CHAPTER-II
POST COLONIALISM AND ANITA NAIR

Once upon a time
There was a boy and a girl
Forced to leave their home
by armed robbers.
The boy was Independence
The girl was Freedom
...
Independence came
But Freedom was not there. (Nyamubaya)

The researcher finds this poem not only beautiful but also a strong statement against westernization. The poetry under assessment is steeped in the primary metaphors of war, colonial injustice, liberation and the quest for justice. This revisiting also acts as an account of post independence realism with its oddness of neocolonialism, gender imbalances, and unemployment and on the betrayal of the newly found independence. Colonialism is the establishment, exploitation, continuance, possession and extension of colonies in one territory by people from another territory. It is a set of unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and between the colonists and the indigenous population.

Postcolonialism is presented as a result to colonialism; however, the prefix ‘post’ does not only propose a sequential progression but also conveys the meaning of something that emerged as the opposite of the state in which colonialism is established, because the inequality of colonial rule have not been obliterated. Therefore we cannot declare colonialism is entirely destroyed by gaining independence. Colonialism is not only the way of abducting the country or the province it is also a literary perspective that is based on the tattered
relationship of the colonised and the colonizer. In fact, it almost entirely evades one part of this relationship namely the colonized.

The literary works that are considered representatives of the colonial discourse present the themes and topics only from the point of view of the colonizer without taking into account the fact that people have been living in these places before. According to Foucault, the colonial discourse is a structure which makes the system of statements within colonial relationships and it has a tendency to reject some of the statements about the exploitation of the assets of the colonized nations. To a certain extent it secretes these benefits in statements about the insufficiency of the colonized, and therefore the dependability of the colonial power to replicate itself in the colonial society, and to progress the civilization of the colony. Among the literary works that employs this view were included in the works of Shakespeare for example it is employed in *The Tempest* with its character of Caliban.

This perspective obviously motivated a contra-reaction – postcolonialism – that started all together with colonialism. There was no postcolonial theory almost immediately the colonization began however barely after the colonial theory came into existence and literary critics started their discussions. On the new perspective, postcolonialism is focused on individuals living in the earlier colonies, and it makes use of the “array of the past” a term connected with poststructuralism. It means that when taking into consideration the postcolonial societies and customs, we cannot have a discussion about one particular history but about as many of them as there are people living there. Though, as there is always a contradict view to each and every theory, some critics of postcolonial theory blame it for these interconnections with poststructuralism.

They especially claim that “... an accent on a multiplicity of histories serves to obfuscate the ways in which these histories are being connected anew by the international workings of multinational capital (Loomba 13).
The purpose of postcolonialism is to present the whole range of long-established cultures or to bond these cultures and societies immediately into a new bouquet called multinational and multicultural that on the one hand takes into account the variety but at the same time desires globalism. However when postcolonialism is discussed it can be defined from its commencement to the degree that its institutional structure is concerned. The first postcolonial studies gained its prominence in the 1970s with the publication of Edward Said’s book *Orientalism*. The main contribution of this book was the critique of the western perception of the East or Orient which he claims to be a creation by the western society.

Said in his *Orientalism* discussed the essence of it and is the stubborn feature between Western authority and Oriental weakness. Said identifies a European cultural tradition of ‘Orientalism’, which is a particular and long-standing way of identifying the East as ‘Other’ and inferior to the West. Moreover, he emphasizes construction of binary division between the Orient and the Occident. West is considered to be the seat of knowledge and learning, while East is represented as a place of ignorance, superstition and illiteracy. The Orient exists as a timeless place, changeless and static, cut off from the progress of Western history. The Orient is strange, fantastic, unusual and bizarre. The Orient’s eccentricity often functions as a source of mirth, marvel and curiosity for Western writers and artists.

The Orient is deemed as feminine, passive, submissive, exotic and luxurious while the West becomes masculine, self-controlled and ascetic. The Orient is ‘penetrated’ by the traveller whose passion it rouses; it is possessed, ravished, embraced and ultimately domesticated by the muscular colonizer. Through ‘Orientalism’, Said tries to project the degenerate image given to the Orient by the West. This is what postcolonial literary approach needs to revolutionize. Its aim is to allow the other side of the relationship coloniser – colonised articulate on their own behalf and not only examine the status quo of their position.
Even though postcolonialism came into existence together with colonialism, its theory is applied also to literary works that are much older. Some works of the nineteenth century are reinterpreted from the point of view of postcolonialism to show that their orientation was colonialistic. Illogical as it seems to be, it only chains the initiative that postcolonialism and colonialism are interconnected and the aim of the latter one is to sketch and afford an evaluation of the first one. Of course this is only a basic elucidation but it helps to identify with the fundamental responsibility of this theory.

Postcolonialism examines the manner in which emerging societies grapple with the challenges of self-determination and how they incorporate or reject the Western norms and conventions, such as legal or political systems, left in place after direct administration by colonial powers ended. Ironically, much early postcolonial theory, with its emphasis on overt rejection of imposed Western norms, was tied to Marxist theory, which also originated in Europe.

Post-colonial theory involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe… and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being. (Ashcroft 2)

From the early development of the theory that wanted to reiterate and contextualize literatures that were aimed to deal with the similar themes and that we now call postcolonial, there were fiery debate regarding the name for this theory. In the 1960s the term ‘Commonwealth literature’ emerged. On the contrary, according to several literary critics this term was not a pleased selection. Foremost it has very exact geographical and political boundaries.
It rested purely on the fact of a shared history and the resulting political grouping. In its loosest form it remained a descriptive term for a collection of national literatures united by a past or present membership of the British Commonwealth (Ashcroft 23).

It pursues that the literatures that were thought to be regarded as Commonwealth literature were only different national literary works with only one thing in common and that is the fact that their authors were born or lived in one of the Commonwealth countries. Among the political limits or inconveniences related to this term belongs also the fact that it did not openly distinguish between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ Commonwealth countries and between the nationalities of these countries (which is primary to postcolonialism). According to most critics this term is unsatisfactory and uncertain, although not strictly depressing. However, there are several opinions that see this term as rather declining as far as literature and culture in general are concerned.

