

Features of Post-Colonial in English Literature

Aprana Sharma

Department of English, Chaman Lal Mahavidyalya, Roorkee, Haridwar India

Abstract

More than three quarters of the people living in the world and their lives have shaped by the experience of colonialism. This writing concerned with the writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain and by other European powers. The term post-colonial the term shows a concern with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power. It distinguishes some earlier work in the area of colonial period and post-colonial period (period after and before independence). Colonialism, post-colonialism, Neo-colonialism: As Warren Hastings and T.B. Maculay, and many scholars like William Jones and commentators as James Mill first studied Indian language (especially Sanskrit and Persian). By translating texts from this language into English and in the second stage, they announced that Indian texts and cultures were ancient, irrelevant, and completely out of date with such knowledge systems. They argued that Indian could never progress. Colonialism is a term that often used in conjunction or as a synonym for imperialism. It is also the rule by the European nation of a Non-European one. However, colonialism often refers to the practice of governance often without actual settlement in the non-European spaces. It means that a Metro politician European & American power control is activities in Asian, African, South American and non-European nations . It emphasizes the impact of global geopolitics, globalization and economic shifts upon material conditions in Asian and African nation- states. Post-colonial also captures the military science in art of resistance, negotiation, and cultural assertion that countries such as India adopt to deal with increasing neocolonial interference. Post-colonial is the set of practices to negotiate a history of colonialism, and the present state of political independence and always soon happening threat of Neocolonialism in the economic, cultural and social field.

KEYWORDS: Colonialism, post-colonialism, Neo-colonialism.

More than three quarters of the people living in the world and their lives have shaped by the experience of colonialism. Literature offers one of the most important ways in which new perceptions are express. It is through other arts; it was day-to-day realities experienced by colonized peoples, which were most influential on them. This writing concerned with the writing by those peoples formerly colonized by Britain and by other European powers. The term post-colonial the term shows a concern with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power. It distinguishes some earlier work in the area of colonial period and post-colonial period (period after and before independence). Colonialism, post-colonialism, Neo-colonialism: there is depending upon the figure of colony¹.

The word colony itself suggestive² and colonial is the process of settlement by European in non-European spaces. Colonization in eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries meant a vacant development of native races and spaces by European powers. Colonization really means destroyed native culture or altered them and after producing new forms in the spaces of them. Thus in twentieth century colonial cannot be seen as innocent settlement

in a new place. Rather on, it must be seen as a powerful mode of exploitation based on many aspects as the difference in race, culture, form in knowledge and political system. According to Oxford English Dictionary, colonial is defined a policy of exploitation of backward or weak people by a larger power. It is not only the political control of Asian, African or South American regions but also through which non European cultures and knowledge were destroyed, modified and disciplined by colonial rulers. The Europeans acquired knowledge over native cultures through translation and academic study. They also modified native systems of thinking and colonial administration. As Warren Hastings and T.B. Maculay, and many scholars like William Jones and commentators as James Mill first studied Indian language (especially Sanskrit and Persian). By translating texts from this language into English and in the second stage, they announced that Indian texts and cultures were ancient, irrelevant, and completely out of date with such knowledge systems. They argued that Indian could never progress. The colonial encounter shows a racial encounter where the European and non-European races met. Colonial literature is term that is more general and its literature includes literature written in Britain. It also shows Britain as a dominant world power. As we see, colonial literature relates with the colonial expansion all over. It was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans and Non-European lands dominated by them. Colonial settlement too was expressed textually³. Colonialist literature was filled by theories concerning, the superiority of European, the white man's relationship with colonized people.

Colonialism is a term that often used in conjunction or as a synonym for imperialism. It is also the rule by the European nation of a Non-European one. However, colonialism often refers to the practice of governance often without actual settlement in the non-European spaces. It means that a Metro politician European & American power control is activities in Asian, African, South American and non-European Nations. Colonialism continues the colonial practice of domination but without the actual settlement by the dominating masters/racers. The central features are the governance of these non-European places by European administrators and rulers through Economic, political, and military power colonialism was never smooth⁴. The study of non-European cultures by European academics, scholars, scientists and the slow transformation of native societies are through missionary work, English or European education systems. In that, colonization was a struggle for supremacy, not only of white against black⁵.

