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Post-Colonialism and Globalization*

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Abstract

Post-colonialism to colonialism is what post-modernism to modernism and post-structuralism to structuralism. Though colonialism is dead and gone, it has emerged in a different form, that is globalization. It is an avatar of Colonialism, which subsumes matters of identity, gender, race, racism, ethnicity, slavery, etc. It has submerged all other cultures and languages and made American and European cultures as the standards to which all other cultures are negatively compared. One outcome is digital technology. ELT is another aspect of cultural Imperialism. A new metaphysics of indefinite uncertainty and flux has emerged in the wake of Post-Colonialism attacking God, fixity, certainty, transcendental thought. Epistemologically it is an argument against imagination, intuition and verbal authority. Another baneful aspect is the domination of English language over other languages, due to which several hundreds of languages have been marginalized or declared as most endangered and on the way towards extinction. World literature can be an amazing tool for analysing globalisation. But there is a danger that extrapolating western notions into other cultures effectively perpetuate strategies of cultural Imperialism. The world has been politically liberated. But, cultural self-determination is not happening. It is this form of imperialism or colonialism that needs to be seriously addressed.

Key words: colonialism, post-colonialism, globalization, identity, ethnicity, racism, slavery, digital technology, cultural imperialism, God, fixity, certainty, transcendental thought, intuition, verbal authority, world literature, political self-determination and cultural self-determination.

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Post-Colonialism and Globalization*

I

Post-colonialism to colonialism is what post-modernism to modernism and post-structuralism to structuralism. It is a simplistic way of defining the relation. Post-colonialism, nevertheless, is not a reaction against colonialism, nor is it an extension of colonialism. Reaction against colonialism was over in the form of gaining political independence by the former colonies. Political subjugation was over. Though colonialism is dead and gone, it has emerged in a different form, that is globalization. It is an avatar of Colonialism, which subsumes matters of identity, gender, race, racism, ethnicity, slavery, etc. It has submerged all other cultures and languages and made American and European cultures as the standards to which all other cultures are negatively compared.

II

One outcome is digital technology. Let me examine its working in the present context. We live in an amazing time with access to almost unlimited information, entertainment and opinions. People can stay in touch with friends more easily now, sending them birthday greetings, looking for life partners, sharing ideas, thoughts, feelings, experiences and complaints and keeping each other informed, all on line through tweets, Facebook network and Email contacts. Naturally, e-mail and social networking websites have facilitated communication. People can announce any event to their virtual network of friends, family and acquaintances within moments. From birth day celebrations to baby pictures, friends get news about each other from texts, tweets, or social networks. In addition, many people use credit cards to purchase products and complete numerous online forms with personal information for a variety of purposes.

When doing research, one need not have to walk to a library, search for books, and read words on paper. Obviously, finding what we need from the Internet is faster, and on line searches provide a broader range of sources. We have Amazon, Flipkart and other book links which sell books of both print and kindle editions besides every piece of article we need. With the availability of digital technology, scholars and students rarely engage in face-to-face interactions these days either with their professors or their fellow scholars and students. Libraries have been transformed into museums, and the librarians sit lonely in their cells waiting for the readers. Gone were the days when students, scholars and teachers used to ask questions in person. Now the librarians more often respond to students', scholars' and teachers' text queries in a website help centers. At the end of the day, librarians and other employees return home exhausted by so much on line interaction.

In this fast-paced world filled with online social media, much of information comes from the west in the form of ideas and thoughts. All this knowledge whether science, social science, arts and culture is intellectual and western in character. In science, all science, in literature all literature is judged in terms of the standard – British, European or American, making the western ideas and ideals supreme unquestionable and authoritative, and even "universal". All literary criticism is western; all literary theories, forms and styles are western, blindly imitated, copied and stolen. There is a certain subordination of mind which is evident in the almost mechanical adoption and application of western critical theories and models. The university research/critical thinking has been restricted to the application of these ideas. Construction, deconstruction and reconstruction are normal operations in the history of ideas. Untenable categories are constituted and subsequently dissolved.

One issue now is how open one should be with sharing private information since the information could be stolen by criminals. People who have grown up using the interest are unaware of its risks. The ease of sharing information provided opportunities for crimes and abuses. People may sometime share details of their lives on line without thinking about the consequences. Hackers and scammers continue to come up with more sophisticated and convincing schemes. The issue of privacy online is crucial in this context.

