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## INDIAN POSTCOLONIAL DOCTRINES: PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES TO THE SEARCH AND RECONSTRUCTION OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

**Background.** *The article examines specific features of the formation of postcolonial thought in India, which is distinguished by active integration of its own philosophical tradition into modern discourse rather than its denial. The Indian experience demonstrates how cultural continuity, the concepts of Dharma, ahimsa and moral responsibility become the basis for postcolonial doctrines.*

**Methods.** *Descriptive, analytical, synthetic and comparative methods have been applied to identify the specifics of Indian postcolonial doctrines as well as an interdisciplinary approach to cover a wider range of cultural, social and political aspects of the formation of postcolonial doctrines.*

**Results.** *The study has shown that India's postcolonial thought is formed not only as a response to colonialism but as a continuation and reinterpretation of own historical and philosophical continuity. Traditional Indian schools of philosophy have not been supplanted by modernity but continue to influence modern theories of identity and resistance. The multiplicity of languages, religions, caste and regional traditions makes it difficult to identify a single inner structure of an Indian's identity. The colonial experience did not destroy this multiplicity but rather actualized the need for philosophical reinterpretation of unity through diversity, i.e., for formation of an identity as a conscious internal consolidation and not an externally imposed project.*

*The analysis made it possible to identify doctrinal differences between the key Indian postcolonial authors. The article presents an overview of the doctrines of Gayatri Spivak (asymmetry of political power and the "voice" of marginalized communities), Partha Chatterjee (internal cultural sovereignty), Homi Bhabha (the concept of hybridity and the "third space" theory) and Romila Thapar (decolonization of historiography and restoration of historical subjectivity of India). Thus, Indian postcolonial thought has been proved to be inhomogeneous, but it is represented by various methodological strategies that form an alternative to the Western type of thinking related to nation, history and subjectivity.*

**Conclusions.** *Indian postcolonial thought is based on a creative dialogue between tradition and the present, which ensures its lively evolution rather than a denial of the past. This affords Indian thinkers to form their own theoretical models unaffected by Western frameworks and going beyond the local context. In this regard, India offers universal intelligent tools for analyzing postcolonial experiences on a global scale. The question arises about the possibility of applying these doctrines as a universal methodology for other regions that have experienced colonial dependence.*

**Keywords:** *postcolonialism, Indian philosophy, doctrine, subalternity, "third space", decolonization of history.*

### Background

The Indian model of postcolonial development is distinguished not only by its political or socio-economic aspects but above all by its philosophical depth. Unlike many other regions where colonialism has led to a break with the past, the Indian experience has proven to be a practice of rethinking and integrating traditions. It is here that a unique discourse of nonviolent resistance, concepts of hybridity, subalternity as well as ethical and moral transformation of society are formed. In a global context, this is important for understanding neocolonial challenges that are relevant both for Ukraine and for the world.

**Purpose of the study** is a comprehensive analysis of philosophical underpinnings of the formation of postcolonial thought in India and identification of doctrinal differences in Indian approaches. To achieve the goal, a range of tasks should be completed, which is to analyze the historical and philosophical continuity of Indian culture as the basis of postcolonial self-determination, to describe the complexity of internal structure of the national identity of an Indian and to determine the philosophical differences between Indian postcolonial doctrines.

### Methods

The methods and source base of the study have been selected according to the purpose and specifics of the subject of research. Descriptive, analytical, synthetic and comparative methods have been used to clarify features of the formation of Indian variants of postcolonial doctrines. The interdisciplinary approach and methodology of historians, sociologists, and political scientists have also been used to show the continuity of Indian culture, identify basic moral and ethical narratives as well as their influence

on a wide range of postcolonial self-identification strategies and political thinking.

This methodological synthesis makes it possible not only to reconstruct the ethical and ideological narratives of the Indian resistance, but also to trace their transformation in modern postcolonial ideologies, discursive practices and identification models.

