Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is intended to lay down the bases and concepts, which form the foundation of this research work. In this light and vein, postcolonialism and the Partition of 1947 – both intertwined – with respect to Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan* (Chapter 2), Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi* (Chapter 3), Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (Chapter 4) and Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* (Chapter 5) would be examined critically. Naturally, there are inextricable overlappings and enmeshings between postcolonialism and postmodernism and, therefore, the two form part of the exegesis – both separately and jointly. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this research work, the postcolonial aspect assumes predominance and thus has the major thrust.

Postcolonialism, as a literary genre or movement, is of course a reaction to colonialism, though not free from its effects in the political and socio-economic context. This is all due to the inherited colonial psyche of the postcolonial successors holding the reins of power in a colonial moulded form – political, administrative, legal and socio-economic – wherein the vast majority of the masses (the ruled) bear the brunt of continuing repression. The only difference is that their rulers are not ostensibly white colonisers but natives, though with the same or similar mindset. Insofar as the authors of the works examined are concerned, all fall firmly – though of widely varying style as well as form – within the framework of firm protest narrative.

Postcolonialism, as a term, refers to the period succeeding official decolonisation, signifying the formerly colonised. Historically speaking, the peoples’ voice, the writer, as a reaction takes new, protest intellectual approaches,
whereby he/she crafts counter-texts of the indigenous in opposition to the colonial/postcolonial politico-administrative machinery/apparatus. Therefore, “postcolonialism” simultaneously has a political as well as literary meaning, context and content. It can be argued in general that art has power and that art is useful – a vehicle for socio-econo-political change, a view different from Oscar Wilde’s “All art is quite useless”.¹ (Art is here being used in sense of word craft and literary creation.) We are here concerned with all the works listed as protest narratives.

Now it is necessary to put postcolonialism in proper perspective historically by briefly touching upon periods preceding it (politically and economically), especially with respect to conquerors and conquered. Approximately four hundred years ago, the whole plethora of humanity on the planet was poor and differingly suppressed. Nevertheless, cultures across the globe had their own individual dynamics – East and West and even the native inhabitants of as well as migrants to the New World. Around this time an almost incessant state of hostility existed between Great Britain and Spain – a fact exacerbated by the desire and resultant action to conquer, subjugate and control non-European peoples for political and linked economic exploitation. The other two major contenders for this priceless prize were France and Portugal. However, for our purposes we are mainly concerned with the aspect of British domination, they being the major oppressors and bleeders of the subcontinent. To examine this aspect we shall briefly touch upon the initial stage, just in its basic meaning, of British political and economic ascendancy worldwide. It began with the establishment of colonies chiefly for trading and commerce but later, rather soon
afterwards, assumed the face of imperialism (originally, historically meaning rule by an emperor) culminating in direct military subjugation of Asian, African and New World peoples for inhuman and inhumane economic exploitation. The very term shows that it had the sanction of British royal authority. Once this process had gained impetus and marked success, it was superseded by colonialism – an advanced and more organised stage, though the two terms remained interchangeable.

Colonialism, as a process began with establishment of settlements and trading outposts through which the foreigner, the European, inveigled himself into the good books of the natives, only later to enslave them – the very operational method of the East India Company. Thereby was the equation of coloniser (European rulers) and colonised (subjugated natives) set up and perpetuated over time. Historically, colonialism has two phases – “dominant” and “hegemonic”. In the “dominant” phase, direct control over “savages” (natives) is exercised, their acceptance being passive and direct. This was ensured even if and when resisted with the ever-present threat of official violence and even its actual use, if thought necessary. Such enforcement amply reflects and embodies explicitly Mao’s twentieth century dictum “Power grows out of the barrel of a gun”. In the hegemonic phase indirect control through economic muscle is exercised. This applies to the decolonised period. However, it actually begins during the dominant phase itself, chiefly through cultural denial and marginalisation by thrusting of colonisers’ values and attitudes with their alien morality, institutions and production systems. The actual forms of such control are visible in their tangible aspect in transplanted colonial educational institutions, bureaucracies,
legal systems the press, the alien language (English). The overall uprooting of native cultures, ideals, religions and indigenous social and socio-economic fabric serves the overt and covert intent of the colonizer – to even psychologically and psychically subdue the indigenes. That uprooted and consequently marginalized and rendered inferior is supplanted by the coloniser’s own mindset, value systems and institutions (with respect to subservience) in and with all their brainwashing capacity in all its power.