Indian writer Salman Rushdie also expressed his opinion in relation to the name for the fresh literary theory. ‘Commonwealth Literature’, which, in spite of authorized, and at times suitable gratitude, confines to ghettos many works of art, together with the cultures from which they originate. The term postcolonial became to be preferred because it points the way towards possible study of the effects of colonialism in and between writing in english and writing in indigenous languages … as well as writing in other language diasporas” (Ashcroft 23).

According to Rushdie the problem is in the field of literature that is written in English after the Second World War which is too vast to be considered with any exactness if we stick to narrow definitions like ‘Commonwealth Literature’. There were also suggestions for the term colonial literature but this one also became problematic. First, it sounded critical or disgusting to the countries that had already gained their independence and therefore were not colonised any longer. Moreover this term avoids any reference to people who were already
living in the places that were colonised. It implies the eroded position of these people in relationship with the colonizers. By completely omitting any mention of colonized people it also does not contain any encounter between these two groups and their cultures in particular.

In addition to this is the main point here since postcolonial literature deals mainly with the encountering and conflicting of the two opposing cultures – the indigenous and the coming one that becomes the dominant one. According to Raymond William’s partition we have an enduring culture - the one that survived before at the place, and then comes the culture of the colonizers which, with the use of authority, becomes dominant. The end result then is the budding culture - a result of a progression where recent meanings and ethics, unique practices, newest significances are persistently being shaped. For numerous literary critics, including Homi Bhabha, this is the vital idea of postcolonial theory; the meeting and mixing of the two cultures in one area where one influences the other so they cannot live independently.

Homi K. Bhabha explores the possibility of reading colonialist discourse as endlessly ambivalent, snap and uneven; never able to establish firmly the colonial values they seemed to support. He also describes parody as the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. McLeod observes:

The ambivalent position of the colonized mimic men is in Bhabha’s thinking, a source of anti-colonial resistance as it presents a challenge to the entire discourse of colonialism. By speaking English, they challenge the representations, which attempt to fix and define them. Thus Bhabha offers a positive, active and insurgent mode of mimicry. (55)

In Bhabha’s perception of hybridity, which is considered to be the most prominent as well as controversial, he stresses the interdependence of colonizer and colonised. Bhabha argues that all literary systems and statements are constructed in what he calls the ‘Third
Space of Enunciation’. Bhabha claims that there is not a united culture that would be unique for one particular nation. His concept of the Third Space of Enunciation presents an abstract space where the cultures of two (or more) opposing ‘powers’ meet and fuse. His conception is marked as controversial because he rejects the notion of cultural knowledge as an included and escalating system. A culture cannot be converted into a packed structure developing on its own; it needs to be put in comparison and under the influences of other cultures even if their discrepancies are incommensurable. It is these incommensurable elements that create cultural hybridity. It is also necessary to mention Ngugi who call for a recuperation of the pre-colonial languages and cultures.

Ngugi observes in *Decolonising the Mind* that the real aim of colonialism was to control people’s wealth and this was imposed through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their association to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or successful without mental control. To control people’s culture is to control their tools of self definition in relation to others. Ngugi notices two aspects in the process of colonialism that is the demolition or deliberate underestimating of a people’s culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education and literature and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. The domination of a people’s language by the languages of the colonizing nations was critical to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized.

On the whole, the mission of the postcolonial studies and theories is the way to emphasize the multiplicity within impartiality. It means that the theory should follow the ideas of impurity (in the positive sense of the word) of (post) colonial cultures and by this desert the thought of the myths of pure and superior culture. With hybridity or impurity there
are several other concepts associated; first of all and most imperative as far as writing or literature is concerned it is the concept of language English in particular.

Postcolonial writers usually deal with language differently from other authors as they usually come from places with other formal or informal language than English. And above all English language in previously colonial countries was considered the language of oppression and by transforming it for the needs of local people (by themselves) they at least moderately could express conflict to the colonizing power. The English that is presented as the language used in many postcolonial texts and is described as an international type of English as it includes many local distinctions and words added from other languages is named english (with lower-case e) to differentiate it from the criterion ‘pure’ English, even though with positive implications. One of the most important studies on postcolonialism The Empire Writes Back explains the term english as follows:

The world language called english is a continuum of ‘intersections’ in which the speaking habits in various communities have intervened to reconstruct the language. This ‘reconstruction’ occurs in two ways: on the one hand, regional english varieties may introduce words which become familiar to all english-speakers, and on the other, the varieties themselves produce national and regional peculiarities which distinguish them from other forms of english (Ashcroft 39)

The Empire Writes Back epitomized the increasingly popular view that literature from the once colonized countries was fundamentally concerned with challenging the language of colonial power, unlearning its worldview and producing new modes of representation. The writers of the once colonized countries expressed their own sense of identity by refashioning English to enable it to accommodate their experiences by creating new ‘englishes’ through various strategies. For example, the technique of selective lexical fidelity which leaves some
words are not translated in the text has been widely used for conveying cultural distinctiveness.

The strategies of appropriation by transforming English enables postcolonial writers to gain a world audience, and yet produce a culturally appropriate idiom that announces itself as different even though it is English. Ashcroft et al. assert that in this way postcolonial writers have contributed to the transformation of English literature and to the dismantling of the ideological assumption that have buttressed the canon of that literature as an elite Western discourse. Glossing untranslatable words and giving parenthetical translation is yet another method used to foreground the continual reality of cultural distance. Juxtaposing words in this way suggests the view that the meaning of a word is its referent, but it is complicated to find a referent for more theoretical terms. The polished word reveals the local cultural uniqueness. The essential sense of difference between the word and its referent is absolutely recorded in the space between the two. This gap is not negative but positive in its effect. It presents the difference through which an identity can be expressed. But they notice a problem with Sign languages. It may lead to a significantly affected movement of plot as the story is forced to drag explanatory machinery behind it.

