

Post colonial essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

PostColonial Literature Essay 3. With reference of at least two short stories from the course, consider in what ways either Desai, Munro, Galgut and Rushdie's stories are Postcolonial texts. You may consider issues such as home and homelessness, absences in the text, place, positionality or anything you feel is relevant to your attempt at decoding postcolonial identities. Post-colonial literature can be considered as a body of literary writings that reacts to the discourse of colonization.

Post-colonial writers focus on issues such as de-colonization and the political and cultural independence of people formerly subjugated to colonial rule. However post-colonial literature cannot be described only by the definition above, many other issues have to be considered in order to fully understand post-colonial texts. In order to understand post-colonial texts, one has to focus on two post-colonial writers: Anita Desai and Damon Galgut. To begin with, Anita Desai is an Indian novelist and short story writer, especially noted for her sensitive portrayal of the inner life of her female characters.

Desai prefers the concerns of Westernized, middle-class characters rather than those facing the majority of India. Desai has comments on her work "My novels are no reflection of Indian society, politics or character. They are my private attempt to seize upon the raw material of life." "Diamond Dust"(2000), a second Desai's short story collection, features a selection of tales set in North America and India, Indian characters and concerns figure in all of them, illuminating Desai's thematic preoccupation with the psychological effects on multiculturalism.

A short story called " Five Hours to Simla or Faisla" was written by Desai. Shubha Tiwari in " Critical responses to Anita Desai" argues that " Five Hours to Simla Or Faisla is one of the most successful stories in this collection because of the clarity of the motives in it. It is a humorous story about the adamant attitude of a Sardarji causing a good deal of tension to the travelers on the way to Simla. " In my opinion, " Five hours to Simla or Faisla" can be called as a post-colonial text for many reasons.

First of all, I think that key character is a crucial thing while talking about post-colonial texts. A key character in this text is really important as short stories tend to be more interesting in characterisation. In this story the key character is the mother's character as it shows tradition-bound patriarchal culture in India: mother's responsibility to take care of children and not having a say in the family, being less important than the father / husband. At that stage Desai tries to focus on middle-class women in contemporary India as they attempt to overcome social limitations.

Writers' qualification is also very important in post-colonial texts as it reflects why the author chose to talk about this particular subject in their text.

Desai's qualification is feminine and we can see why mother's (the wife's) character is such an important thing in this short story. Her qualification is also somehow engaged in as to why her daily life is occupied with the complexities of modern Indian culture from a feminine perspective, while highlighting the female Indian predicament of maintaining self-identity as an individual woman. Being an immigrant, Desai sees differences between her culture and Western world.

Talking about the mother's character, she tries to show the limited opportunities for women in Indian society; she tries to find the dissolution of traditional Indian values and Western stereotypes of India. Talking about central characters, we can consider family as central characters in this story as Desai focus on family relationship so much in this text. She talks from a third person perspective " she", " he" and she never mentioned family member names, so she place very long distance between readers and family-unnamed characters makes a little bit difficult to talk about them for readers.

Secondly, language/style is also really important in post-colonial texts. Desai's literary language is not her native language, but English. She uses fluid language and a less flaky, descriptive style. She writes in a very natural way. This text is really interesting in linguistic terms, for example Desai in this text uses words such as kohl which means German politician who served as chancellor of West Germany. We can see here that Desai tries to focus on her real roots as her mother was German.

Thirdly, it is worth to talk about identity in this text as identity is a key issue in post-colonial text. Desai use this story to solidify, through criticism and celebration, an emerging national identity, which she has taken on the responsibility of representing. Desai in this text represents post-independence India while she is talking about traffic jam. Traffic jam is like a symbol (symbolism is also an important thing in most post-colonial texts) of the stagnancy of the Indian society: India had never formerly existed and so it a huge issue - national identity crises in India.

Traffic jam also symbolizes that members of a postcolonial society have an identity which has been shaped jointly by their own unique cultural and community history, intertwined with that of the colonial power. Desai tries to show cultural and social changes that have swept India since its independence from Britain in 1947. Key passages also play a vital role in post-colonial texts. The text I have chosen is: " She did not need to draw upon her thumb juices for long. The news of the traffic jam on the highway had spread like ripples from a stone thrown.