Technically, the “hegemonic” phase (Neo-colonialism) comes after the colony has been decolonised but politically it percolates from the top of power to the bottom as employed by the inheritors of power – the brown or black rulers – postcolonialist. This elite has by and large the same inherited and conditioned operational mindset.

In this context, British style education has played and still continues to play a permanent role – English being the “superior tongue”, thereby naturally having a great leveling impact. Insofar as its introduction and transplanting the alien British roots on impressionable minds – already enforced by subjugation – its operational mechanism, still functional in today’s postcolonial era, according to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, was and is as follows:

Colonial education comes in two basic forms; missionary or religious schooling (which was often residential) followed later by public and secular schooling. Numerous accounts across nations now attest to the critical role played by schools in assimilating colonized peoples, and in the systematic, frequently brutal, forms of denial of indigenous languages, knowledge and cultures.
Later on, the British colonisers even “recruited” missionaries for the business of education, more soul-rapacious because they assailed centuries-old religions (Hinduism and Islam) for ends of conversion. Om P. Juneja avers in this regard that they were “the spiritual policemen of the colonizer” who declared that the natives had “no culture, ... no religion, and virtually nothing to save his soul”.

The fact that missionary and schoolmaster were usually one “finally destroyed whatever was left of the traditional culture.” Specifically, these words are especially with reference to Christian conversions in Africa but these also apply, though to a much lesser extent, to India insofar as conversion’s success, technically and formally, is concerned.

Macaulay was responsible for the introduction and dissemination of English within the Indian education system, asserting and justifying English’s universal superiority. It was because of him that English was made to acquire the status of the prime and primary language, to the exclusion of all native ones. At one instance he supremely confidently and arrogantly stated:

The effect of this [British] education on the Hindus is prodigious. No Hindu who has received English education even remains sincerely attached to this religion. It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence.

Scottish missionary Alexander Duff, the head of the General Assembly Institution in Calcutta from 1830 to 1843, was rather blunt and matter-of-fact as to the effect, proclaiming:

By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions, and our religion, in our Asiatic territories, we shall put a great work beyond
the reach of contingencies; we shall probably have won over the inhabitants of those territories to this country.8

Thus did the marginalisation by actively apathetic neglect of indigenous languages and curriculum begin and gather force as English was the language of the colonisers, the elite, the language of power – resulting in a class of babus who did the job of “filtration”. Percolation from the ruling colonial top to the colonised bottom with and in its most insidious brainwashing of psychological, spiritual and cultural mega-dimensions and mega-proportions. Its top to bottom mode orientation was heavily marked and quite ridiculous.

The colonial rulers started building their edifice called English education from the ceiling! The universities were started first and later English education filtered down to the secondary level and no attention was paid to primary education, the foundation!9

Colonialism, in its steam-rolling ramifications – of nefarious tendencies, both overt and covert – operated not only just by brute force but also by and through mass dissemination among the colonised for its ingrained and embedded concept of racial supremacy. This falls within the category and orbit of cultural supremacy with its self-assumed “cultural imperialism”. This had the effect of trampling over the Eastern Cultures and their delicate social fabric. The coloniser arbitrarily assumed the moral prerogative to rightfully destroy the indigenous cultures without any qualms whatsoever. Specifically within the context of the African societies – especially marked from the colonial viewpoint by socio-cultural “structurelessness” - Mazizi Kunene in Return to My Native Land stated1 its negative socio-cultural effect thus: “those [students] who returned [from
western countries] despised and felt ashamed of their semi-literate/illiterate parents who spoke inelegant patois".  

