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Nationalism and the Postcolonial

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Nationalism and the Postcolonial discusses the inevitable presence of nationalism in the postcolonial times. Alongside postcolonial studies, nationalism studies has seen landmark publications since 1980's (Anderson (1983), Balibar (1991), Bhabha ed. (1990), Billig (1995), Gellner (1983), Smith (1986)). These discourses have contributed to the understanding of the other and in "contesting essentialisms" (9). With the emphasis on encompassing and homogenous perspectives, Western nationalism has precluded postcolonial subjects. Instead of opting for an integrated national identity, imperial powers still attempt to homogenize the national identities. It is here the postcolonial methodologies and theoretical perspectives could bring to light the ambulation of nationalism and their ramifications. Recognising the discontinuities in the intersection of nationalism studies and popular culture, the editors have brought together essays that inspect the manifestations of nationalisms in "autobiography, romance fiction, the historical novel, nonfiction, drama, poetry, computer games, calendar art, photography, music, cinema, journalism, teaching scenarios, independence celebrations, immigration policies and political speeches" (3). Coming from a wide-ranging geographical and cultural possibilities, the themes discussed are interdisciplinary and diverse in analysing the disruptive and the stabilizing tendencies of nationalisms.

The book is divided into four sections: Section one, "The Languages of Nationalism," deliberates on the significant role played by language in the formation and dissemination of nationalism. Westphal argues that "the European nationalist ideology of monolingualism ('one nation, one language') has not only spread globally but also transcend into theories on postcolonial Englishes" (25). In his examination of Kachru's and Schneider's models of World/postcolonial Englishes, he recognizes an underlying nationalist and monolingual predisposition. Therefore, future theories on World/postcolonial Englishes must be founded on multilingualism by acknowledging its intricacies and disparities. Bing's essay, grounded on Kenya's polylingual context, challenges the essentialist notions of a monolingual nation. The configuration of (postcolonial) nation is a complicated and diverse process similar to the ambiguous and changeable linguistic practices. While politics endeavours to design a homogenous Kenya, the diverse linguistic practices and flexibility only add to the nation's diversity. Gupta examines the ideological interconnection between Hindi and Indian nation. Modelled on the functioning of English language during the independence movement, Hindi has assumed an invincible stature. Evaluating the writings of Ramachandra Shukla, Gupta locates the ideological foundations and consequences of the formulation of Hindi as the national language.

The second section, "The Songs and Sounds of Nationalism," elaborates how music envisages nations in the postcolonial times. Marshall, in her essay, explains how calypso as a national art form is entwined with Independence narratives. The instrumentalization of calypso functions as cultural practice in the post-Independent period to mark the departure from colonial rule. The rich figurations embedded within calypso envisions a free cultural and political home and nation. Schuhmaier re-narrates the concept of Englishness in the lyrics of PJ Harvey and Kate Tempest. The essay traces how the idea of 'lost England' is re-configured through these two artists representing national identity. Section three, "Nationalisms in Postcolonial Popular Culture," surveys how nationalisms are

represented in media and videogames. Khandy explains how the state endeavours to use popular media to propagate nationalism in India. The manifold ways which the state employs to instrumentalize the pop culture corroborate and advance the narrative of Hindu nation. Teichler's analysis of Luhrmann's *Australia* locates how Australia reconciles with the history of displacement of the aborigines. In its attempt to fashion a multicultural Australian nation, the movie again retracts to colonial hierarchies and dominant typecasts thus challenging the nation's domain of cultural production. Krampe's interesting essay reveals how videogames by Canadian developer BioWare, when examined from the point of view of ambiguous interchange of national, racial and sexual identities, encompass subtle and influential forms of nationalism and imperialism.

The final section, "Nationalisms in Postcolonial Literatures," divulges how twenty-first century literature represents nationalisms. Haekel's reading of Cole's *Everyday is for the Thief* exemplifies how photography destabilises the narrative voice. The narrative challenges the history of dominance and nationalism and the photograph subtly undermines any grand narratives of nationalisms, essentialisms and alterities. Examining Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and Habila's *Measuring Time*, Pardey's essay takes a closer look at new Nigerian writers and audiences. The "Western or Westernized agents construct Nigerian authors as market-driven tools and their audiences as equally passive stooges" (187) as part of neo-colonial ideologies. This effort thwarts any cultural endeavour put forward by new Nigerian novels. Employing the theoretical frameworks of Gilroy and O'Tool, Lammer reads Gardam's trilogy which refashions the end of British colonisation by validating it as a noble act. In a surprising turn, the narrative configures Britain as a victim of imperialism to formulate the notion of a "British postcolonial novel." Härtl's essay explores how Walcott employs Joseph Conrad as a "metonym of imperialist literature" (235) in *White Egrets* to formulate varied strata of interpretation and expose the convoluted reflection towards English language and literary tradition.

Nationalism and the Postcolonial examines and represents how the postcolonial viewpoint can enlighten the discourse on nationalism and vice versa. It not only acknowledges the parallels between postcolonial and nationalism studies but also recognizes the gaps in approaching these topics in intersection. Further, it emphasizes the significance of accommodating the theories and issues of nationalism in postcolonial studies. Essays from various postcolonial nations across the globe add varied perspectives and demonstrate how nationalisms function in subtle and permeating manner. While the essays discuss the impact of Western nationalism on the postcolonial nationalisms, it does not explicate how postcolonial nations have configured nationalisms, in many shades, to marginalize their own citizens. Postcolonial nationalisms are schematic in its ways attempting to homogenize by ignoring differences. *Nationalism and the Postcolonial* is discerning and resourceful. The book will serve as a groundwork for those who endeavour further research on the intersections of postcolonial studies, nationalisms and popular culture. The essays in this volume is suitably marshalled to engage a dialogue between postcolonial studies and nationalism studies.