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Negotiating Identity in Post-Colonial Literature: Culture, Memory, Diaspora and Resistance

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Abstract

The question of identity is one of the vital problems in post-colonial literature. With the collapse of the empires the former colonies became politically independent but they also uncovered psychological, cultural, linguistic and historical dilemmas of the individual and collective identity. Colonialism was an attempt to alter the identities of colonized societies by stating that the cultures of the colonized societies were irrational, primitive, inferior and that the European civilization was the one that represented the universal standard of progress. This was very closely linked with the struggle for independence from colonial domination; and the struggle for identity was a struggle against colonial domination. The questions of identity in postcolonial literature are raised by questioning what has been considered to be an “unproblematic self,” an “unproblematic” notion of self that is challenged by the colonial discourse. Postcolonial literature looks at issues of identity, while considering the nature of colonial discourse and how it has resulted in divided consciousness and divided subjectivities among people and communities. The notion of identity is not static and consistent for the post-colonial writer; rather, it is a process of negotiation, resistance, migration and displacement within the context of historical memory and cultural contact. They uncover the far-reaching psychological consequences of imperialism in the novel, poetry, drama and essay, and re-imagine identities through native histories and cultural practices.

Keywords: Ethnography, Post-colonialism, Culture, Resistance, Hybridity, Identity

Colonial authority was not only established through military conquest, political administration, or economic exploitation, it was also made by producing knowledge of colonized peoples. Empire survived through the production of specific imaginings of the colonized and the propagation of these imaginings in education, administrative documents, missionary discourse, ethnography, history texts, travel accounts and imaginative literature. The colonized subject was frequently described as irrational, superstitious, backward, passive, primitive, emotional, or even uncontrollable, whereas the European civilization is regarded as scientific, disciplined, modern, progressive, and rational. These conflicts were not only about cultural difference, but about hierarchy as well, upon which colonial domination could be justified as a project of “civilizing” the “savages.” It is necessary to make use of the idea of ‘Orientalism’ developed by Edward Said to appreciate this process. Said examines how colonial

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knowledge contributed to the process of making the East an object that was described, classified, studied and governed from the West. The colonized world was seldom given the chance to speak for itself since colonial discourse asserted itself as having the authority to represent the history, culture, morality, and social character of the colonized world. This is why colonialism was structured in terms of unequal representations, and these representations were the context of identity. The colonized was not only politically subservient, he/she also had to be a different kind of a person; an image had been imposed on him/her.

One of the best tools in this process was education. The education system was used by the colonies to teach European histories, traditions, values and categories of intellectuality, while indigenous knowledge systems were often viewed as less developed or obsolete. An educated colonial subject was encouraged to appreciate the culture of the metropolitan and often could evaluate the indigenous culture by European standards. Literature, language, religion and social behaviour, therefore, were the significant clues to cultural refinement. In various colonial societies knowledge of the coloniser's language and manner was the basis for employment, power and respect. This concept of cultural assimilation became thus associated with material advancement. This process brought a complex situation of identification. Colonized people were frequently trapped between the received and imposed cultural values of the colonial education. The cultural world of the family, community, religion and indigenous history could be very different than the institutional world of colonial modernity. The result was a double consciousness – a feeling of belonging to different systems of belonging. The subject of the colony was not able to give up their use of indigenous culture nor to be entirely a part of the superior European world of colonial ideology.

It is a crisis that's been examined by Frantz Fanon in a psychological depth. His writings reveal the way colonialism works on the minds of the colonised subjects in that it makes the appearance of Europeans, their language, their behaviour and their culture the symbols of their superiority. The urge to mimic the colonizer can then occur not only due to admiration, but due to the social systems that correlate whiteness with authority, intelligence, prestige and success in European culture. This can result in a "split" in the subject whereby he or she begins to perceive his or her own culture within the context of colonial discourse. Also, the colonial construction of identity involved the reorganization of collective identities. Colonial authorities tended to racialize, tribalize, caste, ethnicize and/or religiously categorize populations. Sometimes the locally defined and fluid categories were redescribed as administrative categories. These were adopted as the standard units of census activity, legislation and educational programs of representation. Pre-existing identities were not therefore challenged by colonialism: in many cases, colonialism re-created them, standardised and politicised them.

