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New Literatures in English

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By: Prof. H.S. Bhatia



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**Sample Preview
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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

NEW LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

M.E.G.-8

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carries equal marks.

Q. 1. Can the term ‘New Literatures’ be critiqued? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, ‘Introduction’ and Page No. 2, ‘Critiques’.

Q. 2. Would you agree that “the complex reality of modern Kenya is captured successfully by Ngugi Wa Thiong’ O’ in A Grain of Wheat.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 102, Q.No. 27.

Q. 3. What is the significance of the play within the play in Wole Soyinka’s ‘A Dance of the Forests’?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 123, Q.No. 3.

Q. 4. Examine Ice-Candy Man as reflecting Parsi identity.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-21, Page No. 188, Q.No. 5.

Q. 5. Critically examine the manner in which irony and humour are used in ‘A House for Mr. Biswas’.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-27, Page No. 238, ‘Irony and Humour’.

Q. 6. Trace the influence of Calypso in Derek Walcott’s Poetry.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-31, Page No. 269, ‘Carnival’.

Q. 7. Analyse the insider/outsider dynamics in The Solid Mandala.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-35, Page No. 307, ‘Insider/ Outsider: Some Perspectives’ and ‘The Solid Mandala’.

Q. 8. Does the past have any significance for Hagar Shipley in ‘The Stone Angel’.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-42, Page No. 343, ‘Hagar Shipley: A Character Portrayal’.

■ ■

QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

NEW LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

M.E.G.-8

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. Each question carries equal marks.

Q. 1. Which term would be more suitable—‘Common-wealth Literatures’ or ‘New Literatures in English’? Comment.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, ‘Introduction’ and Page No. 2, ‘Framing Commonwealth Literature’.

Q. 2. Examine the role played by women in the freedom struggle as portrayed by Ngugi Wa Thiong’O in ‘A Grain of Wheat’.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 97, Q. No. 15 and Page No. 100, Q. No. 21.

Q. 3. Write a detailed critical note on the structure of Wole Soyinka’s *A Dance of the Forests*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 132, Q. No. 6, Q. No. 4 and Page No. 134, Q. No. 7.

Q. 4. Do you think the women characters of *Ice Candy Man* have an impact on Lenny?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-20, Page No. 167, ‘Feminists Inscriptions Ice-Candy Man’.

Q. 5. Comment on V.S. Naipaul’s use of irony and humour in *A House for Mr. Biswas*.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-27, Page No. 238, ‘Irony and Humour’.

Q. 6. Who were the Rastafarians? Can Rastafarianism be looked at as a counter-culture in Jamaican society? Base your answer on the analysis of “Wings of a Dove”.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-32, Page No. 279, ‘Wings of a Dove: Counter Culture Rastafarianism’.

Q. 7. What is a Mandala? What does it symbolise? Examine *The Solid Mandala* as a novel that deals with myths and symbols.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-35, Page No. 307, ‘The Solid Mandala’ and Chapter-38, Page No. 323, ‘The Mandala Motif’

Also Add: Patrick White has used myths and symbols convincingly in *The Solid Mandala* tell the story of the Brown brothers, Waldo and Arthur, non-identical twins living in the small Australian town of Sarsaparilla. White uses the Mandala symbolism to explain his metaphor that defines every living body is a symbol that is attached to the universe and God. There are natural images of trees, flowers, sun and Sea. He also uses the modern objects like tables, hats, glass, marbles: these natural and manmade images are fused together so as to form a link between ‘*The Mythical*’ and ‘*The Modern*.’ Though White had been chosen Indian Mythical symbols ‘Chariot and Mandal’ his themes are related to contemporary Australian society. *The Solid Mandala* tells the story of the Brown brothers, Waldo and Arthur, non-identical twins living in the small Australian town of Sarsaparilla. It is a novel about lost souls and every day saints, and what they do to find a place in the world, told with all the beauty and poignancy one can expect of White. White has gone for the literary trope of twins that embody his notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, and his world view is clearly laid out as a result. Waldo is a failed writer who upholds his sense of superiority by remaining aloof. He collects knowledge, but understands little due to his stubborn Godlessness. Bitter and selfish, he is incapable of loving others except on his own narrow terms, Arthur, on the other hand, is a ‘dill’ with an unspecified intellectual impairment, by his selflessness and his capacity for love. He is also impulsive, in sensuous and consciously disregards social norms. In contrast with Waldo whose intellectualism is driven by a need to feel superior, Arthur has a natural wide eyed curiosity about spirituality and, or course, literature. All of which

