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Postcolonialism: An Overview

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Abstract

At present “Postcolonialism” has been a current topic in literary circles. As a genre of contemporary history, post colonialism questions and reinvents the manner in which a culture is being viewed, challenging the narratives expounded during the colonial era. Anthropologically, it records human relations between the colonists and the peoples under colonial rule, seeking to build an understanding of the nature and practice of colonial rule. Colonialism was presented as ‘the extension of civilization’, which ideologically justified the self-ascribed racial and cultural superiority of the Western world over the non-Western world. This paper accomplishes the phenomenon of post-colonialism. It presents general meanings of the post-colonialism theory and gives some information about its advancement and additionally explaining foundation information about essential points of interest of India's colonial past. It at that point focuses on the post-colonial advancement of India which was a British province until 1947.

Keywords- *Postcolonialism, Culture, Racial, Phenomenon, Advancement, Colonialism*

Introduction

More than seventy five percent of the population living on the planet today has had their lives molded by the experience of colonialism. It is anything but difficult to perceive how essential this has been in the political and economic circles, yet its general impact on the perceptual structures of contemporary people groups is regularly less clear. Literature offers a one amongst the most important routes in which these new perceptions are communicated and it is in their writing, and through different expressions, for example, painting, model, music,

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and dance that the everyday realities experienced by colonized people groups have been most capably encoded thus significantly convincing.

Postcolonial as we define it does not mean 'post-independence', or 'after colonialism', for this would be falsely assign an end to the colonial progression. Post-colonialism, somewhat, begins from the very first moment of colonial connection. The term postcolonial is echoing with all the suspicions and difficulties of the several cultural experiences it includes. It also addresses all aspects of the colonial process from the beginning of the colonial contact.

Post-colonialism acknowledged as an "era" or the "post-colonial theory" that occurs ever since around the middle of the 20th century. Post-colonialism likewise manages clashes of identity and social having a place. In Post-colonial compositions the subjects which are centered around are patriotism, self-recognizable proof to against imperialistic evaluate and postcolonial conflict. Regularly protest written work has a political motivation of social change and communicates outrage and disillusion at the postcolonial state. Nayar points out, "resistance literature in both the colony and the postcolonial nation include testimonial writings, prison narratives, revolutionary tracts and 'insurgency' writing. The rise and changes through technology, the manipulated fear of wars, multi-national capitalism, corporate economy, environmental concerns, various rights, terrorism, and all that; through political. After colonialism and post colonization there is a re-colonization taking place with India. It is rather continuation of colonialism with certain added features to suit the perpetrators of colonialism, be it art, culture, commerce, or politics or, we are heading back to colonialism by not resisting the politics of tyranny of a handful of zealots who have virtually consolidated their brutal power and are now out to obliterate the "marginalized" , postcolonial literature is writing which has been "affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft et al, 2). In India's case, this includes novels, poetry, and drama which were written both during and after the British Raj or "Reign," which came to a formal conclusion with Indian Independence in August 1947.

As a contemporary-history term, postcolonialism occasionally is applied temporally, to denote the immediate time after colonialism, which is a problematic application of the term, because the immediate, historical, political time is not included in the categories of critical identity-discourse, which deals with over-inclusive terms of cultural representation, which are abrogated and replaced by postcolonial criticism. As such, the terms *postcolonial* and *postcolonialism* denote aspects of the subject matter, which indicate that the decolonized world is an intellectual space "of contradictions, of half-finished processes, of confusions, of hybridity, and of liminalities". (Gregory 2007: 561)

The term "decolonisation" seems to be of particular importance while talking about post-colonialism. For this situation it implies a scholarly procedure that determinedly transfers the autonomy of previous colonial nations into peoples minds. The fundamental

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thought of this procedure is the deconstruction of out-dated perceptions and attitudes of power and oppression that were embraced amid the season of colonialism. First attempts to put this long-term policy of “decolonising the minds” into practice could be regarded in the Indian population after India became independent from the British Empire in 1947.

However, post-colonialism has increasingly become an object of scientific examination since 1950 when Western intellectuals began to get interested in the “Third World countries”. In the seventies, this interest led to an integration of discussions about post-colonialism in various study courses at American Universities. Nowadays it also plays a remarkable role at European Universities.

A noteworthy part of post-colonialism is the fairly fierce like, unbuffered contact or conflict of cultures as an unavoidable result of (formerly) colonised times; the relationship of the former colonial power to the (formerly) colonized nation, its population and culture and the other way around appears to be to a great extent ambiguous and opposing.

This contradiction of two clashing cultures and the wide scale of problems resulting from it must be regarded as a major theme in post-colonialism: For centuries the colonial suppressor often had been forcing his civilised values on the natives. But when the native population finally gained independence, the colonial relicts were still omnipresent, deeply integrated in the natives’ minds and were supposed to be removed.

So decolonisation is a process of change, destruction and, in the first place, an attempt to regain and lose power. While natives had to learn how to put independence into practice, colonial powers had to accept the loss of power over foreign countries. However, both sides have to deal with their past as suppressor and suppressed. This complicated relationship mainly developed from the Eurocentric perspective from which the former colonial powers saw themselves: Their colonial policy was often criticised as arrogant, ignorant, brutal and simply naïve. Their final colonial failure and the total independence of the once suppressed made the process of decolonisation rather tense and emotional.

Post-colonialism additionally deals with conflicts of identity and cultural belonging. Colonial powers came to foreign states and destroyed main parts of native tradition and culture; furthermore, they continuously replaced them with their own ones. This often led to conflicts when countries became independent and suddenly faced the challenge of developing a new nationwide identity and self-confidence.

