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Post Colonialism: Meaning and its Impact With Special Reference of the Writings of Ann Bhalla

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Abstract:

This paper elaborates the Colonialism and its impact on the literature. Colonialism is a term made up of 'colony' etymologically it means Farm, settlement and landed state. The word acquires the derivational form of colonised during the 17th century with the European colonies all over the world. Colonialism is defined as, A powerful country controls less powerful countries and uses their resources for its own interest wealth and power. There are several *Avtars* of colonialism called Economic Colonialism, Cultural Colonialism, and Linguistic Colonialism. Colonialism never ends and perhaps began with Adam and Eve. Through the writings of Ann Bhalla, this paper will focus on all the aspects of colonialism as Racial discrimination, Imperialism, Cross-Culturalism, Orientalism, Occidentalism etc. Bhalla's debutant novel A Season for All Things and second novel A Passing Shadow are totally based on influence of Post- Colonialism.

Keywords: Racism, Imperialism, Subalterns, Orientalism, Occidentalism

The term "Postcolonialism" represents the race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity itself in the modern era. Postcolonial literature seeks to describe the interactions between European nations and the peoples they colonized. By the middle of the twentieth century, the vast majority of the world was under the control of European countries. At one time, Great Britain, for example, ruled almost 50 percent of the world. During the twentieth century, countries such as India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Canada, and Australia won independence from their European colonizers. The literature and art produced in these countries after independence has become the object of "Postcolonial Studies," a term coined in and for academia, initially in British universities.

In another vein, Canada and Australia, though former colonies of Britain, are often placed in a separate category because of their status as "settler" countries and because of their continuing loyalty to their colonizer. Some of the major voices and works of postcolonial literature include Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958), Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient* (1992), Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place* (1988), Isabelle Allende's

The House of the Spirits (1982), J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Disgrace* (1990), Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990), and Eavan Boland's *Outside History: Selected Poems, 1980–1990* Ann Bhalla's *A Passing Shadow* (2002).

In *Post-Colonial Drama: theory, practice, politics*, Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins write:

the term Postcolonialism – according to a too-rigid etymology – is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state, Not a naïve teleological sequence which supersedes colonialism, Postcolonialism is, rather, an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies ... A theory of Postcolonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism.¹

Ann Bhalla shows myriad emotion love, conflicts misunderstandings and resolutions in her novel *A Passing Shadow* which is simply a saga of changing values, changing times in a person's life. All the story is built around beautifully with an interplay of sunrise and sunset around the life of the man at his peak and then in his irreversible decline. And that person could be anybody, or at least anybody given to human weaknesses. Settled in America, she has managed to deal with Indian values not as a dispassionate, non-participant observer but as a caring individual with a heart as Indian as that of a man in Karol Bagh or Chadni Chowk.

Post colonial period awakened the female writers to be conscious of their identity and space in an age of rootlessness, exiled from the seamless web of domestic organization; Ann Bhalla exerted and aspired to come out from their present space to public space for their identity. She tries to reveal through her novel that women are not merely 'man's mirror'² and therefore, challenged the male-coded conventions of patriarchy based on gendered positioning as part of their strategies of grabbing the male-space. Social discrimination, male-oppression, self realization and consequent evolution of feminine consciousness are some of the recurring themes in her writings.

Ann Bhalla's novel *A Passing Shadow* contains her background and her writings reveal not merely self expression but are a means of self-exploration and self assertion. *A Passing Shadow* is a remarkable novel for two aspects: the reflection of Colonial consciousness and revealing a feminine question for identity. Tara, as an illegal daughter of Ramesh poses a dilemma of feminine sensibility to an extent that it brings forth the colonial perspectives of society. Gayatri Spivak in the text of her paper, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Analysis the question of female

subaltern, whom she describes as doubly marginalized subjects in Colonial/ Post-Colonial discourse:

Within the effected itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effected... it is rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the female is even more deeply in shadow.³

The recent metaphorisation of Post-colonialism has an evil tendency to grow as amorphous as to leave no room for cultural identity. Although novelists like Ann Bhalla seem to opt for a figurative flexibility at the expense of radical locality within historical exigencies, their works convey a different message. *A Passing Shadow* unveils a vast plethora of details concerning the problems of plaguing women in a male dominated society. She narrates the agony and affliction of a single, helpless daughter in an apathetic world where the age old subjugation of women and the miserable plight of the downtrodden still persist. Despite the multifarious for a focusing on the women's physical, financial and emotional together with their mental anguish, relies of oppression seem to have continued.