Imperialism is a common term only in the later part of the nineteenth century. Today it means mainly a system of Economic domination and exploitation. Imperialism is the ideology that justify colonial rule. It is the concept that proposes newer regions for the sake of economic exploitation. Imperialism is often the political theory behind colonial conquest. It originates from European centers of political military and economic power and spreads outwards to take in the whole earth. It justifies conquest in the name of economy (for the economic goods of European nation) or politics. It situates the non-European region through Economic measures (slaves, labor, and capitalism) and accompanied by political and military control. Imperialism is a theory and colonialism is the practice. Imperialism was mainly working for money expansion of European power into non-European spaces. Imperialism, therefore, was not something that took place only abroad⁶. What needs to be kept in mind is that not all imperial powers worked in the same way. But there are considerable differences between French and British imperialism in the nineteenth century and in the American imperialism of the twentieth century.

Colonialism and Imperialism, therefore, make a clear division between the rulers and ruled, European and non-European, the white race and non-white races. It can thus be seen as a method of discovering, creating and reinforcing difference. Whatever is interesting is that while colonialism posited and worked from a principle of difference of the whites from the non-whites, it treated all non-Europeans as similar, this form difference of the white from the non-white. It ignored differences between the non-whites themselves.

Economically, the native population still controlled by the European power. The nation-state continues to suffer from economic exploitation by European power. Neo-colonialism is the continuing economic exploitation of Asian and African nation-states by European and American powers. In most case, Neo-colonialism is achieved not merely through state control by Euro-American powers but by news between the political, the banker and the general. The physical forces (military or police) may not be an immediate role in Neocolonialism. Political independence is a process often described with a special title as decolonization for Non-European nation. Partial control may have main body from the Europeans to the natives. However economically the native population is still controlled by the European power. Decolonization seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking. It involves a process of postcolonial theory. It engages European thought in a dialogue and hence decolonization is always a dialogic process.

As a preceding section, European powers ruled over vast regions of the Asian and South American until the mid-twentieth century, especially taking the political part. During the later half of the nineteenth century, and increasingly in the first half of the twentieth century, the colonized status engaged in active political resistance to this rule. Freedom struggles erupt throughout the colonies. Postcoloniality is a state of being, which even as it feels into the project of postcolonialism⁷. Post-colonial refers to the historical, material and actual living conditions of newly independent Asian, African and South American states with in the global system. It refers to the Economic and political conditions in countries such as Indian after the European ruler handed over political power to the native population. It emphasizes the impact of global geopolitics, globalization and economic shifts upon material conditions in Asian and African nation- states. Post-colonial also captures the military science in art of resistance, negotiation, and cultural assertion that countries such as India adopt to deal with increasing neocolonial interference. Post-colonial is the set of practices to negotiate a history of colonialism, and the present state of political independence and always soon happening threat of Neocolonialism in the economic, cultural and social field. The reconstruction of Native culture, the revival of folkloric forms in the arts, the newer forms of narrative and the rewriting of histories constitute the practice of postcoloniality and post colonialism. Post colonialism criticism bears witness to the unequal and unforce.⁸ Postcoloniality is closely tiedup with decolonization, trying to secure freedom from the cultural, political and economic control of the former European masters. In this connection, Gilbert's definition of postcolonial:

The term indicates a degree of agency or..., programmed of resistance, against cultural domination...Signals the existence of a particular historical legacy...a...stage in a culture's transition into a modern nation- state; (or) to suggest a form of co-option into Western cultural economics... 'Postcolonial' has become a convenient... term to describe any kind of resistance, particularly against class, race, and gender oppression.⁹

The 'postcolonial' specifies a transformed historical situation and the cultural formations that have arisen in response to changed political circumstances, in the former colonial power. It describes a completely new experience of political freedom and new ideologies as for development, or economic freedom and self-reliance in many postcolonial societies and new agendas. The Sovereign nation state now asserts its independence by preparing its own programmed for economic and social development and by generating its own, new cultural forms. Previously, it had been decided and administered by European colonial power. The problem with the term 'Postcolonial' is that European colonialism becomes the determining moment of the non-European country. All cultures are placed in history as before European colonization or after European colonization.

Asian, African or South American, three continents, which became colonies of European powers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is not a political control. It is in context through which non-European cultures and knowledge were destroyed but colonial rulers modified this. The real meaning of colonialism is the process of settlement by Europeans in non-Europeans countries. Colonization often destroyed native cultures or altered them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a violent exploitation of native races and spaces by European powers. Thus, the colonialism has three central features that are following:

- (a) The governance of these non-European places by White administrators and rulers through economic, political, and military models.
- (b) The study of non-European cultures by European cultures European Academics, Scholars and Scientists in literature.
- (c) White people took slow transformation of native societies through missionary work, their education system, and European modes of bureaucracy.