The split consciousness is a recurring theme in post-colonial literature because the post-colonial cultural ideas that were developed during the colonial period were not necessarily destroyed once people became independent politically in a country. Colonial language, education and culture, and metropolitan values sometimes survived after the end of colonial rule. Authenticity, belonging, education, race and class and cultural allegiance are problems that are common to the character in post-colonial literature. Their struggles show the psychological and cultural legacy of colonial power without the presence of the coloniser himself/herself. Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, V. S. Naipaul, Jamaica Kincaid, Jean Rhys and others take off in different directions, exploring the multi-faceted means of communicating this divided inheritance. Through their works, they show that there is no straightforward and unproblematic way to explain the post-colonial identity as simply a return to a pristine pre-colonial

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self. Colonial history has already changed the language, social institutions, political boundaries and cultural consciousness. But the work of post-colonial identity is also a critical reconstruction; one that allows depressed histories to be retrieved as well as complex cultural developments that have been created in the aftermath of colonial encounter.

One of the most prominent aspects of the post-colonial identity is culture hybridity. European contact with the colonies was not always met with assimilation of indigenous culture to the European. However, they developed complex cultural formations that were the result of interactions, conflicts, adaptations, translations, imitations, and resistances. Languages and religions, literary forms and lifestyles, artistic traditions and patterns of daily life, political institutions and others were all changed by sustained intercultural contact. Hybridity is an important concept in post-colonial theory and Bhabha talks about it. Bhabha challenges the notion of fixed, pure and permanently divided cultural identity. Colonial discourse made a dogmatic separation between colonizer and colonized, civilized and primitive, European and native. However, these boundaries were continually being breached by contact with the colonies. Colonized self was taught the colonizers' language, institutions, and culture, and applied it to the local context. The consequence was colonial culture gave birth to identities that were not easily dichotomized.

Hybridity can thus not be seen as cultural confusion or loss of authenticity. It can mean a creative metamorphosis; the new ways of cultural expression. In a post-colonial society, individuals may blend their own traditions with those of the colonizer(s), their own languages with the colonizers' languages, their own customs with those of the colonizers' and their own culture with the colonizers' cultures. It becomes obvious from their names that cultures are not unchanging; that cultural difference does not go away when cultures interact. The intermingling of cultures is particularly evident in literature. Post-colonial writers are known to combine European literary genres and native narrative techniques. For instance, the novel may contain elements like oral narrative, myth, folk songs, legends, proverbs, ritual performances, regional histories or local speech patterns. Such experimentation transforms the literary form given by the colonies, and enables it to communicate experiences unknown or distorted in colonial literature. The product is not only European, but not only European and not only indigenous but new; a literature that has been generated in a negotiation of culture. Hybridity is also a problem for the notion of 'national identity'. The colonial history had created a linguistically, ethnically and culturally heterogeneous society and the new independent countries attempted to build a cultural unity. These identities were further complicated by migration, urbanization, education and globalization. Those from a post-colonial background can feel attached to a village, region, ethnic group, religion, nation, language, profession and transnational community at the same time. Identity becomes 'plural and situational' instead of 'singular'.

Diasporic experience is another important instance of hybridity. Individuals who have left their homeland often are forced to cope with the cultural requirement of a country or community, while also retaining a memory of the homeland. Culture may be transmitted via second and third generation migrants who could have learned some of the traits which have also changed over time. They cannot be defined as citizens of one country or another only. Instead, they are located in cultural borderlands where food, language, religion, family relations, memory, and popular culture are tumbled over, intertwined and mixed. Bhabha refers to such a cultural space as a "third space" which means an intermediary space in which one's entrenched culture values are challenged and reimagined. This is important because it's an anti-binarized idea. Identity is negotiated and not inherited. This could then

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highlight the fragility of categories of the colonial, by showing that cultural boundaries are always being crossed and reimagined. But hybridity is not to be idyllic. Cultural exchange is facilitated in unequal power structures. Economic privilege, global media, education and political influence have all been factors that have helped western cultural forms to spread to the former colonies. At the same time, when interculturality is happening, indigenous traditions are still at risk of being marginalised. The creative potential and the conflict of hybridity are thus dealt with by post-colonial literature. Post-colonial writers employ such tools as hybrid characters, mixed languages, broken narratives and intercultural scenes to challenge the colonial imagination of cultural purity. They demonstrate that identity is not cleanly inherited from the past or simply a replica of western modernity. It is, on the contrary, a dynamic cultural practice, as it is being developed by memory, erasure, negotiation, conflict and creativity.