The source base used in the study corresponds to the purpose of the article and allows us to comprehensively analyze the philosophical foundations of postcolonial thought in India and the doctrinal differences in Indian approaches. We refer to the works of Indian authors such as Partha Chatterjee, Ramil Thapar and Mamta Rani, as well as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi K. Bhabha. This source base gives the possibility to combine local and global perspectives, historical and modern analyses of postcolonial processes.

### Results

The Indian philosophical tradition has a long historical continuity. The original culture, literature and social structure of India, although influenced by numerous external and internal transformations, preserved the continuity of conceptual axis built on the concepts of Dharma, cosmic order and moral responsibility of an individual to the world.

This continuity was not static: the Indian tradition functioned as a living system of interpretation, capable of redefining its own foundations without losing its identity, which was a determining factor in its resistance to colonial influence.

Colonialism did not destroy traditional culture completely, as in some African or American societies, but it was embedded therein causing a process of hybridization rather than a complete destruction (Rani, 2023).

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This "continuity" of the main cultural development of Indian society was also reflected in philosophy. The continuity of connection remains from the beginnings of philosophical knowledge in the sacred texts of the Vedas and the formation of Darshan's Astika and Nastika to modern Neo-Vedanta as one of the leading directions of modern Indian philosophy. The concepts laid down as the basis for understanding the world, society, and human destiny remained relevant both during its emergence and appearance in the first philosophical studies as well as during the Indian cultural renaissance (starting from the mid-nineteenth century). The same narratives allowed Indian society not just to relive the colonial experience but to philosophically rethink it.

Integrity and heredity are a characteristic feature of Indian philosophical thinking. Therefore, the concepts of Dharma and ahimsa became the basis of the teaching of the Mahatma Gandhi's resistance movement – Satyagraha. Old concepts were adopted to new historical contexts.

Philosophy, religion, norms and regulations promoted by them played an active role during the resistance movement in India. The ideas of ahimsa and Sathya became the resource that laid the foundation for the formation of a new political nation of Indians. Cristiano Gianolla considers Satyagraha not just as a political action but as a philosophical and ethical concept of responsibility: "It was also mobilized to overcome polarization between religious, social, and cultural groups in search of dialogue. Finally, Satyagraha included postcolonial provisions for a democratic system based on duty, empathy, and social love. Gandhi's theory and social work combined a critique of individualism, state centralism, and representation in liberal democracy and the construction of a political culture based on social love from the community level. Gandhi projected a socio-political theory of democratization through cognitive-emotional liberation from heteronomous processes of subjectivation in favor of the self-construction of subjectivity" (Gianolla, 2025).

Vedanta in the form of Neo-Hinduism became the doctrinal basis on which the ideological response to colonial hegemony was built. Philosophers, political and social figures of the twentieth-century India used the ideas of Vedanta, in particular Advaita, to criticize Western thinking. Proficiency in English helped not only apply the comparative methodology of "Western" and "Oriental" but also present their ideas to a wider audience, to give, first, a cultural, ideological precedent for the deployment of resistance to British rule, and then for the formation of their own postcolonial identity: "...in search for political and epistemic empowerment, the appeal to classical Advaita during this vibrant period of modern Indian philosophy gave rise to a rich and heterogeneous group of Indian academic philosophers who, established at some of the then most prominent Indian universities in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Allahabad, or Banaras, engaged in a genuine though troublesome enterprise of rethinking the Sanskrit Advaita in English, through Western categories of understanding, and within the grammar of their colonial predicament. Philosophers such as Anukul Chandra Mukerji (1888–1968), Ramachandra Dattatraya Ranade (1886–1957), Krishnachandra Bhattacharyya (1875–1949), Ras Bihari Das (1886–1945), Ghanshamdas Ratanmal Malkani (1892–1978), S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri (1893–1942), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975) to name just a few, were all to some extent acquainted with Kantian transcendental idealism, Hegelian absolute idealism, and the idealism of their British interpreters" (Odyniec, 2018).

