

**POST-COLONIAL INTRUDER IN M. MUKUNDAN'S RADHA
RADHA MATHRAM: AN ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

Using the term 'Post Colonialism' in the complex and increasingly convoluted world of today is a tricky affair. Its elements have so seamlessly infiltrated into the very being of everyday existence that tracing them back to its roots is hardly a clear-cut path. While the colonialist narrative has been dominated by the theory of binary oppositions, the post-colonial phase obliterated these boundaries through an overlapping of the realms of dominance. The resulting arbitrariness and re-articulation of identity against the hierarchy of imperialism has become a defining feature of post-colonial discourse.

This subjective derogation of culture over time and the denial of all attributes of humanity have created a deep-seated identity crisis in the colonized people. Even if inducted into the colonizer's world, entitled with a similar education and given the same privileges, these people will continue to see themselves and be treated as outsiders. The impact of such a self-legitimising conditioning of the oppressed by the oppressors has far-reaching consequences. The world becomes based on a reality as interpreted by the rule makers. In the process, the marginalized lose their identity. Through this paper, I intend to present a case study of Radha, the protagonist in the M Mukundan's novel Radha Radha Mathram; and through her, an attempt has been made to explore the nuanced ways in which our sense of identity is inextricably linked to post-colonial behavior.

KEYWORDS: *Post Colonialism, Hybridity, Existentialism, Identity Crisis, Subaltern*

INTRODUCTION

The trumpet of Malayalam modernity can be mainly traced through the works of Maniyambath Mukundan [commonly known as M. Mukundan], also nicknamed as 'Mayyazhiyude Kathakaran' (The storyteller of Mayyazhi). In 2008, Mukundan's magnum opus *Mayyazhippuzhayude Theerangalil* (On the banks of Mayyazhi) fetched him the award for the best novel. Mukundan's novel provided a platform for the readers to know much about Mayyazhi and the aesthetic sense of Mahi. The French government conferred on him the title of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres in 1998 for his contribution to literature. He served as the president of Kerala Sahitya Akademi from October 2006 until March 2010. As a prominent writer, critic, debator, Mukundan demonstrates his own stampede in every aspect like cultural, political, religious level as such. Through the short story, 'Radha Radha Mathram' the author is trying to portray the issue of 'Identity Crisis' that one may have to face in one's life. From the title itself, it reveals the alienation of Radha in which she

is adheres to. With this paper, I wish to squeeze out the multiple layers of postcolonial aspects through which Radha was forced to move on.

Tracing back to certain scholarly articles and journals in the late seventies, Post Colonialism emerged as a full-fledged concept with the publication of Edward Said's "Orientalism" in 1978. According to him, Orientalism was a political vision of reality which promoted the difference between the familiar and the strange. Said elaborate the definition of the Orientalist as anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient by a basic precept, an 'ontological and epistemological distinction made between them where the fundamental opposition between East and West is 'the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, mind, destiny so on.² If post colonialism stands for the notion after colonialism and 'colonialism is defined in terms of binary division in between the colonizer and colonized. The traditional binary modules of political struggle –like models of colonizer/colonized, oppressor/oppressed, first/third, center /margin, Metropolitan/peripheral, Local/Global etc still haunt post-colonialist aspects of the contemporary political identity.

According to Balagangadhara and Bloch in their essay, "Colonialism, Colonial Consciousness, and Political Theory", assert that

'Colonialism is not merely a process of occupying lands and extracting revenues. It is not a question of encouraging the colonized to ape the Western Countries in trying to be like them. It is not even about colonizing the imaginations of a people by making them dream that they too will become 'modern', developed and sophisticated. It goes deeper than any of these. Colonialism denies the colonized people and cultures their own experiences, it makes them alien to themselves it actively presents descriptions of their own experiences except in terms defined by the colonizers'.

In the story, 'Radha Radha Alone, manifest the alienation of Radha from the circumambient circle. She trysts to authorize herself in that colonized world, but in vain. At the outset of the story, the writer brings the attention of the readers to the aura of Existentialist philosophy³, through which Radha depict the journal of Samuel Beckett⁴. While seeing her lover Suresh, she became highly expressive and deleted into her happiness. But the young, energetic, iconic figure Suresh cannot identify the hybrid girl 'Radha'. Hybridity refers to the integration or mingling of cultural signs and practises from the colonizing and the colonized cultures. The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practises, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching and dynamic, as well as oppressive. For Post-Colonial critics, Hybridity is one of the recurrent encompassed conceptual leitmotifs as it destabilizes the colonial superiority for authority or unquestionable authenticity. According to Jenni Ramone, Hybridity is a response that destabilizes colonial fixity and rigidity. He insists that hybridity does not assume a comfortable coming together of colonizer and colonized or any other binary opposition. Throughout the story, Radha trying to convey that she is Radha and she is for her own native people. But no one understands her and no one is focussing on her. The herald cry of the native can be seen here.

