



## MOTIVATIVE LINES OF A MULTICULTURAL PORTRAIT OF THE ENGLISH DISCOURSE OF POSTCOLONIALISM

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The article provides an in-depth examination of the key postcolonial features that shape the multicultural portrait of contemporary English literary discourse. It not only outlines the theoretical foundations of postcolonialism but also demonstrates how these conceptual frameworks influence the works of S. Rushdie, H. Qureshi, S. Selvon, M. Ondaatje, C. Phillips, and Z. Smith, whose writings collectively reflect the transformative dynamics of modern British multiculturalism. Postcolonial literature is presented as an artistic platform that enables a profound rethinking of identity, hybridity, migration processes, and racial and transnational interactions within the rapidly changing socio-cultural space of London. Through the representation of decolonisation trauma, tensions between the Self and the Other, the lingering presence of historical memory, and the impact of religious collisions, these writers reveal the complex interplay between individual experience and traditional communal frameworks.

From a linguocultural perspective, the study highlights linguistic hybridity, the integration of untranslatable lexemes, and the presence of transnational codes as defining markers of contemporary postcolonial discourse. These linguistic strategies emphasise the fluidity of cultural borders and the multiplicity of identity formations characteristic of diasporic communities. The narratives of the examined authors reconstruct long-term intergenerational links within immigrant families, showing multiculturalism not as an abstract ideological notion but as an everyday social practice embedded in the urban fabric of London. Such portrayals underscore the lived reality of hybrid communities, whose daily interactions, negotiations, and conflicts shape modern British cultural life. The article ultimately stresses the importance of applying a cognitive-interpretive approach to postcolonial texts, proposing it as a productive methodological direction for expanding philological research and deepening the understanding of multicultural dynamics in contemporary English literature.

## МОТИВНІ ШТРИХИ МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРНОГО ПОРТРЕТУ АНГЛОМОВНОГО ДИСКУРСУ ПОСТКОЛОНІАЛІЗМУ

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наратив.*

Стаття присвячена ґрунтовному аналізу постколоніальних штрихів у мультикультурному портреті сучасного англомовного літературного дискурсу, зосереджуючи увагу на способах, якими постколоніальна методологія формує художнє мислення та тематичні акценти британської літератури кінця ХХ – початку ХХІ століття. У розвідці узагальнено теоретичні засади постколоніалізму як інтерпретативної методології та простежено його вплив на творчість С. Рушді, Х. Курейші, С. Селвона, М. Ондатже, К. Філіпса та З. Сміт, чії тексти відображають складні процеси взаємодії культур, ідентичностей та мов у контексті постімперського британського суспільства. Доведено, що постколоніальна література функціює як художня платформа для глибинного переосмислення ідентичності, гібридності, міграції, а також расових і транснаціональних взаємодій у динамічному соціокультурному просторі Лондона. Письменники передають травми деколонізації, прояви конфлікту між «своїм» та «іншим», різні форми історичної пам'яті та релігійних колізій, демонструючи напружене співіснування індивідуального досвіду з традиційними колективними структурами. Завдяки лінгвокультурному підходу встановлено, що мовна гібридність, включення неперекладних лексем та використання транснаціональних кодів становлять визначальні маркери сучасного постколоніального дискурсу й відображають складну природу ідентичнісних трансформацій у міграційному середовищі. У статті підкреслено, що художні наративи досліджуваних авторів відтворюють системність у тривалих міжпоколінних зв'язках іммігрантських спільнот, формуючи образ мультикультуралізму не як абстрактного теоретичного конструкту, а як щоденної практики існування персонажів у великому урбаністичному просторі сучасного Лондона. Наголошено, що саме когнітивно-інтерпретативний підхід до постколоніальних текстів відкриває перспективні можливості для подальших філологічних студій, оскільки дозволяє глибше осмислити механізми формування мультикультурної ідентичності та розкрити нові виміри постколоніального художнього мислення.

**Problem statement.** To fully understand postcolonial fiction, one needs a basic understanding of postcolonial theory as interpreted by Edward Said [Said, 1983], Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak [Spivak,

1987], and Homi Bhabha [Bhabha, 1996]. This understanding is mainly centred around Edward Said's *Orientalism* [Said, 1978], whose narratives lie within the plane of historical construction of