As generations had lived under the power of colonial rulers, they had more or less adopted their Western tradition and culture. The challenge for these countries was to find an individual way of proceeding to call their own. They could not get rid of the Western way of life from one day to the other; they could not manage to create a completely new one either. On the other hand, former colonial powers had to change their self-assessment. This paradoxical identification process seems to be what decolonisation is all about, while post-colonialism is

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the intellectual direction that deals with it and maintains a steady analysis from both points of view.

So how is this tough process of decolonisation being finished? By the power of language, much more than by the utilization of military brutality. Language is the scholarly means by which post-colonial correspondence and reflection happens. This is especially critical as most colonial powers attempted to incorporate their language, the significant part of their civilized culture, in foreign societies. A considerable measure of Indian books that can be attached to the period of post-colonialism, for example, are composed in English. The cross-border trade of thoughts from the two parties of the post-colonial struggle is supported by the utilization of a mutual language.

The post-colonial experience in India

In the sixteenth century, European powers started to overcome little stations along the Indian coast. Portugal, the Netherlands and France ruled diverse regions in India before the "English East India Company" was established in 1756. The British colonialists managed out how to control most parts of India while administering the key urban areas Calcutta, Madras and Bombay as the primary British bases. Be that as it may, there still remained a couple of free regions (Kashmir among others) whose rulers were faithful to the British Empire.

In 1857, the first big rebellion took place in the north of India. The incident is also named "First war of Indian Independence", the "Sepoy Rebellion" or the "Indian Mutiny", depending on the individual perspective. This was the first time Indians rebelled in massive numbers against the presence and the rule of the British in South Asia. The rebellion failed and the British colonialists continued their rule.

In 1885, the "National Indian Congress" (popularly called "Congress") was founded. It demanded that the Indians should have their proper legitimate share in the government. From then on, the Congress developed into the main body of opposition against British colonial rule. Besides, a Muslim anti-colonial organisation was founded in 1906, called the "Muslim League".

While most parts of the Indian population remained loyal to the British colonial power during the First World War, more and more Muslim people joined the Indian independence movement since they were angry about the division of the Ottoman Empire by the British. The non-violent resistance against British colonial rule, mainly initiated and organised by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, finally lead to independence in 1947.

At the same time, the huge British colony was split into two nations: The secular Indian Union and the smaller Muslim state of Pakistan. The Muslim League had demanded for an independent Muslim state with a majority of Muslims. India became a member of the British Commonwealth after 1947.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), the theoretician Homi K. Bhabha argued that viewing the human world as composed of separate and unequal cultures, rather than as an

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integral human world, perpetuates the belief in the existence of imaginary peoples and places—"Christendom" and "The Islamic World", "The First World", "The Second World", and "The Third World". To counter such linguistic and sociologic reductionism, postcolonial praxis establishes the philosophic value of hybrid intellectual spaces, wherein ambiguity abrogates truth and authenticity; thereby, *hybridity* is the philosophic condition that most substantively challenges the ideological validity of colonialism. (Bhabha 1994: 113)

In 1997, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of India's Independence, Santiniketan: The Making of a Contextual Modernism was an important exhibition curated by R. Siva Kumar at the National Gallery of Modern Art (Siva Kumar, 1997). In his catalogue essay, R. Siva Kumar introduced the term Contextual Modernism, which later emerged as a postcolonial critical tool in the understanding of Indian art, specifically the works of Nandalal Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Ramkinkar Baij and Benode Behari Mukherjee. (*The Hindu*)

In *Provincializing Europe* (2000), Dipesh Chakrabarty charted the subaltern history of the Indian struggle for independence, and countered Eurocentric, Western scholarship about non-Western peoples and cultures, by proposing that Western Europe simply be considered as culturally equal to the other cultures of the world, that is, as "one region among many" in human geography. (Chakrabarty 2000: 9-11)

The incorporation of early concepts and racial and cultural conventions into modern imperial ideology boosted colonial claims to supremacy and right to colonize non-Europeans. Because of these numerous ramifications between ancient representations and modern colonial rhetoric, 19th century's colonialist discourse acquires a "multi-layered" or "palimpsestic" structure. It forms a "historical, ideological and narcissistic continuum," in which modern theories of domination feed upon and blend with "ancient myths of supremacy and grandeur". (Acheraious, 2008)

Concerning the integration of Western values in the Indian population and culture, one can say that the British influence is still omnipresent in the Asian subcontinent. The reason for this can be also found in the persistence of the English language. Many Indians are conversant with the English language, because the British colonialists intended to export their values and culture by teaching the Indian population their language. This was regarded as the basic fundament for further education.

Shouldn't something be said about the connection amongst India and the United Kingdom today? It is a unique one, and obviously still not without strains between these two countries that allude to the season of colonialism which from our retro point of view isn't at all so far away. India has figured out how to end up plainly a free nation with its own particular political framework is as yet attempting to locate its own identity. The more extended the procedure of decolonisation keeps going, the more we get the feeling that only a middle course between the acknowledgment of British heritages and the making of another one of a kind Indian fearlessness will be the correct approach for India.

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To give a conclusion of it all, one might say that post-colonialism is a vivid discussion about what happened with the colonial thinking at the end of the colonial era. What legacy arouse from this era? What social, cultural and economical consequences could be seen and are still visible today? In these contexts, one examines alternating experiences of suppression, resistance, gender, migration and so forth. While doing so, both the colonising and colonised side are taken into consideration and related to each other. The main target of post-colonialism remains the same: To review and to deconstruct one-sided, worn-out attitudes in a lively discussion of colonisation.

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