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"POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE – II"

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MA - I (PGENG 24)

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(Deemed to be University), Pune
School of Distance Education

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POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE – II

M.A. ENGLISH-I

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Unit-2 Basic Concepts - II

2.0 Objectives:

After completing the study of this unit, you will

- know about the basic concepts
- know about the trends in postcolonial writing
- learn the process of reverse colonizing
- learn the process of reading postcolonial literature
- be able to answer the questions on the unit

2.1 Introduction:

All of us know that Postcolonial Studies has made significant contribution to research over the years. This unit deals with two important basic concepts in Postcolonial Studies: 1) Colonizing in Reverse and 2) Citizens of the World: Reading Postcolonial Literature

2.2 Colonizing in Reverse

Postcolonial writers such as Abdulrazak Gurnah, Wilson Harris, Michael Ondaatje and Salman Rushdie, have revisited concepts of nationality and community. They have attended to the diverse histories and cultures of the areas they grew up in, histories which precede and accompany European colonization. Many of those writers had emigrated to Britain or Canada. Their attention to those early multicultural communities is influenced by their location in the more recent immigrant communities. Australia, Britain and Canada had all allowed immigration to rebuild their postwar economies and fulfill the requirement of labour forces. In Australia the immigrants came mostly from Britain and Europe. Until the 1970s non-European peoples were turned away under the White Australia Policy. The workers from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent preferred to go to Britain to work in service transport systems, the new National Health hospitals, and the steel and cotton factories. Australia, Britain and Canada still have predominantly white populations. At the same time, they provide different contexts for the development of multicultural societies. However, Britain differs significantly from Australia and Canada as a symbolic and actual site for those who had formerly been her imperial subjects.

A number of immigrants and visitors from the Colonies travelled to Britain for more than two hundred years before World War II. There is an increase in numbers and reasons for emigration after 1948. During the next three decades, the percentage of people in Britain of African or Indian descent increased rapidly. Majority of them settled in London. Additionally, many Irish people sought work in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and other major cities.

A large number of people had migrated in search of work. They had left their families in the Caribbean, Ireland, India or Pakistan. So they expected to return to those families and houses after a few years. For many, there was also a sense of adventure and glamour in the possibility of living in England. Others wanted to get acquainted with the scenes and the culture which they had studied in books. Some, like Kamau Brathwaite, Buchi Emecheta and her husband, and V. S. Naipaul, came as students. George Lamming and Samuel Selvon wanted to be writers. It was difficult to be accepted as a writer (either by others or in one's own mind) unless one had the imprint of British publication.

In 'Migrant in London', James Berry from Jamaica expresses the mingled feelings of achievement and apprehension, of nostalgia for the world left behind and excitement at being in the 'worl' centre' and recognizing a city and its landmarks already known through a shared culture. In London, he feels at home culturally and yet homeless physically. Paradoxical double experience of familiarity and strangeness has been conveyed in the poem by means of imagery as well as language. The sensation of sand underfoot and the sound of the sea in the speaker's home country have been contrasted with the streets and the noise and confusion of traffic in the metropolitan city. The speaker's reference to London as Mecca not only suggests the central symbolic significance of London for West Indians, as a place where one can and must pay homage, but also a place to be visited rather than lived in. (A later collection of short stories by Farrukh Dhondy, Come to the Mecca (1978), also indicates the ways in which British imperial culture has appropriated place names such as Mecca.

Many writers from the erstwhile colonies came to write, study and work in Britain in the first two decades following World War II and then remained there. The list includes the poet Dom Moraes from Bombay; the novelist and short story writer Attia Hosain from Lucknow; the novelist Kamala Markandaya from Bangalore; the poet Ketaki Kushari Dyson from Bengal; the historian and travel writer Nirad Chaudhuri from Bengal; the novelist and journalist Farrukh Dhondy from Poona; the novelist Salman Rushdie from Bombay; the fiction and travel writers V. S. Naipaul and his younger brother Shiva Naipaul from Trinidad; the novelist Selvon also from Trinidad; the poets James Berry and Andrew Salkey, who was also a novelist, from Jamaica; the novelists Wilson Harris and Edgar Mittleholzer from Guyana; the poets and critics Peter Porter and Clive James; the novelists Christina Stead and Randolph Stow from Australia; the poet Fleur Adcock from New Zealand; the novelist and poet Elizabeth Smart from Canada; the novelist and short story writer William Trevor from Ireland; and the novelists Buchi Emecheta from Nigeria, Lauretta Ngcobo from South Africa, and Abdulrazak Gurnah from Zanzibar. Gurnah and Ngcobo came to England as political refugees. The list indicates the multifarious places and cultures from which these writers came.

Such novelists as Doris Lessing and Stead from settler colonies took either the world they had left behind or a changing postwar English society as their subject. They offered sharply observed critiques. Stead wrote several stories about migrants in England, including 'Days of the Roomers', which portrays a European landlord who has emigrated to London rejecting 'dark-skinned foreign students'. Her 1965 novel, Cotters' England analyses the material and psychological poverty of working-class Britain through a study of the Cotter family in Newcastle and

three generations of working-class activists. Both this novel and Miss Herbert: Suburban Wife (1976) depict a bleak postwar England, in which neither the working class nor liberal intellectuals like Miss Herbert can escape from the dead hand of traditional attitudes.

White authors from the Commonwealth presented a jaundiced view of England for an English audience and readers back 'home'. However, writers from the Caribbean, and later from Sri Lanka and the Indian subcontinent, increasingly spoke of and to a black and South Asian community within Britain. Moreover, they were often seeking to create a community here and now in Britain. It is in this role as a creator of community that Selvon's writing is particularly innovative and significant. The Lonely Londoners, published in 1956, assembles a cast of African and West Indian men seeking companionship and support in the face of a bleak, impoverished and unfriendly white London. We find a gathering of people who find their identity less through their different places of origin than through their mutual presence in London. This new group identity is expressed through the ambivalent sense of longing for 'home' and belonging in London, as well as the language of the narrator, a subtle blend of Trinidadian and other West Indian idioms and inflections with Standard English. That impulse to write out of the experience of dislocation or estrangement is one shared by many immigrant writers.