Therefore, alien-model education – thrust downwards to create colonial views and convictions across the board - was not in itself the most rapacious mechanism operating on the colonised races and peoples. In Africa in particular, Christianity was employed to create both body and mind slaves – forced physical labour even being practiced to and going to the extent of enslaving the psychology of the colonised. In India Charles Grant, commented insightfully on education, as also on religious conversion as a power worth harnessing. His view, he being historically granted the elevated position of the father of modern education in India, saw Christianity and education as two sides of the very same coin (real weapon) to effect occidental oriented change. In this light and vein he was convinced beyond an iota of doubt of the following: "The true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant, and their errors have never fairly been laid before them." Appropriation of light (a metaphor for knowledge and spirituality as well), was carried forward by Macaulay. If stripped off all veneer and, reduced to the very basics of propagating, advancing and perpetuating imperialism/colonialism, one can see that it was just a power game. The coloniser usurped the right to write the history of the colonised. So the natives were defined within this orbit – highly secondhand. Naturally the aim was material – the repressed slave labour (formal or not) “recruited” to produce inordinately inexpensive products for foreign markets with a back-flow of man, material and goods to the colonised territories – and, as such the very cause of colonialism’s economic expansion after the
mid-nineteenth century. Linda Tuhiwai Smith dissects this phenomenon with remarkable clarity:

Imperialism was the system of control, which secured the markets and capital investments. Colonialism facilitated this expansion by ensuring that there was European control, which necessarily meant securing and subjugating the indigenous populations.¹²

This pertains directly to the inability of the European working class to buy native European products, impelling and compelling European industrialists to capture other markets for more profitable commerce – a state of affairs beginning in the later stages of the nineteenth century. As such, colonialism meant a flow of human goods and natural resources between the ruling elite and the colonies and vice-versa. Ania Loomba’s view in this light reflects Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s view, but slightly amplifies it:

“... there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. This flow worked in both directions – slaves and indentured labour as well as raw materials were transported to manufacture goods in the metropolis, or in other locations for metropolitan consumption, but [as already stated] the colonies also provided captive markets for European goods.”¹³

Now it would be pertinent to briefly touch upon the literature of the colonial era. Colonial literature, whether written by British or subjugated natives, justified and propagated and glorified the establishment of imperialism. Colonialist literature, the next stage, was largely a celebration of colonialism with a strong element of glorification. It reflected the mind of the coloniser with his arbitrarily arrogant superiority wherein the colonised were painted as indolent,
weak, wicked, backward and evil. In this light Homi J. Bhabha is quite direct in his analysis, contending the following:

Colonial discourse ... is an apparatus that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences. Its predominant strategic function is the creation of a space for ‘subject peoples’ through the production of knowledge in terms of which surveillance is exercised and a complex form of pleasure/unpleasure is incited .... The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as population of degenerate types of basis of racial origins, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. 14

Such notions were used to justify repression, pillage and overall socio-economic exploitation – actually for naked material ends in which compradors (native business agents of the coloniser) was employed. It can be argued that most colonialist writers were literary compradors, their readers being colonising Europeans reveling in their “God-given” superiority over the natives, granting them the right to exploit and persecute. As to its content, propaganda and influence, it was as follows:

It embodied the imperialist’s point of view ... Colonialist literature was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. Its distinctive stereotyped language was geared to mediating the white man’s relationship with colonized peoples. 15

Colonialism as well as its literature was, therefore, stamped with the concept of the “civilizing mission”, a duty of the colonisers over the colonised, especially in Africa and Asia. Such a view is necessarily culturally and religiously racist, it being used as justification for denigration and assault on indigenous societies in
which religion (Christianly) was a tool/weapon for upliftment of the black/brown
natives, the targeted individuals thereby assuming – in the coloniser’s mind and
related worldview – the status of a burden. This conveniently allowed the
invocation of morality where and whereby the natives could be uplifted to a more
suitable state. So, brainwashing as per colonialism was “amply justified” and a
“moral responsibility”. By now colonialism is marked by a collision of interests –
the master colonisers on the one hand and the marginalized native minions on the
other.

