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## QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE POSTCOLONIAL NOVELS

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### ABSTRACT

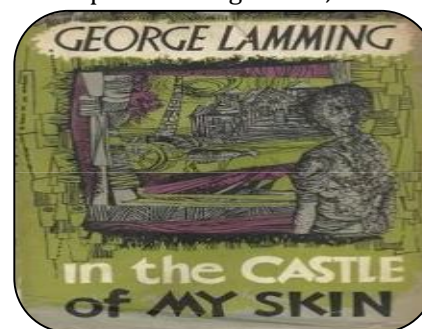
*A wide range of post-colonial novels has been published during the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century. The diaspora and trans-cultural themes are foremost in these novels and may open discussions for further and deeper research. Post-colonial studies have been with us for the last fifty years and at present they are foremost in any program of Literature in English. Perhaps the most interesting thing is that the current literature in English is heavily relying on the literature coming from post-colonial topics and post-colonial writers living in British ex-colonies or living in Britain or the United States but were born and bred in colonized countries.*

**KEYWORDS:** *postcolonial writers; narrative; diaspora; trans-cultural; disruption.*

### INTRODUCTION

The paper is not intended to be an in depth analysis of the novels themselves, of postcolonial themes or of the reaction of Third World literature in English against metropolitan fiction writing. India, South Africa and the Caribbean are represented in the context of their history, their literary state-of-art and the novels specifically focused. The aim is to whet the reader's curiosity and interest so that the novels under analysis could be better known and studied, whilst their themes given more attention and emphasis. Post expansionism includes an examined commitment with the experience of imperialism and its over a wide span of time impacts

A potential working definition for postcolonialism is that it includes an examined commitment with the experience of imperialism and its at various times impacts, both at the neighborhood level of ex-pioneer social orders and at the degree of more broad worldwide improvements thought to be the eventual outcomes of domain. Postcolonialism regularly additionally includes the conversation of encounters, for example, subjection, relocation, concealment and opposition, distinction, race, sex and spot just as reactions to the talks of majestic Europe, for example, history, reasoning, humanities and semantics. The term is as much about conditions under dominion and imperialism legitimate, as about conditions coming after the authentic finish of expansionism. A developing worry among postcolonial pundits has likewise been with racial minorities in the west, grasping Native and African Americans in the US, British Asians and African Caribbeans in the UK and Aborigines in Australia and Canada, among others. Due to these highlights, post expansionism takes into account a wide scope of uses, assigning a steady transaction and slippage between the feeling of a chronicled change, a socio-social area and an epochal design. Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) is considered as critical in the molding of postcolonial



contemplates. In Orientalism, Said contended for seeing an immediate connection between's the information that oriental researchers delivered and how these were redeployed in the constitution of provincial principle.

Pre- and post-independence literature in India Mulk Raj Anand (1905- ), Raja Rao (1909- ) and R.K. Narayan (1906- ) are the best known and perhaps the most influential novel writers in the first half of 20th century India, or rather, during the immediate pre- and post-Independence period. Whilst Anand in his novels (*Untouchable*, 1935; *Coolie*, 1936; *Two Leaves and a Bud*, 1937; *The Village*, 1939; *Across the Black Waters*, 1940; *The Sword and the Sickle*, 1942; *The Big Heart*, 1945) deals with injustice, exclusion, underprivileged landless peasants, race relationships, the opposition between rural and urban India, and distinguishes himself by using various style forms from the fable, parable and folk tale, written with ruthless realism. Raja Rao is perhaps the first Hindu writer to appropriate English in the postcolonial novel, coupled to local thematic, legendary history and Sanskrit literary style. In *Kanthapura* (1938), *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) and *The Chessmaster and his Moves* (1988), Rao focuses on the freedom struggle, the exploitations of day workers, the relationship between India and Europe. He has not only broken new ground in the Indian novel written in English but has also Indianized the novel.

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan is probably the most well-known among Indian post-colonial writers in English. Postcolonial Indian English Literature The term 'Postcolonial' came after the term 'colonial' which was based on the theory of the superiority of European culture or Imperial culture and the rightness of the empire. Colonial literature means the literature written by the native people including the writings by creoles and indigenous writers during the colonial times. Postcolonial literature means the literature written after the withdrawal of the imperial power from the territory of the native people. Having got the freedom from the colonial rule, the Postcolonial people thought of having their identity. So they raised their voice against the past exploitations and oppressions and attempted at establishing their identity. The question of identity whether it is of the writer or of poet, of the nation or of religion, and of the national or regional literature is important for each. The postcolonial poet Niranjan Mohanty appears very conscious of the identity question and also believes that "no order of things obfuscate/ my identity."

