

# Exploring the Complexities of Postcolonialism and the Dynamics of Power Relations through the Critical Analysis of Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy*: A Study on the Resistance, Identity, and Hybridity of Postcolonial Thought

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## Abstract

Ashis Nandy focuses on colonialism and its effects in her book *The Intimate Enemy*. He mentions colonisation of both the body and the intellect. Nandy questions accepted notions of colonialism and emphasises the significance of hybridity in postcolonial thought. The book does a good job of explaining the reasons behind the British Raj's protracted rule as well as the mutual effects of coloniser and colonised. Nandy asserts that there is no unbalanced connection between colonisers and colonised people. He objects to the idea that colonisers are always "victorious" and colonised people are always "victims". *The Intimate Enemy* is primarily a study of the epistemic structure and intellectual capacities that continue colonialism's legacy in India under British control. According to Nandy, eradicating colonialism requires starting right there in people's minds. The downtrodden of the globe are one, and those who torture others are also complicit in this practise. In this essay, I want to concentrate on how Nandy reinterprets the idea of postcolonialism to open new vistas of thinking that lead to universalism, humanism, and self-realization. He does this by attempting to undermine the theory of the connection between colonisers and colonised.

**Keywords:** Postcolonialism, Colonizer- Colonized, Hybridity, Resistance, Psychology

## Introduction

Postcolonialism, often known as postcolonial studies, is an academic field that uses examples from history, political science, philosophy, and sociology to examine, explain, and address the cultural legacies of colonialism. The ultimate goal of Postcolonialism is to combat the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. Postcolonialism focuses at decolonizing the future.

Postcolonialism as a literary theory deal with debates originated in countries that once were colonies of other nations. Postcolonialism is the struggle which is followed by many, involving the subaltern, a group of marginalized and least powerful. Postcolonial theory inspires thoughts about the colonized unique confrontation to the colonizer. Postcolonial theory concentrates on the process in which literary works produced by the colonizers misrepresents the incident and facts, and imprints the inadequacy, of the colonized people who try to pronounce their individuality and regain their bygone days in the face of those unavoidable distinctiveness. Postcolonialism is concerned with the evaluation and creation of literary works created in formerly or presently colonized realms, or literature produced in colonizing countries which is concerned with colonization. It deals with the method in which literature in colonizing countries changes the traditions, scenes, metaphors, language and many other aspects of the colonized people.

According to Nandy, actual colonialism embarked on after 1947, while the outward reinforces to colonial philosophy ruined and the impedance to it continued. He highlights that colonialism is an actual loss to the cherished idea and identity of the whites comparing the loss of Indians during colonial period. Nandy argues that the impact of colonialism extends far beyond its physical and material effects, but also has significant psychological and emotional consequences. He contends that colonialism not only inflicted economic and political subjugation on the colonized but also stripped them of their cultural identity, autonomy, and sense of self-worth. Nandy believes that this loss of identity and sense of self is not limited to the colonized but also affects the colonizers themselves. Moreover, Nandy suggests that the notion of a pure and homogenous identity is a colonial construct and that hybridity and plurality are intrinsic to postcolonial thought. This idea of hybridity challenges the binary thinking of the colonizer and the colonized and creates a space for the expression of multiple identities and perspectives. The research paper explores these ideas and argues that Nandy's work provides a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of postcolonialism and power relations. It highlights the importance of examining not only the material effects of colonialism but also its psychological and cultural impacts on both the colonized and the colonizers. By examining the complexities of postcolonial thought and the dynamics of power relations, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of the legacy of colonialism and the challenges of decolonization.

## Discussion

The book consists of two essays – “The Psychology of colonialism” and “The Uncolonized Mind”. Nandy points out how colonialism sustained in India and his responses to it are unique in these two essays. The first essay deals with the psychological perspective of colonialism and in the essay, Nandy points out that the danger in the experience of colonialism is self-identity. For him colonialism is not only about economic gain and political power but is a state of mind. Nandy distinguishes between the first colonization – the military conquest and second colonization – the colonization of the mind. In order to carry out the second colonization, both cultures (colonizers and colonized) have to be altered and come to a consensus and a shared consciousness. For this to happen, an active role is given to the colonized in contrast to the idea put forward by Fanon. In the process of sharing both agents become hybrids and their self-definition is blurred. In this regard Nandy gives an example to show how the British categories of sex influenced not only the ruled but the rulers. It is therefore, not only the colonizers that influence the colonized but the colonized that come to influence colonizers in the same way. It could be said that Nandy challenges the British -colonizers- to think about the effects that colonization had on themselves.

