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POSTCOLONIAL TRENDS IN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT



Colonialism is defined as the annexation and domination of other people, lands, and commodities by European powers in Asia, Africa, and the Americas starting in the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, the actuality of colonisation differs from this constrained interpretation of colonialism, which is the four-century political and geographic expansion of a few Western nations. Post-colonialism is a critical examination of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse in the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands, and South America. The field of study encompasses the historical processes of colonisation, which can be traced back to the Renaissance, decolonization, which involves the recovery and reconstruction of indigenous cultures, and the process of neo-colonization, which is the result of postmodernism and late capitalism, during which multinational corporations gain global influence. The paper provides a sophisticated grasp of the long-lasting impacts of colonialism on societal, cultural, and personal levels, it encourages readers to critically interact with the intricacies of the postcolonial world.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Post-colonialism, Neo-Colonialism*

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INTRODUCTION

Colonialism is defined as the annexation and domination of other people, lands, and commodities by European powers in Asia, Africa, and the Americas starting in the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, the actuality of colonisation differs from this constrained interpretation of colonialism, which is the four-century political and geographic expansion of a few Western nations. In the post-colonial nations, it is a present and ongoing process. Through coercion and brutality, the colonisers changed the colonies' customs, language, and culture. Their interventions with hidden profit-driven agendas result in exploitation, enslavement, and other crimes.

Colonialism destroyed the fundamental character of the Third World Countries, as Ania Loomba notes in her book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. It destroyed their civilizational structure as well as their morals, beliefs, and culture. The foundation of Third World countries has been destroyed. After the East India Company arrived in India, there was an increase in resource theft and looting. Materialistic and economic exploitation was also involved. For their expanding trade and industries, the British considered India as a cheap supply of raw materials. With little forethought, they plundered the nation's resources and took the enormous gains they made, back to their home nation.

In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, Ania Loomba observes that colonialism eroded the core identity of the Third World countries. It decimated their culture, values, and way of life in addition to their civilization. The Third World's foundation has been undermined. Resource theft and looting increased once the East

India Company came in India. There was also economic and materialistic exploitation. Indian raw materials were cheap enough for the British to use in their burgeoning trade and industries. They stole the vast profits they produced and returned home with little concern, pillaging the country's resources.

POST-COLONIALISM

Post-colonialism is a critical examination of the history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse in the Third World countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands, and South America. The field of study encompasses the historical processes of colonisation, which can be traced back to the Renaissance, decolonization, which involves the recovery and reconstruction of indigenous cultures, and the process of neo-colonization, which is the result of postmodernism and late capitalism, during which multinational corporations gain global influence. Post-colonialism examines the metaphysical, ethical, and political concerns about cultural identity, gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, subjectivity, language, and power, focusing on the omnipresent power struggles between cultures and the intersection of cultures, which results in multiculturalism and poly-valency of culture.

Edward Said's Orientalism may be pointed as the magnum opus that inaugurates a proper post-colonial criticism. It alludes to the idea of Eurocentric universalism, which holds that everything Western or European is superior and everything else is inferior. Said drew attention to the cultural practice of "Orientalism" in Europe, which he defined as "a specific and long-standing way of identifying the East as 'other' and inferior to West" (Barry 193). Through its concepts and nomenclature, orientalism



transformed the field of postcolonial theory and literature. It shows the case of power imbalance between the East and the West, with a sense of supremacy and domination over the East by the West.

It should be noted, however, that Homi K. Bhabha also brings up the subject of cultural identity. He uses the term "**mimicry**," which is a critique of post-colonialism, to refer to the abject adoption of Western practices by the indigenous people. The majority of indigenous civilizations are mindlessly copying Western culture without realising how it is destroying their own traditions. The most appropriate and authoritative phrase to characterise, distinguish, and examine the emerging English-language literatures is postcolonial literature, according to a large number of critics.

