

Paradigm of New Literature

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Abstract. The term "Commonwealth Literature" has been often labeled as Third World Literature. New Literature in English, Minority Literature and Post-Colonial Literature, as terms of convenience. It also maintains that African writing is the only one which can be called post-colonial literature, the reason being that it was written after the continent was free from human bondage. The study of New English Literature is concerned with colonial and post-colonial writing which emerged in former British colonies such as parts of Africa, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean Islands, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, islands in the South Pacific and Sri Lanka. All great literature is primarily universal, rather parochial in appeal and therefore, the response to it ought to be independent of our knowledge of the author's native environment, yet we believe that though the appreciation of a work from the stance of the layman is important, it is no more than an instinctual response to the work and therefore, of lesser value than the methodic evaluation of the scholar which calls for the fuller response to the work than the common reader can make. It is for that total appreciation of the work where nothing is taken for granted or overlooked for ignorance, that one needs to familiarize oneself with history, geography, politics, religion, values, tradition of people whom the writer is portraying in a manner distinct form that in which they have been portrayed in other literatures.

Keywords : New Literature; human bondage; colonial experience; subjugation.

Sam Pitroda, heading the National Knowledge Commission has outlined the role of English in the present day knowledge society as the most important 'determinant' of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. Globalization has necessitated English to emerge as the language of commercial transactions in the global market. The study of New English Literature is concerned with colonial and post-colonial writing which emerged in former British colonies such as parts of Africa, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean Islands, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, islands in the South Pacific and Sri Lanka.

New Literature is literature developing in the world's developing countries, where standard English is used simultaneously with the regional languages as dialects for creative writing. Apart from other language, creative literature in English written in the third world has two fundamental features in common. The first is the impact of the colonial experience on the native's consciousness. The other is the native writer's increasing awareness of the peculiar present day problems of the third world and his growing concern with the need to confront them.

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The native writer, though very much a product of the colonial experience, by virtue of a keener sensibility, understands the subversive impact that colonization has had on the colonial's consequence on the present condition and status of his country. But this attempt has not exhausted itself with a mere sentimental journey into a lost idyllic past but has developed further into an urgent expression of the need to "decolonize", which Frantz Fanon has described as "the veritable creation of new men The thing which has been colonized becoming man during the same process by which it frees itself." (Fanon, 63) In artistic terms, the native writer has articulated the necessity of regenerating the ex-colonial's dead spirit and self-respect of shedding off the oppressive influence of colonization and by depicting to the world at large, the native's very own national identity and achievement.

Chinua Achebe, the West African writer through his debut novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) attempted in African identity, an identity of which the African ought to have been proud instead of feeling ashamed, the same he had felt ever since the British colonized his country and told him that they were savage. In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe shows :

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans: that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry, and above all, they had dignity. (49)

Again, it was Ngugi, an East African who in his novels made a similar attempt to sensitize the people to the fact of their own identity and tried to awaken them to the need to free themselves of complexes of blind imitation of the white man's values. As it usually is so, for every genuine Achebe and Ngugi, one finds several lesser writers who in an attempt to evoke their native heritage have produced self-conscious pieces written to project as exotic image of Africa-Africa as a land of tom-toms, drums and strange and mysterious rites and customs. Very often they have done this to cater to the European reader's pre-conceived image of their culture and to win acceptance in Western markets. According to Achebe who first set the tone for powerful, different African writing, the purpose of writing is to teach. He feels that a writer can perform in two ways. First, by asserting the beauty and dignity of his own culture, and secondly, by educating the masses in the new directions the country must take as a mature, independent nation. It is interesting to note that these leading African writers are among the intellectuals of the country who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of awakening through their writing the ignorant, indifferent, inert masses to the challenges of belonging to a free country after hundreds of years of subjugation.

Wole Soyinka, another South African (Nigerian playwright and poet was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize in Literature, the first African to be honoured in that

category. He played an active role in Nigeria's political history and its struggle for independence from Great Britain. Buchi Emecheta (1944-2017), a Nigerian novelist in Britain has published more than twenty books, including *Second Class Citizen* (1974), *The Bride Price* (1976), *the Slave Girl* (1977), *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) have the themes of child slavery, motherhood, female independence and freedom through education.

Indian writing in English has acquired a great significance in recent years, not only in India but all over the world. A large number of Indians use English language as a medium of creative expression. Salman Rushdie rightly observes:

One important dimension of literature is that it is a means of holding a conversation with the world. These writers are ensuring that India, or rather Indian voices (For they are too good to fall into the trap of writing nationally) will henceforth be confident, indispensable, participants in that literary conversation. (Rushdie, 71)

Early writers like Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan have shown a general awareness of political events in the 1920s and 1930s and of the onset of corruption and failure in independent India. Other Indian writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Manohar Malgonkar, also have great contribution to Indo- English Literature. Other novelists writing in English have worked on a host of other themes, some borrowed from the West such as the exploration of the psychological states of mind – *Cry, the Peacock*, *The Inner Door*, *Voices in the City*, *The Salt Doll*, some formulated out of the Indian confusion over the unreasonable conflict between tradition and modernity as – *He Who Rides a Tiger*, *Too Long in the West*, *The Serpent and the Rope*, *Possession*, *Esmond in India*. The women writers also made a remarkable contribution in English writing in India. Fiction is the most powerful latest literary form to be evolved, and the most dominant in the twentieth century. Writers like Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Anita Desai, Gita Mehta, Gita Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Bharati Mukherjee, Nina Sabal, Shashi Deshpande, Uma Vasudev, Shobha De, Kalindi Sen Gupta, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Jhumpa Lahiri et al. through their writings very successfully and skillfully captured the Indian ethos.

A concerned group of novelists from the West Indies –V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Roger Mais – have attempted to reconstruct the West Indian experience and have tried to discover the West Indian identity through creative literature. The West Indian's crisis of identity is different from that of the African for while the African was colonized, the West Indian was expatriated, uprooted from their mother country (Africa, India, China) and were transplanted in a new country either as a slave or as indentured labourer.

All great literature is primarily universal, rather parochial in appeal and therefore, the response to it ought to be independent of one's knowledge of the author's native environment, yet we believe that though the appreciation of a work from the stance of the layman is important, it is no more than an instinctual response to the work and therefore, of lesser value than the methodic evaluation of the scholar which calls for a further response to the work than the common reader can make. It is for that total appreciation of the work where nothing is taken for granted or overlooked for ignorance that one needs to familiarize on self with history, geography, politics, religion, values, tradition of people whom the writer is portraying in a manner distinct from that in which they have been portrayed in other literatures. Post-colonial fiction writers deal with the traditional colonial discourses, either by modifying or by subverting it or both. They portray life in all its depth and complexity in their novels. They have poignantly conveyed the predicament of people who are engaged in the struggle not only with their circumstances, with their limitations and failures, but also with their own self. The novelists show a deep insight into human nature, and at the same time they catch the epiphanies of life in their work. They view life with a keen perception, sharp sensibility, or acute sense of observation and a fine sensitivity.

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