The presence of a black and Asian community in the metropolitan centre also helped to create a new sense of community. Moreover, immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean, the Indian subcontinent and Ireland were confronted with prejudice fuelled by years of imperial rule and contemporary caricatures in the British media. The media showed prejudice against darker-skinned people who did not speak the English language or adhere to the Christian religion. At the same time, it had an interest in the 'exotic' and a certain glamour attached to India as a realm of Indian princes and palaces. Such attitudes, in relation to the popular films and television series Gandhi (1982), A Passage to India (1984), The Far Pavilions (1984) and The Jewel in the Crown (1984) were harshly criticised by Rushdie in his 1984 essay 'Outside the Whale'.

Many students and professional writers from 'the British Commonwealth' such as Kamau Brathwaite and George Lamming from Barbados, Ngugi wa Thiong'o from Kenya, and John (Pepper Clark) Bekederemo and Wole Soyinka from Nigeria came to Britain. The first two Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) Conferences were held at the University of Kent in Canterbury in 1967 and 1968. The conferences grew out of a series of smaller group meetings which began in January 1967, and featured monthly readings and discussions of work by African, African American and Caribbean writers and artists.

Both the interaction between artists from different Caribbean islands, and the discussions and formulations concerning the objectives of a meaningful Caribbean art, were to have a continuing influence on art and cultural politics produced in the Caribbean. In Britain and in the Caribbean, it had the consequence of questioning the centrality of the English canon, and of creating alternative foci and lines of communication and response. Journals such as The West Indian Gazette, edited by Claudia Jones, and the CAM Newsletter and its successor in the Caribbean, Savacou, became important outlets for the publication of black British and Caribbean writers.

The CAM group debated and sought to redefine the language, forms and content of a black British and Caribbean writing. In Britain CAM writers and artists were becoming aware of innovative fiction and poetry drawing on oral and folk traditions, jazz structures and spoken idioms, published by African and African American writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ralph Ellison and Langston Hughes as well as Hispanic and francophone Caribbean writers such as Césaire, Damas and Nicolas Guillén. Encouraged by their creative brilliance and success, Brathwaite, Lamming, Selvon and others fashioned a language which recalled the voices and idioms and rhythms of everyday Caribbean life and culture. For Brathwaite, this involved specifically rejecting in his poetry the iambic pentameter line characteristic of the English poetic tradition, and instead drawing on calypso, blues, and African drum rhythms. Berry, Brathwaite and Selvon also drew on oral and folk traditions, to make Caribbean voices heard within the English literary tradition. Through the performance of their poetry to multicultural audiences within the United Kingdom, these poets created and reinforced a sense of communal identity and established a hybrid oral/literary tradition different from but affiliated to the preexisting English literary tradition. Or rather one might see their work as giving new life and new directions to an older oral/literary tradition characterized by Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and the drama of Shakespeare.

All writers who had emigrated from Africa, the Indian subcontinent or the West Indies were not pleased with the aims and aesthetics embraced by some members of CAM. Naipaul was never a member of CAM, and his fiction, unlike Selvon's, maintained a clear distinction between the Standard English of the narrative persona, and the Trinidadian voices of his characters. As Susanne Miihleisen contends, Naipaul uses Creole speech in his early fiction to symbolize and satirize what he described and dismissed as the 'half-bakedness' of colonial society. Naipaul's adherence to the traditional genre of the 'novel of manners' reinforced static and unchanging views of a people and a society desperately in need of growth and change. Although reservations have frequently been expressed by Caribbean and other 'Third World' writers and critics, such as Achebe, Naipaul's reputation within Britain has continued to grow, resulting in the award of the Booker Prize in 1971, a knighthood in 1990, the David Cohen Prize recognizing 'a lifetime's achievement by a living British writer' in 1992, and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

Naipaul in his early writing shows a preoccupation with the search for accommodation in both the literal and the metaphorical sense. In A House for Mr Biswas, the protagonist expresses a kind of existential terror at the thought of remaining alone, isolated and unaccommodated. The Mimic Men (1967) regards with disdain and sharp scrutiny the disjunction between European architectural, political and cultural structures and traditions, and those of the newly independent peoples and places in the Caribbean. Its narrator, an exiled political leader, traces his life and search for order through a series of bleak lodgings and hotel rooms in London, as well as ramshackle or pretentious villas in the Caribbean, finally affirming his existence as a permanent lodger or guest. For Naipaul's narrator, this discontinuity between his past and his present allows him to reinvent himself, sometimes in terms of the fantasies of British people. Selvon's characters, on the other hand, cling to an identity which links them to their Caribbean past and continues ways of speaking and narrating ('it have a ballad'), so that they also identify with one another rather than with white Londoners.

Like Naipaul and Selvon, and later Caryl Phillips (in The Final Passage (1985)), the Irish author William Trevor, sets his fiction in lonely boarding houses, lodgings and hospitals. Combining compassion and irony, his novels, whether set in London or Ireland, portray the lives of those who are lonely and alienated. Miss Gomez and the Brethren (1971), for example, has as its central protagonist a Jamaican woman who has been orphaned by fire. In London she has worked as a stripper and a prostitute before becoming an ardent member of the Brethren of the Way and a cleaner at a decaying English pub. Miss Gomez is portrayed as a redemptive figure who clears up the physical and psychological mess that is postimperial England.

The fiction of the 1980s often focuses on the attempt to make a home in Britain, and frequently the protagonists are women, seeking to hold their families together and establish some sense of permanence. Emecheta's Second Class Citizen (1974), David Simon's Railton Blues (1983), Phillips's The Final Passage, Ravinda Randhawa's A Wicked Old Woman (1987), Gurnah's Dottie (1990) and Farhana Sheikh's The Red Box (1991) all explore the meaning and consequences for young African, Asian and Caribbean women, their husbands, siblings and children, of living in a British community which is reluctant to accommodate them. Many of the women anthologized in those early years have gone on to create powerfully individual visions and, indeed, to influence male writers to give greater attention to women characters.