West and East as oppositional referents between *the Self* in the West and *the Other* in the East. Since the 1980s, a whole cohort of novelists, playwrights, and poets have been positioned as postcolonial writers (Ch. Achebe, R. Arundhati, M. Cliff, J. M. Coetzee, A. Desai, B. Emecheta, B. Evaristo, N. Farrah, A. Ghosh, J. Kincaid, D. Lessing, VS Naipul, G. Ogot, J. Rhys, S. Rushdie, N. wa Thiong'o, H. Qureishi, S. Selvon, M. Ondaatje, C. Phillips, Z. Smith, and others) [Bhabha, 1986]. But what is postcolonial literature, and what are its postcolonial features in the linguistic and multicultural portrait of modern English literature? In the broadest sense, this literature encompasses works related to imperialist forces of subjugation and colonial expansion [Bhabha, 1994]. Postcolonial literature is that which emerged primarily after the end of World War II in the decolonised regions of the world, as many colonies (from areas such as the Indian subcontinent, South Africa, and the Caribbean) fought for independence [Said, 1985]. The postcolonial literary movement, with its dominant novelistic form and postcolonial content, developed coherently in the mid-twentieth century, and classic postcolonial texts emerged between the 1950s and 1990s. What postcolonial writers did was as important as what anticolonial freedom fighters did [Bhabha, 2006]. The intentional battlefield of postcolonial writers was the mind, while the battlefield of active freedom fighters was the battlefield. Thus, near the end of the 20th century, the time had come for postcolonial writers to fully tell their own lived and suffered stories from their own perspectives [Spivak, 2014].

**The purpose of the article.** The purpose of the investigation is to attempt to outline the postcolonial features of contemporary English literature, based on a brief theoretical description of the creative ideas of a cohort of writers who are compared or associated with the leitmotifs of the postcolonial narrative and who, through their own artistic discourse, reproduce the postcolonial features of British multiculturalism. Who can actually be attributed to writers in the field of postcolonial literature?

**The tasks of the article.** For this purpose, we focus on those who provided the background for the analysis of texts in postcolonial discourse [Bhabha, 1992]. We limit ourselves to brief mentions of the creative ideas of a cohort of writers, focusing on the leitmotif of the postcolonial narrative, and reveal the postcolonial features of multiculturalism that permeate all aspects of the characters' lives in contemporary London [Spivak, 2013]. They explore themes of racism through the strategies and ways in which the characters interact with immigrants and their attempts to manage the manifestations of racism they encounter daily. They aim to portray the everyday normality of modern urban life, which includes encounters

with prejudice and racism, the happy and even comical incidents of life in a hybrid British community. All this is a new touch in the multicultural portrait of contemporary English-language literature, with its leitmotifs such as history, religion, language, race, identity, and multiculturalism [Rennison, 2005].

**Presentation of the primary research material.**

Salman Rushdie is one of the most famous British authors of South Asian origin (born in India in 1947), and therefore postcolonial. His novels are written in English, but most of his works, fiction and non-fiction, are devoted to India and its history, people, religion, and often connect India with Great Britain and the English. His novels are about "migration, translation, hybridity, blasphemy and globalisation", and "the agenda in his novels is focused on the problems of marginalisation, difference, the so-called 'otherness' that immigrants bring to the fore". The importance of S. Rushdie for postcolonial studies stems not only from the leitmotifs he examines but also from his work as a whole [Itakura, 2006]. Although he writes in English, his "writing is not steeped in the European tradition of realism or in the desire to adopt the metropolis of the West". His discourse is enriched with verbal expressions, idioms, and phrases from the native languages of India, which, in the literary texts, are stylistically coloured and linguistically expressed. They are not always translated or explained to an English-speaking audience, as he explains is impossible to translate accurately into English (the following example is taken from his novel *Shame*): "This word: shame. No, I must write it in its original form, not in this peculiar language tainted by wrong concepts, Sharam, that's the word. For which this paltry 'shame' is a wholly inadequate translation. A short word, but one containing encyclopedias of nuance" [Rushdie 1995, p. 38]. In this, on the one hand, he acts in a double role – both dragoman and writer – negotiating between two cultures, and, on the other, he thereby deprives the English reading audience of its privilege, or even distorts it. After all, the indigenous Indian reader certainly has an advantage in understanding this type of text. Salman Rushdie's creative style lacks the priority notes of realism, which is typical of European writing. Still, we note the traditions of magical realism, which are closely connected with the discourse of Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez. Therefore, the circle of post-colonialism closes again: magical realists incorporate many techniques associated with this post-colonialism, with hybridity a primary feature [Spivak, 2000]. Specifically, magical realism is illustrated in the inharmonious arenas of such opposites as urban and rural, and Western and indigenous. The plots of magical realist works involve issues of borders, mixing, and change. Authors establish these plots to reveal a crucial purpose of magical realism:

a more profound and more accurate reality than conventional realist techniques would illustrate. In short, Salman Rushdie is an essential figure in postcolonial discourse, not only through his artistic work but also through his active participation in scientific and public debates on topics such as migration, integration, (British) identity, and diverse multicultural life.