In fact, the postcolonial discourse means "to get connected with what is important for the lives of ordinary people-their culture, or on the other, " to show how people are being constructed and manipulated by cultural forms."7 In the postcolonial era the lives of ordinary people and their culture have been widely discussed in both Indian English Fiction and Indian English Poetry by the different perceptions of different writers and poets of different cultures. In Indian English Fiction, representation of colonialism, offers an unbiased common man's and common sense perspective on colonialism in India. Mulk Raj Anand , R.K. Narayan ,Raja Rao and A.S.P. .Ayyer whose life views and language stem from Indian perceptive have discussed Indian landscapes and culture in their writings on the wide scale. We can notice in R.K. Narayan's novels "the pattern of the Indian fairy tales." Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar , Kushwant Singh and Arun Joshi focus on specific socio-political problems placing the country whereas the novelists like R.P.Jhabvala ,Kamala Markandaya, Nayantra Sahgal and Anita Desai view, from feminist perspectives, socio-political as well as personal problems. Some recent novelists like Salman Rushdie, Kiran Desai, Githa Hariharan and Amitabh Ghosh highlight postcolonial issues in more specific ways. Darkness of ignorance , illiteracy, starvation, poverty, suffering and humiliation prevailing in Indian writings. In this paper we discuss the writings of Kamala Markandaya, Kushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, Bhabani Bhattacharya and R.P. Jhabvala on the map of Post colonial English Fiction.

In her novel, ' Nectar in a Sieve' Kamala Markandaya shows how urbanization of rural areas make the people landless and homeless. Further she notices Rukmani's relentless struggle for survival in the context of urbanization of rural areas where a new founded Tannery upsets the tranquil life of peasant people during the time of rain, rice, draught and fine weather, hope and fear, hunger and starvation and then they become the captives of failure of crops, fear and the lure of the essay pleasures of life. In the paddy fields lies the hope of farmers attuned to a patterned existence: This is one of the

truths of our existence as those who live by the land knows that sometimes we eat and sometimes we starve. We live by our labours from one harvest to the next, there is no certain telling whether we shall be able to feed ourselves and our children, and if bad times are prolonged we know we must see the week surrender their lives and this fact, too, is within our experience. In our lives there is no margin for misfortune. This view is also apparent in Kushwant Singh's poem 'I Shall not Hear the Nightingale' when he observes, " *Our country has never been free and we have developed a servile mentality .We are frightened of power.*" Salman Rushdie also writes in 'Midnight's Children': It is the privilege and the course of the midnight's children to be both masters and victim of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked in to the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace. Bhabani Bhattacharya's 'So Many Hungers' is an analysis of the strength and endless struggle of human beings against the evil forces of mankind. Kajoli's mother does not sell the cow Mangala , since she regards her as a mother symbol that has provided nourishment to her family. She meets a desperate starving woman with no milk in her breast for her dying baby who in concern for her child says, "*Poor godling, so hurt with hunger! Look, my breasts have no milk. ... he has no throat to cry. If he sleeps a little! Where is sleep? He is hurt and hurt all the time with his hunger.*"

The favourite theme of Postcolonial literature is east-west fusion that makes its presence felt in the English speaking world by breaking a new ground both in themes and techniques of both fiction and poetry. There are many European characters that come to India and adopt the Indian culture and also remember their culture so there creates a matter of compare and contrast between the east and the west. Jhabvala's 'A Backward Place' shows a very fusion of the east and the west as her European sensibility mixes with Indian sensibility and presents the compare and contrast of two cultures. Judy and Etta are the women central characters of this novel. They came to India and stayed for a long time. One can easily find the contrast in their habits and preferences. Etta is a seeker of husbands and wants to marry an Indian and lives in India within western style. She is expert at love-making art and to her, "*Marriages are made to be broken*" and broken marriage is "*one of the rules of modern civilization.*" That's why, she has married several times only for getting the comforts. She thinks that a flexible marriage is better than the permanent marriage for her. On the other Judy appears as pure an Indian character who passes through poverty, superstition, violence, suffering and communal effort that are the real Indian characteristics.

On the map of Post colonial Poetry we place Shiv K.Kumar and Niranjan Mohanty for their post colonial themes and techniques appear in their valuable writings. Shiv .K. Kumar himself underlines the favourite theme-east -west fusion of Postcolonial Indian English Poetry and also states, "Another recurring theme in most contemporary Indian Poetry in English is East-West cultural encounter. This perhaps relates to the fact that several of our poets have had their education abroad at Oxford, Cambridge, Leeds or some American University. So they often tend to write like expatriates or exiles while living in the west and look back nostalgically on their western experience when they return home."

Kumar's poem 'A Letter from New York' included in his poetic volume 'Subterfuges' is the best example of the dichotomy between the east and the west and also reveals his great longing for returning to India. He says: Here I live in a garbage can and pile grows bigger each week with the broken homes splinted all round, and further makes the contrast between the two cultures of east & west and points out that nothing is there but emptiness : Incidentally, there are no beggars at Grand Central or Broadway, no cripples on wheel barrows no lepers with patches of scraped skin, Only eyes, eyes, eyes staring at lamp-post.

Post colonialism emphasizes a contemporary state and therefore, Kumar as a post-colonial poet writes poems of contemporary interest. He is well-versed with the new postcolonial terms like 'hybridity 'and 'diaspora' and his poetry is a living example of these terms in action and operation. Apart from the themes, one important ingredient of postcolonial literature is the language in which it is written. It was the conspiracy of the colonial rule to introduce English with the intention of converting the colonized into mimic men, but this tool proved to be the nail in their coffin as the Indians learnt how

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to pay them in the same coin. But today it is not the problem because English has become a global language, and has become a medium to represent the east to the west in an emphatic manner.

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