"For the land has lost the memory of the most secret places.

²In ' Postcolonial Theories' Jenni Ramone argues this taken from Said's " Orientalism: Western Concepts of the Orient".

³In 'Existential Philosophy' the belief is that people are searching to find out who and what they are throughout life as they make choices based on their experiences, beliefs, and outlook.

⁴Beckett was an Irish novelist, playwright, translator mainly associated with the 'Theatre of the Absurd.'

We see the moon but can't remember its meaning.

A dark skin is a chain but it cannot recall the name of its tribe."

[' The Arrivants' by Edward Brathwaite.]

Radha stubbornly believes that she belongs to that colonized world and she tries to reveal it by again and again highlighting the same world "I am Radha". Though she is Radha and it is her own native world, no one is accepting her and adopting her. They didn't open their eyes to the scattered thoughts and dreams of Radha. With a jeering smile her father asked Radha, 'Good thing, How can u crooked up stories?' [p.220]. Radha astonished at that time because the people who had given her birth can't identify her hence it's an experience which is going to kill by herself. Identity is based on a distinction of the self from what is believed to be and not to believe self.

In the 'Satanic Verses' of Salman Rushdie, a Bangladeshi woman, Hind Sufyan, a migrant living in London bemoans of her lost identity. This lost is mainly accompanied by a loss of her language in the colonized way. She knew her language very well though she can't follow the language of the colonize people. Language forms a crucial part in the post-colonial analysis of work of literature within and outside its boundaries. Here the language of Radha can't be appreciated by 'others', though she is repeating the word- 'I am Radha.' [219] The lament of Radha is the epitome of all the native tribes of that community.

Nugugi Wa' Thiongo through his work, "Decolonising the Mind" speaks about the importance of African literature, culture, tradition etc. Basically, African literature is oral to Ngugi's way of seeing, so one may have understood its impulse through its language, culture etc. Through this work Ngugi questioning the assumption that English Literature and the English Language is more appropriate for the African University for teaching African literature and African Language. Replacing colonial capitalism with indigenous capitalism is not well enough, replacing English Literature with African Literature written in English is not enough; instead, Ngugi calls for an Africa which is 'culturally and economically free'.

It has been rightly said that one can take a person out of his country but not the country out of his mind. In the Post-Colonial world 'Home' has become extremely complicated. While Radha's father compelling her to go out from her own home, she became rootless, insecure and vulnerable. She asks herself, without home where she has to go? Her cry echoed indigenous people who settled there.

In Derek Walcott in his 'A Far Cry from Africa', states the dilemma in the minds of the poet- how to reconcile the past with the present, in the post-colonial era, becomes the burden of his poetry.

"A Wind is ruffling the tawny pelt

Of Africa, Kikuyu, quick as flies

Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt

Corpses are scattered through a paradise."

The concept of 'otherness', which includes, both identity and difference so that every 'other' different than and excluded by in a dialectically created and includes the values and meaning of the colonizing culture even as it rejects its power to define. 'Other' means anyone who is separate from one's self. Radha was considered as 'Other' by the community in which she stands.

In an article, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' by Gayathri Chakravathi Spivak explicitly suggest that Subaltern is, by definition, outside of the circuits of institutional recognition and validation. In the story of 'Radha Radha Mathram', this marginalization would be doubled. Double marginalization can be sketched here through the portrayal of a girl and that of an indigenous creature. Moreover, Spivak adds that the subaltern must be unrepresentable, and so, if the subaltern is made representable, this proves that 'there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself.' Here too the iconic figure Radha as a mixing up, upturning and dismantling negative representations, the strategic line of attack taken by the colonial discourse. At the last line of the story, established its voice that all the natural and unnatural combat reverberates in a single voice that you are not Radha and we don't know about you. Thus colonialism intervenes and the chance of discovering one's own tradition, culture, and history is lost.

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