Postcolonial writers refuse to follow Standard English syntax and use structures derived from other languages. The new ‘english’ of the colonized place was ultimately different from the language of the colonial centre separated by an unbridgeable gap. The publication of *The Empire Writes Back* greatly influenced postcolonial literary criticism in English. The authors of the book have challenged universal and timeless value of texts and analysed them primarily within historical and geographical contexts. *The Empire Writes Back* was criticised for neglecting gender difference between writers and national difference between writings from divergent nations.
Some critics do not agree with the view that all writings from the once colonized countries are ‘writing back to the centre’ and they argue that cultural productions are created in response to one’s own needs. People learned from Fanon and Said that Empires colonize imaginations. Fanon shows how this works at a psychological level for the oppressed, while Said demonstrates the legitimating of Empire for the oppressor. If colonialism involves colonising the mind, then resistance to it requires, in Ngugi’s phrase ‘decolonising the mind’. Sensitised by Said and others to the operations of colonial discourses, a new generation of critics turned to more theoretical materials in their works.

However, there are authors who are more severe and argue that English as the language of the oppressors and it should be absolutely discarded and the literature should be written in the native languages. Still, more postcolonial authors use English as the language of expression because thus they make their works accessible to as ample audience as achievable from the time when they aim is to give voice to the literatures (and themes and topics) that were in the past avoided. And obviously English is a language that is understood globally. Besides, the authors that avoid English wholly frequently deal with topics diverse from those writing in it, though it is not a rule.

Authors who prefer English employ the most common and typical features of postcolonial literature that are the experience of colonized and people in a different country in general and through this they present the postcolonial issues. On the other hand, authors writing in indigenous languages usually write about the colonized country itself and try to return to the traditional myths and impressive narratives. That is why these literatures can be described more as national literatures. It does not decline their significance; rather the contrary – national literatures are the basis of postcolonial studies. In *Empire Writes Back* the authors claim that without the improvement of national literatures and their use in evaluating and contrasting the cultures on the national level there would not be any postcolonial
discussion possible. Of course, the use of national myths and narratives is also marked in the works of postcolonial authors writing in English (an apt example would be Salman Rushdie).

Ever since the early developments of the postcolonial studies there has been a mystification in relation to its comparables and resemblances with other literary and philosophical theories. The main debate was about the correlation between postmodernism and postcolonialism. It can be said that both these theories have their basics in poststructuralism or deconstruction. The name of Jacques Derrida appears in connection with both. Poststructuralism aims to dismantle the old order of things by presenting a new visions and analysis. The same is suitable for postmodernism and postcolonialism, albeit in a slightly different areas. In practice it means that they want to destroy the notion of binarism established by structuralism. In the case of postmodernism and postcolonialism it is the binarism Centre/Margin or West/East.

Postcolonialism addresses issues such as identity, gender, race and ethnicity: the challenge of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule, the ways in which knowledge of colonized people has served the interests of colonizers, and how knowledge about the world is produced under specific power relations, repetitively circulated, and finally legitimated, to serve certain interests. Postcolonial theory is also built around the concept of resistance, of resistance as subversion, or opposition which can vary with it ideas about human freedom, liberty, identity, individuality, etc.

Terry Eagleton argues that postcolonial theory is directly rooted in historical developments. In his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* Eagleton observes that the collapse of the great European empires was replaced by the world economic hegemony of the United States. The steady erosion of the nation state and traditional geopolitical frontiers was accompanied by mass global migrations and the creation of multicultural societies. The intensified exploitation of the ethnic groups within the West and ‘peripheral’ societies
elsewhere and the formidable power of new transaction corporations have developed apace since the 1960’s and with it a veritable revolution has taken place in our notions of space, power, language and identity.

The dominance of mass media forces us to rethink of classical frontiers by situating them within the framework of the cultural studies and postcolonialism takes a decisive step beyond the questions of theoretical method which held sway over an earlier phase of literary theory. Next in this ground appears is Gayatri Spivak who in 1985 wrote her study “Can the subaltern speak?” trying to point out the group of people who have been measured below par due to colonialism and were dispossessed of their right to express themselves. She sees the calamity in the fact that subaltern is constantly the object of discourse, by no means the subject. As a result, it does not come behind but fairly goes beyond. It means that these two (colonial and postcolonial) theories cannot be studied independently but only together because one influences the other.

Indian born philosopher Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has contributed profusely to postcolonial literary theories. She has made a critical exploration of the status of the non-Western culture and the cultural experience of the recently decolonized people. She is an immigrant Indian intellectual, currently settled in the USA. She classifies herself as a postcolonial intellectual trapped between socialist ideals of national independence movement in India and the heritage of colonial education system in *The Postcolonial Critic* (1990). Her reputation was first made for her translation and preface to Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (1976). She has applied pessimistic approaches to various theoretical actions and textual analyses and her critical involvements include a range of academic interest including Marxism, Feminism, Deconstruction, postcolonial theory and globalisation.

Along with other leading intellectuals such as Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, Spivak has challenged the disciplinary convention of literary criticism and academic
philosophy by focusing on the cultural text of those people who are often marginalised by
dominant Western culture: the new immigrant, the women and the postcolonial subject.
(Morton1)

Spivak has questioned the notion that the Western world is more civilized, democratic
and developed than the non-Western world and argued that the colonized nations had a
progressive and advanced culture in the early historical period than that of the European
colonizer. Spivak draws our attention towards the emergence of the United States of America
as a global economic super power to protect the interest of multinational corporate finance.
She has relentlessly questioned the ability of Western theoretical models of political
resistance and social change to adequately represent the histories and lives of the
disenfranchised in India. Spivak has argued that the everyday lives of many ‘Third world’
women are so multifaceted and disorganized that they cannot be recognized or characterized
in a frank way by the words of Western critical theory. In her influential essay “Can the
Subaltern Speak?” She addresses the trouble regarding the subaltern and arrives to the
conclusion that the subaltern cannot articulate and she highlights the silent position of the
subaltern.