Hanif Qureshi is a British writer of South Asian descent [Smith J., 2002]. Like the protagonist of his first and often-cited novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), Qureshi is "born and bred English" - he was born in 1954 and raised in a mixed-race family in England, with a Pakistani father and an English mother. He began his career as a playwright, with his first play, *Soaking the Heat* (1976), staged at the Royal High Court Theatre. In 1985, his screenplay for the film *My Beautiful Laundrette* helped him set himself on the path to success, a path he has firmly established ever since. In most of his works, he portrays British society from the perspective of an immigrant: the protagonist of *The Laundromat* is a young Pakistani who opens a laundromat in a London suburb, and both *Buddha* and his second novel *The Black Album* (1995) deal with the racial and cultural conflicts of young people with an immigrant background who are confronted with the British environment. Hanif Qureshi is often described as a "London writer" [Kureshi, 2005], known for his accurate and vivid descriptions of contemporary multicultural London. This ability to recreate an authentic and captivating picture of London. In addition, comparisons can be made among H. Qureshi, S. Rushdie, and Z. Smith regarding the inclusion of events crucial to the lives of immigrants in Britain in their novels. For example, the burning of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988), witnessed by the main character Shahid in H. Qureshi's novel *The Black Album* (1995), as well as the main character Millat in Z. Smith's novel *White Teeth* (2000), is the primary setting in these novels.

Sam Selvon was born in Trinidad in 1923 to a family of mixed ethnicity, his grandparents being immigrants from India on one side and Scottish on the other. He worked as a wireless operator and reporter, occasionally publishing short story manuscripts [Tizard, 2002]. He left Trinidad for Britain in 1950, where he became a freelance writer. While his early novels were set in Trinidad, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) is his first depiction of the lives of West Indian immigrants in London. This theme is also present in his other novel, *The Ascension of Moses. Ascending* (1975).

Michael Ondaatje was born in 1943 in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) to a mixed family of Indian and Dutch descent. He moved to London with his mother. In 1954, Michael Ondaatje moved to Canada and has remained an active writer. The similarity to Zadie

Smith, noted by some critics, may be the most obvious. This tendency is clearly evident in Michael Ondaatje's most famous novel, *The English Patient* (1992), particularly in its depiction of life at the end of World War II and, more specifically, in the figure of Kirpal Singh. Singh is an Indian sapper who joined the British army at the beginning of the war in 1920 and is now awaiting its end, separated from his company in Tuscany. He not only has to deal with his personal history, but also with the history of his country, and, in general, with all European history [Bhabha, 1992].

Caryl Phillips was born in the West Indies in 1958 but moved to Britain with his parents when he was just a year old. Phillips continues to live and work in the UK as a university lecturer and author of novels, plays, television scripts, and non-fiction, including anthologies, numerous collections of essays, travelogues, and more [Phillips, 2005]. His first novel, *The Final Passage* (1985), "recounts the experiences of his parents and thousands like them who left the West Indies in the 1950s to travel to Britain". In terms of other themes, the first novel already foreshadows many of his leitmotifs, which explore fate, slavery, migration, and relationships among people of mixed ethnic origin. Phillips has written articles for *The Observer*, and his novels are compared to the works of Zadie Smith. The fact is that both depict Jewish characters in their novels this way: Phillips, like *Blood* (1998), and Smith in *The Autograph Man* (1993). This is just one example of the similarities that literary criticism has hinted at.

Zadie Smith, as a person of mixed ethnicity, in her artistic discourse about contemporary London, touches on a variety of postcolonial issues in a coherent artistic narrative alongside Salman Rushdie, Hanif Qureshi, Sam Selvon, Michael Ondaatje, and Caryl Phillips: she is steeped in her forerunners. She has imbibed Edward Said, while Salman Rushdie's influence pervades the chattily intrusive narrative voice. And whether pilfering or in playful homage, the novel carries echoes from the migrant, or "post-immigrant", literature of such as Sam Selvon, Caryl Phillips, Michael Ondaatje, and Hanif Kureshi. Most of the characters in her books are themselves of mixed ethnic origin (such as Irie Jones in *White Teeth* [Smith, 2000], Alex-Lee Tandem in *The Autograph Man* [Smith, 2002] or Kiki Belsey in *On Beauty* [Smith, 2005] and come from first- or second-generation immigrant families (Iqbala in *White Teeth*) or are part of multi-ethnic relationships (Alex-Lee Tandem and Esther in *The Autograph Man*, and Howard and Kiki Belsey in the novel *On Beauty*). It seems that Z. Smith is even expected to write about race issues. She kept her word, as her second novel, *The Autograph Man*, and her third book, *On Beauty*, both centre on characters of mixed ethnicity (in *The*

*Autograph Man*, the protagonist Alex is half English and half Chinese, while in *On Beauty* the protagonists come from a half English, half African American family). These characters are therefore inevitably involved in a search for an identity that transcends cultural and racial boundaries, and they move towards what might be called a "transnational identification", meaning that they identify with cosmopolitans, with shared international values and characteristics, rather than with the traits of a particular national identity [Spivak, 2012].

