1947 and until India chose to remain in the district in the wake of turning into a republic in 1950. With the passage of India, the cutting-edge region gained another composition and character and showed its true capacity for advancement and development. The affiliation became multi-racial; and it was proclaimed as a free relationship of autonomous country where balance of status was completely perceived. The

commonwealth is the British Empire in switch; It is the blooming of free elements out of the subjugation of pioneer reliance. The term in a real sense signified "common well-being".

The commonwealth of countries, otherwise called the British commonwealth, has showed a particular scholarly improvement set apart by its social and verifiable variety. The commonwealth is an intergovernmental association of 54 countries which were previously essential for the British Empire. The commonwealth expects to give a system of normal qualities, working with co-activity between its part states in the field of a majority rule government, basic liberties, law and order, deregulation and harmony. As a rule, district writing is a dubious term which characterizes English-language works written in the previous British settlements or spot which had the situation with territories.

In respect to literature, it may be claimed that "commonwealth" or "postcolonial literature" has been one of the most significant contributions to the curricula of English departments in Europe, the Caribbean, Australia, the United States, and elsewhere in the last two decades. The fact that "post-coloniality" is regarded a cognate phrase with "commonwealth" may explain why the term "post-coloniality" has gained such traction in the First World but is rarely used in the ex-colonized countries of South Asia and Africa. The misgivings expressed elsewhere about the term's potential "offensive" character are "willingly" being ignored. The following discussion is a quick tour de force of taxonomy to start a debate about these hazy and often perplexing notions. It may be more rewarding by firstly emphasising the link between British empire and English literature, or the ideological purposes for which English literature was used.

If it is true that Britain utilised military power to dominate a large portion of the world, particularly in the late nineteenth century, military triumph was a fight, not a war, and cultural texts were employed to finish what military might had ongoing. As stated by Boehmer, literary works created during this time period that may be classified as colonial or colonialist writings representing the colonial mentality and subsidized to the complex views that made empire appear natural. In further words, it was evident that gaining control of an area or a nation required not just "political or economic force, but also inventive thinking." It was also to be able to use one's imagination" (Boehmer 5). The ideological applications of English literature may be seen most clearly in the self-portrayals of the British and the representations of the Other.

The clearest evidence of introduction of English literature into the Indian educational structure: followed the Battle of Plassey in 1755. The British East India Company began administering the different local Indian states as colonies. According to Gauri Viswanathan, a large majority of individuals who moved over from Britain to help as administrators were Scots who initiate it easier to grow overseas than at home without English support. The Scots were in charge of training a civil service from the Hindu and Muslim communities, and English literature was one of the main disciplines taught to the newly Europeanized indigenous. It was supposed to express the victors' values and standards: the British had invaded India with ships and weapons, but they were now "to law it with Shakespeare.

At the time of Adam Smith's introduction of English literature courses in Scotland, this field was seen as unacademic and unworthy of serious investigation in Oxbridge. Classical disciplines, such as Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Sanskrit, ruled the lecture rooms. If classical studies were the upper classes' academic menu, religious studies were the lower classes' major course. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, religious studies, which had previously been used to oppress the lower classes, were rapidly losing their hold as a consequence of scientific advancements and social change. Values, tradition, and authority are disseminated through the church.

As Terry Eagleton points out, George Gordon declared in his maiden address at Oxford: " England is ill, and English literature is the only thing that can rescue it. Because the religions have failed and social cures are tardy, English literature today serves a threefold purpose. The fact that English as an academic discipline "was originally institutionalised not in universities, but in Mechanics' Institutes, working men's colleges, and extension speaking circuits" is particularly significant. The rationale for this was that, it was thought that literature's "softening" and "humanising" effects might be utilised to strengthen social class ties. As a result, English literature was to act as a type of opiate, warding off what Mathew Arnold viewed as chaos engulfing and disrupting social connections in England.

For some, Commonwealth Literature is a simple concept: it is literature created by countries that were once British colonies or possessed the status of dominions. For others, it can be expanded to include nations that are currently associates of the Commonwealth of Nations despite not having been former British colonies. Others, on the other hand, do not have it so easy. Some contend that the entire concept of Commonwealth Literature is self-condescending, narrow, and deceptive for instance, Tiffin's "Commonwealth Literature: Comparison and Judgement". And for some, the term *dépassé* is a relic from a bygone era. The authors of *Learning from Each Other: Commonwealth Studies in the Twenty-First Century*, research made to order by the Commonwealth criteria. The writers of *Commonwealth Studies in the Twenty-First Century* are unconcerned whether Commonwealth Literature occurs or not. Rather, they are grappling with how to expand the notion to include literatures written in indigenous languages. How can the study of Commonwealth literature more completely embrace literature in languages other than English, and represent the increasingly complex varieties of English used? the authors question in the section Intellectual developments in *Commonwealth Studies*. The question arose, makes sense in terms of studying the many varieties of English utilised, as well as the attempt at nativization. However, it would be improper to refer to literature in indigenous languages as Commonwealth Literature, especially as some of these literatures predate the historical events that led to the formation of the Commonwealth. Sanskrit, Igbo, Yoruba, Hindi: Kikuyu, Hausa, Maori, Khosa and Zulu literatures appear to me to be more acceptable to designate by their names rather than by the designation of Commonwealth Literature. Perhaps if these works were translated into English, they would fall within this category, as did Ngugi wa Thiongo's Gikuyu-to-English translations. Neither, say, can Wolof literature, for example, cannot be termed francophone literature. Of course, the writers were well aware that the label did not sit well with many academics. They point out that this is "especially true in the realm of literature," where some scholars "avoid using the phrase 'commonwealth,' preferring to use terms like postcolonial". They point out that "egalitarian values of public sovereignty, rights, and liberties" underpin the concept of "commonwealth. Commonwealth studies have the ability to provide democratic and inclusive social analysis, leading to rebuilt societies and communities beyond colonialism. They go on to say that the term "post-colonial" is "much more limited than 'commonwealth,'" despite the fact that the former "may in principle (but typically does not in reality) embrace a broader geographical expanse".

