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Trans-nationality and cross culturalism: Contradictions in genetic elucidation

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Abstract

The world scenario, not merely in the field of literature but also in almost all other fields, is replete with contradictions. We speak of post-colonialism, but we conveniently forget that most of the erstwhile colonies are now independent nation-states. In the same manner, Colonialism is a term that critically refers to the political ideologies which legitimated the modern invasion, occupation and exploitation of inhabited lands by overwhelming outside military powers. Globalization has also resulted in undermining of democratic process in developing countries. In fact, so many major decisions related to social issues are imposed on developing countries by their developed partners. It is in view of these contradictions that the present paper presents the contemporary world scenario.

Keywords: colonialism, post-colonialism, globalization, culture, modernism, post-modernism, resistance, independence etc.

Introduction

Post colonialism examines how societies, governments and peoples in the formerly colonized regions of the world experience international relations. The use of 'post' by postcolonial scholars by no means suggests that the effects or impacts of colonial rule are now long gone. Rather, it highlights the impact that colonial and imperial histories still have in shaping a colonial way of thinking about the world and how Western forms of knowledge and power marginalize the non-Western world. Post colonialism is not only interested in understanding the world as it is, but also as it ought to be. It is concerned with the disparities in global power and wealth accumulation and why some states and groups exercise so much power over others. By raising issues such as this, post colonialism asks different questions to the other theories and allows for not just alternative readings of history but also alternative perspectives on contemporary events and issues.

While "post-colonialism" appeared in the context of decolonization that marked the second half of the 20th century and has been appropriated by contemporary critical discourse in a wide range of domains. Indeed, on the one hand, "post-colonial" may refer to the status of a land that is no longer colonized and has regained its political independence. On the other hand, "post-colonialism" may designate and denounce the new forms of economic and cultural oppression that have succeeded modern colonialism. The term tends to point out that cooperation, assistance, modernization and the like are, in fact, new forms of political and cultural domination as pernicious as the former imperial colonialism.

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin. Imperialism, on the other hand, comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control. Even in the field of literature, there is a danger in using terms like "colonialism" and "post-colonialism" too sweepingly. One good example of this debate can be found in *Interrogating Post-Colonialism: Theory, Text and Context* (eds. Harish Trivedi and Meenakshi Mukherjee, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1996).

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In the opening chapter, "Interrogating Post-Colonialism" (pp.3-11), Meenakshi Mukherjee makes the point that the concept of post colonialism has been fashioned in Western, especially American universities and is not always adequate to meet the contemporary needs of countries with a history of colonialism such as India. The imperatives of post-colonialism are being set elsewhere, particularly by migrant Indian Intellectuals who have helped to make post-colonialism the fashion in Western academics by drawing upon the latest advances in literary theory. According to Mukherjee.

"Several diasporic Indians have been pioneers in the area of post-colonial theory, and the field is now densely populated with academics in American universities who originally came from the ex-colonies. But as of now no major theoretical contributions has come to this discourse from home-based Indian intellectuals". (p.8)

This leads Mukherjee to argue that countries with a history of colonialism are being colonized again, this time by Western theoretical imperatives and the current focus in Western universities upon cultural difference. In terms of literary studies, the colonies provide literary texts as "raw materials" which are imported by the West to be "processed" using postcolonial theory, with the resulting intellectual product shipped back to the erstwhile colonies for academic consumption.

Trans-nationality and cross - culturalism

We try to consider the idea of trans-nationality, of cross culturalism in depth, and yet we discover that most of the writers, the Indian expatriates in particular, keep on looking back to their roots. As we know that trans-nationality is a principle of carrying out an action across national borders, so as to have effects at a more general level, while the term cross- culturalism emerged in the field of social sciences in the 1930's; initially referring to comparative studies based on statistical compilations of cultural data, but the term gradually acquired a secondary sense of cultural interactivity. Many Indian writers continue to grapple with these issues. But the writers generally find their efforts as unconnected to the other world. The reasons of their looking back are in the heart of all who are living in an alien world. Displacement, whether forced or self-imposed, is in many ways a calamity.

