



Literature of Commonwealth Countries : A Review

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Abstract

Some people use the term 'Post-Colonial Literatures' as a synonym for 'Commonwealth Literature', even though the latter might refer to literatures in other languages like French or Portuguese as well. Most critics agree that 'post-colonial' in the English context encompasses the literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka, to quote from one recent analysis of the term. 'Commonwealth' would suit a similar list of countries. Some postcolonial theorists would include the United States in their category, while others who prefer the term Commonwealth omit the United States and include nations like South Africa for 'reasons of completeness'. It was in 1994 when South Africa rejoined the Commonwealth after having left it in 1961. To the general public, the term "Commonwealth Literature" has little meaning. If you ask someone to identify five notable writers from the Commonwealth, you're likely to get a blank stare.

Key words: Commonwealth, countries, historical, development etc

Introduction

The phrase "Commonwealth literature" is rife with ambiguity, to say the least. In terms of historical, geographic, political, and linguistic contexts, it simultaneously affirms and revises its literary standing. It is not necessary to be a part of the Commonwealth as a political organisation, or of the corpus of literary works known as Commonwealth literature, to have English as a native tongue or official language. In this perspective, the United States stands out as possibly the most notable example. Other than that, the Republic of Ireland is there. Even though the United Kingdom's imperial heritage and language provide the foundation of the notion of Commonwealth literature, the United Kingdom's literature is not considered to be Commonwealth literature.

Despite this, the term "Commonwealth literature" has become a convenient way to refer to the literary output of the majority of countries that were once British colonies and are therefore linked in many ways.

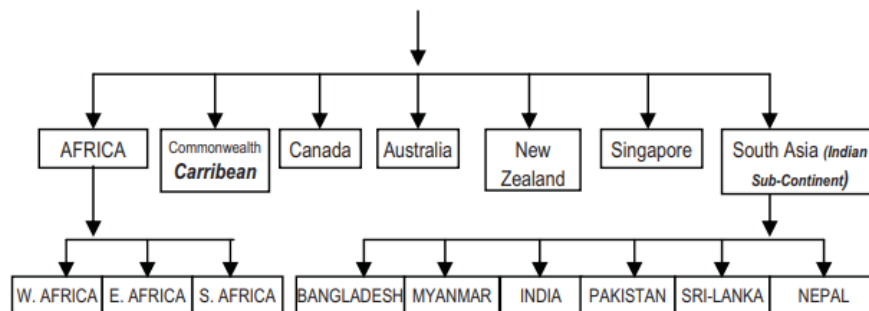


- colonial rule by the British was a regular occurrence,
- the widespread usage of English in modern society
- how the British literary canon has had an impact.

Literature is not defined by political philosophy (such as Marxist literature) or historical time (Elizabethan literature), geographical place (African literature), or prevalent literary trends (Symbolist literature). All of these elements come together in Commonwealth literature, making it an ideal vehicle for bridging the gap between authors from very disparate cultural and racial origins. William Walsh argues that it is at the very least a useful category of denotation rooted in history and making a substantive point about those to whom it is applied, but one that does not ignore the fact that an African, Indian, or Nigerian writer writes against a particular historical tradition and in a particular national context.

Overall, Commonwealth literature serves as an excellent example of the strong ties that exist between place and time, as well as themes and content.

COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE



Australian Literature

All the countries studied here, Australia is arguably the one that had the least favourable historical conditions for the development of literature. Australia is unlike other Commonwealth states in that the British deliberately labelled it a penal colony when it was originally established in 1788. This implies that convicts in Britain were transported there as punishment for a wide range of minor and major offences. Many individuals were forced to migrate to Australia against their choice and in situations of extreme poverty and hardship as a consequence of this transportation method, which was widely publicised. In addition, the country's vast geography, sparse population, and severe climate make it difficult to conduct literary activities.



Canadian Literature

Canadian literature, like its Australian equivalent, has been profoundly influenced by notions of Canada's equivocal standing in the literary world. In spite of the country's enormous potential and real riches, Canada has long been seen as an unsolved mystery. An apparent lack of stability is reflected in its paradoxes: a people split among themselves by race and language; an American country that exists separate from the United States of America; and a former British colony that has rejected colonialism.

New Zealand Literature

The remoteness of New Zealand's literature is one of its most distinguishing traits. Nearest neighbour Australia is around 1600 kilometres distant, making it difficult for New Zealand to be reached by the usual maritime and aviation routes of most countries. Because of its geographical isolation, the literary growth of this country has taken on features of an unusual frontier civilization. Furthermore, New Zealand's literary history has been affected by a lack of broad support for creative effort in the country's early years. Nonconformist religious beliefs, as well as the country's tiny population, have been cited as the main factors in this.

Indian Literature

India is the most populous and biggest country in the Commonwealth, and a number of factors are to blame. The number of languages spoken is the first. Nearly a billion people speak more than 840 different languages. There are many different faiths in India, from Hinduism to Buddhism to Judaism and Islam, and these languages are a representation of this diversity. These faiths have a long and rich history of writing, which can be found in languages like Sanskrit, Tamil, Gujarati, Arabic, and Kashmiri, all of which date back thousands of years. In the fourteenth century, a Roman Catholic Mission was established in Goa, India, which has had more interaction with Christianity than other Asian nations. Thus, colonial dominion over the British Empire's crown jewel was a short one.

Malaysia and Singapore

The contemporary literatures of Malaysia and the city-state of Singapore may be considered together since they share many cultural traditions owing to their communities' geographical closeness to each other at the southernmost point of Southeast Asia. In the past, due of its location halfway between India and China, the region was known as



Malaya. During the sixteenth century, it was initially ruled by the Portuguese, then by the Dutch, and ultimately by the British in 1795.

Differences between Commonwealth Literature and Postcolonial Literature

Commonwealth literature and postcolonial literature are sometimes used interchangeably by students, according to research. The phrase "postcolonial literature" encompasses a wide range of works. Chattejee (1979), Darby (1997), and Castellino (2000), among others, have used the term post-colonial to describe problems across a wide range of disciplines. After the colonial era, the word post-colonial was coined by Anne McClintock, who said that the phrase signifies a commitment to linearity in time and progress that was unintentional but unavoidable. Postcolonial refers to more than just post-colonial literature, since it encompasses a wide range of works from pre-colonial through colonial eras of Commonwealth Literature. "Post-colonial studies" is a word that Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin use to describe all parts of the colonial process, from the first encounter with a foreign country until its eventual demise. According to these definitions, post-colonial refers to times before, during, and after colonisation, which is a common theme.

Conclusion

As a result of its diversity, Commonwealth Literature offers a broader view of mankind to its readers. It has the potential to become a prominent field in the study of English. African Literature produced in English, French, and other European languages by Africans has contributed a new depth to the commonwealth literature. Authenticity and African flavour have been infused into contemporary African writing via the usage of oral literature. The present African literature is mostly concerned with analysing the more recent consequences of a four-century past. Understanding and appreciating the evolution of African literature in English requires familiarity with the history, culture, and religion of Africa.

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