

More Literary Essays

The Contribution of Asian-African literature to World Literature through Translation: Reference Indian Literature¹

Chaman Lal**

The term 'World Literature' was popularized by German poet Goethe in 19th century, as he read and felt inspired by the writings from Asia. Johan Wolfgang von Goethe made use of the term '*Weltliteratur*' in many of his essays. In 1827, Goethe told Eckermann that World Literature will replace National literatures in years to come:

'I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men. . . . I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.'¹

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels too mentioned the term in 'Communist Manifesto' in 1848:

'In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climates...And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.'

In Asia 1913 first ever Noble Prize winner from India and Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore and Chinese fiction writer Lu Xun also wrote on the theme of World Literature.

That apart, in the nineteenth century, World literature was generally mentioned as Western literary classics by-Homer, Shakespeare etc. It was only in twentieth century, with the independence of Asian and African countries from colonial yoke and with the assertion of Third world political and cultural identity vis a vis Western colonial world, that World

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² Chaman Lal is Professor in Hindi Translation and former Chairperson of Centre of Indian Languages, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi (India). He was Visiting Professor to The University of the West Indies, Trinidad.

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