Now that the basis and basics of the era that preceded the postcolonial era
as well as colonial literature and the overall colonial view has been set down, it
would be worthwhile to touch upon postcolonial theory. In postcolonial theory
– amply reflected and embodied in postcolonial works and postcolonialism as a
genre – power is the major issue, a major point of contention. The power game is
primary to it, the colonial/postcolonial authorities suppressing the natives
physically and psychologically, the latter by thrusting their own Eurocentric
worldview as a firm imprint on the native psyche. The colonial/postcolonial
equation between ruler and governed individuals is therefore a given, emanating
from top and percolating down to bottom. Even till date in the postcolonial era in
formerly colonised cultures/societies/nations, the after-effects of the empire still
visibly linger as an inescapable moulding influence – the residual effects of
imperialism/colonialism – culturally, socio-economically and politically. Therefore, postcolonial writers continually try to make sense of colonialism’s
impact even while protesting it as well as its successor postcolonialism with its
inherited mindset and operational mechanism and, indeed, its entire functional machinery.

As a theory, postcolonialism has been defined by Said as the way in which European culture managed and produced the colonised cultures/societies, still continuing at the neo-colonial and native postcolonial level — sociologically, ideologically, scientifically, et al. The native was and still is thus marginalized as inferior or “the other”. So, a highly arbitrary opposition between West and East is “established”. The West represents the norm, being “superior European culture/identity,” thereby making the Eastern native subservient and inferior. The fact, however is that the native has been “created”. So “cultural racism” is, according to Spivak, the part and parcel of colonialism’s Occi-centric view. “Subaltern” is the term for the socially/culturally inferior, applied to women/blacks and the working class (even in the modern world) — reflecting Occidental repression and dominance, initiated during colonialism and continuing still in the postcolonial era. In this regard Spivak avers, the term “Third World” can be seen as a totally Western propagation which long after imperialism still locks non-Western cultures within an imperial picture. “Worlding”, in the context, represents the process of thrust-upon colonised space in its psychological dimension — obviously highly Occi-centric. So, one can see that power and its practice in colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial forms constitute the hub of postcolonial literary theory.

Now it is relevant to briefly touch upon the related and entwined theory of post-structuralism with respect to power, wherein a multiplicity of force relations are inevitably operative within the social sphere. Besides operating therein they
also form their own organisation – the manner and modus operandi of incessant strife and confrontation which also has simultaneously the qualities of transformation, strengthening or reversal of situation x, y or z, etc. All this is within the area of power. The various aspects of the force relations within such compose a system often viewed as a series of links like a chain. In such systems are also contained disjunctions and contradictions that separate them from each other. Within these systems are also the strategies whereby they have effect. As such it can be argued that it is a triad, the general institutional architecture crystallizing being embodied in the state machinery – in its operational mechanism of law and also in the numerous social hegemonies. So, power, thus defined, is, postcolonially speaking, of the type, which is heavily oriented or rather biased in favour of the upper social and societal rungs. However, despite the ever-present threat of violence to enforce will by ruler or master, even the most marginalized individual is not absolutely devoid of power, he/she capable of resisting, especially, in the sense of refusing to believe in the thrust-down view of reality while pretending to do so.