More recently, the dimensions of postcolonial theory have expanded to address even
more complex relationships particularly in the field of feminism and cultural studies.
Postcolonial feminists argue for more inclusive critiques where the position of women within
the colonial framework is scrutinised to illuminate the ‘double bind’ of colonial and gender
oppression. An important concept in post-colonial theory emerges in referring to the
integration of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures.
The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be
seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as oppressive. Hybridity is also a useful
concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures--or colonizing
cultures for that matter--are monolithic, or have essential, unchanging features. Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement now accompanied by the territorial ambitions of global media technologies--make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue. The transnational dimension of cultural transformation--migration, diasporas, displacement, and relocation--makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification. The natural unifying discourse of nation, peoples, or authentic folk tradition, those embedded myths of cultures particularity, cannot be readily referenced.

Postcolonialism is the persistent peeling of the old skin of Western thought and discourse and the appearance of new self-awareness, analysis, and commemoration. With this self-awareness in order to establish their imprints the writers started to express their autonomy in their writings. Postcolonial Writings as we have observed, stress the process of strong resistance in the colonized societies and also set prominence on contemporary reality of life. It deals with the literature written by the people of colonized countries that take the suffering and survival and resistance of their people as their subject matter. Postcolonial Writings can be considered as the historical marker of the period because it deals the literature which comes after decolonization as well as it is considered as an incarnation of cerebral approaches. At the intellectual level postcolonial writers occupied themselves in opening up the potential of a new language and a new method of looking towards the world. Their writings can be taken as a medium of resistance to the former colonizer. Their themes are focused on the subject matters like identity, national and cultural heritage, hybridity, border crossing, contemporary reality and situation, human relation-ship and emotions etc.

The special post-colonial crisis of identity concerns itself with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place. A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration, the experience of
enslavement, transportation, or ‘voluntary’ removal for indentured labour. Diaspora cannot be separated from colonialism, as it was this historical condition that led to the displacement of people across the world under different circumstances or forms of compulsion. Whether or not the people of the diaspora were settlers, migrants, transported convicts, slaves, or labourers, what is more apparent is the capacity of colonialism to produce so many varied forms of power that compel people to move.

Consequently, the culture produced by diaspora cannot but contain so many resonances of the movement, the imagination of their homelands, sense of tradition, the circumstances of their removal, and the reaction to the places they currently live. Other major concepts and themes in postcolonial theory are power, subjectivity, identity, ethnicity, race, and nation. Literary critics began to distinguish a fast growing body of literature written in English which included works by such figures as R.K Narayan (India), George Lamming (Barbados), Katherine Mansfield (New Zealand) and Chinua Achebe (Nigeria). The idea of the Commonwealth of Nations suggests a diverse community with literature produced in India, Australia and the Caribbeans, and was assumed to reach national borders and deal with universal concerns.

As the texts studied as Commonwealth literature were written in English, they were to be evaluated in relation to English literature with the same criteria used to account for the literary value of age-old English classics. Commonwealth literature thus becomes a subset of colonial English literature, evaluated in terms derived from the conventional study of English that stresses the value of timelessness and universality. Like the liberal humaninists, Commonwealth writers believed that good literature is of timeless significance, and transcends the limitations and peculiarities of the age.

Postcolonial authors use their literature and writing as a mode to strengthen, through criticism and celebration, an emerging national identity, which they have taken on the
responsibility of representing their nation. Definitely, the reassessment of national identity is an ultimate and indispensable outcome of a motherland gaining independence from a colonial power, or a country emerging from a fledgling settler colony. However, to declare to be representative of that complete identity is a huge undertaking for an author trying to convey a postcolonial message. Each nation, province, island, state, neighborhood and individual is its own unique blend of history, culture, language and tradition. Only by understanding and embracing the idea of cultural hybridity when attempting to explore the concept of national identity an individual, or nation, truly hope to understand or communicate the lasting effects of the colonial process.

The post-independence novel has shown signs of maturity from the viewpoint of technique, style and language. American and European models began to exercise their influence on novel, K. R. S. Iyengar remarks, before 1947, the English representations were the major outside influence on the Indian novel. After independence, however, novelists in India have shown themselves liable to the influence of American and European (especially Russian models, and also models from oriental countries. The progress in fictional technique is a landmark in the history of Indian English novel. The novel has emerged as a living and budding field, and is trying in the hands of its practitioners, a fusion of form, matter and expression is recognizably Indian, yet also bearing the marks of universality. The relationship between an author and the public, though a peculiar and complicated one, is a vital factor which determines the evolution of technique. The public is composed of all kinds of men and women of different part, varying interests, passions and degrees of intellect. The public is influenced by tremendous variances of class, by national and racial prejudices, by the inheritance of history working out its usual course in the life of civilization. From the public the author takes his characters as well as finds his readers there. Here the author discovers both his raw material and his critics. In the greatest novels there is a kind of living unity
between creator characters and readers. Where that unity is wanting, where the author is aloof from the public, ignores it or is spiritually ignorant of it, there is very likely to result an anaemia, a lack of some important element in the chemistry of imagination, which impoverishes the author's thought or cripples his power. The Indian English novelist has not ignored this vital factor and has created an artistic and imaginative rapport with the public. The character of the public determines the technique.

In the Indian perspective, postcolonial writing makes its existence undergone in the English-speaking world by giving new subjects and performances. The rise of postcolonial Indian English writing is a significant aspect of Indian English literature. If we talk about the different genre of postcolonial Indian English literature, novel has become one of the best means for expression. Postcolonial Indian English novelists make use of contemporary circumstances in contemporary society to give their novels a divergent Indian flavour. They have now become conscious of their own identity and have turned inward, to discover their roots.

The term Indian Writing in English in recent times has achieved reputable scholastic status. It is beyond doubt that the department of Indian Literature in English has nowadays become a full fledged one, enhanced with sundry writings. It is true that genuine Indian writer has to convey his own sensibility in a language which is not his own, if and when he chooses to write in English. Into the middle of this bafflement came many grandmasters who witnessed the impressive scenes of Indian Renaissance. These grandmasters have effectively made use of verbal communication capable of communicating the postcolonial predicament.