Writers such as Gurnah, Phillips, Randhawa, Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi and Meera Syal, also play mockingly and ironically with the stereotyped identities within and against which those of Asian and African descent in Britain find themselves living. They make an attempt to show how race and ethnicity are constructed identities, which may be performed differently within different contexts and for different audiences.

Kureishi's novel The Buddha of Suburbia (1990) wittily satirizes both the English liberals and the immigrant Asians who trade in ethnicity. The child of an Indian father and English mother, Kureishi questions and subverts notions of fixed racial or sexual identity (his main protagonist, Karim, is bisexual), and writes from the perspective of someone who grew up in London in the 1960s. His mixed race and sexuality allow him to construct and perform changing selves. Above all, they allow him (and the author) to cast a sardonic eye on the ways in which his father, Haroon, and others cater to and profit from certain stereotypes. Thus Haroon presents himself as an Indian guru, teaching the 'Path' to enlightenment. And although Karim expostulates that 'Dad couldn't even find his way to Beckenham," his performance as a guru is eagerly accepted by his white liberal mistress, Eva Kay, and her friends.

Ravinda Randhawa also takes as her subject the temptation to appropriate and perform stereotyped roles, but in contrast to Kureishi her 1987 novel A Wicked Old Woman suggests, in the end, the need for 'affiliations, and collectivities'. The central character, Kulwant, is culturally, if not racially, hybrid, having grown up in England, the daughter of immigrant parents from India. The motif of multiple identities, a series of exterior layers which hide inner selves, is introduced in the novel's opening childhood memory, where Kulwant remembers her attempt to transform a Russian doll into an Indian one that has a bindi, a red mark on its

forehead. As a schoolgirl, Kulwant has responded to a reflected image of herself as an oriental princess, an exotic and mysterious maiden who is the focus of desire for the blond English Michael. This image gives her status in her all-white school, and also provides an escape from her embarrassingly un-English parents. But when Michael seeks marriage, Kulwant retreats in confusion from assimilation into an English family and goes to the other extreme, seeking to become 'the complete Indian woman'. From accepting an identity defined as 'the other', she turns to an identity which asserts her belonging within the Indian community, and demands an arranged marriage. Inevitably, her attempt to conform to that stereotype is doomed to failure, for it is based on fear, resentment and self-denial. Only later, after her husband has sought a more fulfilling relationship elsewhere, does Kulwant begin to understand the paradox that in her attempt to reject assimilation into Englishness, she took as the signifier of Indianness that special feature emphasized by Europeans as the mark of cultural difference, the arranged marriage.

Kulwant's third assumed identity, which corresponds to Western media images of India in the 1970s and 1980s, is that of the Third World Victim, the needy recipient of Oxfam and welfare state handouts. If she cannot become 'English' or 'Indian' in more acceptable terms, then she will become the monster they have created, as the title of this episode, 'Frankly Frankenstein', implies. As such, she need no longer take responsibility for her failures, for her family, or for her community. Her only project is to retreat, and perform her role as a helpless and poverty-stricken old woman, from whom nothing can be expected. She envisions her future as one of the unaccommodated, so marginalized that she will be able to take refuge as 'a smelly old hag whose address would be a patch under Charing Cross Bridge'. As in The Lonely Londoners, The Mimic Men, Emecheta's Second Class Citizen and Phillips's The Final Passage, the motif of accommodation as a metaphor of belonging, or not belonging, in the larger society becomes significant. But as in these other novels, the problem of finding a home is not just metaphorical; there are numerous images of rejection and homelessness, or fear of homelessness. Randhawa's novel also contains the story of Rani, who runs away from home, denies any Indian identity, assumes the name of Rosalind, and finds meagre shelter in hostels, empty houses and squats. Most horrific are Kulwant's memories of the Indian family burned to death in their house by racist arsonists, an event which recalls other actual arson attacks in the 1970s and 1980s, such as the fire which caused the deaths of Mrs Abdul Karim and her children, and the burning to death of thirteen young black people at a party in New Cross Road, London, in January 1981.

Nevertheless, Randhawa's novel suggests that it is through community and storytelling that healing and some sense of wholeness can be found, and in this aspect it reflects Randhawa's own involvement in the Asian Women Writers Collective. Kulwant sheds her isolation and her chosen identity as a helpless cripple when she joins Maya, West Indian Angie and others in a marathon of storytelling which gradually pulls Rani back from semi-consciousness and the abyss of madness. Storytelling can heal the individual whose mind has been nearly destroyed by the seeming contradictions of being Asian, British and female. Communication can in turn create community and heal divisions within it. But collective political action is also required in the face of the vicious hatred displayed by white Englishmen who are unwilling to hear the stories.

Along with the many writers who explore a new sense and consequence of location and identity in Britain, these and others also continue the tradition of travel writing which was such a feature of colonialist writing, and still represents an important genre in contemporary British writing. While Anglo-English works emphasize the 'otherness' of the regions they explore and the people they encounter, postcolonial British writers often revisit and revision those places depicted by metropolitan travellers, or focus their travel writing on Britain and Europe. Here V. S. Naipaul is perhaps the preeminent example of a writer who alternates writing about his encounters with other cultures and places with the search for location within England and Englishness, culminating most powerfully and complexly in The Enigma of Arrival (1987). Naipaul described his return to and turn away from the Caribbean in The Middle Passage (1962), contentiously (and in contrast to C. L. R. James) pronouncing that 'History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the Caribbean'. The incisive detail of Naipaul's descriptions led reviewers to compare him to D. H. Lawrence as a travel writer, and encouraged commissions for later works, such as An Area of Darkness (1964), which traverses India and finds there a static and sterile culture, A Congo Diary (1980), and Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey (1981). Naipaul's later novels often incorporate and build on the places and cultures described in the travel books, and simultaneously allude to earlier novelists and travellers such as Joseph Conrad. Thus A Bend in the River (1979) draws on his earlier "Congo Diary' and essay on Conrad to create a contemporary version of Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1902), while Guerrillas (1975) fictionalizes his series of essays on Michael X while also alluding to both Jane Eyre (1847) and Wuthering Heights (1847). One of the main protagonists, a South African journalist, is named Roche, while the Michael X figure sees himself as a kind of Heathcliff.