In the first feature white governance adopted by European rulers through economic, political and in military modes is called imperialism, which was a main feature of colonialism. It was driven by the need of greater wealth to acquire it in a full way. On the other hand, it was selfish expansion of European power into non-European spaces.

But when non-European began to require for political independence, this process was described as postcolonial in chronological sense. In real sense, we know that it was decolonization. An important feature of settler colonization is the violence that accompanies salting. War of independence of America was fought against colonialism. European powers until the mid twentieth century they ruled over the regions of the Asian, African and South American continents. It shows the political governance, Economic exploitation and cultural exploitation.

The scope of postcolonial and postcoloniality include just the military tactics of formerly colonized nations, but also negotiation allotted by groups such as African American and Asian American.

Racism can be described as the most important feature of post colonialism. Homi K. Bhabha gives his critical revisions around the issues of cultural difference, social authority and political discrimination. It is in order to reveal ambivalent moments with in the rationalizations and modernity. Race, was used as a mode of social organization or identity formation in the west, especially in America, just as caste has been used in India. Racial space is also more globalize today with an international movement of labor and immigration through which creating a new racial identities. Later, Bhabha makes a connection between these groups. In this, very post-colonial does not considered only

with colonial histories, globalization and colonial contexts. Duncan Ivasion come with proposes a postcolonial liberalism¹⁰ based under main liberal values and ways of thinking as individuals and people are fundamentally equal and they are free, social and political arrangements should be such well being of individuals and groups in the manner that they conceive of it.

‘Discourse’ a term used frequently in contemporary critical writing. Its context in which knowledge is produced, and the context representation of speech and language. Discourse is about power and regulation in contemporary thinking cause of very context of language and expression. A subaltern (An officer in British Army below the rank of captain) term is used for the people who belong to lower class. Now traditionally oppressed, oppressive upper class/caste state is clearly visible now. Subaltern historiography in India, draw the attention to the democratic Indian nation has been constructed through a process of exclusion and Dalitbahujan’s marginalization, woman, or working classes. Since 1990’s Hindu, politicians and writers have portrayed the Dalitbahujan as Hindus. The irony is that when Dalitbahujan had tried to be accepted as Hindus but they have been kept a part as others. In this way of process, we know that this process is not entirely honest. They want to remain them as ‘other’ for socially culturally and even physically. The exclusively of the Indian nation state which he clearly characterizes as Hindu-meant that through out Indian history. In this way, Dalitbahujan voices have been silenced. The Hindu most often as Brahmin culture of learning alienated them from the Dalitbahujan culture of work. Ilaiah suggests programme where the Dalit histories must be based on their own epistemology, their own selfhood.

The major three of the theorist as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffins and Helen Tiffin defined postcolonial literature in this way:

We use the term ‘Post-colonial’ ...to cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism, which has emerged in recent years, and for the discourse through which this is constituted.¹¹

‘Commonwealth’ literature is a term used to describe writing from Asia, Africa, Australia, South America and Ireland. Commonwealth literature began to be used during 1950 to describe writing from Africa, Asia, and South America. This term also conclude alongside writers as Chinua Achebe from Nigeria and R.K. Narayan from India and writer white settler communities As Australia. Commonwealth was used a term to signify the equality among nations. They apposed to colonial, which indicated a power relation between European and Non-European countries. After Independence from Europe, Artists, writers and intellectuals returned to their nations in Africa and Asia. Generally post-colonial literature were marked by themes of nationalism and the euphoria of decolonization in 1950s and 1960s must preferred mode of colonialism was realism as R.K. Narayan’s fiction demonstrates, writer such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe were negotiating in the first round of postcolonial writing. Themes such as the following:

- (i) Bi-culturalism, (ii) Nationalism
- (iii) Local and tribal identities as opposed to a universal humanism.
- (iv) The conflict between European modernization and native tradition.
- (v) Generating a discourse about the nature of Post-colonial identity.