The Indian-English writer, notably, Raja Rao became an expatriate even before the Independence of the country; G.V. Desani was born in Kenya and lived in England, India and U.S.A. and Kamala Markandaya married an Englishman and lived in Britain. Nirad C. Chaudhuri too preferred the English shores. But for their creative writings, they always try to explore something which can connect them to their original motherland. Actually, the non-resident Indian writers have explored their sense of displacement- a perennial theme in all exile literature. They have given more poignancy to the exploration by dealing not only with a geographical dislocation but also a socio - cultural sense of displacement. These exilic states give birth to the sense of displacement and rootlessness. Though we speak in terms of one world, of the universal man, of peace and harmony, of liberation and progress, but unfortunately our world seems to have reverted back to primitive fundamentalism, to terrorism, to the utter negation of human values. We do insist on the importance and significance of the text, of

ontology; however, we come out perhaps most of the time in the language of abstractions and generalization.

Post modernism: women empowerment

We lay stress on postmodernism as it became the buzzword of the society in the 1990's. Yet, even now, it still remains confusing and baffling in its variety of definitions, contexts and associations. It is quite retrospectively possible to see that postmodernism has developed a history; and that history is an uneven and irregular one. Anxieties about its conservative's political complicity, its reactionary aesthetic ideology, and its philosophical contradictions continue to dog its diagnostic or forensic utility in analysing contemporary culture.

At the same time, postmodernism also gives emphasis on the concepts of women empowerment and improvement in the status of the marginalized on the name of feminism or sometimes post feminism, but everywhere we notice that women are still being exploited. Women bear almost all responsibility for meeting basic needs of the family, yet are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action they need to fulfil their responsibility. The vast majority of the world's poor are women. Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women. Of the millions of school age children not in school, the majority are girls.

Globalization

We gloat over the theory of globalization, and still we see the hiatus between the developed and the developing nations, the developed countries ironically imposing the policy of protectionism on the economics of the developing nations. Globalization, we are told, is what every business should be pursuing and what every nation should welcome. But it has become a very controversial issue today. It can be called boundary-broadening and it allows people to share everything on international level. But the benefits of globalization are not universal. Companies have set up industries causing pollution in other countries with poor regulation of pollution. What we see as the result of industrial globalization is growing social inequality and the rich are getting richer and the poor are becoming poorer. Globalization does not only include economics but also other disciplines such as politics and social studies. It has led to loss of sovereignty in many developing countries. The world governments have come up with institutions like World Bank, IMF and WTO which have developed super national governance policies and which are used to deal with the world affairs. In this case the developing nations at many times are affected negatively by world decisions made by the developed countries to favor their own interests. This is also a bare fact that as much poorer the country as weaker it is in influencing the decisions of the international agencies. It also results to exploitation of labor in the developing countries because the developed countries have immense capital strength which they invest in big companies and multinationals and then they take advantage of cheap labor in developing countries.

Conclusion

No doubt, an awareness of history has its own representative value, but history is being distorted beyond repair. History of any country is not mere sayings but a recording of actual events that took place in the past of that country and it must be taught to every citizen of that country. No one can deny

the value of culture. Culture is an omnibus term, for it partakes something of history, of philosophy, of religion, of psychology, of sociology and anthropology. The first important step that we have to take in the present-day world is to interpret appropriately and consolidate strongly the implications of culture. When we refer to culture, what we do really point to is the validity of human culture. Culture consists of things both small and great: small that take us to our everyday life and great because it involves certain fundamental and imperishable categories.

With respect to conflict, the discourse of culture directs attention to problems of intercultural communication, interpretation, and the possibility of diverse metrics for decision-making. It makes analysts or practitioners aware that in dealing with conflict across cultural boundaries they are dealing with more than superficial differences in “style,” but with something foundational. It also makes them aware that in the most common “culture-type” conflicts—ethnic conflicts—they may be dealing with situations of low culture conflict, no matter how politically intense the confrontation; contrariwise, some conflicts may not appear to be “cultural” at all (that is, overtly ethnic or national in nature), but in fact are deeply cultural when examined from cognitive, communicative, or worldview perspectives. To promote better understanding of cross-cultural conflict and better conflict resolution techniques, some scholars and practitioners have sought to develop typologies for characterizing different sorts of cultures, and by extension different kinds of intercultural communication problem areas, amenable to different types of conflict resolution procedures. Most of the research on cross-cultural conflict resolution thus far has concentrated on negotiation, rather than third party processes such as mediation or facilitation, or more specialized forms such as the problem-solving workshop.

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