Language plays an integral role in the development of personal and group identity. It is not only a means of communication, but also a storage of memory, culture, worldview, history, social relations and collective experience. Thus, linguistic control was a key element of political and cultural power of colonial powers. European languages, such as English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, were frequently learned as languages of administration, education, law, governance and literary production, and native languages remained in the domestic/informal realm. The colonial language was inserted into the culture and had a longterm effect. Those who could communicate with the coloniser were more likely to secure a position with the coloniser, to attend school, attend higher education, and gain a good reputation. Colonial education consequently created linguistic hierarchies where the European languages were deemed to mean intelligence, progress, civilization and opportunity, and the indigenous language was deemed substandard for intellectual and administrative purposes.

This linguistic supremacy went beyond words and grammar. Language has a special set of perceptual and systems of cultural values. When the main language of learning is a foreign language, the involvement of the person with history, folk stories and oral traditions, and collective memory can alter. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o has emphatically claimed this link between language and cultural consciousness, thus asserting that the people could be taken from the cultural environment that formed their identity in the colonial culture. It was to be a huge issue for post colonial writers. Some writers claimed that it was necessary to return to the indigenous language, as a way to decolonize cultures. Others went on to write in English, French or other colonial languages but purposely adapted them to the local context. The question of the language to be used was now not the sole question, but what was to be the language form which is legitimate.

One of the writers who demonstrate the possibilities of appropriation and transformation of the colonial language is Chinua Achebe. The majority of the post colonial writers do not try to replicate the standardized meta-colonial English, but rather they opt to include proverbs, indigenous speech pattern, translated idioms, oral rhythms, song, myth, code switching, and regional speech pattern in their writing. It may be the same form, but the cultural content is modified because of local experience. The language of colonial power becomes thus a language capable of challenging colonial presumptions. In some cases, this has been termed the processes of linguistic appropriation and linguistic abrogation. Abrogation is the denial of the monopoly of the colonial language, appropriation is the adoption of colonial language to represent the post-colonial experience. These are in opposition to the idea that the right language is confined to the metropolitan areas, such as Britain and France. For example, the post-colonial English varieties acquire their own vocabulary, pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, literary style and cultural references.

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Language is also important in post-colonial literature as a way to portray social identity. A character's choice of language may be associated with class, education, ethnicity, generation, political affiliation or level of cultural assimilation. The use of code switching can indicate a change of social worlds. Dominant language knowledge, that is, ability or otherwise, can also be a factor in determining access to institutions and authority. On the other hand, the preservation of the indigenous language might be a resistance, intimacy, memory and/or a solidarity. In the case of diasporic and migrant writing, the problems of language are only complicated. Within the linguistic communities, people are able to think, remember, speak and write in more than one language. They move between and superimpose their language selves. A mother tongue can symbolize childhood and emotional identity whereas a foreign language can be a source of professional or public identity. Linguistic plurality is frequently used in post-colonial literature to represent the multi-facetedness of migrant consciousness. The politics of naming is another key aspect of language and identity. European classifications were often adopted by colonial systems and geographical localities, communities, and people were often re-named. In the aftermath of independence, the reclamation of indigenous names has thus become a symbolic struggle in a number of societies. Naming is one way of reclaiming from the past and recovering its meanings, since colonialism tried to substitute these with its own.

Language in post-colonial literature is always an active medium, then, because of this. It is a contested space; a space that evokes power, memory, education, a sense of mobility, resistance and belonging. Post colonial writers demonstrate that identity is not solely a linguistic problem, but also a problem that is created and constructed in language.

One of the most vital issues of post colonial literature is the psychological impact of colonialism. Not only was there a political and economical domination, there was also a cultural and a racial hierarchy. European civilization was so consistently portrayed as superior to that of the native, that over time, the colonized subject came to accept European values and ideas as their own. One of the most influentially analysed by Frantz Fanon is the psychological process. His work is a product of the colonial racism that breeds in the colonised which instils a sense of inferiority, lack of self-worth, shame of culture and even self-splitting within their psyche. Colonized subject will try to reject social discrimination by adopting the language, manners, education, dress or cultural values of the colonizer. But the assimilation process does not imply acceptance; assimilation does not necessarily mean acceptance as there are still racial and cultural barriers in colonial society. This can result in what may be considered psychological alienation. Removes person from the inherited culture and at the same time from full identification with the colonial culture. The self produced is divided between conflicting self-identities. This psychological conflict is a familiar experience in post-colonial literature, especially in those who grew up in a colonial environment or who are thrust into a colonial environment. This psychological change is crucial and language is a key element. Knowledge of the language of the colonizer could be a path to social mobility, but it also could become linked to a wish for cultural acceptance. Education in accent, pronunciation, vocabulary and literature can be an indicator of social status. Embarrassment about indigenous speech or cultural practices may then result in characters. Post-colonial writings frequently depict internalized hierarchies, with attention to the emotional impact they have.