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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NEW LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

BLOCK-1

**INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN,
SOUTH ASIAN, AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN LITERATURE**

NAMING THE DISCIPLINE

1

1. OBJECTIVES

Q. 1. What do “Objectives” concerning “New Literature in English” stand for?

Ans. (i) The objectives imply defining the term “New Literatures in English.”

(ii) There are a number of questions which will be answered in this unit such as :

- (a)** What do different categories stand for :
 - New Literatures in English
 - Commonwealth Literature
 - Postcolonial Literature, etc.?
- (b)** In what respect these categories :
 - differ, and
 - overlap in meaning?
- (c)** What kinds of forces have played their part in moulding these terms giving them the shape they now have in meaning :
 - political forces,
 - social forces,
 - economic forces, etc.?

2. INTRODUCTION

Q. 1. How will you define “New Literatures in English”?

Ans. (i) It should be borne in mind that the non-British authors whose works emerged from the cross-

cultural contact between the British colonisers and the colonised natives have not always been rightly appraised as it happened with the valuation of Toru Dutt's poetry by Edmund Gosse.

(ii) According to Norman Jeffares :
It is quite understandable that :

- (a)** Literature should be judged according to cosmopolitan standards and not national standards.
- (b)** The literatures of different nationalities and regions :
 - provide local colour, and also
 - enrich the English language.
- (c)** The word “English” (with capital “E”) stands for the English spoken by native speakers of the language.
- (d)** —The word “english” (with small “e”) stands for an english spoken by non-natives.
 - Such as “english” is part of the term “World Englishes”.
 - It is different from a “standard code, English.”

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(iii) Thus the term “New Literatures in English” refers to the distinctiveness of these works offering diversity such as :

- (a) thematic
- (b) linguistic
- (c) formal

(iv) It should be noted that the, modern theoreticians, prefer to use the term “Postcolonial” for literatures from the commonwealth countries.

3. **FRAMING COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE**

Q. 1. Explain the origin of the terms :

- (a) ‘local’ texts
- (b) metropolitan and peripheral literatures
- (c) cosmopolitan and provincial literatures.

Ans. (i) Dennis Walder was perhaps the first to use the term “provincial” by referring to “a few provincial U.K. universities”, in connection with the start of certain courses in American, commonwealth, Irish and African literatures in the 1950s.

(ii) Walsh called the works Peering to these countries as “little clusters of ‘local’ texts.”

(iii) Thus, there emerged a new turn to the disjuncture between the :

- (a) metropolis, and the
- (b) periphery.

(iv) (a) The term “metropolis” refers to the centre or origin of the colonial power, and

(b) the term “periphery” refers to the regions over whom that colonial power was exercised.

(c) “periphery” also refers to these regions over whom the colonial powers is still being exercised in forms known as “neo-colonial” forms or means.

(v) This leads us to the recognition of and differentiation between the two terms :

- (a) metropolitan, and
- (b) peripheral.

(vi) Thus :

- (a) London is the metropolitan centre, and
- (b) countries colonised by Britain in Asia and Africa were the periphery or the outports.

(vii) Now, it is not hard to understand the difference between :

- (a) cosmopolitan, and
- (b) provincial.

(viii) Quite understandably,

- (a) the metropolitan literature is cosmopolitan, and
- (b) the peripheral literature is provincial.