The difference between man and woman is a product of the complex dynamics of economics, political, social and other factors. In the spite of the remarkable change in women's position in society in the Post-Independence era, she is yet to find a fully emancipated voice. One pertinent observation made by Maitreyi Mukhopadhyay can be safely quoted here:

It should be emphasized that poor status of women, their oppression and exploitation, can not be examined as an isolated problem in Indian society. Although the status of women constitutes a problem in most societies in the rigidly hierarchical and inequitable social structure which exists in India, the relative inferiority and superiority of various roles in much more clearly defined. The inequality and subordination of women is an instrument or function of the social structure.⁴

In *A Passing Shadow* the novelist implicitly advocates greater social reform in the rigid positioning of women. The world of Ann Bhalla's novel is captured in a state of flux where the values of the patriarchal society are under attack from a new world in which self interest and self-aggrandisement and social equality are forcing their entry. Seen from a feminist point of view the novel speaks of the manhood perpetrated upon women and paternal tyranny engulfing the luckless child, Tara. It ruthlessly unmark the dual standards of morality in society of men and women, the passive, submissive role of a wife in a man-woman relationship, and the vindictive attitude of a woman in prolonging the suffering and ignominy of other woman by a male.

Ann Bhalla's characters revolt against the established age-old conventions to pull themselves out from the *cul-de-sac* of their lives. Bhalla is one of those writers whose pen delineates the labyrinths of human relationships. Her women characters can be categorized as conventional and unconventional models. The conventional women protagonists are the followers of archetype like *Sita*, *Damyanti* and *Savitri* who are considered as the epitome of feminine value and they serve as a beacon to them. Mrs. Gupta, her mother and Nuns belong to conventional model. They are prudish and biddable to the established social norms and consider them as a *fait accompli*. The woman who transgresses the four walls of the house and sequesters herself from orthodox womanhood is a *persona non grata* to them. She simultaneously projects unconventional women who are repugnant towards the orthodox conventions of the society and are not pliable under the shelter of their male counterparts. Mala in *A Passing Shadow* projects educated, independent and volitional womanhood. As per my opinion the female in Bhalla's novels ceases to be an easy fall downwards for quivering toadies. The male starts accepting the redemptive influence of woman.

Simone de Beauvoir has told about the position of women which is appropriate in the male-dominated culture, "humanity is male and man defines woman not in it but as relative to him, she is not regarded as an autonomous being."⁵ Therefore, masculine exploitation of women's body, man's appropriation of women's body and man's hypocrisy about the whole affair are exposed with challenging defiance.

Ann Bhalla tries to attain the ultimate goal of post-colonialism i.e. combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply concerned with salvaging past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. We can say that this goal is lively embossed by Ann Bhalla's novel which depicts the lack of love in relations and lack of mutual understanding leads towards debacle. Everyone has a rage attachment with home which is a sheltered grove for the family. Many emotional relationships breathe under the roof of home which is fostered by the insensibility and often have a lasting influence that is why parents have a unique place in one's life. But sometimes the parents do not bother to care for this bond.

The protagonist Ramesh encounters a girl Mala who was deprived of parental care and brought up in a convent school. She looked after the children of Ramesh. She became time pass entertainment for Ramesh and finally she gave birth to a female child and died. By such incident Bhalla is brushing the scenario of social injustice and oppression towards female. After delivering child, the child named Tara by nurses, is brought up by Mrs. Bimla Bhushan, mother of Uma who was running a home for the helpless and trodden women. But after passing away of Bimla Bhushan, Tara is sent to Uma who has been very affectionate to her mother and even to her. The postures and gestures of little child Tara appears Ramesh to be a problem. He is

surprised to see the blue eyes of the child, and concludes that she is not his daughter as she does not resemble either Mala or himself that is why he hates the child. This can be better understood by studying:

A wild hope surged in his breast that Mala had been meting someone else besides him but it dies away just quickly. He knew it had not been possible for so many reasons, chief among them that she had been besotted with him to look at another man.⁶

This novel also depicts the parents' child relationship suffering from blows of insensibility from time to time. The psychologists attach great significance to this relationship. This insensibility is a major result of Postcolonialism. According to psychologists:

Childhood is the most formative period of one's personality. Socialization of the child begins in the family in the company of his parents.⁷

The children love their parents as their ideal and they expect their parents to be respectable and full of decency as a psychological need. The male characters in the novel are insensible but on the other hand, the female characters are full of love, adore, affection which is being purely reflected by Mrs. Bimla Bhushan, and even with Uma she never felt herself insecure. It was the effect of Uma's affection that Tara never felt herself a destitute. Ann Bhalla has revealed the complex nature of man. The illicit love of the protagonist causes enough to destroy many lives. The action and the event carried out furtively by two men, Somnath Prakash and Ramesh, and the far reaching consequences that are inflicted on their respective families as result, are well told as an unpleasant shadow forever on the ground of social injustice in a home and society.

The inner psyche of Bhalla's protagonists is expressed through their interaction with those who are passionately concerned with them. She depicts the depth of her characters and analyses thoroughly the psychological demands which are much important in their life.

A Passing Shadow is a literary protest against all types of marginalization, subordination or oppression of the subalterns by their domineering counterparts. This novel is virtually an epic of subaltern in the sense that it upholds the cause of not only the marginalized sections of society but also of those creatures who are neglected, despised or treated callously.

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