Whereas earlier British novels have tended to separate the genres of adventure/travel/quest and domestic/romance fiction, one of the distinctive and intriguing features of these novels by Naipaul is the creation of a hybrid fiction combining the quest and the domestic genres. Naipaul has generally focused on contemporary settings, but a later generation of black and Asian British novelists has begun to combine the exploration of place with the exploration and revisioning of history, resulting in a remapping and revisioning of both.

Like Naipaul, the novelists David Dabydeen and Gurnah have also drawn on Conrad's Heart of Darkness as a textual background and map against which to ground a new vision of African or black identities and terrains. Dabydeen's The Intended (1991) provides a sharp and witty rereading of Conrad through its relocation and 'filming' of the novel in the heart of London by a group of schoolboys of African, Asian and Caribbean descent. Like Phillips, Dabydeen has also turned to the eighteenth century and the history of slavery as a means of bringing to life a suppressed history. Slave Song (1984), Coolie Odyssey (1988) and Turner (1994) are long poems or poetic sequences giving voice, sometimes in the Creolized and vivid language of Guyanese 'coolies' and slaves, to the experience of plantation life and immigration from India to Britain and Guyana. Turner takes as its starting point J.M. W. Turner's painting Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, with both the picture and the poem recreating the 1783 HMS Zong case, in which the captain of a slave ship was tried for throwing

more than a hundred slaves overboard in order to collect insurance for this 'property', a crime which the ex-slave and abolitionist Olaudah Equiano had been instrumental in publicizing and contesting. In almost all his works, Dabydeen sets up a linguistic and aesthetic struggle between the cultural traditions and experiences framed by the Western canon, and histories and experiences which he as the descendant of a Guyanan plantation worker seeks to express.

In the 1980s Rushdie celebrated the 'hybridity' of his culture and identity, and 'hybridity' has become a term proclaimed by many later writers and critics, including preeminently Homi Bhabha. In a 1995 manifesto, 'Re-Inventing Britain', Bhabha advocated a move away from 'the multiculturalist thinking of the eighties, which in his view 'sought to revise the homogenous notion of national culture by emphasizing the multiple identities of race/class/gender' and thus reinforced the notion of national or ethnic identities as given. For Bhabha, multiculturalist thinking obscures 'the hybrid cosmopolitanism of contemporary metropolitan life', a hybridity which is constantly in process and transformation. Like Rushdie, he draws attention to the transformational powers of a cosmopolitan migrant culture, for not only do migrants reimagine their 'homelands' their places of ancestral origin, they also 'impose their needs on their new earth, bringing their own coherence to the new-found land, imagining it afresh'. Commenting on Bhabha's manifesto, Stuart Hall perhaps reflects his experience as a Jamaican who came to England in the 1950s, and his academic grounding as an eminent sociologist, when he expresses some scepticism about the view that globalization 'has completely evaporated the space of national culture'. Indeed, he sees in many cases a hardening of cultural nationalism in the face of dislocation and globalization, though he, too, has also advocated a move away from fixed identities to an acceptance of the 'positionality' of identity, a sense of self which foregrounds different aspects (race, history, gender, family, location, work, cultural affiliations, etc.), according to the context in which one is speaking or acting.

Rushdie's own fiction is perhaps the most widely recognized example of writing which reinvents histories and identities and celebrates hybridity, in terms of not only cultures but also genres. Variously described by critics as magic realist, postmodern and postcolonial, his novels draw on traditional Indian oral and written narrative forms, and popular Indian film and theatre, as well as shifting and often disconcerting perspectives embraced by writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Remarkable for their energy, linguistic playfulness and exuberance, his novels are also sharply satiric regarding the politics of India, Pakistan, and contemporary Britain. Midnight's Children (1981) won the Booker Prize in 1981 and was subsequently named the 'Best of the Bookers' in the twenty-five years of the award. Sharply critical of conservative British nationalism (as well as other nationalisms), The Satanic Verses revisits British history and migrancy through the scenes set in the Hot Wax Club, an alternative version to that established by the iconic figures in Madame Tussaud's.

In the 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century, new realist fiction and drama continues to make an impact, for instance in the prizewinning White Teeth (2000) by Zadie Smith, which gives voice to Anglo-Saxon, Asian and West Indian families in a grounded London setting, or the 'yardie' novels of Courttia Newland, or the historical revisiting of the eighteenth-century black British community in S.

I. Martin's Incomparable World (1996), or the Bildungsromans by Andrea Levy of young West Indian women rediscovering their family histories. But the last decade of the century also produced some striking experimental fiction and poetry, which sidesteps the powerful models provided by Rushdie by drawing on African and Amerindian traditions which in turn transform canonical English and European literary icons.

2.2.1 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative.

1. For James Berry, being in ---------- is being in the 'worl' centre'.
   a) Paris b) Berlin
   c) London d) New York
2. The postwar England depicted by Stead in her novels is ----------.
   a) bleak b) bright
   c) great d) grand
3. Selvon's novel The Lonely Londoners was published in ----------.
   a) 1955 b) 1956
   c) 1957 d) 1960
4. The central character in Ravindra Randhawa's novel A Wicked Old Woman is ----------.
   a) Lata b) Kulwant
   c) Mary d) Leny
5. In the 1980s, Rushdie celebrated the ---------- of his culture and identity in his novels.
   a) purity b) clarity
   c) sanctity d) hybridity

B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Mention the countries which have allowed the development of multicultural society.
2. Mention the name of the city which James Berry uses for London in his poem 'Migrant in London'.
3. Which line Brathwaite rejected as characteristic of the English poetic tradition?
4. Mention the quality of colonial society which Naipaul dismissed in his novels.
5. Mention the year in which V. S. Naipaul won the Nobel Prize for literature.