The book is also a study of postcolonial consciousness. Nandy's work is grounded on the hypothesis that all misery made by man is one and everyone has an obligation. For Nandy previously the postcolonial writings were concerned with race, gender, decolonisation and how knowledge is controlled by the West. Nandy finds a gap here – the absence of studies on colonialism dealing with the psychological impact in South Asia. In the *Intimate Enemy* he tried to fill in the gap. The first chapter of the book explains that in the initial stages of formation of colonies, there used to be reciprocated reverence for each other's ethnic disparity – the evangelist activities were forbidden and Indian rules and regulations controlled the judiciary and education systems in India. It was the middle class British and the new generation of colonizers who bind the colonialism with the cultural and political aspects according to the book. The book cites example of Madhusudhan Dutt, who in his book *Meghnadvadh* tries to justify Meghnad

(Ravan's son) in his act, as loyal to his kingdom and being a true Kshatriya by fighting for his father and for the nation. In this way colonizers had succeeded in imbibing their way of looking towards society in India, which proved to be their strength, and a point of success to the civilizing mission. In the first chapter of the book the author uses social structure and psychological structure of both colonizers and colonized as an instrument in explaining the nature of colonialism in the era of British India. The book gives an excellent insight into the thinking pattern of various strata of society. It talks about three major concepts on the basis of generalization of sexual orientation of a person – Purusatva, Natitva and Klimbatva. The last one became the nature of colonialism in India and the colonizers were less of morality driven and more of dominance driven in later stages.

In the first essay Nandy compares colonialism with a game and classifies the colonized as imitative players, counter-players and innocent non-players who are not willing to play. For him the last type of players i.e., the non-players can provide the most effective resistance by making the game invalid. He attributes this "non-player" trait as a characteristic of Indian culture which protects itself against the conception that – "The Indian isnegotiating; he has aneffortlessidentity-delineation, and he is eager to study the traditions of his civilized mastersunconditionally." (Nandy 1983,p-104).Nandy states that the imitative players and the counter – players make the Western ideas effective. He himself is guilty of the same process when he writes in English. He confesses: - "English is not my language. Though I have developed a taste for it, it was once forced upon me." (p-xix). Thenext part of the essay discusses in details the epistemictake up by the British to vanquish India using the emblem of femininity and masculinity. There was theprojection of procreative young men who departed about civilizing thebarbarians. These adolescent men confronted a dilemma in India as the Indians were not a nation of savages. The essay additionally discusses how the ancient socio-religious revival movements and the military nationalism of educated middle-class youth in India reacted to the British image of hyper-masculinity. These individuals had a fundamental fault since, according to their worldview, they overvalued the British and so recognised their supremacy. Mahatma Gandhi made the proper choice by ignoring them and painting a powerful, genderless image that was consistent with Indian thought in order to "cure the British". Nandy praises the non-players in the first essay for creating a version of the West that allows them to coexist with another West while tolerating the West's dominating self. According to Nandy, the colonised Indians are not completely at the mercy of the colonisers. They started taking part in a moral and intellectual freedom that was independent of sadness. Because of ongoing re-evaluation, the occident is still a functioning civilisation.The second essay is about the legacy of colonialism. It propounds the hunt forequalitybeyond the western and colonized worlds as aconsequenceof colonialism, as there was interchange of conceptions and clash of lifestyles. The author clarifiesthe issue applying the biographies of Rudyard Kipling and Sri Aurobindo as conspicuouslysamebutextremelydifferentevidences. The book talks about intimacy with colonial ideas while protesting against it.The lastessayof*The Intimate Enemy*"The Uncolonized Mind"endsby the declarationthat Nandydoes notrequest"to reverse thestandard stereotypes to create a neo-romantic ideology of the irrational, the mythic or therenunciatory" (Nandy 1983, p. 113). In another placein his book, Nandyexplicitly condemnsthewrongreplacementof either a supernaturalpostcolonialism groundedon a wonderfulvisualisationof the bygone daysorthe tougherrealismsof postcolonial India.As a substitute, he needsto highlightartisticvaguenessandmutability, both 'within India and within the West' (Nandy 1983, p. 74;Nandy's emphasis): the opponentinvolvingmasculinism and androgyny—or the

