



The Hybrid Muse: Postcolonial Poetry in English

Jahan Ramazani

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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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