While it is true that globalization through digital technology has many benefits, they come at a cost, producing citizens who have fewer critical-thinking skills and weaker social skills. According to one study in the UK (Carr, 7) students who skimmed over most information rarely read more than a page or two when completing academic research. Individuals who use Internet for research or for social networking suffer from information overload. On line readers understand and retain less than print readers. There is always a gap between reading on line and reading print materials. Such over users may be called as "digital natives." Digital natives are those people who were born since the 1990s, the year when globalization had been introduced in India which led to drastic economic reforms, which in turn facilitated India for MNCs. These people were born in a digital world, and they have been using technology since childhood. According to Tapscott (97-112), digital natives process information differently than digital immigrants (people who were born before the 1990s and learned how to use the Internet later in life than digital natives did). In his study he cited, however, that digital natives' thinking styles have not suffered despite their excess dependence on digital technology.

III

ELT is another aspect of cultural Imperialism. Today, in non-English speaking countries, ELT has become a big business. The texts used as material in teaching English have been largely west-imported, subverting native culture. This is akin to teaching English literary texts from England in the third phase of assimilation in

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India. Culture is victimized. These literary texts teach and preach western values and ideals totally different from the native values and ideals. In Indian class room these western teaching methods, techniques and approaches have been tested, demonstrated and aggressively followed. ELT is never taught in the context of native culture. Many of the theories developed by ELT experts have carried colonial character. In the context of globalization, the onslaught of such material generated and published by OUP, CUP and Orient Black swan has increased phenomenally as the number of publications with will receptions is a testimony. A large part of material used in the classrooms as well as in many so called spoken English institutes contains tailor-made expressions, idealistic sentences, American slang and expressions drawn from the English cultural background. All this has subverted our ethos and milieu. We have enough rich treasure of tales in our ancient lore endowed with moral and spiritual values or rich repository of indigenous experiences that can be exploited in an intelligent way in teaching English. This would instantaneously appeal and strike readers' minds and hearts. It would facilitate the students to learn and acquire not only the langue but also the ethos of our rich culture which seems to have fallen as victim to the aggressive onslaught of western values in the name of globalization. The English class room in India looks more like a colonial class room than an Indian in truest sense.

IV

A new metaphysics of indefinite uncertainty and flux has emerged in the wake of Post-Colonialism attacking God, fixity, certainty, transcendental thought. Epistemologically it is an argument against imagination, intuition and verbal authority. In literary theory, it is an argument against 'author', 'given meaning' and 'aesthetics'. Everything has been construed as a 'linguistic construct' and it has been deconstructed. Implicitly, it is an attack on Eastern thought, philosophy and religious experience, challenging and subverting it or nullifying it as nothing but "a mass of gas". Derrida has borrowed the ideas from the Eastern thought, chiefly from the Buddhist and the Upanishads, to subvert the very ideas. The Western theorists have discovered the inadequacy of metaphysics to counter the fullness of Eastern metaphysics which has falsified sciences as supreme, authoritative and unquestionable. This has led to the equation of linguistic categories with Reality of the East, not knowing that language is only representational, and Reality is immanent, yet transcendental. Ferdinand de Saussure's asserting the paradigmatic relation itself is a questioning of linear progression of knowledge. In the context of plurality and uncertainty of meaning, the West rejected the author as an institution, the notion of God and permanency. All these neo-Colonial thoughts have questioned the intellectual and spiritual tradition of the East and established the supremacy of the West.

The Indian history of ideas are different for their vibrancy, there is a wide spectrum of *drshtibheda,* perspectives or points of view – coexisting and competing at the same time. Indian thought treats language as

asymmetrical with reality, *sabdha* being crucial, interpretation essentially a linguistic exegetes, the technical terms used in texts are ordinary – *atma, citta, buddhi, rupa, maya, nirukta, rasa, bhava, bhavana*, etc. intrinsically transcendental man as *nimiita* a means or instrument and not as agent, literary experiences as autonomous, as in Rasa theory, tradition of thinking as continuous and cumulative primary texts as products of actual practice/experience, knowledge being treated not an end itself, but upholding *dharma,* a form of meditation, a mastery over the self, *kavya* itself as meant to be enjoyed and experienced, and not interpreted are the unique thoughts, now questioned in the post-Colonial context.