Post-colonial English literature in India works through the process of "writing back", "re-writing" and "re-reading". This outlines the description of well-known literature from the point of view of the formerly colonised. Indian English Literature (IEL), as was seen before, pertains to that body of work by writers in India, who pen in the English language and whose
native or co-native language could be one of the several regional languages of India. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. The 1950s-1960s in most postcolonial literature were marked by themes of nationalism and the euphoria of decolonization. The preferred mode was realism, as R.K. Narayan’s fiction demonstrates.

R. K. Narayan—one of the most popular and widely read of modern Indian writers displays a remarkable indifference to the historical experience of colonialism, his fiction can be read with recourse to local specifics, a fact which results in his being almost entirely ignored by postcolonial scholars. Bi-culturalism, nationalism, local and tribal identities as opposed to a universal humanism, the conflict between European modernization and native tradition, the usable past and generating a discourse about the nature of postcolonial identity are the earliest themes in postcolonial literature in Raja Rao, Narayan, George Lamming, Patrick White, Derek Walcott and others.

The postcolonial Indian English fiction witnesses at least three generations of Indian novelists in English. The first generation consists mainly the prominent figures like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, the second like Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and others enriched the fiction. But the third generation of writers like Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, etc., established the fame in international arena.

In fact, past has been depicted as our identity in novel. People, especially Indian expatriates and those who have lost their cultural moorings and are completely under the influence of materialistic Western ideals, ignore and discard their cultural identity. The Indian English novelist reveals the anguish and despair, feeling of rootlessness and loss of identity in such characters. Alienation and rootlessness is a recurring theme in modern novel. The duality of culture, known as East-West encounter, generates its own tensions which have been artistically dealt with in novel. Characters torn between the traditional values they have
acquired and absorbed from childhood and the new values bestowed upon them by their education and their changing cultural milieu are pathetic figures but some of them surmount over their tensions and conflicts through a definite act of will.

Indian English fiction succeeded to win almost every well-known literary prize in the world. In postcolonial literary setup cultural nationalism has become a recurrent focus. In treatment and tone the native reality and Indian sensibility take a significant turn in every branch of literature. The outcry of east-west encounter becomes prominent in fiction. Sahgal’s *Into another Dawn*, Bhattacharya’s *Music for Mohini*, Rajan’s *Too Long in the West*, Jhabvala's *The Nature of Passion* portray the same theme. The socio-political problems of India are also pictured in Bhattacharya's *So Many Hunger*, Sahgal’s *Storm in Chandigarh*, etc. The contemporary Indian reality takes its significant mode in the writing of the golden trio, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao. Anand's *Untouchable*, Rao's *Kanthapura* and Narayan's *The Guide* reveal the better stand depicting such reality.

Narayan is regarded as the father-figure in postcolonial Indian English fiction. Ancient Myth, fables and rituals deal with the relevance for the contemporary reality. The recreation of events and situations are rightly reflected in the different fictions. Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, Malgonkar's *The Distant Dream*, Chaman Naha's *Azadi* and Attiah Hussain's *Sunlight on a Broken Window*, etc. offer a sense of nostalgia sustaining the event of partition of India. The postcolonial Indian English fiction upholds the Indian spirit at large. It depicts Indian thought, Indian emotion but English only in words. In this way new Indian English idiom originates at this moment.

The field of Postcolonial studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. During the 1970s, there were endless debates on the impact of colonialism on native cultures, and about the nature of postcolonial development, as witnessed in the social realist works of
Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya in India, V.S. Naipal in the Carribean, and Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiongo in Africa.

Postcolonial writers respond to these global phenomena in various ways. Amitav Ghosh addresses this postcolonial crisis through his novel *The Hungry Tide*. This work can be read against the background of the social activities taking place in the subcontinent, which are meant for saving the earth and thereby saving humanity. The social activist, Medha Patkar’s *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (Save Narmada Movement) has been spearheading the movement against the Sardar Sarovar Dam being built across the Narmada River in Gujarat, insisting on the proper rehabilitation of the displaced people. The Indian English writers asserted themselves on the global literary scene with their transnational writings engendered by experiences of migrancy, multicultarism and multilingualism. There was an unprecedented increase in innovative techniques and experimentation in novels. It was in this transitional phase of postcolonialism that the vibrant and energetic voice of Amitav Ghosh reverberated through the Indian literary scene. Ghosh’s fiction strives to bring the trials and tribulations of the marginalised people from the peripheries to the centre.

The status and predicament of women in Indian society has been yet another motivating force for the Indian novelist with a social purpose. Despite the fact that Women can contribute to social regeneration as much as to the cause of family welfare, she became a victim of social prejudices and male chauvinism. However, Gandhi’s clarion call to the Indian women to participate actively in the freedom movement made them conscious of the much needed liberation and equality of opportunity in personal, social and political life. Recognizing the potential women to join their counterparts in their struggle against ignorance, superstition and backwardness, Indian English novelists in general, and women novelists in particular, began to treat women as legitimate subjects for their purposeful social novels. Their endeavour was to the relevant, to their culture by presenting characters and
situations rooted in Indian ethos. The post-independence Indian English women novelists like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Bharathi Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur and Anita Nair present women in their heroic struggle to break through the pattern of sexuality and sensuality and to discover themselves as human beings capable of playing a positive role in the development of society.

Women writers in post-colonial India have created a literature of their own, so to say, placing women in the context of the changing social scenario, specially concentrating upon the psyche of such women. It is true that the Indian women have consciously accepted the domination of the patriarchal value system by surrendering meekly to their traditionally assigned roles and allowing themselves to be dominated. But increasing education, better job opportunities and awareness of nights and privileges of women have forced her to contemplate. Indian women today are exposed to a new set of values with education and economic independence putting them in a rather conflicting state where they desire independence while they dread their traditional role but are still not courageous enough to walk out of the situation. At this juncture the woman has to redefine her status, certainly not an easy venture. Women writers have caught the Indian women in this flux and have portrayed them realistically both psychologically as well as physically in their novels. Such literature has certainly contributed to a fresh exploration of the role and status of women in the contemporary Indian society.

