

Literary Location and Dislocation of Myth in the Post/Colonial Anglophone World

The English-speaking world today is so diverse that readers need a gateway to its many postcolonial narratives and art forms. This collection of essays examines this diversity and what brings so many different cultures together. Whether Indian, Canadian, Australasian or Zimbabwean, the stories discussed focus on how artists render experiences of separation, belonging, and loss. The histories and transformations postcolonial countries have gone through have given rise to a wide range of myths that retrace their birth, evolution, and decline. Myths have enabled ethnic communities to live together; the first section of this collection dwells on stories, which can be both inclusive and exclusive, under the aegis of 'nation'.

While certain essays revisit and retell the crucial role women have played in mythical texts like the *Mahābhārata*, others discuss how settler colonies return to and reappropriate a past in order to define themselves in the present. Crises, clashes, and conflicts, which are at the heart of the second section of this

book, entail myths of historical and cultural dislocation. They appear as breaks in time that call for reconstruction and redefinition, a chief instance being the trauma of slavery, with its deep geographical and cultural dislocations. However, the crises that have deprived entire communities of their homeland and their identity are followed by moments of remembrance, reconciliation, and rebuilding. As the term 'postcolonial' suggests, the formerly colonized people seek to revisit and re-investigate the impact of colonization before committing it to collective memory. In a more specifically literary section, texts are read as mythopoeia, foregrounding the aesthetic and poetic issues in colonial and postcolonial poems and novels. The texts explored here study in different ways the process of mythologization through images of location and dislocation. The editors of this collection hope that readers worldwide will enjoy reading about the myths that have shaped and continue to shape postcolonial communities and nations.

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COVER IMAGE

Jai Prakash Yantra, astronomical sundial in the Jantar Mantar of Jaipur, Rajasthan (1734). Photograph (August 2012), © Benoît Luizard.

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