Consequently, it should be mentioned that resistance, subversion, and reconstruction are characteristics of postcolonial literature. Some critics argue that colonialism will always exist because colonies only become independent from government rule, and self-imposed colonialism and the convoluted process of post-colonialism will never cease.

The word "post-colonial" was first used to describe post-independence challenges worldwide in the 1970s. From an ideological and historical perspective, it is significant. The viewpoints and experiences of the colonised people are the main emphasis of post-colonialism. Post-colonial studies is primarily concerned with language and landscape, as well as the self and the other. Research on race, ethnicity, and empire has made a significant

contribution to post-colonial scholarship in recent years.

In post-colonial discourse, the colonised self is reinterpreted, recast, and recreated. The word "post-colonial" should be used to describe the period after national independence as opposed to colonial control. The entire planet will be referred to as post-colonial when the era of colonialism ends. Neo-colonialism is a topic of discussion in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and India. Although they have nominal independence, they are nevertheless post-colonial in the sense that they are mentally colonised in every way.

NEO-COLONIALISM

"Neo-colonialism" refers to the way powerful countries use their financial resources to subjugate less developed states or to maintain control over their former colonies. It replaces the military or political might of colonisation with capitalism, globalisation, and cultural imperialism. Language, culture, or economic restrictions are examples of control mechanisms. These nations can have an advantage over their rivals by fostering such control. As a result, neo-colonialism would be the result of benevolent commercial interests leading to euphoric cultural ramifications. Post-colonialism emphasizes many hybridities and various kinds of diversity or fragmentation. It discusses about "a specific group of (oppressed or dissenting) people or individuals within them, rather than a location or social order which may include such people, but is not limited to them" (20). This is one of the reasons as to why postcolonial theory is accused of shifting its focus from larger, wider contexts to individuals and representatives.



There are many misconceptions around the phrase "post-colonialism." It is typically interpreted in terms of time, specifically the era following the end of colonisation. The term 'post' denotes a temporal or ideological aftermath. A nation may be officially decolonized or in the neo-colonial stage of economic or cultural dependency when it is considered post-colonial. The history of colonisation or repression by the British or other colonial powers is shared by the people who live in Third World countries. The Third World's perceived "inferiority" has always given the West more fertile ground on which to act and impose its supremacy. It assisted the latter in altering the colonised nations for their colonial practices by establishing trade, religious missions, and military rule. The colonizer's language was established as a prerequisite during the process, based on the widespread belief that individuals in charge of overseeing the colonizer's interests needed to be conversant in both language and literature. It was agreed that Western literature should be taught to the Indians as well. For example, in the case of India, it should be mentioned Macaulay's conviction that the English educated Indians, using them as tools and turning them into a class.

It is believed that the Third World countries' people's dependence on and respect for their colonial overlords is what led to the conquerors' conquest and ongoing rule there. On the other hand, one may argue that post-colonialism today is typically limited to the locals taking over as the primary form of government. Decolonizing the intellect is also a must, it must be recognised. The histories of the once colonised nations, such as New Zealand, Canada, the United States of America, or

India, differ significantly from one another. Class, caste, and ethnicity must be treated differently in nations like India where internal divisions are also present.

In postcolonial theory, a few major theoretical works are: *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) by Franz Fanon, *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said, *In Other Worlds* (1987) by Gayatri Spivak, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft et al, *Nation and Narration* (1990) by Homi K Bhabha, and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by Edward Said. Indigenous peoples from historically colonised and marginalised countries have increasingly discovered their voices in literature, striving to assert their own perspectives, tell their own tales, and reclaim their histories and experiences. For example, Ngugi's "*Decolonizing the Mind*" and "*Moving the Centre*" are worth mentioning here.

The notion of otherness is the foundation of post-colonial thinking. The idea of others is complicated in many ways. "Otherness" encompasses dual identity—that is, difference and identity. People that were colonised had a very diverse temperament and set of customs. The theory also places a strong emphasis on concepts of resistance including opposition, subversion, and mimicry. It also conveyed the concepts of liberty, individualism, and human independence. They concentrated on the highly centralised economic and cultural system that, in the end, unites the western concept; it also deals with the political and cultural systems. It might have been challenging to imagine or justify the fundamental ideas of nationality and identity in terms of the cultural customs of the colonial people.