The nature of colonialism can also lead to what W.E.B. Du Bois in earlier times dubbed "double consciousness" - a feeling of being judged by the dominant culture. A post-colonial subject, too, can make his own judgments based on the norms that are created by the colonial ideology. They begin to

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see themselves in a way that has been mapped onto them by another's point of view that sees the European as "normal" and the indigenous as "deficient". If it is an independence of a political nature then re-claiming identity is not enough. It's psychologizing decolonization that it demands. People and communities need to consider what values they have been given by colonial discourse and recover lost and aborted memories from culture. There can be a new conversation with indigenous history, oral history, family history, local language, ritual, myth and collective history during this resurrection. As a result, Post-colonial literature is directly engaged in this process; it is literature that tells a history not told from the point of view of the colonizer. Recovering is not about returning to a past, or back to what it was before colonization, peace, harmony and tranquility. The pre-colonial society also has a complex, hierarchical, dynamic nature. Rather, in recalling history, communities can recognise that they have traditions for intellectual, ethical, political, artistic and social life prior to colonization.

Therefore, memory is an important factor in psychological reconstruction. The colonial history is interested in the official and imperial narratives, while the post-colonial writer is interested in the retrieval of other histories that are not necessarily caught up in the colonial history – the histories that are now remembered in oral testimony, family histories, folklore, communal ritual and everyday experience. One way to make subliminal memories public is via literature. Trauma also is a significant aspect of post-colonial identity. Its legacy may be intergenerational, spanning from the impacts of slavery and forced migration, racial violence and displacement, partition, war, indentured labour, cultural suppression, and political repression. Violence can have an impact on people who were not directly involved in the violence, and can be passed from generation to generation through family memory, institutional inequity, cultural silence, social prejudice, etc. Personal memory and inherited historical trauma are, therefore, often at play in shaping post-colonial identity. But the post-colonial literature is not seen as a solely victim-oriented expression of identity. Numerous narratives are about the endurance, survival, adaptation, resistance and self-healing of culture. Characters counter stereotypes and reconstruct identities through remembering cultural histories. Others make new models of belonging that are multiple, rather than single cultural regurgitations.

Literature then is a potent place in which to be psychologically and culturally restored. The subjects are marginalized, their story is told and they are no longer object of the description but its subject. Writing can add marginalized voices to the history, can challenge and question stereotypes that have been handed down, can convert individual experience of alienation to common culture reflection. Here identity reconstruction with historical consciousness is linked. When a post-colonial subject is able to redefine the self, he can understand how colonial discourse created specific notions of race, civilization, language, gender and cultural value. The denial of colonial history is not how identity is produced, but rather its critical engagement. The outcome is a conscious sense of identity based on cultural memory, but also sensitive to the experience of change. In any case, the most critical concern is to be remembered. In any case, the most vital is to be memorable:

The individual identity is not the only one that is explored in post-colonial literature; the formation of a national identity is also fraught with difficulties in the post-colonial era. Political independence did not necessarily come with cultural unity or social integration. Many of the new states had borders set to make administration of the colonies easier, rather than historical, linguistic, ethnic or cultural. Thus, the post-colonial nation often resulted in one state, but with great internal disparities. The colonial rulers had at many times over the years dug their claws deeper into social inequality by stigmatizing people based on their race, religion, caste, tribe, ethnicity and language. The fluid social

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identities may be converted to political categories through administrative policies. It is important to note that these divisions that have been inherited have not been eradicated since the end of colonialism. This represented a challenge to the newly independent states, because for them there was a need to build up a sense of national identity among people who have very different histories, culture and political ideology. This is a problem to which post-colonial literature turns. The authors wonder whether it's possible to understand a nation more as land or a state. Instead, literature is the genesis of national identity as moments of shared memory and struggle in history, symbols of culture and collective dreams, stories of belonging. A country's identity is continually constructed and redefined in terms of its history, and the values it hopes to advance.

