

POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

Postcolonial literature is a body of literature writing that reacts to the discovery of colonization. It often involves writing that deals with issues of decolonization, or the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. It is all about the shift away from the notion of centrality. The term postcolonial emphasizes the significance of colonialism on the colonized. It changed the native roots of the people and forced them to accept or imitate the modern culture of the Western society.

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KEYWORDS: *Postcolonialism, Imitation, Mimicry, Memory, Identity.*

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Introduction:

Postcolonialism is a broad term which encompasses various approaches and theories. It studies about the literary works having the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism, which was one of the dark phases of human exploitation, slavery, and domination. When we talk about the effects of colonialism, it is evident that contemporary postcolonial literature gives adequate expression to the experiences of the colonised in their literary creations, which they address through their plot, action, setting, and characters. The people faced several challenges such as loss of faith, cultural and language alienation, external policies, and interference and so on. “US” and “Other” mentality became very strong, and the colonised people were totally distorted. The postcolonial texts imply about the writers who are from countries with a history of colonialism, about colonialism, or about the struggle to escape from the clutches of the colonisers.

We need colonial texts looking for ways that they address the idea of empire and the consequences of colonization on the coloniser and the colonised. These texts mainly focus on the way in which literature by the colonising culture distorts the realities and harsh experiences of the colonised people. The expression is given to the facts related to inhuman conditions, inferiority complex, loss of identity, and the effects of reclamation among the colonised people.

In the late 1970s, a group of writers and novelists started to emerge who forever had chalked out a plan to alter the map of postcolonial Indian English Literature. Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Chetan Bhagat, Pankaj Mishra, and Hari Kunzru have already alighted on the international arena, and their writings are very much appreciated and acclaimed around the globe.

Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* turned into a passionate object around the world. It won the Booker Prize in 1981 and tells the story of Saleem Sinai, who believes that his life is mysterious and connected to the fate of the nation. He discovers that he has telepathic powers that allow him to communicate with other children born in the first hour of independence. In this, history is blended with magical realism, exploring the themes of identity, memory, and destiny.

Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* made him the first writer of the Indian diaspora to enter the field of international writers and leave an unforgettable mark on the global literary panorama. It is a novel in verse set in 1980s San Francisco, highlighting the journey through love, relationships, and self-discovery. He crafts a relatable world where loneliness and connection dance in the city's neon shadows, exploring the

themes of identity, friendship, and the pursuit of happiness. Seth's clever wordplay and sharp insights make *The Golden Gate* a delightful read to understand modern life in its own way.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines* are two novels that weave intricate tales of identity, culture, and history. His characters navigate multiple worlds, struggling to find their place within families, communities, and the nation. He also probes the tensions between tradition and modernity, highlighting the complexities of cultural identity. *The Circle of Reason* follows Alok as he deals with the complexities of tradition and modernity in rural India. *The Shadow Lines* is a sprawling narrative that spans generations, exploring the partition of India and its lasting impact on families and nations. These novels explore how personal and collective memories shape our understanding of the past and inform our present.

Shashi Tharoor's debut novel, *The Great Indian Novel*, is a sweeping satire that reimagines India's struggle for independence through the lens of the Mahabharata. The story of Veda Vyas Tripathi deals with the complexities of Indian politics and history. His character explores the excesses of Indian politics, themes of power, identity, and the search for national identity.

The Paradoxical Prime Minister is a recent novel of 2018 wherein Tharoor offers a critical study of Narendra Modi ji's tenure as Prime Minister, examining his leadership style, policies, and impact on India. It is about his ability to inspire devotion and criticism in terms of his efforts to modernise India while embracing traditional values. *Why I Am A Hindu* is a personal novel of Tharoor; it is an insightful exploration of Hinduism and its relevance in modern India. It reflects his own journey with Hinduism, exploring the complexities of the faith and its practices. Tharoor's narratives explore the themes of identity, culture, and politics.

Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* is a Booker Prize-winning novel set in the Himalayas and follows the life of a retired judge and his cook along with his granddaughter. In this novel, the characters are seen struggling with cultural displacement, alienation, and the search for identity in a colonised country, India. The story also examines the rigid Indian class system and its effects on personal relationships, social mobility, and human connection.

The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny is the latest novel by Kiran Desai, dealing with a story that spans continents and explores the themes of identity, culture, and belonging in a globalised world. Sonia and Sunny are two different characters in the novel, but both of them are seen suffering from

cultural heritage and modern aspirations. Both of them are drawn towards each other, but their families reject them, and they choose to have separate journeys and confront loneliness, trauma, and family expectations. The novel deeply delves into the complexities of Indian diasporic experiences.

Arundhati Roy is a renowned Indian author and winner of the Booker Prize for her novel *The God of Small Things*. It is a semi-autobiographical novel dealing with the themes of love, loss, family, etc. It has many characters and separate stories between the past and present, revealing tragic events and their impact on the family. The novel is about the rigid social hierarchy of Indian society, highlighting the struggles of the marginalised and the consequences of the social system.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy is the story of Anjum, a transgender woman, and her journey. The story explores the themes of identity, belonging, resistance, and India's treatment of marginalised communities, including the lower caste, the poor, LGBT individuals, and so on. The characters are seen with multiple identities, searching for acceptance and a sense of belonging in a society with rigid norms. It also deals with India's political landscape, rebellion, and the struggle for justice.

Chetan Bhagat is a renowned Indian author and screenwriter. He has written more than ten novels featuring romantic relationships, complexities of love, marriage, and cultural differences. His characters often undergo self-discovery, exploring identity and purpose. *Five Point Someone* is the story of three friends who struggle with academic pressure, personal issues, and relationships. All of them are struggling with family expectations, and the three of them support each other in facing the challenges and shaping their identities and futures. It is a portrayal of young adults caught up in love, friendship, and self-discovery in a highpressure environment, dealing with feelings of inadequacy and fear of failure. The characters and experiences are relatable to the present generation.

Pankaj Mishra is a well-known Indian novelist and literary critic. *The Romantics* is a thought-provoking novel which deals with love, identity, and cultural dissonance. It raises questions about identity, love, and the feeling of belongingness in a globalised world. The characters suffer from seeking connection with each other and understanding in a rapidly changing world.

Hari Kunzru is a British Indian novelist and journalist. He was born and brought up in London. *The Impressionist* is his debut novel, which speaks about adopting various identities to survive as the protagonist searches for a sense of belonging. He also explores the complexities of

racial identity. Pran, the protagonist of the novel, is abandoned by his English father after the death of his Indian mother and suffers a cultural crisis; his mixed heritage makes him an outsider. To cope with all these circumstances, he adopts various identities to meet with the colonial hierarchies. It becomes a part of his survival.

Gods Without Men is Hari Kunzru's notable novel that explores the lives of people migrating to a Western country. It revolves around a family who lives in a remote desert town, and their nine-year-old son goes missing while playing in the desert. The family desperately searches for the boy and suffers from grief, trauma, and displacement regarding connections and relationships in a foreign country.

Conclusion:

To conclude, contemporary Indian texts deal with narrators and narratives that grapple with the complexities of postcolonial identity, culture, and history. All the writers of this genre reveal the multifaceted nature of identity, power, and culture. These texts delve into the postcolonial experience, highlighting Indian culture and histories. The themes of hybridity, identity, and history encourage us to rethink our assumptions about belongingness in an increasingly interconnected world.

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