The main focus of postcolonial theory is on how colonising cultures are absorbed by literature, which then distorts the realities and experiences of the colonised people. Through literature, colonial people attempt to define themselves and recover their history in the face of inevitable otherness. Post-colonial literature originated in the Caribbean, Africa, and India, the former colonies of Britain. The struggle for independence, immigration, identity, and childhood trauma are all major themes in the English-language writing of numerous post-colonial writers. The post-colonial literature makes frequent reference to the colonial past and post-colonial treachery.

In his writings, Frantz Fanon claims that the indigenous intellectuals of the recently established nation get inspiration from the early attempts to imitate the major literary movements of the colonising power. As the indigenous intellectuals emulate the cultural patterns of the colonising power, they completely disregard the pure culture of the conquered nation. As a result of neglecting their roots and joining the colonisers, the recently formed bourgeoisie has negatively damaged the country's indigenous population. Later, in the second stage, the intellectual growth of the native person reaches its pinnacle, and eventually, dissatisfied with copying the coloniser, he immerses himself in the history of the native people. The revitalization of ethnicity and the appreciation of local culture by intellectuals from the area characterise this phase. At last, Fanon claims that during the final stage, known as the "fighting phase" (179), indigenous intellectuals actively engaged in the fight against colonialism and were directly involved in the national struggle.

Fanon here raises the problem of 'neo-colonialism' and invites the attention of the ordinary class people of the newly formed country, to take precautionary steps to save themselves from the clutches of the native bourgeoisie who come to power immediately after the colonial masters leave the country. Fanon calls these classes of people 'native bourgeois' and the phase of history not 'post colonialism' but 'neo-colonialism'. Hence neo-colonialism, according to Fanon, lies between colonialism and post-colonialism where the newly independent nation becomes free from the clutches of colonial powers but the colonial administration continues through the newly occupied Western educated hybrid powers of the newly formed country.

ORIENTALISM

As a result of increased global cultural interaction, colonialism has only served to promote the diversity and fluidity of identities. However, orientalism is a method of thinking and a means of representation that gave rise to racially charged beliefs, concepts, and representations of non-European culture, such that the East was constantly compared to Europe and the justification for colonialism in the East was established. In his seminal work *Orientalism*, Edward Said portrayed non-Western people as the "other." The goal of Western European thought has been to understand and characterise the "Orient" or "East" as a concept in contrast to the "Occident" or "West." Thus, the idea of orientalism is a way of thinking about and researching the East in contrast to the West.

According to Said, the concept of Orientalism is a tool that attempts to know and



define the 'Orient'. In a nutshell, Orientalism is a Western approach to conquering, reforming, and controlling the Orient. The history of colonial and post-colonial theory shows that the nations that underwent colonialism and gained their independence afterwards are now gripped by the neo-colonial strategies of the first world countries.

Edward Said's work mainly focused on the themes of imperialism and the inter play of the orient and the occident. This discourse analysis helps to perceive the connections between dominant and marginalised ideas and institutions more clearly. It allows people to understand how power operates in our everyday lives through language, literature, culture, and institutions.

MIMICRY

In *Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha presents a series of ideas that aim to dismantle the fundamental polarisation of the world into self and other. In this argument, Bhabha contends that these Western-framed cultural stereotypes are not absolute or stable. The West portrays the East as the native, uncorrectable, and uncivilised people in colonial discourses and narrations. To maintain the West's cultural superiority, the primary strategy employed by the West to denigrate the East is to reiterate and validate preconceived notions that have already been formed. The stereotype that was therefore produced made the colonisers appear "unstable and dependent" while also aiding in the development of their identity. The colonial discourse mainly depended on the power of narration exerted by the West. The West's authority over the East was first exerted by the circulation of the 'English Book', the epitome of Western civilization and culture. As the

major motive of colonization is to civilize the native, the English book was circulated among the people of the colonized country and transmitted its ideals, educating the relevance of Western education and importance of their superior culture.