Z. Smith identifies this as wishful thinking by people who are not connected to such an environment and therefore see multiplicity as an exotic or even romantic feature that does not correspond to reality. The author argues that: "... young professional women aged eighteen to thirty-two who would like a snapshot seven years hence of Irie, Joshua and Hortense sitting by a Caribbean Sea, while Irie's fatherless little girl writes affectionate postcards to Bad Uncle Millat and Good Uncle Magid" [Head, 2003].

In the novel "The Last Friend" by T. B. Jelloun, the use of negation *without* the phrase *You're Jewish without having to wear a yarmulke* explicates the ambiguity of the character's hybrid identity and social mobility. This negation reveals important themes of postcolonial discourse, such as adaptation, privilege, discrimination, and identity issues. *Without* adds depth to the understanding of the character, indicating his unique position between two cultures and emphasizing the superficiality of social prejudices: *You're Jewish without having to wear a yarmulke. You have their mentality, their intelligence, but you are a real Muslim, like Mthue. You win on both counts, and you're not harassed the way the Jews are. Of course, people are jealous of you. But you're my friend. You just need to change the way you dress and be a little less cheap* [Jelloun, 2007].

*Obi Okonkwo was indeed an only palm-fruit. His full name was Obiajulu---'the mind at last is at rest'; the mind being his father's of course, who, his wife having borne him four daughters before Obi, was naturally becoming a little anxious. Being a Christian convert---in fact a Catechist--- he could not marry a second wife. But he was not the kind of man who carried his sorrow on his face. In particular, he would not let the heathen know that he was unhappy. He had called his fourth daughter Nwanyidinma---'a girl is also good'. But his voice did not carry conviction* [Achebe, 1960].

In Chinua Achebe's novel "No Longer at Ease", the excerpt conveys the father's struggle with cultural, religious, and emotional expectations through the lens of denial. His disappointment at having only daughters, despite naming the fourth daughter Nwanyidinma, reveals his deep desire for a male heir. Furthermore, his Christian beliefs prevent him from

marrying a second wife, creating a conflict between his cultural aspirations and religious obligations. The father's emotional restraint further illustrates societal pressure to conceal personal grief, highlighting the difficulties he faces. These themes significantly influence Obi's character and his journey throughout the novel.

**Conclusions and prospects for further development.** Thus, the main discursive and narrative features of the postcolonial novel form are its structure, language, and style, through which human and personal history is formed, which the writers of this artistic camp carefully depict. As for the historical dimension, the postcolonial novel form emphasises that each story seems to repeat itself according to specific patterns that interconnect the main characters in the works of the mentioned writers. One gets the impression that these characters feel locked in a constantly repeating circle from which they cannot escape.

Another theme that no less problematically affects the lives of most characters in the artistic discourses of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Qureshi, Sam Selvon, Michael Ondaatje, Caryl Phillips, and Zadie Smith is religion. While some of them struggle all their lives to be faithful to their fate or even join religious groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses or radical Islamists, others struggle to avoid the influence of religion on their lives. History and religion are closely intertwined in the personal and social lives of the characters and form an identity, a hybrid in particular, in the multilingual background of contemporary London. In accordance with the central motif of postcolonialism, the novels of the authors under study place specific emphasis on defining postcolonial identity and what it encompasses.

In short, the novels of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Qureshi, Sam Selvon, Michael Ondaatje, Caryl Phillips, and Zadie Smith focus on a hybrid community that reflects the full range of the main characters' lives, as they live in London's multicultural environment. In this context, the problem of racism appears, in particular, given the characters' relationships with immigrants and attempts to resolve the manifestations of racism that they encounter in everyday life. The analysis of individual multicultural features and postcolonial leitmotifs in the artistic discourses of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Qureshi, and Zadie Smith will contribute to the gradual disclosure of the author's family saga, the narratives of which stretch for each of them through several generations and where the leitmotif, characters and their stories are closely intertwined into a single whole. These are artistic discourses that satisfy or at least try to satisfy "the need for an alternative approach to ethnic diversity, an approach that avoids the words' multiculturalism' on the one hand and 'banal assimilation' on the other". These narra-

tives also reveal the difficulties of the characters' lives as they actively search for roots and pursue family history in a multinational environment, without descending into melodrama or becoming kitsch. It can be assumed that the linguocultural paradigm for the analysis of leitmotifs in postcolonial artistic discourses fits well with the perspective of further in-depth studies of the multicultural portrait of contemporary English discourse on postcolonialism in a broad macrophilological key of cognition and interpretation.

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