In this context, the concept of the nation as an "imagined community" is of special importance to Benedict Anderson. They do not know the majority of their countrymen, but they feel like they belong to a nation, as they share a language, a shared print culture, an education, political systems, public ceremonies, culture and symbols. One of the significant places where such collective consciousness is created and examined is literature. In colonial situations, nationalism frequently developed as an instrument of resistance. The anti-colonial movements brought together a variety of people on the basis of a shared goal – political freedom. The idea of national identity was employed as a means of pride and unity under the imperial rule. However, the unity that was created during the struggle for Independence is not easy to sustain after independence, as writers after independence, often make clear. The problem of class, caste, ethnicity, religion, language, gender and regional identity can resurface in a fresh and virile manner. In this way, the contrast between anti-colonial nationalism and the post-colonial reality is often emphasised in post-colonial literature. While the benefits of independence – freedom, equality, justice, dignity, and democratic participation – can create tension with corruption, authoritarianism, communalism, economic differences, and political exclusion. Writers therefore look at the difference between their nation as imagined and what's happening in their nation.

Frantz Fanon condemned the threat of nationalism which becomes a business of the national elite that replaces the colonial power without changing its system of inequality. His criticism is even relevant to the literature on a post-colonial society that is not correlated with any substantial social justice. Whereas it may be here that one can begin to wonder again whether the national identity can be legitimate if a significant part of the population is impoverished, discriminated against or excluded. The problems related to the nature of an ethnocultural similarity underlying the national identity are also raised in the post-colonial literature. Multilingual and multicultural societies are not translatable to one language, religion, ethnic group or culture. The writers do not agree with the definition of nationalism (without minorities) which prevails in their writing. On the other hand, they provide notions of collective identity which are able to acknowledge difference in political unity. The understanding of 'nation' is necessary in the context of the migratory society, border countries, multi-religious and multi-national society. National identity is felt when the citizens can live with their national life without losing their local, linguistic, ethnic or religious identity. It does not need to be a weakness or even a threat to a country, it could be a strength and a contribution to the country's cultural imagination.

Literature is one of the significant factors which constructs this multi-national consciousness. We do this by rendering the voice of the marginalised experiences of women, workers, indigenous communities, migrants, linguistic minorities and socially disadvantaged groups – experiences that add another dimension to the notion of national belonging. They challenge official or mainstream history that has the history of the country told as if only the dominant communities had told it. It wouldn't then

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appear that the national identity in post-colonial literature is a democratic achievement, but a process. It needs to be always aware of unity and diversity, and memory and modernity, tradition and change. The strength of the post-colonial state is not based on monoculture or monoculturalism but on the establishment of institutions and cultures capable of reflecting on difference and challenging the colonial order.

Another context for the construction of post-colonial identities, for questioning and transformation is migration. The colonialism itself produced large-scale transcontinental migrations in the form of slavery, servitude, service in the military, commerce, and education and administrative work. Economic opportunity, higher education, political conflict, war, globalization, professional mobility and family migration have been displacing populations from the societies that were once colonized throughout the world during the post-colonial era. Thus Diaspora plays an important role in the current post-colonial literature. It is a condition in which people and communities develop emotional, cultural, historical and/or imaginative ties to a homeland, as they also develop lives in other places. Within this tension between origin and relocation is a diasporic identity forged. Migrants' notion of home is more complicated. Home can be a place, a memory, a culture, a language and a network of family, or a constructed homeland. These types of memories can live on long after migrants have moved elsewhere, influencing their cultural practices and feelings of identity.

Avtar Brah's notion of "diaspora space" can shed light on the complexity of these identities. The diasporic identity does not neatly fit either with the homeland or the host society. It emerges from the interplay of migrants, the descendants of migrants, local communities, memories and social realities. Identity is thus no longer an inherent but a relational entity. A clash with post-colonial texts is frequently represented in terms of characters who enter into more than one cultural setting. They can speak two languages in two worlds, live in a traditional culture and in everyday life, or be emotionally attached to a country that they seldom or never go. These people question the idea of free choice of identity that is based exclusively in the loyalty to a particular country or culture. Nostalgia is also an important theme in diasporic writing. Migrants are remembered for many things in the homeland such as food; festivals; music; family stories; religion; landscape; language. Memory can be selective, though. Imagined homelands can be very different from the modern-day homeland. So, when they return home sometimes they find that the land they had envisioned in their memories is different. This imagined reality of the homeland creates a kind of diasporic consciousness. People can be half foreign in the country, and half foreign in the country of origin. This means that they are in a middle space between belonging and displacement. These experiences give rise to opposing experiences of home and exile of the traditional kind.