These are earliest themes of postcolonial literature in Raja Rao, George Lamming, Patrick White, Derek Walcott and others. Asian writer like Raja Rao's works shows a return to cultural roots, rituals, icons and belief systems, the native tradition, local histories and modes of speech. These are also emphasized a cultural nationalism as a treating cultural and commonalities as a source of political solidarity and nation building. Patrick White saw the culture of white settler in Australia as a source of a typical Australian national identity. Thus, cultural nationalism became a major theme during this time.

During 1980's there were a number of greater debates on the impact of colonialism on native cultures, and about the nature of postcolonial development. In the social realist works of Bhabani Bhattacharya, Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in Africa. This situation reflect as a witnessed. In the 1980's there were endless critical reflection on the postcolonial condition. Writers like Salman Rushdie were faced with increasingly multicultural cities and countries.

Numerous works explored the postcolonial nation's disillusionment. Achebe is *A man of the People* (1966), Ngugi *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Devil on the Cross* (1982), V.S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Man* (1967) and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are Not yet Born* (1968). In this way writer began to experiment with narrative modes, meaning, politics and ideology. Naipaul's in *A Free State* (1971) and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1982) illustrate the mixing of genre autobiography, popular culture, documentary history, fiction- in a bind of postmodern writing through self-conscious forms on globalization.

Writers like Walcott and Ben Okri thematized the ideas stated below:

- (i) Cultural roots and identity, Multicultural Displacement
- (ii) Identity
- (iii) Migrancy
- (iv) Multiculturalism
- (v) Displacement

Diasporic writers such a David Dabydeen's *A Harlot's Progress*, Hanif Kureshi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Bharti Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Timothy Mo's *The Monkey King* discussed the problems of dual location and dual roots. The poetry of Agha Shahid Ali, Meena Alexander and Sujata Bhatt explored hybrid identities, located between the East and the West. Today Irish writers such as Colm Toibin, Patrick MacCabe and Paul Muldoon figure prominently in postcolonial reading lists. Post-coloniality refers to many modes of reading, political analysis and cultural resistance that deals with different kinds of colonialism's history and present neocolonialism structure. It involves ideas such as social justice, emancipation and democracy. It involves with many ideas in order to oppose oppressive structure of discrimination and exploitation. Post-colonialism pays attention to the differences, among the native people in the sharp contrast of colonial approaches. It was a warning against any kind of homogenization of culture or people. Post-colonial seeks to understand how oppression, resistance and adaptation occurred during colonial rule. 1980's and 1990's many issues as the issues of ethnicity, displacement, sexuality and gender were added as categories for analysis. Thus, post-colonial arguments began to focus on how nationalist projects in colonial times and decolonized nation state and how replicated or extended certain fundamental oppressive structures in class and gender. The decolonized nation discuss postcolonial thinkers, under the manner of national stability and theory explores how colonial ideology and strategies of differences that perpetuates oppression of the marginalized-women, lower

classes/castes. They discuss that it is essentially as the same technique as of colonialism. Post-colonial representation and racial prejudices are coded into the literary texts and how these informed concrete political, military and social operations in colonialism. These are following:

1. Colonialism's strategies of representation of the native;
2. The Epistemological underpinnings of colonial projects (Colonial Histories, anthropology, area studies, cartography)
3. The feminization, marginalization and dehumanization of the 'native'.
4. The rise of nationalist and natives discourse that resisted colonialism and other form of resistance.
5. The Psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized.
6. The role of apparatuses such as education, English literature, historiography, art and architecture in the execution of the colonial project.

The most dominant form of postcolonial criticism we can explore was colonial discourse analysis during 1970's and through the 1980's. This term taken and borrowed by new research areas and theories. These are gay and lesbian, Gender and Feminist, African, American, Post structuralism, Psychoanalytic and others. Colonialism was not only a system of military, economic and social oppression, but also a discourse about the domination of another race effectively. Colonial discourse attempts an unmasking of the colonial ideology in literary and cultural works produced by European countries. It examined discourse the system of thought that allowed certain knowledge, ideas and opinions to be expressed actual political and material practices of colonial oppression. It was literature as the site of such a colonial domination over native cultures. Discourse analysis was concerned with the linguistic expression of colonial practices and power relations and with actual historical and institutional conditions of capitalism, geographical or market forces. Colonial discourse analysis turned to the colonial text rather than colonial context.

Comparative literature grew as a discipline to include more and more writers from formerly colonized nations with the increasing visibility and respectability of non-European writing. Post-colonial criticism also argued that European aesthetic is models or modes of reading need to abandoned. Asian or African writing derived from and influenced by their cultures. Criticism proposed that writing from other cultural contexts were not mere imitations or adoptions of western traditions and texts. Such kinds of works forms and traditions are recasting them with in their native tradition. The Postcolonial theory today is aware of her institutional celebrity status.