2.2.2 Terms to Remember:

- **immigration :** migration, colonization
- **the Commonwealth :** erstwhile British colonies
- **hybridity :** the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization
- **multicultural :** culturally diverse
- **Bildungsromans :** novels dealing with formative years of the protagonists

2.3 Citizens of the World: Reading Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial writers in Britain and the former British colonies have received several prestigious literary prizes. The Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to Patrick White, Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, V. S. Naipaul, Nadine Gordimer and Seamus Heaney. Nearly half of the winners of Britain's most prestigious literary award, the Man Booker Prize for fiction, have been writers from former colonies, including Salman Rushdie (whose 1981 Midnight's Children was also named 'Best of the Bookers' J. M. Coetzee (twice), Peter Carey (twice), V. S. Naipaul, Michael Ondaatje, Margaret Atwood, Ben Okri, Ken Hulme, Nadine Gordimer, Thomas Keneally, J. G. Farrell, Roddy Doyle, John Banville, Arundhati Roy, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala. Many of these writers have also appeared several times on the shortlist, as have other postcolonial authors such as William Trevor, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Rohinton Mistry, Carol Shields, Doris Lessing, Anita Desai, and André Brink.

Literary prizes provide welcome publicity not only for their sponsors but also for the publishers of these authors. The Man Booker Prize is conducted in such a way as to maximize publicity and book sales through advertising the shortlisted writers and encouraging speculation and participation by readers before the televised announcement of the winner. The Booker Prize awards have encouraged a greater awareness of Britain as a pluralist society, and welcome its recognition of writers from 'the Commonwealth'. However, the activity has given rise to a suspicion that the metropolitan centre has appropriated postcolonial writing for its own ends. Thus some African and African American critics claimed that the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature to Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott (and also Toni Morrison) indicated that their writing was more European and 'elitist' than 'authentically' African or Caribbean. The sponsorship of the literary awards was seen as another form of neocolonialism.

Indeed, the whole institutionalization of postcolonial literary studies has been declared suspect by critics such as Aijaz Ahmad. He sees both the emphasis on literature in English and an embrace of poststructuralist theory as adverse to the development of indigenous literatures and societies. Many critics and teachers view with suspicion the rapid establishment of a postcolonial literary canon, and a (related) reliance on particular publishers and anthologies to make the literature available to students. Moreover, the texts that seem to foreground values and concepts such as 'authenticity, 'otherness' and 'hybridity' only receive continuing attention. The emphasis on and commodification of 'the exotic'arise in part from the predominance of values such as 'otherness' and 'authenticity' in postcolonial

theory. It has been argued that works by Hanif Kureishi, Naipaul and Rushdie exemplify a 'staged marginality' — 'the dramatisation of their "subordinate status" for the imagined benefit of a majority audience'. Although this 'staged marginality' has a subversive intent, and seeks to challenge majority stereotypes and exoticizing of the other, the works are marketed and often read in terms of that perceived marginality or 'otherness'. This process creates the 'postcolonial exotic', that is, a process of domesticating the other, or, 'a mode of aesthetic perception which domesticates the other even as it makes it strange'.

The entire process involves the power to confer legitimacy on the writers and kinds of writers, through prizes, favourable reviews, etc. and, the power to include particular writers in academic curriculums and textbooks. The book The Postcolonial Exotic (2001) seeks to question 'the neo-imperialist implications of a postcolonial literary/critical industry centred on, and largely catering to, the West', an industry mainly articulated in English, depending on publishing houses in London and New York, offering 'translated' products for metropolitan consumers, and privileging 'a handful of famous writers (Achebe, Naipaul, Rushdie)' and 'its three celebrity critics (Bhabha, Said, Spivak).

Publishing data for Chinua Achebe's books demonstrates that the majority of his readers are in Africa rather than Europe or North America. Scholars such as Karin Barber and Stephanie Newell have shown the significance of indigenous publishing and marketing networks within Nigeria, while Ahmad and others have pointed to thriving writing and publishing in the Indian subcontinent in a number of languages (of which English is merely one), and assuming a local audience.

Yet it is also the case that many anticolonial and postcolonial works of literature have been banned and so made unavailable in their own countries. James Joyce's Ulysses (1922) was banned in Ireland (and some other countries, such as Australia and the United States) because it was considered obscene. Rushdie's The Satanic Verses (1988) was banned in India, Pakistan and many other countries on religious grounds, because some authorities denounced it as blasphemous and offensive to Muslims. Indeed, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini declared a fatwa, or sentence of death, on Rushdie, so that he was forced to live in hiding for almost a decade. In South Africa many authors such as Peter Abrahams, Brink, Gordimer, Alex La Guma, and Lauretta Ngcobo have had their works banned because they were considered subversive on moral or political grounds.. South Africans were also forbidden to read thousands of texts by outside writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah, Leonard Cohen, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King, Stephen King, NgugiwaThiong'o and Woody Allen. Ernest Hemingway's Across the River and Into the Trees (1950) was banned in both South Africa and Ireland. Such restrictions meant that many voices were suppressed, and that the lives and cultures of black and coloured people in South Africa were either not represented at all or represented in limited and distorted ways.

The reading of an anticolonial or postcolonial text is a process in which readers may assume a number of positions or identities, and become aware of the relationships, including power relationships, between those positions.

Most critical analyses of postcolonial writing implicitly or explicitly presume that the reader is either a member of the writer's nation, as in Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities (1983), or, more frequently, a generalized cosmopolitan

Westerner. In Huggan's The Postcolonial Exotic or Timothy Brennan's At Home in This World (1997), it is taken for granted that the reader is American or European, and there is little differentiation between kinds of Western readers. As a result, there is an implicit assumption that the texts may be read in one way, that there is a manner of homogeneous or universal reading. Thus Huggan declares that Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) 'implicitly address[es] a Western model reader who is constructed as an outsider to the text and to the cultural environment(s) it represents.' Where there is diversity or ambiguity of meaning, many critics assume it to be a property of the text rather than a consequence of diverse readerships. Moreover, those diverse reader responses may exist to varying degrees in the same person. The construction of a multiple or hybrid reader is one of the properties of many postcolonial texts.

There are clearly many questions arising from the complexities surrounding the readers of postcolonial texts, and the varieties of readings and responses that may then emerge. Many postcolonial writers and critics have celebrated their double status as insiders and outsiders.

