

ANALYSE OF THE VARIOUS THEMES, STYLES AND PATTERNS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE

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Abstract

The collective literature of all postcolonial countries is referred to as Commonwealth Literature. It mostly refers to works of literature written by authors from the countries that the United Kingdom colonized. Commonwealth literature often refers to the writing produced by authors from North America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. The United Kingdom had colonized each of these countries. Thus, Commonwealth literature refers to the writings of authors from nations such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, India, Malaysia, and Singapore. Because of its historical, geographical, political, and linguistic components, the term "Commonwealth" is difficult to define while yet maintaining its status as a separate literary genre. Ironically, despite the fact that the concept of Commonwealth is based on the language and imperial past of the United Kingdom, its literature is not regarded as Commonwealth. Thus, the Commonwealth is associated with a number of elements, such as the introduction of British literary tendencies, the use of English in daily life, and the shared experience of British colonialism among the inhabitants of these countries. Thus, Commonwealth literature is a complicated synthesis of several ideologies derived from African literature, Marxist literature, symbolic literature, and contemporary literary tendencies that set authors from various sociocultural origins apart. The purpose of the study is to analyze the many topics, genres, and patterns that are frequently found in literature that comes from Commonwealth countries.

Keywords: Commonwealth Literature, Post-Colonialism, Displacement.

Introduction

Oliver Cromwell coined the phrase "Commonwealth" in 1649. The exact meaning of the phrase "commonwealth" is "well-being." However, it was then changed to refer to a state where the people have the ultimate authority; in other words, the term indicates a democratic state where the people have nearly complete control over choosing their government and changing it on a regular basis. Commonwealth literature is the writing produced by authors from participating Commonwealth countries. The authors of the countries that the British Empire formerly ruled as colonies have collected Commonwealth literature. However, once these colonial states gained their independence, the authors of these colonized countries kept writing about their experiences living in a colony and also reflected their emotions in their works after their countries gained independence. The writings of the commonwealth writers will be examined in this chapter.

Commonwealth Literature

According to Maes-Jelinek, who gave a talk at the Free University of Brussels, the phrase "Commonwealth Literature" is restrictive because it is predicated on similar literary traditions. He made an effort to keep commonwealth literature out of the mainstream in Britain. Other

descriptions of the Commonwealth have also been made. Salman Rushdie, the Indian author of the well-known *Satanic Verses* and *Midnight's Children*, for example, claimed that "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist," and other writers have agreed with him. "Isn't this the most bizarre of creatures—a literary school whose purported adherents strongly dispute their membership? Even worse, their denials are just ignored! The closest definition of Commonwealth Literature, according to Rushdie, seemed condescending because it seemed to be "that body of writing created ... in the English language, by persons who are not themselves white Britons, or Irish, or citizens of the United States of America." Rushdie also wrote, "It seems the creature has taken on a life of its own." Rushdie claimed that the establishment of this "phantom category obscured what was really going on and worth talking about," and that the Commonwealth writers' traits were less similar to the "magical realism" of Latin American writers than those of the other former British colonies.

He went on to say that the Commonwealth itself undoubtedly exists even if Commonwealth literature does not. As its original name suggests, the Commonwealth of Nations is an organization of states that included Britain and its former colonies, including those that continued to rely on the British nation. Beginning in 1931, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand were included in the group of countries known as the Commonwealth Nations. While operating under their own set of laws and regulations, each of these nations swore loyalty to the British Empire. When the participating countries decided to reject the "British" and the concept of allegiance, the association of these countries was further broadened and reorganized in 1949.

With a population of over one billion, the Commonwealth is currently an association of 53 nations. Thus, "Commonwealth Literature" refers to the literary works produced by nations that were formerly a part of the British Empire, but it ignores the writings of British authors. However, it acknowledges the writings of authors who were originated from a colonized country but now live in the United Kingdom. Ironically, authors from the colonized nations have produced some of the best English-language literature in recent years. Such as V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad), Salman Rushdie (India), Ben Okri (Nigeria), Timothy Mo (Hong Kong), and the late Jean Rhys (Dominica). Their excellence in writing has led to articles and even books being titled 'The Empire Writes Back'.