From somewhere, it seemed from nowhere for there was no village bazaar, marketplace or stalls visible in that dusty dereliction, wooden barrows came..."(p. 122) I think that this passage shows that the market place finally appeared in Indian society. Market place at this stage is very important as it represents the centre of the community; it connects community together again after British oppression; it is like a sense of community even in stagnancy; it represents a whole nation again.

It is always important to look at the title in post-colonial texts. The " Five hours to Simla or Faisla" title is no exception. Of course, we first look at Five hours to Simla because it makes sense for us- and the text in general represents it, but when we are looking deeper in the text context we make sure that Faisla is an important part of the title too. Faisla in English means judgment/ verdict, so how it is relative to this text? Traffic jam as I said is a symbol of stagnation of the Indian society.

It also represents that Indian people are waiting someone to take control of India; to connect all religions together into one India identity/ into one native

India. India was damaged by being colonized, so who will bring this country together? Indian people really need someone to take a verdict/leadership. Opening and ending of the text are essential parts of analysis of the post colonial texts too. Desai ends her text with no great judgment and resolution. Short story writers are tend to leave things open.

They can't really solve the problems, but they can represent the problems from all angles and allows people to judge. Another short story, which I would like to analyze is "The Lover" from "In a Strange Room" (2010) written by Damon Galgut, a South African novelist. I will start with a speaking person. The narrator is sometimes referred to in the first person singular, sometimes in the third. All this makes connection and at the same time disconnection in one's mind, especially because Galgut is free and easy with conventional punctuation.

Galgut writing style and punctuation is unusual in a way that he does not use any questions marks. Identity is also very important figure in this text. We can see that identity in this text is a migrant identity- the main character in this text is lost in this world, " he has not made a home for himself". By this text, the author means that the character has not found a place in the world that he could call home, he doesn't feel right, and is trying to find a place where he would feel accepted and content.

Therefore he travels to Zimbabwe, without having planned anything " No particular intention brings him to Zimbabwe, all those years ago. He simply decides one morning to leave and gets on a bus that same night. " He also tries to find this place, that in his imagination he could call home. In the text

the narrator says " Somebody has a map and knows which way to go", he refers to how other people are different than him in a way that they have planned their routine, and have a place they can call home, whereas he hasn't got any routes or plans, as he feels lost.

In my opinion, him travelling around, symbolizes the fact that he is lost. He is trying to change his surroundings, he is trying to find a community, home, to find someone to love. " If I was with somebody, he thinks, with somebody I loved, then I could love the place and even the grave too, I would be happy to be there. " He emphasizes the fact that he is desperately trying to find a lover, a person who he would love, and that that person would make the surrounding right for him, that only then he would feel happy in the place.

The character feels guilt, because he is trying to find a place that he could call home, and a person that he could call his lover, but fails to do that, and therefore he feels guilty. The title " The Lover" reflects the whole point of this story. In my opinion, the title refers to that person that the main character is looking for throughout his journey. That person in my opinion is the Irish woman that he meets in the hotel and starts his journey. We are told that the moment when they leave the hotel, him and the Irish woman, is the moment when the " real journey begins". Sometimes it happens as you leave your house, sometimes it's a long way from home. " We are told that even though the main character of the story has travelled for a while, his journey has only begun at that time when he, and his ' lover', leave the hotel, to go to Malawi. Even though there is no evidence that the woman is feeling any romantic feelings for him, his journey only begins now, and this Irish woman gives him hope, and he thinks that she could be her lover, in my

opinion. Class issues are very obvious in this text. The officials at the border of Malawi are described as very ignorant, and incompetent.

This is due to the fact that when they were told by the tourists, that they were informed by their embassy that they wouldn't require a Visa. After that the officials shouted at them, and told them that they were wrong, and sent them back to get the Visa. This shows that the officials aren't well informed, and also badly mannered. This goes to show that the stereotype that most African's are very narrow minded is still very much true. They wouldn't allow foreign people to go through the boarded without a Visa, even though it wasn't required, but they did allow some South African's through without a Visa.

In conclusion, I believe that in order to understand post-colonial text you may consider issues such as identity, story title, characters, language, style, key passages, home and homelessness, place and etc. References: Anita Desai (2000). *Diamond Dust*, " Five Hours to Simla or Faisla". Damon Galgut (2010). *In a Strange Room*, " The Lover". Hart, Jonathan; Goldie Terrie (1993). " Post Colonial theory". In: <http://books.google.com/books?id=CTJGiLG9AeoC&pg=PA155#v=onepage&q&f=false> Word count: 1, 967.