Many anticolonialist and postcolonial writers differ from American, English and European modernist and postmodernist writers in their sense of a double audience, one existing as an immediate community within or identified with the colonized people, the other an outside or metropolitan readership, often connected with the colonizer. For the immediate community, reading might be largely an act of recognition and bonding, naming of people and places or allusions to them, and specific idioms (or the use of 'nation language', in Kamau Brathwaite's term) become an assertion and (re)creation of this intimate inside community. Hence the small group of people who originally received copies of W. B. Yeats's 'Easter 1916' from its privately printed run of twenty-five copies did not need to be told the names; they knew who was being referred to by 'That woman who rode to harriers', 'This man who kept a school', 'This other his helper', 'This other who seemed a drunken vainglorious lout'. Among the ways in which the participants in the Easter Rising have 'changed, changed utterly' is that they become not only members of an inside community but also members of an outside community, for which they become merely the names invoked at the end of the poem. (One might note that women remain barred from that outside community; 'That woman', though she is the first to be described, is not named in the final stanza along with 'MacDonagh and MacBride/And Connolly and Pearse.') Thus 'Easter 1916' in part commemorates the changing status of Ireland from colonized and marginalized community to the status of nation that speaks its own history and names its own heroes.

Although Joyce's Ulysses makes a more oblique response to the 1916 Easter Rising and its aftermath, it nevertheless presupposes an inner audience, acquainted with the cultures and personas involved, and responding to Joyce's parodic version differently from readers less inward with those events. As W. J. McCormack has pointed out, Ulysses is a historical novel, and its Irish readers would have been particularly aware of the gap between the Ireland of 1904, when the novel is set, and the Ireland of 1922, when it was published. The 'Cyclops' episode in particular is likely to create an awareness for its Irish readers of the differences between then and now. The cultural and political world represented in 1904 by 'Citizen' Michael Cusack, the Gaelic League, and the Gaelic Athletic

Association had now been overlaid by the fearful bloodshed of World War I, the Easter Rising and subsequent executions, the elections that brought Sinn Féin to power in Ireland, the declaration of Irish independence, and the fierce fighting between Irish Republicans and the British Black and Tans. In this context the romantic and racially based nationalism espoused by the Citizen is brought into question and seen as one of the sources of the performance of the Rising and the defects of its ensuing narration.

More specifically Joyce parodies the narration of events surrounding Robert Emmet's execution, and his role as a model for twentieth-century rebels. The leader of a failed Irish rebellion in 1803, Emmet is invoked and recalled throughout Ulysses. Irish readers would have been quick to recognize the events and the restaging of events.

Joyce's burlesque of this sentimentalized and romantic heroism speaks to an American and European audience which has seen the deaths of thousands of young men in World War I; but it speaks more directly and intimately to an Irish audience which has witnessed the replaying of Emmet's story on the streets of Dublin, and would have recognized the Easter Rising in that context, and indeed in the wider context of a series of heroic martyrdoms and rebellions, remarked by Leopold Bloom in his dispute with the Citizen about 'the point, the brothers Sheares, and Wolfe Tone beyond on Arbour Hill and Robert Emmet and die for your country, the Tommy Moore touch about Sarah Curran and she's far from the land'. Bloom's detailed consciousness of Irish history, culture and places, his consciousness of himself as an Irishman rather than an 'other', unites him with the Irish readers of Ulysses and the community depicted by Joyce. Writing Ulysses in the years between 1914 and 1921, Joyce may have wished to construct an Irish readership which would be ready to identify Bloom as one among them, and to reject an outdated and xenophobic nationalism which was unable to acknowledge Bloom as an insider. It might also be a readership growing towards the affirmation of Ireland as an independent nation, writing and reading itself into its own version of history.

However, while Joyce provides a critique (via the Citizen and others) of Irish readings of their history and culture, he also sets up a model and implicit critique of readings by outsiders, and contrasts 'outsider' readings with the responses of an 'insider' Irish community. For Joyce's Irish contemporaries, the act of reading Ulysses was in many ways an act of recognition, the retracing and hence the sharing and repossession of familiar places, names and persons. The novel is peopled with actual Dubliners, with familiar figures, and with passing references to familiar places, anecdotes, and events. Some are explicitly named (like Best, Eglinton, Nanetti (who was to become Mayor of Dublin) and George Russell); others like Buck Mulligan and the Citizen are given names and characteristics which disguise only to reveal. Ulysses is a novel for which inside knowledge and authority as a reader comes from being part of a community which Joyce seeks to extend but also to define. In this novel Haines is not only a caricature of the English imperialist, with his nightmares about guns and panthers, his collecting of folklore and his amateur anthropological and philological interests, he is also a figure of the excluded or outside reader, who fails to 'get' Stephen's jokes or to understand the nuanced references in the speech and banter of the Dublin community.

The distinction being made here between Haines as 'excluded' or outside reader, and the insiders who share jokes and understanding to which he has no access, has to do with 'constructed' or fictional readers, rather than 'real' ones. The issue of Joyce's actual readership is a complicated one; nevertheless, it could be argued that Joyce sets up a tension between a number of implicit readers and his actual readers — if only in terms of engagement and disengagement. In seeing how Haines 'misreads' Mulligan, Stephen Dedalus, the old woman who brings the milk, we can perhaps become more nuanced readers ourselves