Bhabha affirms that the repetition can never become the original and thus the repetition of the book represents lack of distance, and instability. The emergence of hybrid culture during the neo-colonial era led to a complete cultural imitation of Westerners. In order to examine the fragmented state of colonialism in the recently constituted nations that are still under the control of the indigenous elite, Bhabha presents the idea of imitation. As a result, the goal of the colonial mission is accomplished when the native is transformed into "one like us," a replica of the coloniser. As a result, the colonial discourse breaks down, and mimicry creates a subject that matches the warped perception of the colonial ruler. Thus, the colonial authority is transformed into the mechanism through which it is replicated, giving rise to hybrid cultural identities. Cultural mimicry is an act of straightforward homage. Bhabha suggests that it is possible to think of mimicry as a way of eluding control. (Bhabha, *Location* 124-133) Bhabha is of the opinion that the East copied everything from the West blindly following the footprints of the Westerner, thinking that the West is the 'role model' and embodiment of true values. As a result, the East's social conventions and way of life evolved from the neo-colonial to the postcolonial eras, and eventually, total cultural integration occurred. The original culture became a source of nostalgia for the older generation and a fresh concept for the younger,



while the western dress code, eating habits, lifestyle, learning a second language, education, and other aspects of life became necessities of the day. In the neo-colonial era of history, imitation serves as an anti-colonial instrument. Historians of the early colonised nations believe that Western education there helped native inhabitants develop ideals of liberty and freedom, and that the enlightenment that resulted from this education gave them ideas of democracy and fraternity.

Caliban from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* serves as the best representation and example of this dynamic state. He declares to Prospero and Miranda, his masters, that he can curse his captives for teaching him a new language. However, the primary cause of the breakdown of colonial rule is thought to be subversion or rebellion. Ngugi Wa Thiango, the celebrated Kenyan writer and the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe are the African writers who used coloniser's language for this subversive purpose. Achebe is of the view that most of the African countries are multi-lingual in nature and use English as the primary language in the framing of national literature of Nigeria. Achebe invokes the creative hybridity of the African writers who moulded the English to their experience rather than the way around and says: "For me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it... I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings." (Achebe 103)

HYBRIDITY

Bhabha's view of hybridity of the cultures refers to the mixedness within every form of identity. The hybrid is half acquaint and half oppositional and marks the site of slipperiness of authority. They are situated between the adopted Western culture and the native culture of the colonised country, displaying the cultural characteristics of both the coloniser and the colonised. The subject of how to distinguish between non-Western and Western identities is one that Bhabha addresses in his 1990 essay collection *Nation and Narration*. He believes that nations have been important in colonial discourses, especially the kinds of nationalism that have been involved in anticolonial uprisings and post-war reconstruction. "If nation states are widely conceded to be 'new' and 'historical', the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past and still more important glide into a limitless future". (Bhabha 11-12) According to Bhabha, nations are the forms of mythology which he rephrases to emphasise the connection between nation and narration: "Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye." (1) Bhabha's view is that nations are "narrative" constructions that arise from the "hybrid" interaction of contending cultural constituencies.

Postcolonial writing has its roots in historical liberation movements, but it also responds to modern issues like globalisation, environmental degradation, and the after effects of neocolonialism. In order to convey the complexity of the postcolonial experience in the twenty-first century, writers use a variety of storytelling styles, frequently combining



aspects of digital media, magical realism, and postcolonial science fiction.

All things considered, postcolonial literature is a potent monument to the tenacity, inventiveness, and agency of historically colonised peoples. By providing a sophisticated grasp of the long-lasting impacts of colonialism on societal, cultural, and personal levels, it encourages readers to critically interact with the intricacies of the postcolonial world.

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