Salman Rushdie as a literary figure and Gayatri Spivak as a critic are self-consciously to seek creates politically relevant, socially committed literature and criticism. Postcolonial critics of the 1980's and 1990's look at the differences between Wilson Harris and Raja Rao rather than propose that both writers speak of a universal human condition. Both the writers with the increasing influence of Postcolonial studies and Postcolonial theory (especially after Edward Said's *Orientalism*, 1978) have focused how colonial writers underscored racial difference and imperial power. Said defines the term orient as an integral part of European material civilization and culture¹². This kind of criticism looked at the way in which literature enabled, empowered and reinforced the Empire. Post-colonial criticism in words of Bhabha:

Bears witness to be unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order.¹³

In 1990's, the scope of postcolonial studies moved beyond addressing the 'Third World' cultures and colonial histories. This also to include issue relating to the first world within the Third World nations: immigrants, refugees, blackers and other ethnic minorities in the U.S. and U.K. Post-colonial indicated a bridge building between formerly colonized and oppressed people in non european nations socially subordinated and marginalized races/communities in the 'first world' nations. Diasporic peoples who were subject to racism and systemic marginalize nations saw themselves as colonized. Now we can see, postcolonialism has become a term to discuss the problems and narratives and much of the world has marginalized classes.

This criticism also looked at the way in which native people reading such literary texts make similar with western ways of looking at non-white races. Post-colonial criticism looked at the manner in which non-white races assimilate values through the consumption of imperial texts. Such a critical approach embodies three modes of reading, according to John Mcleod, are following:

1. A re-reading of English literary texts to examine their methods of representations, assumptions, and prejudices that reinforced imperial power relations.
2. Analyzing the construction of colonial subjects in their writing and the ways in which natives resisted such constructions.
3. Discussing the ways in which colonial subjects 'wrote back' that is responded to resisted and overturned imperial power relations to empire.

Colonial discourse analysis therefore turned to the colonial text rather than the colonial context. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to ignore specific historical conditions and context, when theorizing about colonialist and postcolonial studies. Selective reading of programmatically chosen passages taken from isolated texts then built it into a huge edifice. Thus, empires as diverse as the English, French, and Spanish are conflated in such reading of 'coloniality' Frederick Cooper, one of the few who draws attention to this selective mode of reading in postcolonial studies. Put it best as:

One can pluck a text of a narrative from Spanish America in the sixteenth century or from the slave colonies of the West Indies in the eighteenth century or from a moderately prosperous twentieth-century cocoa planter in the Gold coast and derive a lesson that conveys a generalizable meaning¹⁴

Post-colonial theory can be said to have originated in the mid-twentieth texts of Franz Fanon, Aime Cesaire and Albert Memmi. Anti-colonial writing, nationalism, resistance, Anti-Westernization and cultural identity in colonized nations have been integral to the writing or speeches of many writers as Kwame Nkrumah, Gandhi, Julius Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda, Amilcar Cabral and other leaders from colonized nations belong to the end of the nineteenth century. Though studies of imperialism have been taken much earlier in the works of such as V.I. Lenin's Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916) was the central text in this area.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Andrew Bennett & Nicholas Royle. Introduction to Literature Criticism and Theory. (Delhi: Darling Kindersley, 2000) 214.

2 _____. Introduction to Literature Criticism and Theory, 215.

- 3 Elleke Boehmer. Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature. (London : Oxford University Press, 2005) 15.
- 4 _____. Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature, 252.
- 5 _____. Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature, 82.
- 6 Andrew Bennett & Nicholas Royle. Introduction to Literature Criticism and Theory. (Delhi: Darling Kindersley, 2000) 31.
- 7 Jashbir Jain & Veena Singh. Contesting Post-Colonialism. (Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2004) 21.
- 8 Lazarus Neil. Post-Colonial Literary Studies. (New York : Cambridge University, 2004) 3.
- 9 _____. Post -Colonial Literary Studies, 8.
- 10 _____. Post -Colonial Literary Studies, 9.
- 11 _____. Post -Colonial Literary Studies, 12.
- 12 Ashcroft Bill. The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. (London: Routledge, 1995) 87.
- 13 _____. The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 20.
- 14 _____. The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 19