

A Brief Introduction to Pakistani English Literature in Context of Post colonialism

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Abstract

Every nation has its unique history and social norms. Considering the peculiar historical background and national significance, their literature is penned down. All the nations have their own literature with its unique peculiarities. Similarly Pakistan English Literature has no exceptions.

Pakistani literature in English emerged evidently and globally recognized from last two decades. It's relatively difficult to decree the precise date of its origin: roughly it could be said that its origin goes back to colonial India and it has close association with British colonialism. Broadly it can be divided into two main eras' i.e. Pre-Partition and Post-Partition Pakistani English literature. Pakistani literature thrived with the emergence of Pakistan but accomplished wider attention from 1980s. Pakistani English writers have gained worldwide literary attention due to their significance writings.

Introduction

English language was enforced in Subcontinent right after the war of Independence in 1857 to establish colonization in Subcontinent. This war changed the future of inhabitants of Subcontinent. English language has a long historical background in Subcontinent. This colonization came to an end in 1947 but still English language is not only spoken in Pakistan and India but also the official language of Pakistan.

As a matter of fact the origin of Pakistani English Literature is a debatable question among literary circles. If the term 'Pakistani English Literature' is associated to that literature which was written during post partition era then it's obvious that pre-partition literature will not be the part of Pakistani English Literature. Here an important question arises, what about those writers who migrated to Pakistan after partition because many Muslim literary persons and writers were writing before the partition of India in 1947. Most of them migrated to newly born state and their literary writings became the part of Pakistani literature in English. Here are the names of very promising and elegant writers such as, Ahmed Ali, Firoz Khan Noon, Mumtaz Shahnawaz and Khawaja Ahmed Nawaz penned their literary writings before partition. After mutiny war in 1857 English colonizer familiarized English language to establish their colonization.

Dr. Tariq Rahman in "A History of Pakistani Literature in English" (1990) opines that third world literature was perceived by the European critics in a political scenario. They neglect its aesthetic forms. Colonialism was an impediment between colonizers and colonized: that was the main reason that third world literature did not get comprehensive attention by the critics. The trends have changed now; due to substantial evolution of third world literature European have started to patronize it. There are several issues still sustain in this regard: it is yet to be decided whether the third world literatures have diverse characteristics from English literature or not.

Postcolonial is a literary term used for an era when colonies achieved freedom from European colonization. The term post colonialism concerns the effects of colonialism on cultures and communities which are originally historians used it after WWII referring to the post-independence era.

Postcolonial literature has its own antiquity and characteristics as compared to European literatures. Due to these diverse features postcolonial literature has its own importance among other literatures. Postcolonial writers try to establish their identity and prestige through their writings. Major portion of the postcolonial literatures has been written in the languages of former colonizers (i.e , English, Spanish, French, Portuguese). As Pakistani literature in English has got eminence after the partition the postcolonial effects are visible in the literature which has been penned by the Pakistani English writers. Pakistani literature in English has its own peculiar rudiments which make it dissimilar from other third world literatures. Though it was a political transition after the end of colonialism and many colonized states got independence from colonizers and they were not colonies anymore, but culturally and economically there raised many predicaments and crisis, they were still in confusion about their culture and identity.

In fact, colonialism was not only a power control but it was a cultural control by the colonizer, in which still colonized people tied to. The struggle of the colonized subjects for their cultural identity and the social formation of the new independent nations was an aspect of cultural transformation that led to a conflict with the colonizer's culture. After the decolonization there was a struggle for the restoration of cultural identity and maintenance of independence. The question of identity is the most controversial subject in postcolonial era and literature and it can be regarded the most significant because of its crisis exist in all postcolonial communities. The issue of identity is not a clear and fixed concept as it may imagined, that led to the crisis and became a phenomena. Postcolonial literature and criticism emerged during and after many countries gained or struggling for freedom. The important themes of post-colonial literature are resistance race, gender, ethnicity, identity and culture.

One of the debatable issues of post-colonialism is the question of identity and culture. In the modern world with the increase of immigrant numbers, hybrid nations, and constitution of countries with different cultural diversities the question of identity aroused. Bill Ashcroft (1989) in *The Empire Writes Back* argues that the literature presents a one of the most significant ways in which the postcolonial period's discernments are expressed and the day to day veracities experienced by colonized peoples have been powerfully discussed and so profoundly influential.

Post-colonial novels address the key issues such as resistance, identity, nationalism, Diasporas, identity formation and its crisis. Postcolonial theorists and critics considered the issue of identity as one of its essential discussion.