Ulysses is a book noteworthy for the number of listeners who inhabit it, and for the number of scenes which draw attention to the listener hovering on the margins of conversations. In the first two episodes of the novel, Stephen suffers the chatter of Mulligan, the earnest commentary of Haines, the preaching of Deasy, the halting mistranslations and misreadings of his pupils; he himself says remarkably little, though his unspoken responses to Mulligan, Haines and Deasy suggest how we should read what they say. In the ninth episode Stephen is heard, but he also frequently overhears himself, and at certain points nudges his readers towards sceptical detachment from his autobiographical readings of Shakespeare. Indeed, this central episode in the Dublin National Library is as much about reading and misreading as it is about authorship, whether of Irish writers, Shakespeare or Percy Bysshe Shelley. The 'Aeolus' episode, set in the newspaper offices, also shows Bloom and Stephen as listeners and readers, both at times seeking to insert themselves into the community of speakers. John Nash has demonstrated the interplay and clash between modes of writing displayed in this episode, and Joyce's use of the London Times as a source for news which reveals here and in the Cyclops episode Joyce's awareness of London as a centre of empire. But this chapter also invokes a series of readings dependent on insider knowledge which is unavailable to Londoners. Beginning with that resounding phrase, 'In the heart of the Hibernian metropolis; with its playful insistence on Dublin as a centre, not only of paralysis and a mimic culture, but also of a history and 'Hibernian' counterculture of its own making, Irish metropolitan readers find themselves in an almost entirely known world, amid a familiar series of place names and a group of speakers who assume both a mastery of Greek, Latin and Judaeo-Christian oral and written cultures and an insider knowledge of Irish history and affairs. The references to lines from 'The Boys of Wexford', a ballad well known to Irishmen and women, to the Wild Geese, Isaac Butt, [James] Whiteside, John Philpott Curran, the mass meetings held by Daniel O'Connell, news sheets such as Paddy Kelly's Budget and The Skibbereen Eagle invoke a specific national history and culture which has little or no meaning for readers outside Ireland. The anecdote narrated by Myles Crawford about the reporting of the Phoenix Park assassinations in coded form, whose decoding depended on access to the Irish Freeman's Journal and a ready knowledge of Dublin's streets and suburbs, can be seen as a paradigm for the reading of many sections of Ulysses, in which incidents, names, phrases signify differently for Irish and non-Irish readers. The effect is not to make those sections meaningless to those who do not share the knowledge of Irish place and history; it is rather to create an awareness among Irish readers of a shared knowledge and history, over which they have authority and mastery, and which non-Irish readers must be taught.'

This tactic of 'writing in' the outside reader is found in different ways in many

other anticolonialist and postcolonial novels and plays. The District Commissioners in Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God (1964) are comparable to Haines in their misreading of 'native' culture, and as with Haines their misreading depends partly on an anthropological approach to the world they observe. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's A Grain of Wheat (1968) recalls for Kenyan readers a particular and specific understanding of Kikuyu history and culture from which the English administrator, Thompson, is excluded. In these African novels, as in Ulysses, the role of the outsider as a misreader of the culture also functions to encourage the actual readers to disengage themselves from the constructed misreading allocated to the English administrators. At the same time, the use of Igbo or Gikuyu words and references, the construction of an inner audience which belongs to a specific village community and is aware of a history that often remains slightly mysterious to outsiders, gives Igbos and Kikuyus (and at a further distance, other Nigerians, Kenyans and Africans) a sense of authority and community.

As Huggan points out, the construction of the insider or insider knowledge in novels such as Things Fall Apart is by no means uncomplicated, for the question of who speaks for the local culture and who interprets it is clearly bound up with questions of power and production. Anthropological discourse is both presented and questioned in this novel. One could argue that Arrow of God takes the issue of the relationships between power and knowledge, authentic histories and their interpretation, further — indeed, the question is central to the novel, to the contests between the two priests, and to the relationship between Ezeulu and Clarke and Winterbottom, all of whom claim to speak truths sanctioned by an outside and higher authority, divine or imperial. And whereas the failure of the outsider in Things Fall Apart lies in his arrogant dismissal of Igbo institutions as merely primitive, the failure of Clarke and Winterbottom stems additionally from their unwillingness to acknowledge or even conceive of the complex divisions and power struggles, personal and political, within that particular Igbo society, and their assumption that one model (indirect rule as applied to the North) is appropriate for all of Nigeria.

Thus one trait of outsider reader characters, whether Haines or a District Commissioner, is their generalization from particular individuals to judgments about the group as a whole. Haines views the woman who brings the milk as representative of Irish-speaking peasant folk; the District Commissioner sees Okonkwo's behaviour, regarded as aberrant by the members of his own clan, as useful for drawing conclusions about all Africans.

In this respect one might regard Fredric Jameson's much-debated essay describing Third World texts as 'national allegories' as a more contemporary example of outsider reading practice. Jameson's argument that all Third World texts are to be read as national allegories assumes that characters and plot represent a whole nation's values and history — in other words, the native writer and his or her characters become native informants who speak for the race or society as a whole. Not only does his argument ignore the very contested nature of 'the nation' in most Third World countries (one would have thought that the civil war in Nigeria would have been caution enough against such homogenizing), it also ignores the different kinds of fiction produced within those so-called Third World countries. It is the case, of course, that some writers set out to produce

allegories of the national condition and its past: Armah'sThe Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1968), SembeneOusmane's Xala (1973) and Rushdie's Shame (1983) could be considered examples. However, as Ahmad vehemently affirms, their work is by no means typical of the majority of fiction and drama produced in Africa and the Indian subcontinent. But, as Huggan suggests, the marketing of African fiction contributes to the construction of it as 'other', as works providing anthropological understanding which will reinforce Western preconceptions about Africa, rather than aesthetic pleasure, or sympathetic identification, or even political comprehension. Huggan takes the Heinemann African Series as the prime example of such marketing which, in his view, 'has often shown symptoms of the controlling imperial gaze', with book covers which according to Huggan emphasize their status as African and primitive. To some extent, there seems to be an elision here in Huggan's own thinking between drawings which are clearly African and images which are primitive, for some of Africa's leading and most talented and sophisticated artists were employed to illustrate the covers. Nor does he take sufficiently into account the role of African writers such as Achebe, Gurnah, and AdewalaMaja-Pearce as general editors for the series. And although he acknowledges the enormous readership that the series gained within Africa, he still maintains that the series and the novels selected illustrate mainly the desire to reflect a Western concept of Africa back to Western readers. What Huggan seems to ignore is the cosmopolitan culture of readers within Africa or India, the fact that they will all have had access to European literatures, films, advertising and systems of knowledge, including those influenced by anthropology, as well as indigenous cultures and systems of knowledge. It is this cosmopolitanism or multiple consciousness which African and other postcolonial writers acknowledge, the diverse reading practices and backgrounds within each local reader, which arguably their works seek to develop in the outside reader. In other words, their texts seek to encourage outsiders to become not observers but more like insiders, and to recognize the interplay as well as the ironies which exist in such a double consciousness.