The term "Commonwealth Literature" is often used to refer to "Post-colonial Literature," even though the latter also includes works written in other languages, including Portuguese or French. The fact that Commonwealth literature was authored by individuals who were from another location is one of its key characteristics. The progeny of migrants from various colonies made up the Commonwealth's writers. Therefore, one of the main characteristics of their literature is displacement. However, this characteristic is not exclusive to Commonwealth literature; for example, Native American and African-American writers rarely address displacement as a topic in their writing. Thus, the use of the English language is the only thing that is prevalent in Commonwealth literature, but it is English with a twist. Contrary to this, a large number of authors in Commonwealth nations have chosen to omit English, either because of political ramifications or in an effort to communicate with non-native speakers. In summary,

the term "Commonwealth Literature" refers to the literary works of former colonists who were impacted by different kinds of migrations and cross-cultural events. It was created to actively promote the works of authors whose writings were not recognized.

In general, Commonwealth Literature includes the complex fate of people in time, space, history and ecology enabling writers from different continents, cultures and traditions to come together and interact with other to contribute to new creativeliterary trends and processes.

Commonwealth Short Stories (1971), a compilation of short stories by Postcolonial authors, was published in London by Edward Arnold. Donald Hannah and renowned Australian and post-colonial critic Anna Rutherford edited these short stories. An understanding of the development of Commonwealth literature can be gained from the Commonwealth Short Stories. "At the beginning, we had two options: either we could decide to include one story from each Commonwealth nation, or we could be guided in our selection by more purely literary standards," the editors of the Short Stories claim.

We ultimately chose the latter option, despite the fact that the first option seemed tempting in many respects. VS Naipaul, Wilson Harris, George Lamming, Andrew Salkey (West Indies), R.K. Narayan (India), Mordecai Richler (Canada), Frank Sargeson (New Zealand), Chinua Achebe, James Ngugi, and Amos Tutuola (Africa) are among the authors who are featured in these stories. Despite this, the editors did not choose them to represent their respective regions because they were quite skilled at doing so. Some of these authors gradually rose to prominence as global leaders, having been the literary titans in their respective countries in the 1970s.

These authors also appeared in The Penguin Companion to Literature I: Britain and the Commonwealth, which was released at the same period (Penguin Books, London, 1971). "This volume is concerned with writers (whatever their language) in the British Isles and with writers who use the English language in Commonwealth countries," according to the volume's editor, David Daiches. Daiches remarks, "there is the question of quality" here as well.

When looking at literature more broadly, a distinct literary genre known as Commonwealth Literature first appeared in 1970. During the past 20 years, some notable authors have tried to influence global literature through their exceptional works. These authors were from nations that the British Empire had once occupied. The West Indies, India, Pakistan, Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were among the notable nations that were colonized by the British. The politically acceptable word British Commonwealth was created during the decolonization era, replacing the previous term "Empire."

Due to subsequent events, the name "British" has been mostly avoided. Thus, in addition to English, American, French, Spanish, Russian, or German literature, a new writing style known as Commonwealth literature was created. However, because the mainstream academic community had not recognized that distinct regions had gained enough autonomy, volume, numbers, and/or influence to be referred to as "literature" in and of itself, its existence went unnoticed. As a result, there was no distinct West Indian, African, or Indian literature in the

late 1960s and early 1970s. They earned a spot on university curriculum since they were all included under the general heading of Commonwealth Literature.

The Commonwealth countries and their literature gradually began to have an impact on the world and gain recognition on their own. Several authors from these regions later had to relocate to the UK, and their exile had a negative impact on literature. Because the exiled writers were originally from the colonies, their literary style significantly reflected the political, social, and cultural climate of those places. The writing was developing at a quick pace. The literary evolution mirrored the reciprocal ties that existed between the newly independent nations and their European "Mother Countries."