In Indian tradition *kavya* is not subjected to interpretation, but meant to be experienced and enjoyed. Even the interpretation has a system, *sastrapaddhati*. But the Western theories have propagated umpteen interpretations of the *kavya*, thereby severely subverted the powerful exegetes – Sabara, Patanjali, Bhatta, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and scores of others. Indian literary theories have carried out a sustained analysis of how meaning is constituted in language, of forms and devices. The Bharata's *Rasa* theory thus becomes in effect a theory of literary experience which is strongly rooted in the empirical reality; Bhamahas's *Alamkaras* was sought to be integrated with *Dhvani* and *rasa.* Rudrata's classification of *Alamkaras* into two, Bhoja's into three, Ruyyaka's into seven, Mammata's into sixty-one – this taxonomy is not mere ingenuity but represents coherence and value. Vaman's *Riti* theory correlates with theme effects on the hearers/viewers, and sentiment. Anandavardhana's *Dhvani* theory has presented a structural analysis of indirect literary meaning and symbolism. Kuntaka's six head classification of *Vakrokti* (deviant marked expressions) provides a useful framework for stylistic analysis of literature. Kshemendras's *Auchitya* identifies twenty-seven locations or sites of literary compositions that belong to different levels or domain of language, of ideas, of creativity, of poetic devices and of grammar.

Unlike in the west, in Indian context, all literature is classified as *sravya* (aural) or as *preksa* (visual) or as *sravya-preksha* (aural-visual). The notions like 'reader', 'audience' 'participant', 'hearer' or 'viewer' are alien to 'Sahridhaya' term, analogous to that of the poet composer to see to hear, to fee, to participate and to experience. All literary compositions, in Indian context, are treated as essentially narrative – be it a poem, a play, a story –there is always change and substitution. The *Puranas* are abstracted (permanent) structures. They are told and retold in the folk and literary manner. The narrative and the dramatic interact, the visual and the aural coexist, in all compositions. Our literary theories are constitutive, and they are concerned with analyzing how meaning is constructed. The major concern is how and secondarily what, because of the long pre-existing transitions of thought – etymology, grammar, philosophy and logic (*nirukta, vyakarana, darsana* and *nyaya).* In our tradition verbal discourse (*vanmaya*) is *vani* (sound) and *vak* (speech). Speech is a cognitive instrument, by inference, divine music, the physics and metaphysics of it coexist in the concept of

AUM. As the *Kathopanishad* says (2.16): "The syllable is *Brahman (saguna),* this syllable is also the highest (*nirguna*), and thus *Om* is called *sabda Brahman* as it is the only phonetic symbol of *Brahman.*

Similarly, we have several typologies of *Vanmaya*. The two-fold classification of *Apauruseya* and *Pauruseya* separate *Vedic* compositions – *Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads* – from the rest of literatures. The esoteric literatures are based on *Sruti* (that which is heard), *Smriti* (that which is based on recollecting) and *Kavya* are autonomous compositions. The reasoned texts – *darsanas, dharamsastras and vedangas* – belong to *Smriti.* Epics, *Puranas,* narrative poems and prose narratives belong to *Kavya.* Panini has made five-fold classes of it –*Drsta, Prokta, Upajnata, Krt,* and *Vyakhyana. Drsta* literally means "seen" or "visualized", *Prokta* stands for "spoken" or "expounded", *Upajnata* for "found" or "systematized" or "reorganized", *Krt* for "composed", and *Vyakhyana* for "commentary". There are three kinds of utterances: *Prabhusammita* is literally authoritative, as if it is coming from the ruler, *Suhrdasammita* has the authority of the well-wishers. Here the intended /desirable meaning is primary. *Pauruseya* has four disciplines: *Itihasa* including *Puranas, Anviksiki (tarkavidya,* the science of argumentations), *Mimamsa* (the system of interpretation) and *Dharmasastras* (the science of righteous conduct). These have to be read with the intended/desirable meaning. *Kantasammita* is invested with charm and is processed for the effect rather than meaning.