Rushdie's novels also include a wealth of reference to Indian cultures, characters and histories which will be more readily recognizable to readers from the Indian subcontinent than to American or English readers. But he differs from Achebe, Joyce and Ngugi in that an outsider reader is not given a significant role within the novels. Here might be one indication of the difference between anticolonial and postcolonial texts, for in Rushdie's novels different historical narratives are contested within the Indian subcontinent rather than between colonizer and colonized. Thus Midnight's Children foregrounds, the marginalized history of Muslim participants in India's move towards independence, and almost ignores the mainstream histories placing Mahatma Gandhi at the centre (except where the narrator 'deliberately' gives an inaccurate date for Gandhi's assassination). One could argue also that the fluidity of Rushdie's characters and the manifest unreliability of their narratives (including that of the central narrator, Saleem Sinai), is one means of making it difficult for the outsider reader to make them representative spokesmen. Similarly the assumption of an informed national audience might be implicit in Clear Light of Day (1980), Nervous Conditions (1988) and The God of Small Things (1997), whose authors take it for granted that their readers can supply the details of an official national history barely alluded to in their novels.

How might these reflections affect the reading and teaching of postcolonial texts in Britain and the United States? One response could be to move away from an emphasis on cultural and anthropological analyses which on the one hand distance the text, and on the other encourage readers to see the worlds they encounter as static and unchanging. Rather, we need to foster an understanding of identities in process, or what Stuart Hall has called a cultural identity of 'positioning. In a 1982 interview with Kwame Anthony Appiah, Achebe explained:

I'm an Ibo writer because this is my basic culture; Nigerian, African and awriter ... no, black first, then a writer. Each of these identities does call for a certain kind of commitment on my part. I must see what it is to be black — and this means being sufficiently intelligent to know how the world is moving and how the black people fare in this world. This is what it means to be black. Or an African — what does Africa mean to the world? When you see an African, what does it mean to a white man?"

These are the multiple and shifting identities, and the tensions between them, that call upon Achebe's commitment as a writer, and which emerge in that ironic and creative interplay which make his novels so rewarding. But they are also the multiple identities which call upon our commitments as readers and as teachers. By opening ourselves to that creative and ironic interplay between observer and observed, between insider and outsider, by allowing ourselves to become hybrid readers, we can enter into dialogue with the texts and their political implications. We can understand what it means to be both inside and outside varied cultural contexts, and experience the different kinds of spaces and insularities that those contexts permit. In other words, we allow ourselves to be transformed and translated culturally, entering into dialogue with the work, its implicit readers, and the power relationships between them.

2.3.1 Check Your Progress:

A) Choose the correct alternative.

1. The '---------* is a process of domesticating the other.
   a) postcolonial exotic b) postcolonial mimicry
   c) postcolonial hybridity d) postcolonial commodification
2. The book The Postcolonial Exotic was published in
   a) 2002 b) 2010
   c) 2001 d) 2009
3. Many postcolonial texts construct a ---------- reader.
   a) voracious b) silent
   c) plural d) hybrid
4. Joyce's Ulysses is peopled with actual ----------.
   a) Dubliners b) Englishmen
   c) Americans d) slaves

5. The episode in Joyce's Ulysses shows Bloom and Stephen as listeners and readers

a) Cyclops b) Calypso

c) Aeolus d) None of the above

B) Answer in one word/phrase/sentence.

1. Mention the most prestigious literary award of Britain.
2. Mention the name of the critic who has challenged the whole institutionalization of Postcolonial literary studies.
3. Mention the poem by W. B. Yeats which commemorates the changing status of Ireland.
4. Mention the name of the leader of a failed Irish rebellion in 1803.
5. Mention the name of history and culture which Ngugi wa Thiongo's A Grain of Wheat revives for Kenyan readers.

2.3.2 Terms to Remember:

- **shortlist** : a list of writers winnowed from a longer list who have been deemed suitable and from which the successful author will be chosen
- **pluralist** : allowing freedom to distinct ethnic, cultural or religious groups to exist together in society
- **neocolonialism :** control by a powerful country of the former colonies or other less developed countries by economic pressures
- **blasphemous :** irreligious, profane, sacrilegious, impious
- parodic : something humourous or satirical

2.4 Summary

In this unit, we have read about two important basic concepts widely used in Postcolonial Studies. They are: 1) colonizing in reverse and 2) Citizens of the world: reading postcolonial literature

Postcolonial writers have revisited concepts of nationality and community. The black and Asian community in Australia, Britain and Canada has helped to create a new sense of community. Many writers have explored a new sense and consequence of location and identity in Britain. V. S. Naipaul has created a hybrid fiction combining the quest and the domestic genres.

Postcolonial writers in Britain and the former British colonies have received several prestigious literary prizes. However, the activity has given rise to a suspicion that the metropolitan centre has appropriated postcolonial writing for its own ends. The entire process involves the power to confer legitimacy on the writers and kinds of writers, through prizes, favourable reviews, etc. and, the power to include particular writers in academic curriculums and textbooks. Many anticolonialist and postcolonial writers have a double audience, one existing as an immediate community within or identified with the colonized people, the other an outside or metropolitan readership, often connected with the colonizer.

2.5 Answer to Check Your Progress:

2.2.1 Check Your Progress:

A) **1. London**
2. bleak
3. 1956
4. Kulwant
5. hybridity

B) **1. Australia, Britain and Canada**
2. Mecca
3. the iambic pentametre
4. half-bakedness
5. 2001

2.3.1 Check Your Progress:

A) 1. postcolonial exotic
2. 2001
3. hybrid
4. Dubliners
5. Aeolus

B) **1. The Man Booker Prize for Fiction**
2. Aijaz Ahmad
3. 'Easter 1916'
4. Emmet
5. Kikuyu

2.6 Exercises:

A) Answer the following:

1. Critically comment on the process of colonizing in reverse.
2. Write a detailed note on the change introduced by postcolonial writers.
3. What is the difference in contribution between white authors and postcolonial authors?
4. Write a detailed note on the politics of literary prizes.

5. What is the importance of the process of reading postcolonial literature?

B) Write short notes.

1. A double audience
2. Joyce's Ulysses
3. Salman Rushdie
4. A Wicked Old Woman
5. Hybridity

2.7 References for Further Study:

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