Now it would be relevant to define postmodernism, briefly prefacing its predecessor, modernism. Modernism as a genre is categorized as beginning in 1910 and lasting till 1945 or 1950. Its heyday was from 1910 to 1930. It was a response of some self-conscious writers like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and T.S. Eliot to experiment with new literary forms and styles. It was a radical break with traditional concepts of religion and morality and social organisation and even the long unchallenged idea of the human self. It drew heavily from prominent thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, among a few
others. One of its most radical aspects was the emphasis it put on the correspondence between central Christian tenets and pagan myths and rituals in the latter's barbarousness. It is marked by the futility and anarchy of the twentieth century, particularly in the period during and after World War I - the very essence of history at the time in all its meaninglessness with respect to the human condition. One of its groundbreaking features is stream of consciousness, especially noticeable in the work of Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce. Alienation is a prominent motif in modernist works effectively projected and rendered by techniques of expressionism and surrealism, among others.

Postmodernism is a strong reaction born of disillusionment due to loss of both innocence and the very bases of humanity and its institutions - especially in the wake of the horrifying World War II (technically, postmodernism began as a school after the end of World War II). In this light, S. D Pillai defines: Post-modernism as "a phenomenon, literary and cultural, that points to the collapse of Western liberal humanism and of the literature and culture sustained by it".¹⁶

So, it was a response to Nazi totalitarianism, the very real threat of complete annihilation of humankind due to the atomic bomb, the rape of the natural environment and overpopulation. All of these conditions were seen, for the first time, in their unparalleled aspect as there were on a scale of such magnitude that it boggled the mind. Postmodernism strongly reacts in style and form to the "high art" of its predecessor even drawing from and being inspired by mass culture taken from movies, T.V., print media, cartoons and popular music.
This makes it more accessible. Some prominent Western postmodernist writers are Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov and Roland Barthes. Postmodernism contains many schools, including absurdism and existentialism. Illustrative of the trauma of the post World War II generation along with its subsequent “spaced-out” futility are works like Albert Camus’s *The Outsider*, where life’s meaningless is imparted meaning in the face of utter futility. Postmodernism is the outcome of the alienated human condition – this alienation being of unparalleled scope, proportion, magnitude and ramifications. In this light the role of the postmodernist writer is of a highly changed mould and order as he/she must portray the utter rootlessness and hopelessness stalking the individual, and thereby possibly give it meaning. In this light S.D. Pillai comments:

Post-Modernist art in general takes it impetus from an extreme reaction to the world we live in: this world or reality is so extraordinary, horrific or absurd that the traditional mode of mimesis or realistic emulation will no longer suffice. Given the contemporary human condition, given especially the recent developments in human knowledge, wherein the insubstantiality of history is repeatedly stressed (the legacy of the philosophy underlying the historiography), wherein the man is held to be the sum of his roles (the legacy of Structuralism), the contemporary writer is no longer secure in his conception of history or man. Ours is indeed a world of altered human relationships, of epistemological scepticism, of high technology and strange and distorted history, of anarchic and revolutionary subjectivism and a disoriented sense of human purpose. Many a contemporary artist, therefore, feels that there is no point in creating fiction that gives an illusion of life when life itself seems so illusory.17
The commentary gains all the more credence and prominence in the new millennium in which the power of the media is so prodigious and instantaneous that it has raised the dimension of events to a height never before imagined. This is particularly true with respect to the regimentation of the Western societies and Western style societies (like Japan).