Q. 2. Explain the origin of the term “Commonwealth Literature”.

Ans. The term can be explained on

- (a) The institutional-temporal basis, and
- (b) political, social and economic basis.

(a) The Institutional-temporal basis :

(i) Walsh Walder had expressed his views regarding the prescription of local texts in syllabi at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

(ii) The first school of Commonwealth Literature in England was founded at Leeds University in 1964.

(iii) However, even before that, in 1958, the first institute of Commonwealth Literature was founded at Aarhus University in Denmark by Professor Greta Hort.

(iv) It was, however, in 1970 that William Walsh was appointed as professor to the first chair of Commonwealth Literature.

(b) Political, social and economic basis : In this connection, the following points should be noted :

(i) These factors became an object of study for the reason of contemporaneous conditions, for example,

(a) India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947.

(b) Nigeria in 1960 and

(c) Kenya in 1963.

(ii) In 1960, the West Asian Federation was formed.

(iii) The writings that arose out of :

(a) “national strivings” and

(b) the process of “decolonization” had a major impact internationally, as Walder points out.

(iv) During the 1950s and 1960s, that is in post-war Britain, a large nuclear of migrants from its former colonies arrived, as from :

(a) Asia,

(b) Africa and

(c) the Caribbean.

(v) This had a deep impact on Britain, e.g. the Immigration Act was passed in 1968 to exclude the non-whites from a sense of national belonging.

(vi) This, however, also led to the production of what came to be known as “Black” (cultural) Commonwealth Literature.

4. **CRITIQUES**

Q. 1. What are Salman Rushdie’s views regarding the term Commonwealth Literature?

Ans. (i) Rushdie believes that such a literature just does not exist.

He argues :

(a) "South Africa and Pakistan ... are not members of the Commonwealth, but their authors apparently belong to its literature."

(b) Then, "England which ... has not been expelled from the Commonwealth, quite yet, has been excluded from its literary manifestations."

(ii) Rushdie calls the Commonwealth literary writers :

"This bunch of upstarts, huddling together under this new and badly made umbrella."

Q. 2. How does Walsh answer Rushdie's objections?

Ans. (i) According to Walsh, writers arise out of :

(a) "historical tradition" and

(b) "national context".

(ii) Walsh believes that, here in the case of Commonwealth Literature, writers concerned, do not necessarily emerge out of an "amorphous commonwealth."

Q. 3. How can the Commonwealth Literature be critiqued?

Ans. (i) Many of the Commonwealth countries still have some of their systems modelled on those of Britain, e.g.

(a) educational system

(b) legal system

(c) political system.

(ii) Thus, the "common" literary "wealth" of these countries (which were previously under the British colonial rule) having been approved by the British academia by and large, it can be critiqued bearing in mind this.

Q. 4. Explain the present position regarding the term Commonwealth Literature.

Ans. The term continues although with certain modifications and objections.

Examples :

(i) (a) In this connection, the first conference was held in 1964.

(b) As a result of it, "The Journal of Commonwealth Literature" was established.

(c) The journal still continues.

(ii) (a) As a result of the Leeds Conference, the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies" (ACLALS) was formed.

(b) The body has its regional branches in :

—India – ACLALS

—South Pacific – ACLALS

—European – ACLALS, etc.

(c) It still continues.

(d) Its 12th triennial conference was held in Canberra, Australia in 2001.

(e) The topic for discussion was "Resistance and Reconciliation : Writing in the Commonwealth."

(f) Clearly, the topic intrinsically questions the very founding principle of the body.

5. NEWNESS

Q. 1. Explain the term "Newness".

Ans. (i) Certain countries, such as the following had remained under the British rule for quite a time :

(a) India

(b) Kenya

(c) Canada

(d) Australia

(e) New Zealand

(f) Nigeria.

(ii) Prior to the British rule, the people in these countries communicated through their own native languages.

(iii) During the British colonial rule, these countries started using English for one reason or the other.

(iv) Thus, these countries produced a new kind of literature in English, which may be termed "New Literatures in English."

