

The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English

By Jahan Ramazani

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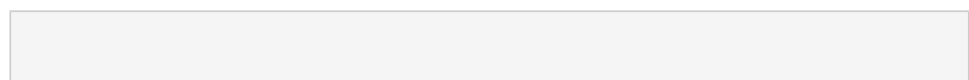
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In recent decades, much of the most vital literature written in English has come from the former colonies of Great Britain. But while postcolonial novelists such as Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, and V. S. Naipaul have been widely celebrated, the achievements of postcolonial poets have been strangely neglected.

In *The Hybrid Muse*, Jahan Ramazani argues that postcolonial poets have also dramatically expanded the atlas of literature in English, infusing modern and contemporary poetry with indigenous metaphors and creoles. A rich and vibrant poetry, he contends, has issued from the hybridization of the English muse with the long resident muses of Africa, India, and the Caribbean. Starting with the complex case of Ireland, Ramazani closely analyzes the work of leading postcolonial poets and explores key questions about the relationship between poetry and postcolonialism. As inheritors of both imperial and native cultures, poets such as W. B. Yeats, Derek Walcott, Louise Bennett, A. K. Ramanujan, and Okot p'Bitek invent compelling new forms to articulate the tensions and ambiguities of their cultural in-betweenness. They forge hybrid figures, vocabularies, and genres that embody the postcolonial condition.

Engaging an array of critical topics, from the aesthetics of irony and metaphor to the politics of nationalism and anthropology, Ramazani reconceptualizes issues central to our understanding of both postcolonial literatures and twentieth-century poetry. The first book of its kind, *The Hybrid Muse* will help internationalize the study of poetry, and in turn, strengthen the place of poetry in postcolonial studies.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

While crowds admire South Asian and African novelists like Rushdie or Achebe, American readers academic and otherwise don't care enough about verse from developing nations. Jahan Ramazani (*Poetry of Mourning*) hopes to change all that with *The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English*. In cogent and illuminating chapters, Ramazani (who teaches at the University of Virginia) considers both the cultural work and the aesthetic choices of five key poets, among them Louise Bennett (Jamaica), Okot p'Bitek (Uganda), A.K. Ramanujan (India) and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott.

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From Library Journal

"No art," said T. S. Eliot in 1945, "is more stubbornly national than poetry." This may explain why postcolonial anglophone literature is represented in academic discourse more or less exclusively by such names as Chinua Achebe, V.S. Naipaul, and Salman Rushdie, all of whom are novelists. Ramazani, whose *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1994, makes a valuable contribution to an understanding of postcolonial literature with this insightful analysis of the work of five postcolonial poets: A.K. Ramanujan (India), Louise Bennett (Jamaica), Okot p'Bitek (Uganda), Derek Walcott (St. Lucia), and, startlingly, Ireland's William Butler Yeats. That great poet, like the others, was born into a colonial population under British rule and wrote in the aftermath of decolonization. All five "grew up in the potentially productive tension between an imposed and an inherited culture productive, that is, for the powerful literary mind that can create imaginative forms to articulate the dualities, ironies, and ambiguities of this cultural in-betweenness." Thus, these "hybrid" poets like every postcolonial writer of merit have the ability to avoid a narrow provincialism on the one hand and, on the other, a shallow cosmopolitanism. In fact, one of the pleasures of reading this book is to see how so many so-called Third World writers articulate a cultural and historical vision that is so much broader than that of self-appointed sophisticates. Recommended for academic libraries. David Kirby, Florida State Univ., Tallahassee

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From the Inside Flap

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Ronnie Johnson:

The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this guide has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to place every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English yet doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource information that maybe you can be among it. This great information can easily drawn you into new stage of crucial considering.

Donna Graham:

In this particular era which is the greater particular person or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become considered one of it? It is just simple method to have that. What you have to do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of many books in the top record in your reading list will be The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hillside can get you closer in growing to be precious person. By looking way up and review this book you can get many advantages.

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