At this point a general outline of the Indian struggle for freedom, the attainment of Independence with its schism of Partition and the post Independence era would be useful as roadmap. Historically, the various states of North India were under Muslim rule before this time, that is, before the East India Company rule in the Eighteenth century. Due to its mismanagement and exploitation, the First War of Independence broke out in 1857 with royal Mughal descendant Bahadur Shah Zafar as its human face and rallying centre. After the revolt was finally put down, the “Crown” assumed direct control during the Victorian era. But atrocities, by far, did not end – such as the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar and the overall highly cruel official violence against Mahatma Gandhi’s Satyagraha movement of non-violence and non-cooperation, culminating in the Quit India movement of 1939. Against this backdrop the continual internecine British policy of divide and rule – putting Hindus and Muslims in opposition – was a means of splitting the freedom movement in two for the purpose of perpetual colonial reign. Repression and its imminent use was backbone of British authority – liberally and inhumanely unleashed on “agitations”, all those resisting British rule and fighting for freedom being placed in this general category. The irresponsible manner and haste in which Independence was preponed and granted with its unwanted child of Partition
remains a controversy to this very day, though, of course, this too is hypothetical. With respect to Partition, Jinnah immediately capitalised on it. All of the aforesaid aspects are covered in the main body of this dissertation, whether or not focused on in detail contextually (as per each writer's individual view of historicity). Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Chaman Nahal’s *Azadi*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Shashi Tharoor’s *The Great Indian Novel* highlight the colonial/postcolonial machinery in its operational mindset, its brainwashing influence, ‘creating’ natives with and of a colonised psyche and mindset – Singh’s Hukum Chand in all his arrogance of power; Nahal’s Lala Kanshi Ram’s naïve faith in the British Raj even in the face of catastrophe; Rushdie’s Saleem as an alienated hybrid of two cultures, two civilizations, two races; and Tharoor’s Dhritarashtra’s alien (colonial) ivory tower political outlook (completely divorced from the native masses). Of course, Rushdie’s and Tharoor’s novels differ from Singh’s and Nahal’s as they are not straight narratives, observing chronology faithfully. In addition, *Midnight’s Children* and *The Great Indian Novel* can be said to be heavier as counter-texts, historically speaking, as they take history in an extremely individualised and liberalised light. Both use parody, though of radically differing forms and styles. Tharoor merges myth (*The Mahabharata*) and history (from 1857 to 1980), yet, he does not observe the objectivity of the latter (as recorded) nor the tradition of the former – both being literary sounding boards of one another. Rushdie’s Saleem, the protagonist, the first midnight’s child of the midnight of Independence, has the supernatural ability to read minds anywhere within the geographical territory of India. All the other midnight’s children of that fateful day possess some
supernatural ability or other. What is significant about Saleem is that he, directly or indirectly, influences the wheel of history, at times actively. These points are covered in detail in the main body of his work, being analysed and interpreted wherever relevant. One of Rushdie’s major aspects of departure from the other writers is his extensive use of surrealism, particularly as employed to depict and highlight Saleem’s alienation, despite growing up in free India.

Chaman Nahal focuses on Partition, the theme of Azadi, the narrative’s point in which the motif of uprooting and resultant loss of identity and subsequent transplanting are the major connected features. The agony and anguish of this Asian holocaust is sharply brought into focus, even the modern reader being transported to that horrifically traumatic time in all its blood-curdling communal violence – chiefly brought out during the exodus of the principal characters as part of the refugee foot convoy to India after the Partition.

Khushwant Singh’s Train To Pakistan is restricted area-wise to the village of Mano Majra throughout. So, technically the locale is apparently narrow and the horrors of Partition are just initially reported events, not immediately directly effecting a schism between Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other. However, the ominous face of the Partition – even though Mano Majra is an island of calm within a divided subcontinent – is clearly foregrounded in the delayed rains, the villagers believing it to be the mark of sin. However, they are unaware of the form and nature this sin has – indistinct and unperceived explicitly.

To varying degrees, that is to minor and major extents, all the works under discussion, barring Rushdie’s Midnight’s Children touch upon communal harmony prevailing between the major communities and its disruption at the hands of the
British and postcolonial rulers afterwards with the policy of divide and rule for vested political end. The rupture between the chief communities when it finally comes with all its inhumanity in all its gruesome aspects – irrevocable in the face of the torrential tide of time – is also rather marked in Nahal and Singh’s works. In this light and vein the communal riots with their monster of mass murder, mass rape and arson are portrayed with great skill, bringing reality firmly to the fore. The communal harmony before Partition and its sudden sundering upon the tumultuous event emerges with vivid and stark realism. The aspects detailed are covered in the main body of this work extensively as per each writer’s main individual thrust, the criticism being predominantly within the confines of formalism.