Salman Rushdie attempts to clarify that Commonwealth Literature would be in an article titled provocatively "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist." He claims that there is "a body of work generated, I believe, in the English language by folks who are not themselves white Britons, Irish, or US citizens". If this is correct of Commonwealth writing, it is absolutely not true of postcolonial literature, which includes the United States. "It's also unclear if residents of Commonwealth countries writing in languages other than English—Hindi, for example—or switching out of English, like Ngugi, are allowed into the club," he adds or be asked to leave" (63). For Rushdie, Commonwealth Literature is nothing more than an attempt to create an exclusive literary enclave. He goes on to say that "creating such a ghetto had, and continues to have, the effect of narrowing the meaning of the far broader term 'English literature,' which I'd always taken to mean simply the literature of the English language — into something far narrower, something topographical, patriotic, possibly even racially segregationist".

Commonwealth literature was created to postpone the day when we savage creatures saunter into Bethlehem. If that's the case, it's time to accept that the centre can't hold. While Rushdie's work is reminiscent of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, there is also a shift from the perimeter to the centre. If, in Rushdie's case, the phrase is narrow and segregationist. For Michael Gorra, the words "narrow" and "segregationist" may one be used in the past tense.

As per the present scenario, Postcolonial literature is located geographically, and, most importantly, It is to be seen whether the term 'postcolonial' is far more forced than 'commonwealth,' even though the former may in theory (but frequently is not applicable in practise) encompass a wider geographical field is true. What is Postcolonialism, according to *Once More with Feeling?* It is employed not just to characterise what comes after the colonial, but similarly the chapter of history subsequent the Second World War, whether it accommodates the still-colonized, neo-colonized, or always colonised.

According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, that the current situation in these countries is not "post": the "colonial" in any genuine, or even cursory sense, as covert mercantile neo-colonialism, the potent successor to modern colonialism, continues its virtually unrestricted march across the face of the earth, confirming that the wretched will remain so, colluding in, as they did before.

The problem of hierarchical connections between ethnic groups in settler colonies, as well as the diverse economic and cultural settings of, for example, Maori in New Zealand, Aborigines in Australia, and black and white South African writers, are unaddressed in the "post" in postcolonialism. The issue of gender relations is also a source of worry. How does one contract with the problem of gender in this formulation, given that men and women were impacted differently by colonialism and gender relations were used on a discursive level to conceptualise the connection between colonisers and colonised? On the issue of gender and class, Ahmad points out that nationalism in the twenty-first century has frequently suppressed problems of gender and class and has frequently aided and abetted all kind of obscurantisms and revanchist stances.

Apart from gender, caste and class must also be considered, as these groups were subjected to colonialism in diverse ways and to differing degrees. The Subaltern Studies Group in India usual out to correct "elitist nationalist Indian historiography in order to study a new the manner in which subaltern classes were influenced by and reacted to the colonial encounter," according to Ahmad. This suggests that there were disparities between and within colonies, making presenting postcolonialism as a clear binary unfeasible. The post colonialists' generalisations about all 'postcolonial people' advise that Third Worldish and/or nationalism bind the people of these societies in conflict less brotherhood, that the inequalities of these societies bind the people of these societies in conflict less brotherhood of caste and class do not exist in these civilizations, and their literary works are only concerned with 'resisting' or 'subverting' colonists' discourses.

In light of the foregoing facts, Stephen Slemon's description of postcolonial literature to be the most complete, as it encompasses all potential subaltern categories and more. "The term post-colonial is an outgrowth of what formerly were 'commonwealth' literary studies," he writes in his essay "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World," a study that arose after "English studies had been liberalised to comprise 'American' and then an direct national or regional literature: Australian, Canadian, West Indian" (105). He goes on to say that the phrase has "a valency of subjectivity peculiar to Third and Fourth World cultures, as well as black, ethnic, and First Nations constituencies distributed throughout First World terrain" (105). The idea that the postcolonial is also "a cultural sign of non-residency of a third-world intelligent cadre, as the inevitable underbelly of a fragmented and conflicted rhetoric of imperialist power, as an oppositional type of "reading practise" should be added to this (Slemon 45). The concept that the postcolonial is also "a cultural sign of non-residency of a third-world intellectual cadre, as the inevitable underbelly of a broken and conflicted rhetoric of imperialist power, as an oppositional type of "reading practise" should be added to this (Slemon 45). It is clear that the term "postcolonial" not only encompasses a broader geographical field than "commonwealth," because it deals with a re-reading of English, French, and American canonical texts, as well as the literatures of Africa, India, and the West Indies, and the problems of gender, caste, and class as they are posed in these societies and represented textually.

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