

Figure 10: Postmodernism and Postcolonialism

Nonmodern

Vedic ideal of caste reciprocities (Das, Marriott)
Village India idyll (*Peacocks and Dreams*)
Hindu/Buddhist nonattachment & compassion, *moksha* or *nirvana* (an ideal behind many allusions, e.g., *Samskara*, or, reformulated, in “The Fourth Ashram”)
Tribal & earth mother motifs (Jayakar, *River Sutra*)
Mining its strategic & critical resources (Nandy)

Modernist

Existentialist individualism (*Samskara*)
Liberal Secularism (Anand’s *Untouchable*)
Marxism (Ahmad; Roy’s “Comrade Pillai”)
High Modernism (V.S. Naipaul)
Liberationist identities (*Women Writing in India*, Dalit lit)
Ironic spatial form of alienated being (Manto’s *Kingdom’s End and Other Stories*)

Postmodernist

Nostalgias for lost idylls, either ancient (*The Tribal Hangover*) or pre-Partition (*The Broken Mirror*)
Recoding Modernism (Rye’s “Mirror to Mirror,” *Fair Tree of the Void*)
Understanding the decoding of form, structure, and being *Moonlight into Marzipan*, *God of Small Things*, *Churning of the City*)
Strategizing the multiple nomadic self (*Ghosts of Vasu Master*, *The Other Garden*)
Demystifying or denaturalizing “culture” (“India Gate,” *That Long Silence*)
Ethnic violence as postmodernity’s backwash (*All is Burning*, *Lajja*, *Funny Boy*)

Imperialism

British Army (Plessy, Great Mutiny)
Civil Service “meritocracy”
Indian railway system
British education and cultural events
Regulating trade, labor, manufacture
Legal & administrative system “rationalizing native customs”

Nationalism

Secular state displacing local Maharajahs
Economic Development creating urban middle class and displacing traditional elites (*Inside the Haveli*)
Class suffusing older structures (region, caste, community)
State-run media dispensing “public affairs” and National Culture
Non-aligned block negotiating middle way in Cold War

Postmodernity: (the new world order)

Economic “liberalization” begins 1991, bringing foreign corporations in as major players
Larger global economic agenda set by IMF/WB etc
Satellite television comes in 1993 bringing world television to every village
Intensifying international labor traffic: skilled workers (engineers, doctors) to U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia, etc, while unskilled workers head for the Gulf states
Identity=work+consumer, with traditional and demographic markers increasingly subordinated to economically defined roles, validities, skills
Anger, frustration, anxiety condensed in communal politics
No history, just scenarios purveyed by media & ideologues