Our poetics, what is known as *KavyaVidya* in Sanskrit is unique. It is said that it was first expounded by Lord Siva to his sixty-four disciples, and these have in turn germinated sixty-four *kalas* (arts and crafts). Bharata's *Natyasastra* is a text for the theory of drama, comprehensive and authoritative, much older than that of Aristotle. Our aesthetics is not merely the philosophy of taste, or of the perception of the beautiful as it is given in the western aesthetics. It is both *bhava* and *tattva* or the essence of being. It predicates the immanence of the universal presence of reality. The Indian conception or understanding of art is yoga. Yoga is *chittavrittinirodhah* as Patanajali has expounded (*Samadhi Pada, Sutra:*2). It is a unifying consciousness by ridding off all *vrittis* (cognitions, impressions, images, opinions, footprints, etc.). It is an intense process of concentration leading to meditation in which subject-object merge. Art is the product of such a *yoga*, uniting the artist's mind to the object. The artist's creation is analogue of the *yogic* meditation. According to Indian aesthetics, art creates and communicates different states of mind, emotional states, *bhava*s which constitute the core aesthetic experience. The reader in turn experiences these states of mind. This is *rasanubhuti*, which is transcendental in nature. In this process, beauty is secondary. The quality of art is to *move*. What *moves* the reader? It is compassion (*karuna*) and tranquility (*shanta*, peace with oneself). These are the two core elements of beauty in Indian art/literature. In Indian aesthetics, *selflessness* is beauty, its goal is *Ananda.* It is this element that makes Indian aesthetics unique from the west.

V

Another baneful aspect of Post-Colonialism is the domination of English language over other languages, due to which several hundreds of languages have been marginalized or declared as most endangered and on the way towards extinction. Apart from westernization Anglicization is another process of globalization. In the first phase of Anglicization, English became the second language in almost one-third of the human world (almost sixty countries). The second phase of Anglicization started in 1980 with globalization and it has engulfed the whole world. In this phase English has asserted its indisputable supremacy over all other European and Asian languages. Anglicization or Englishization has proven extremely efficient factor in language death, called as "linguicide", a concept analogue to genocide (SkuttnalKangas, 2212). The sad result of it is that it has affected and questioned the survival of several hundreds of languages. The process is alarming and at several international conferences (International Linguistics Congress, Quebec, 1992; UN Endangered Languages Project, 1993; International Clearing House for Endangered Languages, University of Tokyo, 1995; Foundation for Endangered Languages, UK, 1995) linguists had expressed their deep and shocking concerns at this development. The publication of *Language Death* by David Crystal in 2000 is an important development and it has acquired so much importance and value in the context of globalization and Anglicization that Crystal has made profound and deeply shocking and horrendous predictions about the fate of innumerable human languages.

According to the data procured, Crystal mentions that an updated table in *Ethnologue* (Grimes,2000) recognizes 6784 languages with data available for 6059. Of these the languages over 100 million (Mandarin, Spanish, English, Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian and Japanese) have nearly 2.4 billion speakers. This demonstrates that just 4% of the world's languages are spoken by 96% of the population it is further stated that a quarter of the total world languages are spoken by less than 1000 people, and well over half by less than 10,000. Nearly 500 languages have less than 100 speakers, around 1, 500 have less than 100 speakers, around 1,500 have less than 1000; and 3,340 have less than10,000. If a population of 20,000 is taken as a danger-level datum, as many as 4,000 languages have been identified as victims. Similarly, if 1,00,000 is taken 25% to 80% or more are on the verge of extinction. If one goes by reading of this book, one could easily arrive at conclusion that around 26 languages would survive without facing extinction. On the other, Krauss (4-10) says that only 600 languages stand a fair chance of surviving in the long run. Others might fall under the following five-level classification used by Stephen Warm (191-211): (i) Potentially endangered, (ii) Endangered (languages that have few or no children learning the language and the youngest good speaker one young adults), (iii) Seriously Endangered (languages that have the youngest good speakers age 50 or older), (iv) Manicured (languages that have only a handful of good speakers left, mostly very old, (v) Extinct

(Languages that have no speakers left). The conclusion is inescapable: languages are dying at an alarming rate all over the world. When a language dies, its culture dies - its way of life vanishes, its myths and traditions get extinct, above all, its connection with the world is completely lost. If that is so, then, the world after hundred years will become barren in terms of losing cosmology.