‘feminine-in-the-masculine’—predominates in each community. However, India is different on this count, and not just because of her record of colonial exploitation. Another part of the essay talks about the lasting impact of colonialism on the minds of colonizers who lost their bounds of dominance facing several moral crises. Some started beating family members, others expressed their state of mind by getting internally conflicted by the idea of Western culture. The book talks of Kipling’s way and Orwell’s way of looking at colonialism. For Kipling colonialism was necessary to civilize the Indians while Orwell felt that colonialism created seclusion and so loneliness to colonizers and hence it is not necessary. Oscar Wilde defied the very moral basis of colonialism. He gave a strong message to the marginalized in the society by defending their stigmatized presence in the world by rebelling. The book is involved with a colonialism which endures the downfall of empires. Nandy condemns “Western universalism” and proposes substituting it with an “alternative universalism” based on conventional Indian beliefs. What he fails to understand is that “Western universalism” is an incongruity in terms, as is “alternative universalism.” Universalism is simply universalism: it cannot be related to a particular society. His complementary universalism is really, therefore, only an exalted particularism. It may justifiably assault the iniquities of modernism. Succeeding Franz Fanon, Nandy’s application of psychology is invigorating for people immersed in the critical existential maxims of postcolonial thinking. Nandy’s analysis of Western prejudice is distantly further comprehensive, and it starts with his inherent refusal of the fundamental Freudian psycho-drama. Homi K. Bhabha’s modified elucidations of Fanon and extremely greater delicate use of psychoanalysis edifying appraisal as extracted from Lacan are in various methods estimated in *The Intimate Enemy*. But Bhabha favours to resolve simply for a superior grade of complication and confusion in the relationships involving colonized people and colonizer than one locates in Fanon. Perhaps, Nandy wanted to show not only the retrieval, through a discerning restoration of custom, of an ancient awareness of society. Nandy also suggests that he is in pursuit of somewhat like a pre-Oedipal concept of the individuality. Also, he is sketching in the features of Freud’s pre-Oedipal child exactly such qualities that Nandy demands were suppressed by occidental manliness, though they persevere in the Indian ‘feminine-in-the-masculine’. Nandy locates, in addition to Gandhi, but in several forms of Hindu parable, a soul that is revolutionary, frisky and innocent, that celebrates in its genderless demonstrations, and that shows confrontation to the foreign masters with the help of peaceful stubbornness. Where previous anti-imperial and postcolonial questions, particularly those motivated by Freud and Karl Marx, have asserted that the colonizer’s Prospero-like behaviour of the colonized as an aboriginal, innocent Caliban proficient in meticulous imitation must be inverted by stipulating on the mature, even aggressively confident, self-respect of the inhabited. Nandy highlights the chronological authenticity, traditional feasibility, and diplomatic effectiveness of a revolutionary pre-Oedipal consciousness that the colonizers had fabricated, to their individual disappointment in the case of Gandhi, with contempt and scorn.

## Conclusion

According to Nandy the innocent players finally won over the colonialists. Who battle against the colonialism unconsciously embrace it. For him the victim’s construction of the West is responsible for its suffering. There exists the non-West’s creation of West which provokes individual to be proper to the west’s additional identity. So, he speaks in favour of an alternative construction of the west for defeating the West.

Though there are disagreements and ambivalence in *The Intimate Enemy*, the book has given a new dimension in the reading of and thinking about the post-colonial texts. Throughout the last century the economic, cultural and political control under colonialism has repeatedly been studied. Departing with the tradition, Ashis Nandy explains how colonialism damaged the colonizers themselves, and how Gandhi and his companions opposed their rulers in British India by fabricating on the psychology, lifestyle and values of ordinary Indians. The liberty had to initiate from the colonized and ending with the colonizers. The persecuted of the world are one and the autocrat too is trapped in the ethnicity of domination. He reinterprets the concept of post-colonialism to open new dimensions of thought that leads towards universalism, humanism and self-realization.

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