Furthermore, the widespread migration that followed events like the Windrush and other similar circumstances in the 1950s led to the expansion of the "minority" populations and, ultimately, to Europe's multiethnic identity. The occurrence of social and cultural practices like "othering" minorities led to the creation of minority groups that took on the role of the "Other." The authors used a variety of literary genres and styles while taking social, political, and cultural aspects into account. Since the majority of the work was written in the UK, it had an impact on local events and changed English literature as a whole.

More significantly, however, Commonwealth literature gave rise to a corpus of writing that is today referred to as post-colonial literature. Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Helen Tiffin, CLR James, Stuart Hall, and even Anna Rutherford were among the many critics who identified the process and gave it names. In highlighting the significant contribution of "the colonial quality" to post-colonial Caribbean literature, critic (and poet) Edward Baugh said that it "is not something to be outgrown," highlighting the part that colonial literature has played in forming the backdrop for emerging literature.

R K Narayan was the top Indian author of fiction in 1971, the year that the British and Commonwealth Literature and the Commonwealth Short Stories were collected. Leading post-colonial Indian authors like Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth have strongly emerged since then. Additionally, Mordecai Richler has succeeded in securing his distinguished position as a novelist in both Canadian and international literature. Major honors like the Commonwealth Writers Prize have been given to his work. In addition to him, a number of authors from different nations have been proclaimed the greatest short story writers; several of these authors have also excelled as leaders in addition to being highly regarded novels. For instance, French author Guy de Maupassant and American author O. Henry have both produced renowned works in this genre. Other Americans include Mark Twain, Edgar Allan Poe, and Ernest Hemmingway, the most well-known of whom is a novelist. Other notable Commonwealth writers from the British Isles include James Joyce, DH Lawrence, Russian author Anton Chekhov, and maybe Henry James.

Even though they have produced notable works that form the part of the short fiction winning several awards, such as the Commonwealth, some of the most renowned Caribbean writers also proved to be the leading writers of short stories, including Kwame Dawes, Lorna Goodison, and Olive Senior, who were known as major poets. Despite being the creator of some of the

most renowned short tales in West Indian literature, Naipaul's "Man-Man" is without a doubt his best work and has little significance on Miguel Street, from whence it was taken.

The editors Rutherford and Hannah also included passages from novels in their citations of other examples, such as Amos Tutuola, which may be a contentious topic given the nature of *The Palm Wine Drinkard*. Additionally, even though it was written by a novelist, "The Sacrificial Egg" is a superb example of commonwealth writing. Therefore, this collection of short tales from 1971 might be considered one of the important works of post-colonial or Commonwealth literature. It has been demonstrated to be a catalyst for comparing and evaluating the ways in which the literature has evolved and advanced, and it provides a clear description of the state of the art in the past.

Conclusion

Commonwealth Literature is the title of a collection of chapters released during the first Commonwealth Literature conference in 1965. John Press edited the piece. The late Nigerian author Chinua Achebe contributed to the first chapter of this work, "Literature and Environment: Inheritance and Adaptation," and the final chapter, "The Novelist as a Teacher." Through these chapters, the author sheds light on how humans interact with novel and unfamiliar environments, forcing them to question long-held beliefs in order to maintain their way of life and to create new realities that will allow them to survive in the new setting. The comprehension of the Aboriginal world was made possible by these works. Thus, the primary goal of the commonwealth literature written by authors from Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Australia, and the Caribbean is to go beyond national borders in an effort to delve into the deepest emotions of people everywhere. In order for individuals from all over the world to show care and empathy for strangers and dispossessed people, Commonwealth literature tries to expose readers to new realities and encourage them to recognize the diversity of habitation and cultures. The richness and diversity of the natural and human worlds have also been revealed thanks in large part to Commonwealth literature. Since Commonwealth literature has contributed to the development of a new consciousness from humanity's ancient origins, it has had a significant impact on society.

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