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Post-Colonial Theory: Literary Text as a Global Pointer and a Re-modeler of Perceptible Reality

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ABSTRACT: Kathelene Kerr asserts the biological, geographical and climatic factors being decisive for the formation of skin tones and about the ability to contribute to advancement of human civilization. The civic nationality, proposed by thinkers like John Locke, David Hume and Jean Jacques Rousseau which has sprung from social contact theory. Whereas the cultural nationality by Jonathan Herder's which is about the entirety of a community. She says, biological determinism, race, capitalism, modernity and class. Elleke Boehmer observes how literature is instrumental in fabricating colonialism, nevertheless also crafting resistance to it. Irrespective of the context: literature becomes the medium of communication. Text becomes a double agent aiding both the colonizer and the resistance.

KEYWORDS: civic nationality, cultural nationality, , biological determinism, double agent.

Literature has played a vital role in shaping up thoughts. Enunciation of thoughts has kept these thoughts alive as well as fashioned wakefulness among the readers. The importance of a literary text in imagining and building a milieu of social order around us cannot be denied. The global appeal of a literary text which influences universal ideas and addresses social stigmas has constantly shaped and reshaped the world, is very much evident in the changes in our thought process over time. In this regard we can observe two thinkers who evaluate the significance of text in illuminating some of the crucial issues of the society.

Kathelene Kerr, in chapter 25 of, *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*(2006), writes the essay, "Race, Nation and Ethnicity". She mentions how the identities of race, nation and ethnicity are connected. She brings forth the idea that the biological, geographical and climatic factors being decisive for the formation of skin tones and about the ability to contribute to advancement of human civilization. She begins her argument by pointing out two types of nationalism: civic nationality, proposed by thinkers like John Locke, David Hume and Jean Jacques Rousseau which has sprung from social contact theory. Whereas the cultural nationality by Jonathan Herder's which is about the entirety of a community, that is expressed in its external symbols like language, custom and dress etc. She speaks of how social thinkers, who, while fighting for ideals like liberty, social progress, unintentionally voice their innate prejudices and preoccupations about human right violations.. Kathelene Kerr speaks about social thinkers are vocal about progress and liberation of the oppressed classes but in reality, indirectly support suppression. She takes up the enlightenment thinkers like, John Locke, David Hume, Rousseau, who obviously supported universal humanity but in turn faltered, by rationalizing slavery and racial discrimination. John Locke put forth the political notion that refuted the divine theory and asked people to remove a tyrant by force, if needed. That all persons are endowed with the rights of life, liberty and property, he said. David Hume proposed an empirical view of experiences. He stated that all that is believed by people should be tested by traceable experiences. Jean Jacques Rousseau argued that man is different from other animals only for he believes in freedom and perfectibility. He was a firm believer in social contract theory where every man is bound to certain responsibility. They maintained racial superiority and supported slavery. Comte de Buffon, who was the first one to think of geological history, professed the species theory which paved the way for theory of evolution by Charles Darwin, naively uses interchangeably the terms, race and nation. Immanuel Kant, who brought up the theory of universal moral law, said that all rational creatures are bound by the same moral laws. Kant, the critique of pure reason, is biased about race based segregation of aesthetics and morality. George Hegel, the German philosopher, who spoke about the absolute capacity of logic, which dwells on itself, rather than mere aberrations or historical accidents to find proper reasoning, denies humanity to Africans, and supports relevance of hierarchy among human beings. Thomas Jefferson who speaks against slavery that Americans should unite against the government which curtails the liberty of its citizens, who upheld the liberty of religion, speech, press assembly etc and spoke against slavery, had in fact ridiculed the Afro-Americans, besides indulging in slavery.



Katheleen Kerr connects biological determinism, race, capitalism, modernity and class. She finds the writers to be preoccupied with such notions, unable to come clean of them, thus making their fight for the oppressed classes, a charade. Here she appreciates Mikhail Bakhtin who acknowledges a hybrid sense of modern society, concedes of the presence of outsiders in homogenous societies. He honestly admits the existence of many realities, within a culture.

Finally she identifies four kinds of multiculturalism; conservative, liberal, left liberal and critical or restraint. Kerr points out that how literature becomes a playing field for contradicting ideas. How the champions of humanity, fail to criticise the prevalent social evil practices, which is detected by a literary text.

Elleke Boehmer is a Professor of World Literature in English at the University of Oxford, and a pioneer of post-colonial literature. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In her critical work, "Colonial and post-colonial literature: Migrant Metaphors," she speaks about the construction process of colonial and anti-colonial ideas. How literature is instrumental in fabricating colonialism, nevertheless also crafting resistance to it. A text becomes a means, not only for imperial expansion, but also for post-colonial, post independent and new nationalistic aspirations. Boehmer notes how the textual undertakings or textual constructions act as a voice of these ideas. She also speaks about the African apartheid. The sense of cultural and historical loss, the fragmented memory, the sense of hybridism, the loss of native tongue etc and how literature brings about all these ideas to the fore. She observes how the imperial literature flourishes by the use of gothic narratives, travelogues, missionary notes, adventurous romance novels etc. for its broadcast. In this regard, she cites the works of Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, DH Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and others, who contributed by accommodating colonialist writings. On the other hand she brings the group of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wathiango, Wilson Harris etc., which speaks out the post-colonial strain to the fore. Their sense of loss of heritage, trauma of cultural displacement etc. Then Boehmer speaks about the contemporary indigenous, migrant women writings. In all her observations, she reveals how a literary text becomes a ground for the battle between contradicting ideas. How literature becomes a powerful instrument of various assumptions. She asserts the idea that, irrespective of the context: colonial and post-colonial opinions, literature becomes the medium of communication. Text becomes a double agent aiding both the colonizer and the resistance.

Thus literature is a tool of shaping global experience, a means of sharing and sustaining global sensibilities. No amount of economical or scientific advancement of a society can diminish the need of sheer intellectual articulation. A text can make all the difference, for it speaks of the experiences of the people, it is a document of the emotions and observations of the people and a certain method of taking our civilization forward.

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