Women as a subject matter in Indian fiction in English are not something recent but the approach of the novelists is certainly different. In the novel of the 1960s women in Indian fiction were depicted as ideal creatures having various virtues, with no concept of revolt while the later novels portray women as educated and conscious of their right and privileges demanding their proper place in society. Definitely, recent years have witnessed the impact of western feminist theories put forward by writers like Simone de Beauvoir [The Second Sex,
1952], Betty Friedan [The Feminine Mystique, 1963] and Kate Millet [Sexual Politics, 1970]. Under these influences the Indian women writers have successfully attempted to break the literary and social norm of the past. They delve deep into the psyche of their characters and also herald a new concept of morality. At the outset writers like kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha de, Bharati Mukherjee and some others have denied any sort of feminist bias in their writings but an in depth analysis proves a strong feminist intent, for women’s issue pertains to be the chief concern of their plot.

The first generation of major Indian female writers appeared only in the second half of the twentieth century, at a time when literature world-wide gave voice also to those who had been previously marginalized. And Indian women had indeed been marginalized, both by the colonizers as well as by Indian men. Boehmer claims that:

Colonized women were, as it is called, doubly or triply marginalized. That is to say, they were disadvantaged on the grounds not only of gender but also of race, social class, and, in some cases, religion and caste. (224)

The main aim of their writing was to share their lives, their feminine experience, so as to balance what had been written from men's perspective. The lives of women have so far been described almost exclusively from the point of view of men and, therefore misrepresented, although not necessarily intentionally. Given their status in society, women's experience was not considered important, and even less so in literature. The characters in literature and especially novel which was a foreign genre were not considered common people. Their lives were as distant as they possibly could be from the experience of the Indian readership.

Women writers today seek to posit the independent existence of women, focusing mainly on the question of identity crisis for women in a parochial society. Exploring wide range of female experiences that question the recurring face of patriarchy, the recent women
writers depict both the diversity of women and diversity within each woman. The novels emerging in the twenty-first century furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition and offer an analysis of the joint family system, with its particular gendered spaces and hierarchies of power, exploring how these dictates the interaction of its members. The issues dealt by women writers today are no longer feminist or chauvinistic, they are everyday issues faced by everyday people.

Authors like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Githa Hariharan and Anita Nair have chosen the problems and issues faced by the women in today's male dominated world as the main theme of their books. For instance, some of the novels of Anita Desai like *Voices in the City* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* she has portrayed the complexities between a man and woman relationship. She has tried to explore the psychological aspects of the lead protagonists. The women novelists try to create awareness that this is the time to proclaim with definite precision. In India, the women writers are doing very well and their contribution is immense.

Some other writers including Rushdie to innovate a distinctive "otherness" followed a consented style. Amitav Ghosh in *Circle of Reason* and *The Shadow Lines*, Upamanyu Chatterjee in *English August*, Sashi Tharoor in *The Great Indian Novel*; Alan Sealey in *Trotter Nama* or Vikram Seth in *The Golden Gate* defy all sorts of confinement with the narrow domestic walls. These writers accept the world as their domain and derive the impression from "Multiculturalism" and universalize their approach. The creative impulses are integrated with all sources available in myth, legend, religion and symbol of global concern. M, K. Naik observes, several tactics - linguistic, literary, cultural and even political - have been occupied in the effort to establish the utter redundancy of Indian literature.

Postcolonial literature sustains the same. During the 1990's India became a popular literary nation as a number of women authors made their debut in this era. Chitra Banerjee
Divakaruni, Suniti Namjoshi and Anuradha Marwah Roy used realism as main theme of their novels. The list of Indian women novelists also comprises popular names such as Bharati Mukherjee, Nergis Dalal, Krishna Sobti, Dina Mehta, Indira Goswami, Malati Chendur, Gauri Deshpande, Namita Gokhale, Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Shobha De, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Anita Nair and many more. They are known for the contemporary approach in their novels. The novels of authors like Namita Gokhale or Shobha De are really outspoken.

The more recent women may not be as prolific as their predecessors yet they also deal with themes related to women and society or more specifically the man-women relationship in their novels. Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* visualizes the whole cultural scenario from a locus of isolation, oppression, depression, frustration and amalgamation. The novelist infers that human identity is destroyed by the oppressive forces of society. Roy presents three generation of doubly marginalized women: First by their binding native cultural and secondly by the dominant forces of patriarchy. Women like Mammachi and Baby Kochamma belong to the first generation being complacent about their subordinate existence and accept male domination silently. Ammu and Margaret Kochamma who belong to the second generation react against the idea of patriarchy and hence are bold enough to cross the limits of sexual codes imposed by society. Roy concentrates upon the sufferings of Ammu in *The God Small things*, a woman who prefers to be mute and inarticulate in a traditional setup. Inspite of her bold maiden attempt a fiction writing Roy has failed to create a model of Feminine consciousness because of her inability to write further.

The new generation of Indian women novelist namely, Gita Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair and Manju kapur have invited much critical attention. Each one of the four has composed at least one novel focussing attention on the plight of contemporary women especially in their endeavour for emancipation and liberation from the patrilineal
social system. However, it is difficult to assess their position as feminist writing either Western or Indian yet, scrutinizing their novelists’ adventure provides an interesting study.

Namita Gokhale’s *Paro: dreams of Passion* are the story of Paro and Priya. It is an account of their experiences in life. Paro due to her courage and convictions becomes the symbol of emancipation and individuality. However, later Paro is doomed to suffer from an atrophy of emotions and cynicism due to her unbridled freedom ending up as a disillusioned woman. Priya’s identification with Paro adds to her misfortunes. The novel reflects an esoteric stratum of Indian society gaining its strength from the interplay of reality and fantasy. Gokhale’s other novels also depict women characters in the Indian social setup and their varied responses to society.