(v) This is what Bruce King says in this connection : "A new English literature may express a culture which has grown up with the settler communities, it may be a continuation of indigenous cultural traditions, or it may be some mixture of the effects of colonization, including the bringing together of various races into one nation."

(vi) Some of the works concerned with "Newness" may be mentioned below :

(a) Literatures of the World in English (1974) by Bruce King.

(b) The New English Literatures : Cultural Nationalism in a Changing World (1980) by Bruce King.

(c) —Imagination and the Creative Impulse in the New Literatures in English by M.T. Bindella and G.V. Davis.

—It was published under Rodopi's "Cross/Cultures : Readings in Post-colonial Literatures in English." (1993)

(vii) Bindella has to say the following about the New Literatures :

"From the European perspective at least, the new literatures in English deal with "new" countries where

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new immigrant populations have settled and new national identities have come into existence. The new literatures thus reflect par excellence the historical processes by which such societies have been created and the development of consciousness through which new lands have been inscribed in the collective imagination of emerging countries.”

(viii) Here, we have focus on two main things :

(a) The discussion on the literatures of such countries as :

- India,
- Nigeria and
- Zimbabwe, and

(b) The discussion on the literatures of such countries as :

- Canada
- New Zealand
- Australia.

(ix) (a) In the former case, it is the matter of “new” nations.

(b) In the latter case, it is the matter of “new” immigrants.

(x) As far as West Indies is concerned, it fits both the categories (a) and (b) above.

(xi) As far as the focus on new lands “inscribing” themselves on the imagination of emerging countries is concerned, the emphasis is on literatures of countries such as :

- (a) Australia
- (b) New Zealand
- (c) Canada

Q. 2. What do you understand by International English Literature?

Or

Explain the variants of Newness.

Ans. (i) Many of the European critics do not believe the Commonwealth Literature and New Literatures as being part of the British Literature.

(ii) As Bindella points out, among the reports read out at a symposium on “Imagination and the Creative Impulse in New Literatures in English talked of “a new integral model of organisation which would take account of the comparative, contextual and multicultural aspects of the subject, thus accommodating the New Literatures in a reformed structural pattern of International English Literature.”

(iii) (a) There is an other work which is directed in this direction. It is a recent collection of essays read out at a conference of the European Association for

Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS)

(b) The theme was :

“Nationalism vs Internationalism.”

(c) The subtitle read :

“(Inter) National Dimensions of Literatures in English.”

(iv) Thus, it is a sort of globalisation of English Literatures.

(v) (a) In this connection, we also have the term : “Multiculturalism.”

(b) This term is used by Bruce King in his essay included in the said collection.

Q. 3. Write briefly on “Supranational Qualities” in literature.

Ans. (i) According to Norman Jeffares, good writing possesses “human and universal” qualities.

(ii) Narasimhaiah also talks of “breaking the national barriers” in literature.

(iii) This means that literature should be ideologically neutral.

(iv) More recent commentators, while talking of literatures of the “Third-world” have warned us of the dangers of “universalism.”

(v) (a) Rushdie believes that third world literatures have often been overvalued because of national politics.

(b) Thus, they have been “ghettoised.”

(c) In this context, “ghetto” signifies what Rushdie said :

“Literature is an expression of nationality.”

Q. 4. What does the term “Post-colonial” imply?

Ans. (i) The best answer to this term is available in “Ashcroft *et al*” (1989) – from “The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures.”

(ii) However, according to Aijaz Ahmad, the first major debate on the idea of “postcolonialism” was started by Hamza Alvi’s article : “The State in Postcolonial Societies : Pakistan and Bangladesh.”

(iii) The said article appeared in 1972 in “New Left Review.”

(iv) Thus, the term had a political origin but as it became current, it also acquired such overtones as :

(a) ‘post-colonial literature’ and

(b) ‘postcolonial intellectual’.

(v) It should be noted that :

(a) the term was first used in hyphenated form : “post-colonial.”