This is a good example of how cultural continuity manifests itself in philosophy not as a complete rejection of the West, but as a transformation and adaptation of the past to modern dimensions.

Since India is multilingual, multi-religious and has a special social stratification (caste and Varna), accordingly, national identity is not a simple set of narratives common to the entire Indian society. All differences only deepened and aggravated during its stay in the status of a colony. Therefore, Indian identity was never one-dimensional and unified but existed as a polycentric and polyphonic structure (Thapar, 2000; Chatterjee, 1993).

In other words, India has never been ideologically monolithic throughout its history. The tradition of philosophizing was represented by Brahmanic darshans (Astika), Buddhist and Jain schools, wandering thinkers in the spirit of Charvaka and Lokayata, etc. Each of the directions had its own understanding of the fundamental ideological bases: anthropological, ontological, soteriological, etc.

In addition, the long period of Muslim influence also gave rise to its own syncretic intellectual environments, in particular the Bhakti and Sufi traditions of mutual reinterpretation of the Divine, which contributed to the formation of a dialogical culture of religious sensitivity, and not just confessional confrontation. Similarly, the ancient processes of Dravidian-Sanskrit interaction took place in South India, which significantly influenced the formation of local schools of philosophy, poetics and political theology.

Colonialism, on the one hand, deepened internal differences by codifying caste division (through population censuses and legal reforms), creating Muslim-Hindu opposition as a political category and introducing Western concepts of "religion", "nation", and "citizenship". However, on the other hand, it was colonial pressure that gave rise to the articulation of a new, conscious "Indianism", in which the ancient cultural continuity took on a modern political form. Partha Chatterjee calls it "an internal sphere of national and cultural sovereignty" that contrasted with colonial external modernity (Chatterjee, 1993).

Thus, an Indian identity was not based on a one-dimensional narrative, but rather on a historically accumulated structure of multi-layered, sometimes contradictory, though co-existing intellectual traditions capable of engaging in polemics, dialogue or flexible adaptation depending on the civilizational challenge.

The above-mentioned features of the formation of postcolonial doctrines by Indian researchers became the ground for creating a strong intellectual tradition. India has given the world key postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Spivak (Spivak, 1999), Partha Chatterjee (Chatterjee, 1993), Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 2004), Romila Thapar (Thapar, 2014). These authors not only analyzed India but also created a global theoretical framework enabling to understand postcolonial experience as a complex of interaction between tradition, power and identity, and are used to study postcolonial processes around the world.

Let us consider the doctrines proposed by the authors, highlighting their main idea. Gayatri Spivak emphasizes the importance of considering the asymmetric position of the authorities in relation to marginalized groups, namely, their ability to represent themselves in public administration bodies, participate in social discourse, and protect their interests in the areas of education, medical care, benefits, or access to certain positions. Historically, such groups "who had no right to speak" were women, representatives of the untouchable (Dalits), and more globally – colonized people. In other words, the interests of these social groups

are presented through the vision of the dominant groups or authorities of the hegemon country (e.g., Britain in case of India). In addition to defining the asymmetry of power, the next step in building a postcolonial doctrine is a critical reformulation of discourse. After all, being in the status of a colony does not mean just economic and political oppression, but also the formation of new cognitive, epistemological structures. The colonized subject is aware of oneself through the prism of the colonizer's power. Colonial power controls not only territories and resources, but also the way of thinking, interpretation of the world, and criteria of knowledge development, creating an epistemic asymmetry that Spivak defines as epistemic violence: "The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity" (Spivak, 1993, p. 76). The solution to this problem is a review of the political policy towards subaltern and marginalized groups through quotas for their representatives, educational programs, and legal protection mechanisms as well as giving them the opportunity to express themselves through alternative forms of discourse.