Postcolonialism, as already stated, is inextricable from postmodernism. Nevertheless, there is a major difference as the former is a reaction to the handed-down mindset of the coloniser and his postcolonial successors. It is purely a non-Western phenomenon emanating from the Third World – Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands and South America, all previously colonised (some theorists enlarge the orbit to include Australia, Canada and New Zealand – quite ironical since they belong to the First World). Alienation is a marked feature of postcolonialism (as it is the successor of colonialism), particularly as a reaction to “cultural imperialism” with its insidious operational mechanism in which power is imposed by continued propagation, advocacy and dissemination of Eurocentric discourse which is the arbitrarily decided norm and is accepted as pre-eminent, enforcing power not forcibly generally, but through the means just detailed beforehand. The former colonial subject and/or his postcolonial descendent is thus viewed as the inferior, the other, the marginalized whom Said calls the “Oriental” in
Orientalism (this term has not been used anywhere in the chapter-wise exegesis and thus need not be unduly focused on). Postcolonialism’s major point of departure and divergence from postmodernism is that it is an anti-West movement whereas postmodernism, though also a protest movement was confined within, largely speaking, the matrix of Western society and environment. By no means are postcolonial narratives straitjacketed into countable, easily identifiable moulds and forms as they are the products of highly differing cultures/societies/nations. Still, there are certain points of commonality. These are the hallmarks, the pillars and thus they need to be detailed. The first important point is the firm displacement of Western imperialism, the Occidental master narrative being rejected as “correct”. The marginalized individual reacts strongly (in the form of the writer and his characters) and asserts, in some form or the other his cultural identity – even though imperialism had previously erased or attempted to erase it. So the postcolonial works are counter-texts/counter-narratives – the colonial cultures strongly protesting for their rightful place in world history as opposed to that handed-down by the Europeans, the former colonisers and the current neo-colonisers. Postcolonialism as a genre, has a heavy and inescapable element of hybridisation with respect to colonial languages and cultures, English being a case in point in former British colonies. This phenomenon of hybridisation is due to the superimposition of colonial values, attitudes, and overall social and cultural structure on native cultures/societies. So there are numerous postcolonial counter-texts refuting Western moulded history in all its hegemony.

The second major point is the primacy accorded to the colonial/postcolonial subject or individual as well as his/her own definition of self and Weltanschauung
reflected in his thoughts and behavior. The British term "subaltern" (the other, the inferior, the marginalized) is the general standard term to specify the colonial subject – peculiarly European whereby colonial peoples are brainwashed as they accept this mindset. So, technically every postcolonial writer's role, according to some commentators, is under question – the specific question being how and how effectively can a subaltern subject writing in an alien tongue serve as a voice of protest since the foreign language is a means of subordination of identity. Last but not least, the English language has lost its alien elitism, especially with respect to the postcolonial writer. Relatedly, Braj B. Kacharu states:

The English language is not perceived as necessarily imparting only Western tradition. The medium is non-native, the message is not. In several Asian and African countries, English now has national and international functions that are both distinct and complementary. English has thus acquired a new power base and new elitism. The domains of English have been restricted, people ask: is English really a non-native (alien) language for India, for Africa, for South East Asia? 

So, English as a tool/weapon of the postcolonial writer's native viewpoint has taken firm roots and is here to stay. The plant has been assiduously nurtured and continues to bear fruit, a process sure to continue, enriching world literature.

The last major point of postcolonialism is the effort to dethrone Eurocentric literary and creative norms and values of writing, elevating postcolonial writers to their rightful place in the literary world. It is important to mention here that the terms "hybridization" and "subaltern" have nowhere been
used in the main body of this work, preference having been given to simpler, easier, more accessible and more generally comprehensible words.
References:


5. Ibid., p.57.

6. Ibid., p.57.