Gita Harisharan’s *The Thousand Faces of Night* represents three women belonging to different generations. Devi, the protagonist cannot cope with life in India after being educated in an American University. She is forced to marry Mahesh, an insensitive man. Her miseries are manifold especially when she is unable to conceive. Mayamma, their maidservant also suffers due to her barrenness. Sita, the mother of Devi is largely responsible for her own fate. Gita Hariharan’s when dreams travel is a sort of feminist retelling of the Arabian Nights. This dark though thought provoking novel centres around the lives of Shaharzad, her sister Dunyazad and their husbands.

In Manju kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* the protagonist Virmati remains in constant conflict with tradition, at loggerheads with her parents and is contemptuous towards the institution of marriage which is considered as the be all and end all of a girl’s life especially in India. Early in the novel the issue of patriarchy which curtails a woman’s voice and freedom is raised. Virmati is compelled to look after a brood of younger brother and sisters while she silently craves for getting properly educated. Manju kapur dwells at large upon the conflict within Virmati who is torn between her present and her past. Virmati ends up as a
Professors second wife. However, Virmati’s inner strength and will power sustain her proving that there is more to life than depending on marriage, parents and other conventional value systems. Atleast Virmati conjures up the courage a defy traditions for the sake of her own happiness.

Modern Indian English novel is, thus, preoccupied with the inner life and individual problems of men and women passing through revolutionary changes. The novel in the previous era was mainly concerned with the external aspects of society and little with the exteriorization of the inner landscape of the human psyche. It has become more subtle, philosophical and psychological. This change in the content of the novel has necessitated the use of new technical devices. During late nineteen nineties a new breed of Convent, boarding-school educated and elite class of novelists and writers, started to emerge, who forever had chalked out a plan to alter the map of post-colonial Indian English literature.

The latest Indian writer who lifted up the world by a storm, among the renowned writers of Indian origin, penning for post-colonial Indian English literature is Anita Nair who makes an attempt to show the quality of strength in a woman. Anita also adds that strength is not usually considered a womanly thing. Her style ultimately differs from other feminist writers. In other words, she is a feminist with difference. She traces the real position of women in the families as well as in the society. She has created ripples in the society of male domination by taking women as women in a serious manner. Her attempt to exhibit the plight, fears, dilemmas, contradictions and ambitions of her women characters is remarkable. Anita Nair’s descriptions and portrayal of characters are highly appreciable.

Anita Nair's first novel, The Better Man (1999), is a welcome change from the trite East-West encounter theme. It is perhaps the only novel written by a woman who is not about an Indian woman; nor is it freely peppered with incest and or same sex relationships. Nair sets her story in an imaginary town called Kaikurrisi. This fictional town is described as
somewhere in South India and having some elements of R.K.Narayan’s Malgudi, Hardy’s Wessex or Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County, discovered by some critics. I think the later statement is more appropriate because the imaginary towns that Hardy, Narayan and Nair represented are closer in that the places are the examples of the modern changeover of England and India respectively. From this place and its people, we can feel the pulse of the transformation of India and its impact upon people’s life and soul.

It is a straightforward tale set in a village in Kerala. The Better Man is the kind of novel that could be (and is) written in India’s regional languages, where the exploration of the postcolonial ramifications of using English is not an issue. The notion of Nkrumah can be introduced in the reading of The Better Man to locate latest patterns of colonial master-slave equation which have entered into local culture. This novel is an effort to analyse the society, culture and politics of Kerala which form the setting of Anita Nair’s fictional world that clearly projects the symptoms of being infected with postcolonial infirmity. Her matrifocal culture helps her choose her subversive act of resistance. Thus, The Better Man describes every individual’s attempt to find a degree of inner peace and manner.

This is the first book of Nair and in it she throws spotlights upon women issues, which also received good reviews. Starting from Paru Kutty (traditional) to Anjana (modern), Nair’s women characters grow stronger and show that the emergence of the 'New Woman' is not a myth or a utopia in India. However, this New Woman is mainly influenced by the West and expresses their resistance against oppressive elements of Indian culture by using the value of the West as resources. Women in her novels struggles for freedom, asserts equality and searches for identity. Nair's New Woman might not have brought earth-shattering changes to India, yet she has certainly brought positive changes not only in her man but also in Indian society.

Anita Nair’s second novel, Ladies Coupe, published in 2001, considered to be among her greatest stunning success. Akhila, a forty-five year old income tax clerk and the
protagonist of the story encourages her travel companions to share their life-stories during her journey from Madras to Kanyakumari quite like the pilgrims do in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. As Akhila listens to the various stories she tries to find a solution to a question which has been haunting her for long; “Can a woman stay single and be happy, or does a woman need a man to feel complete?” After the death of her father Akhila assumes the role of the “man of the family” for she hails from a matrilineal tradition of Tamil Brahmins. She decides to remain single after a brief love affair with Hari, a North Indian man much younger to her. The stories of the various co-passengers refer to their personal crises such as loneliness, ill treatment rape, abortion, madness, betrayal and how each one coped with them. This sets Akhila thinking: the other women are merely patterns of consciousness of a single psyche. Akhila reconciles with life by coming back of Hari. Anita Nair refers to the avatar of the Devi Akhilandeshwari to insist on the many-headed but unitary subjectivity of women. Nair also confidently depicts the plurality of women’s desire. When the miserable conditions of subaltern groups were talked about, this book is most likely to be mentioned as the supportive proof to point out that colonial institutions are the source of the sufferings of the subaltern groups. We can see that Nair notices the social stratification in the modern transition of India. The elites who are actually the groups who take the share of the benefits from colonizers’ institutions and after independence they are comfortable with the existing hierarchical structure and unwilling to make any significant change, which is the real source of the sufferings of subaltern groups.

First she has the courage to get out of unhappy family and to get married herself to a person she loves deeply. Second, she found a guy to make love was just to show her audacity to decide on her own. She enjoyed with him and left the guy without slightest hesitation. This broke the stereotype of Indian women, who were imagined as cowardly, dependent and fragile. After the independence we can see that the Indian women are
consciously against the oppressive elements of Indian traditional culture and also actively take advantage of the western culture, including their lifestyle to resist the oppression of their family under the masks of defending Indian tradition.