Writing by "becoming" cultural identity of Stuart Hall is especially useful for diasporic studies. The diasporic identity is not only due to shared ancestry but also to past experiences, migration and cultural adaptation, and changing relations with each other. Individual identity is continually re-constructed as a result of cultural differences. Diasporic identity is complicated even more by generational differences. The first generation migrants may be very attached to their homeland and may have some problems being absorbed by the host culture; children of migrants may feel comfortable in the host culture. Second and third generation individuals can identify with the parents' influence, their traditions, their racial identity and the social influences of today in a unique way. The negotiation begins to take on importance in the language. The heritage language may represent intimacy, family and cultural memory, and the language of the host society, an education, a professional opportunity, and a

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public identity. There can be some conflict and anxiety regarding continuity of culture across generations as the mother tongue is slowly acquired and/or transformed.

The theme of racism and exclusion is also discussed in diasporic literature. One thing migrants may find is that assimilation does not ensure acceptance of their culture. They may continue to be considered outsiders because of skin colour, accent, religion, clothing, and/or ethnic background. Diasporic identity is thus a process of adaptation and confrontation to the racial difference regime. However, diaspora cannot be perceived in a purely loss/displacement manner. Migration may create new ways of creativeness, cultural encounters and transnational belonging. Diasporic communities can create hybrid cultural spaces which are able to retain, transform and engage with traditions of the host society.

These multiple identities of belonging are explored by writers like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Hanif Kureishi, Michael Ondaatje and others. Their works illustrate that identity is becoming more and more a trans-border phenomenon. The diasporic subject can be part of more than one cultural world, and cannot be confined to any one of them. The post-colonial diasporic literature thus redefines the notion of home. Home is not only a geographical place, but a relationship of culture and feelings that is constantly changing. When it comes to identity, it is shaped, recalled, changed and negotiated in the context of moving, remembering, negotiating - belonging in a connected world. The problem of gender is an irreplaceable space in the present postcolonial discussions on identity, as colonialism did not affect men and women in the same way. Colonial domination was accompanied by the prevailing patriarchy, race, class norms and social conventions. Multiple and overlapping marginalisation could thus be experienced by women. In early nationalist movements, women were often employed as a symbol for the nation, tradition, culture or purity of the moral code. Although these representations helped raise women up as symbols, they did not necessarily help women to have more social or political power. While women have the role of protecting the nation's culture, they are not in the eye of the decisions in education, property, marriage, work, sexuality and political involvement. This paradox was to ignite a new form of criticism, the post-colonial feminist criticism. It challenged notions of passive victims of colonization and notions of traditional gender roles in the nationalist imagination. Post-colonial feminism states that one must not view women identities as a universal thing but rather in specific historical and cultural context.

In the influential political and intellectual discourses, it is a challenge for marginalised women to be heard, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's ground-breaking talk on the 'subaltern' reminds us of this. In the case of a woman who is at the centre of colonialism, patriarchy, poverty and caste or racial oppression, other people can represent her, but not she herself. Literature is important as a place to reclaim voices that are missing from official narratives, especially in the case of voices of people from the margins. This recovery has been aided greatly by post-colonial women writers. The subjects covered in their writings are diverse: their families and homes, marriage and motherhood, sex, education, work, violence, migration and the expectations of society, but seen from a perspective that is often missed in the nationalist male discourse. Such writing makes experiences which had been considered private or domestic political and historical. Tradition is frequently part of the background in many post-colonial pieces in which the female identity is negotiated with tradition. Not everyone who writes is opposed to cultural heritage. Not all writers are opposed to cultural heritage being oppressive. Instead, they distinguish between traditions which serve the "community" and traditions which restrict personal freedom of choice. This way, a more intricate relationship between feminism and cultural identity is

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allowed. Education can be a powerful empowerment tool at times. Women's access to knowledge enables them to challenge the status quo, be part of the public sphere and gain economic autonomy. As well, however, education can also cause tensions when there is a clash between the modern aspirations and family expectations, or between a traditional gender role and the education offered. The family is then a significant context for the construction of the family's identity. A post-colonial woman might engage in negotiations about issues of marriage, motherhood, obedience, sexuality and professional ambition. The conflicts they encounter expose the workings of the political system in the common social practices.