In Indian context, the first phase of Anglicization moved in the right direction and it synthesized India and the west in a greater way, though in the initial stage the native speakers perceived it as a threat to their culture. In the second phase it has become national as well as global phenomenon. It has become a different form of avatar of colonialism. As quoted in *The Hindu* daily (Feb.19, 2018), a list prepared by UNESCO has mentioned that about 42 languages or dialects are considered endangered and are believed to be heading towards extinction as only a fewer than ten thousand speak. The languages or dialects which are considered endangered include 11 from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, seven from Manipur (Aimol, Aka, Koiren, Langang, Langsong, Purum, and Javao) and four from HP (Baghati, Handum, Pangrati and Sirmandi). The other languages in the endangered category are Manda, Panji and Pango (Odisha), Koraga and Kumba (Karnataka), Gadabe and Naiki (AP), Kota and Toda (TN), Mra and Na (Arunachal Pradesh), Tai Nora and Tai Rong (Assam), Bangani (Uttar Khand), Birhor (Jharkhand), Nirhali (Maharashtra), Ruga (Meghalaya) and Toto (West Bengal).

VI

This process of Anglicization has brought in a new idea in literature, that is, "world literature". This term (*weltiiteratur*) was first used by the German writer and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in several of his essays in the early decades of the nineteenth century to describe the international circulation and reception of literary works in Europe, including works of non-Western origin. The concept achieved wide currency in 1835 (Eckermann, 132). In the post-war era, comparative and world literature began to enjoy a resurgence in the United States. As a nation of immigrants, the United States became a thriving site for the study of comparative literature and of world literature. The focus remained largely on the Greek and Roman classics and the literatures of the major modern Western European powers, but a confluence of factors in the late 1980s and early 1990s led to a greater openness to the wider world. The end of the Cold War, the growing globalization of the world economy, and new waves of immigration from many parts of the world led to several efforts to open out the study of world literature. World literature, in modern sense, refers to literary works that are translated into multiple languages and circulated to an audience outside their country of origin.

The World Wide Web provides in many ways the logical medium for the global circulation of world literature, and many websites now enable readers around the world to sample the world's literary productions.

The website Words Without Borders offers a wide selection of fiction and poetry from around the world, and the Annenberg Foundation has created an ambitious thirteen-part DVD/web series produced by Boston's public television station WGBH, "Invitation to World Literature." The major survey anthologies all have extensive websites, providing background information, images, and links to resources on many authors. Finally, globally oriented authors themselves are increasingly creating work for the internet. World literature today exists in symbiosis with national literatures, enabling writers in small countries to reach out to global audiences, and helping readers around the world gain a better sense of the world around them as it has been reflected and refracted in the world's literatures over the past five millennia.

World literature can be an amazing tool for analysing globalisation because it provides a wonderful example of the ways that information is shared across languages and cultures. As literature moves across boundaries of culture and language, it is, in a way, transformed into a unique cultural artefact. World literature is not mere selecting of texts according to geography, history, rather focus is on the interplay between western and eastern visions as shaped by Imperial and post-colonial history, refracted through diverge writings. It is a way of reading. Translations in understanding literature at both local and global levels, is more deeply appreciated than ever before. Translations foster connections between cultures. But there is a danger. Extrapolating western notions into other cultures effectively perpetuate strategies of cultural Imperialism. GayatriSpivak holds a view that the study of world literature often ignores the power of a work in its own language. She believes that scholars must take note of the danger to avoid homogenizing cultures and languages when undertaking the study of translated texts, and consideration must be given to protecting the diversity of languages and cultures present in literary works.

Eurocentrism or more precisely West Centricism/US Centricism is an avatar of colonialism. With globalization it has emerged, submerging all other cultures and languages and making American and European culture as the standard to which all other cultures are negatively compared. This has become a form of neo-colonialism. At the cultural level, we have "hybrid cultures", and "hybrid languages" mostly started in big cities and started spreading to small towns including villages. This hybrid culture has abandoned all the time-tested good values in our tradition and has enlisted all the unwanted elements from the west. For instance, our youngsters have adopted the dress patterns from the west without taking the inner aspects of social discipline of the west. The old values like respect for native or fellow human beings are lost; no compassion for the elderly and aged; only materialism or selfishness rule the society. All this is found in hybrid culture that has already emerged.

VII

Political self-determination and Cultural self-determination, though are the two sides of the same coin, are two phases in colonialism and post-colonialism. We have political independence. All the former colonies have been politically liberated. There is no country in the world which is not politically free. But the sad part of it is that colonialism has come in a different form, that is, cultural imperialism. Cultural self-determination is not happening. It is this form of imperialism or colonialism that needs to be seriously addressed.

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