*Mistress* is a searing new novel of art and adultery. Two tales unfold in this book. The first is the story of Radha, and Shyam, and of travel writer Chris, who comes to their riverside resort in Kerala with a cello and a tape recorder, to meet Radha’s uncle, Koman, a famous kathakali dancer. When Christopher Stewart, a young English journalist and musician, decides to travel to India in order to meet Koman, the great kathakali artist, hybridity is a central concept in his own quest for origins: he wants to know if the old man could be his father and if he himself could have been the fruit of the hybrid union between the kathakali dancer and his English mother. Thus the theme of “genetic” hybridity gradually suffuses the love-story which unites Chris and Radha, Koman’s niece, who is also Shyam’s unhappy wife. The novel ends on the announced birth of Radha’s adulterine child, the hybrid embodiment of his parents’ opposing cultures the East and the West; India and England, Radha and Chris.

The novel foregrounds the themes of identity and otherness, showing characters who often try to find for themselves a hybrid position, a form of in-between’s which can only lead to some lack of stability, entailing the subversion of any initial aesthetic feeling. However, Anita Nair manages to create what can truly be called aesthetics of hybridity: the novel relies on the nine rasas to be found in kathakali, which is typical of Indian culture, while it is also based on several traditional characteristics of the Western genre, the novel. In Mistress Anita Nair creates a verbal kathakali to which she slowly initiates the reader, leading him into this dance of the senses, orchestrated by both chenda and cello.

The narrative form of the novel that has often been traced back to its western colonial roots is weaved together with the Kathakali dance that represents classical Indian tradition. However, both dance and plot as used in *Mistress* are, from their beginning, revealed to be
“tainted” categories in themselves, thus enlightening the tensions between the east and the west, the worldwide and the restricted, and tradition and modernity. Thus the “western” form of the novel (western only in so far as its historical background are concerned) is culturally localized through its setting, its use of the r asas to ascertain narrative arch, and its many point of references to the larger history of the Indian subcontinent.

In post-colonial societies, the crisis of identity often seems to override all considerations. For some, identity is social and rooted in the culture; whereas for some, it means personal achievements. E.H.Erikson described identity as a subject wisdom as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in the similarity and continuity of some shared world image. Identity defines a person and impacts upon everything he or she does; from the relationships they form, to the work they do and everything in between. It works like a constant companion of an individual and an individual’s identity is related with race, class and gender. Other factors such as nationality also led to individual’s identity. In all the novels Anita Nair has taken up the identity crisis as the theme. Because of the education women become aware of their own rights, desires, ambitions, needs. She has given priority to economic independence, career, self-respect and self identity. It affects the every relationship. Even the sacred relationship is not escaped from it. There is a focus on the theme of identity in her novels. Protagonists of Anita Nair are well educated, economically independent, career oriented middle class women with independent views. But they have a clash with their patriarchal society. Because society is traditional, oppressed and tied with social norms.

Thus Anita Nair’s women, though having lost their identities, in the society, try to struggle and find new selves in an extraterrestrial background in which many at least partially successful. Some, of course, like marginalized, lose their way right from the beginning. Yet the evolvement of the so called 'liberated self'-liberated from the clutches of traditional set up
culture and society causes its wake a lot of mental agony to the protagonists. In most of her stories the search for an authentic self, or the awareness of their identity make the woman protagonists struggle to undertake hazardous journeys, undergo any amount of personal tribulations in order to gain access into society and enter willingly into the liberated way of life. The easiest and simplest form of transformation is by affecting a marital union. The characters may be from different backgrounds.

The newly acquired consciousness or awareness is a celebration of womanhood and woman's space. They find their true selves in the literary background and culture because they make a conscious effort. They do not hesitate to tread on the inconvenient and unnecessary or embarrassing ways of their past cultures wherever necessary. Thus their quest for self identities is resolved to a large extent by a total or partial break with their past. Their acquisition of new identities helps cultural fusion, and also helps in changing the global image of India.

Thus the Indian woman, as appropriately presented in the modern and post-modern fiction written in English by Indian women novelists behave unlike her Western counterpart in her evolution from the “Feminine” to the “Female”. She is progressive and conscious of her rights like the contemporary Western counterpart, but she quickly, compromises to the fact that a woman’s real position lies within the family-unit which she must sustain and protect and not ignore or neglect due to the false notion of being “liberated”.

Following subaltern studies and post-colonialism the project examines women and widows, spinster, corporate wife, upper class and middle class married women, and other neglected groups. Subaltern studies track how subalters are represented in representative documents and elite writing. They argue how the nation-state inherited colonial systems of hierarchy, triggering new forms of oppression. The postcolonial critiques hope to give us new and culturally-rooted insights regarding women.
The chapter examines the oppressed women in the modern transition of India, starting from the discussion on the representation of suppressed groups in Nair’s fictions. The muted groups are in fact subjugated most in the modern transition of India and the oppression is legitimized by the independent system. This research is very important because it unveil a myth that the postcolonial theory embellishes the negative effect of colonial rule or colonial culture upon the natives in postcolonial period and thus offer an excuse for the incapability to solve the problems of women in the country. The project figures out the significance of the studies on the indigenous tradition, which actually are quite oppressive and aggressive to certain groups and thus mismatched with the modernity, including the self-governing system of which they are proud. Through this chapter, an attempt is made to associate postcolonialism in the works of Anita Nair.

The next chapter entitled “Protest Against Subjugation” will elaborately deal the writer’s search into the root causes and predicament of Indian women and exploration that illiteracy among the women, their weakness and dutiful natures are responsible for their sufferings, though Indian women are aware about the rights, status and identity; they lack the spirit and nerve to fight against the oppressive forces. Nair’s women characters grow stronger and show that the emergence of the 'New Woman' is not a myth or a utopia in India. However, this New Woman is mainly influenced by the West and expresses their resistance against oppressive elements of Indian culture by using the value of the West as resources. She struggles for freedom, asserts equality and searches for identity. Nair's New Woman might not have brought earth-shaking changes to India, yet she has certainly brought positive changes not only in her man but also in Indian society.