There is also a layer of complexity because of the migration. Gender expectations are negotiated by the diasporic women, from the homeland and host culture. Migration can provide more autonomy, but also can create additional pressures to uphold traditional cultural values. Therefore, the relation between gender, migration, generation, ethnicity and class has an impact on the formation of female identity. In examining these experiences intersectionality is particularly significant. No distinction made based on gender or race, caste/class, religion, sexuality, country or economic status. People with different education and occupation in the same society can have different experiences and a different experience. Thus, post colonial literature extends the definition of liberation. Political independence from colonial rule is not enough, if social structure does not provide equality for women or other marginalized groups. Decolonization cannot happen without changes in social relations, education, economy, body autonomy, politics, and culture. So female identity can be dissociated from agency. Thus, there is no separation between the female and the agency. Women are not simply the victims of history in post-colonial narratives, but they are also interpreters and makers of cultural meanings. They remember, withstand, mediate, adapt and change the social networks to which they belong. Gendered identity takes the post-colonial discourse beyond the dichotomy of colonizer and colonized. It reflects that power operates in various social structures and that freedom is going to be realized in a positive way only by challenging all modes of domination.

One of the most relevant bases of both individual and collective identity is the memory of what has happened before. The communities know themselves in part through stories that traditionally have been told about their beginnings and challenges, successes, sorrows, and culture. In the realm of historical representation, the power of the colonialism was, therefore, strong. Historiography of the colonies often was characterized as a developmental or civilising process, and the role of conquest, violence, exploitation and indigenous resistance was downplayed. Pre-colonial societies often seemed to be unchanging, irrational, primitive and/or unhistorical. This kind of narrative helped to develop a perception of the colonized peoples' relatively insignificant past prior to Europeans. Then history became a domination of the culture. A community's confidence is impacted by repeated experiences of self-representation as a community of "backwards" or "dependents" in official narratives. Historical amnesia is the forgetting of individuals from the culture which can provide them with alternative models of identity and social organisation. But post-colonial literature tries to reverse this history denying, to recover lost memories and to recover voices that have been subjugated. The authors re-examine the theme of 'colonial contact' from the perspective of the colonized. Colonial contact is re-visioned from the colonized's point of view. Thus, they question the seemingly neutral historical record. Oral accounts are especially important in these processes. In historical writing, colonial history, written sources tended to be valued over oral sources. But a number of societies maintained collective memory in songs, myths, legends, folktales, genealogies, rituals, storytelling and communal performances. Frequently, such

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forms have been embedded in the literary works of post-colonial authors, and the concept of “historical evidence” is further questioned.

Family memory also is extremely significant. The personal history can be passed to the next generation and that history part of this can help to keep out of national histories. Apparent privatization of experience through memory of migration, violence, dispossession or political struggle is part of collective historical consciousness. The connection between memory and history is, however, complex. Memory is selective, emotional and sometimes unreliable. Individual and community dynamics of idealization/repression of traumatic experiences or distortion of memory to suit current demands. These tensions are usually referred to in post-colonial writing, rather than make claims to memory being the truth. There is also an aspect of historical memory that is trauma. Sometimes it is difficult to be a direct account of slavery, partition, civil war, forced migration, genocide, racial violence etc., due to political repression. Literary texts that tell traumatic narratives tend to be disjointed, repetitive, melodramatic, short, and lacking in temporal consistency. The characteristics are those that are often observed in literary texts that seek to represent traumatic histories: disarticulated, repetitive, melodramatic, incomplete and chronologically deficient. The recovery of the past is not a nostalgia, the recovery of the past must not be confused with nostalgia. Post colonial writers attack romanticized and distorted history of India. Conflict, inequality and exclusion had also long been a part of pre-colonial societies. Historical reconstruction that helps a person to understand is useful; historical reconstruction that helps to perpetuate a myth is not. Rewriting of history also has political ramifications. The people that are not included in history, can reclaim their power by telling their story. The voice of those whose place had been only as that of an object, was placed in the colonial documents in literature. Through memory, the past and present come together. Past experiences, whether several generations away or not, affect the current identities. These are the colonial languages, borders, systems of education, racial categories and economic structures that continue to impact the world today.

Through the process of ‘reconstruction’ of the narrative, post-colonial literature can aid in redefining a society without the colonial representation standing in the way. The capacity to identify is realized through the crucial act of relating to the past, be it remembering what has been forgotten, questioning the official history or challenging the complexities of cultural inheritance.