Pakistani literature in English is the continuum of post-colonial literature. The contemporary Pakistani literature in English also addresses the issues of identity crises. The Pakistani immigrants in European countries are still under the trauma of colonialism and they are struggling to maintain their independent identity. Almost all the Pakistani writers of English literature chose identity as the subject matter of their literary works.

Themes in Pakistan English Literature

As other literatures of the world Pakistani English Literature is also enriched with artistic and aesthetic values. Pakistani English literature has gained conspicuous status among other contemporary literatures.

Pakistani literature in English is dissimilar in many aspects from Indian and other contemporary literatures. The subject matters of its writings are identity issues particular religious, social, ethnic, regional and hybridity. Most of the Pakistani English writers e.g Hanif Kureishi ,Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie and other literary writers share similar themes in their literary works as identity crises, sexual issues, immigration complications etc.

Identity and sexual traumas are the core issues in Pakistani society. After 9/11 Muslims particular Pakistani are facing identity problems across the world. While within Pakistan domestic violence, sexual abuse, elopement, rape and such issues have greatly attracted the attention of Pakistani English writers. Identity of immigrants is a great concern in the modern world. Religious and societal issues are concerned subjects of contemporary Pakistani English literature.

Nadeem Aslam and Hanif Kureishi are notable internationally recognized Pakistani English writers. Aslam's *Maps For Lost Lovers* and Kureishi's *The Black Album* discuss identity and sexual issues related to Pakistani immigrants in England. Kureishi was born in England and brought up there, he addressed the cultural and ethnic diversities and disharmony experienced by Pakistani immigrants. These issues are the subject matter of his key literary works.

Many Pakistani writers have discussed identity appropriation and sexual issues in their fictional works. Identity issues have become the hallmark of Pakistani literature in English.

Heinz, 1995 in *Sexual Orientation* discusses that among all other minorities exist in the world, sexual minorities are the largest minorities neglecting the ethnic boundaries, social class and age. Mumtaz Shahnawaz a political activist, freedom fighter and novelist in her novel, 'The Heart Divided' 1947 discusses the problems of women; this has been considered the starting point of Feminism in Pakistan. Zulfikar Ghose in his novel 'Murder of Aziz Khan' (1967) reveals the tragic story of protagonist who became the victim of upper class. The novel revolves around the traumas of partition. His all major literary works beholds two significant themes estrangement and separation from the society. 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' (2007) by Afghan American author Khalid Hosseini deals with the problem of sexual abuse, and a pitiable lot of women in Afghanistan.

The history of novel in Pakistan originates with the publication of Qurratulain Heider's *Aagka Darya* (The River of Fire, 1957). This novel is considered as one of the preeminent novels in the Subcontinent region. It is categorized as historic novel; it reveals the history of two thousand years ago and ends at the partition of united India. The novel discusses the complications of self-identity. The novel addresses the partition crises and inter-communal identity concerns.

Abdullah Husain is another prominent Pakistani English writer. His Urdu novel *Udas Naslain* is a master piece of literary work in Urdu literature. Later on the novel was translated in English language.

Bapsi Sidhwa is another prominent Pakistani English writer and she is considered as feminist writer. She has raised her voice against the victimization of women. She has sketched the bloodshed memories of partition in her novels. She addressed the brutal victimization of women during the partition how the women were raped and murdered by the rioters. Some of her novels reveal the women sufferings in Pakistani community. Sidhwa belongs to Zoroastrian community and she is also the representative of her community as well. Immigrants' identity in western societies is also the hallmark of her novels. *American Brat* (1993) depicts hybridity and immigrants issues of Pakistani diaspora.

Kimin (1990) discusses about the sexual attitude of Asian American men and women; she argues that Asian women have stronger sense of sexuality than their counterparts. .

David Waterman (2010) discusses about the conservation of identity of Pakistani diaspora and communal unity of the habitants of Dasht-e-Tanhai. For that purpose Waterman has strappingly suggested prototypical kind of memory instead of ordinary memory. This suggestion seems similar with Homi K Bhabha's idea of non-native place in the development of defining ethnic identity. A prodigious cultural tribulation was faced by the immigrants during the partition in 1947. This division and self-exile provoked their feelings such as depriving the people from their preferred seasons; of their cultural and social exhibitions and externalization.

Conculsion:

It is crystal clear that Pakistani English Literature has emerged as a strong voice of a nation which was once colonized. Almost in every literary work theme of colonization is found. The identity crises of Pakistani immigrants are presented by Pakistani English authors. Among postcolonial literatures Pakistani English literature has a distinct place.

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