Globalization has brought a few twists and turns to the concept of identity in post-colonial studies. Today’s world is characterised by unprecedented transnational mobility of people, information, technology, goods and cultural practices. The ideas of culture and belonging are undergoing a transformation in the wake of migration, digital communication, international education, multinational economies, global media and transnational networks. Identity is thus not only a matter of “country of origin” or “nation-state”. They have more than one relationship in more than one country/cultural context. They regularly communicate with families in their home countries, engage in transnational communities, consume global media and have multiple language and culture affiliations. Digital communication has hastened the processes. Social media, virtual communities, streaming and virtual networks allow people to reach cultural venues that aren’t necessarily defined by location. Where people are separated by long distances, diasporic communities can keep alive their linguistic and cultural connections. Globalization, however, does not obliterate colonial past. Wealth, migration, cultural influence, international power are significant continuities which must be comprehended in the context of colonialism. Therefore, post-colonial criticism also has to take into account new potentials of globalisation as well as the existing inequalities.

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Globalization of culture opens up opportunities for dialogue, hybridity, but also for new types of dominance. The small-scale cultural production can continue to exist and foreign languages can have a higher economic value than indigenous languages if the media industries are strong. Such paradoxes are found in much modern post-colonial literature. Characters can easily travel between cities, countries, careers and languages and be racially, economically or culturally discriminated against. But difference does not go away with mobility. The feeling of belonging is then created to be more pliable. A person may feel connected to a local community, a region, a nation, a religion, a profession, a linguistic community, a diaspora, and/or a world-wide cultural network. These affiliations need not be mutually exclusive.

Multiple, relational and contextual are therefore some of the terms that are often used to describe modern identity. There are many facets to identity, each of which has a different significance in different social settings. The sense of the nation may be salient in one context and another sense of identity (linguistic, professional, ethnic, gender, etc.) may be salient in another context. The disappearance of cultural roots is not, of course, what is being discussed here. The attraction of heritage and genealogy, of language and collective memory can be further advanced by global mobility. The globalisation that makes belonging salient often leads to reclaiming one's culture. There is also serious doubt about notions of cultural authenticity in contemporary literature. Throughout history, cultures have been constantly in a state of change, due to contact, migration, trade, translation and historical transformation. The concept of a pure culture identity, one without outside influence is thus challenged in post-colonial writing. Instead, identity is viewed as negotiating a process all the time. It is built and developed on inheritance and innovation, memory and experience, and locality and mobility. People continually re-envision traditions they receive in light of historical changes. Historical injustice persists in the present-day post-colonial literary texts, coexisting with them. There are, though, the remnants of past injustice that can be read in the present-day post-colonial text. Celebration of multiculturalism is not sufficient to resist colonial violence, racial inequality, displacement and economic exploitation. Cultural plurality can only have meaning when it is connected with critical challenge of problematic power structures. This modern post-colonial subject thus lives in a world in which memory and mobility are intertwined. Identity is tied to colonial histories, and also responds to the digital communication, migration, trans-national culture, and the different ways of social interaction. The post-colonial identity is neither an eschewal of a blemished history of the past nor an uncritical importation of the global modernity. It is a process of negotiation between individuals and communities that is open-ended, involving multiple histories, cultural influences, political realities and ways of belonging.

Therefore, the national consciousness, diaspora, gender, memory, resistance and globalization exemplifies the multi-dimensionality of the post-colonial identity. The processes of identity formation are linked to the person and the community, homeland and migration, past and present, tradition and modernity, domination and resistance. These negotiations are memorialized by post-colonial literature, one that is participating in the negotiation, whose inherited identities are subject to interrogation, and new identities are imaginable.

In terms of the theme of identity in post-colonial literature, it is worth pointing out that it is one of the most basic themes of post-colonial literature as it addresses the most fundamental human consequences of colonial domination. Political independence was not adequate to bring about psychological, cultural and historical changes that the imperial rule had caused. For post-colonial writers, then, identity is a question of recovery, negotiation, resistance and renewal. They write against

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the colonizing conceptions of 'self,' for cultural plurality, historical awareness, linguistic inventiveness and ethical independence. Last, the post-colonial literature demonstrates that identity is not pre-given or predetermined. It grows out of discussions with memory and modernity, tradition and change, locality and exchange with the world. This idea of identity is highlighted in post-colonial literature not only in the decolonization of cultures colonized but also in reflections on the human construction of identity through the building of culture, belonging, freedom and the self-building process.

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