Partha Chatterjee takes a different line regarding the formation of postcolonial doctrine, which is based on the construction of own internal national sovereignty. In her article "Whose imagined community?" she mentions that nationalism is a feature typical for all postcolonial societies (Chatterjee, 1993). It is nationalism that becomes an anti-colonial project because it is formed as a response to colonial power and desire to protect the internal sphere of national culture. Therefore, it is common to turn to tradition at the same time adapting to modernity. First, such nationalism focuses on preserving the spiritual: language, culture, art, social practices, etc. And in the material sphere – economics, science, governance – the models introduced by the colonizer often remain unchanged – mostly because of their effectiveness. This division of spheres, according to P. Chatterjee, helps maintain cultural autonomy and not refuse modernization or achievements in the areas of economic management, trade, and governance.

Cultural autonomy and "internal sovereignty" become a platform for creativity, innovation, and the formation of national identity, even if state power remains colonial. In other words, the internal spiritual sphere is sovereign, and the external material one enables to attract adapted Western practices for the functioning of the state. Thus, P. Chatterjee shows that resistance to colonialism is not always direct, but often manifests itself through cultural autonomy and self-awareness, which forms a unique postcolonial logic.

An American researcher of Indian descent Homi Bhabha builds his postcolonial doctrine around the concepts of hybridity, mimicry and "third space". In his article "Of Mimicry and Man", he argues that the most effective governance tool is mimicry, i.e., when the colonized subject begins to reproduce the same cultural, political, and social practices as the colonizer. At the same time, a rather interesting effect is achieved – undermining the authority and power of the colonizer itself. Mimicry demonstrates that the colonizer's "civilizational mission" does not fully work, since colonized people can only partially assimilate without becoming full-fledged "Englishmen". He cites a passage from Charles Grant's work on partial introduction of Christianity in India as an example of this idea. Because by becoming as "educated

and civilized" as the British, the Indians will cease to obey (Bhabha, 1984). Thus, mimicry is constant tension between the colonizer's desire to maintain control and the natural development of history that gives rise to the phenomenon of mimicry, which, in turn, is the initial stage of hybridization and beginning of the "third space" formation.

The mechanism of constructing the "third space" requires the intersection of discourses on both sides. It is at this intersection that new meanings, cultural forms and ways of identity's existence arise, which do not belong either to the "pure" culture of the colonizer or to the "pure" culture of the colonized (Bhabha, 2004). New meanings, narratives, ideas and concepts are born here, which become the basis for decolonization and formation of a postcolonial identity. Bhabha demonstrates that postcolonial resistance is not always direct or confrontational but often occurs through creative rethinking and cultural adaptation. Such a new combination is hybridization.

In Indian discourse, the concepts of mimicry, hybridity, and Bhabha's "third space" reflect the specifics of postcolonial development. Indian intellectuals and figures used partial imitation of Western models not for direct assimilation, but for creative reinterpretation and integration of colonial and traditional practices. This enabled them to form their own multidimensional national identity. That is, the Indian experience shows that resistance to colonialism can manifest itself not only in open confrontation but also in the strategic intersection of cultural discourses, which gives rise to hybrid forms of self-consciousness and intellectual autonomy.

Another researcher, Romila Thapar, analyzes how historical narratives of colonial and pre-colonial India shape the modern understanding of the nation. She shows that the past becomes an active source of political and cultural reflection rather than just an object of academic research. Through deconstruction of colonial historiographical schemes, Thapar demonstrates that a critical reinterpretation of history allows for the restoration of complex identity, multi-layered cultural practices, and moral autonomy, laying the groundwork for India's modern intellectual tradition (Thapar, 2014). The researcher works in the field of "decolonization of history", i.e., post-colonial historical science, in her opinion, should clear the historical collective memory of the people as much as possible from colonial distortions and this should not be a method of propaganda or total strikethrough and rewriting in a new way, but an intellectual rethinking, a scientific revision. After all, finding its roots, traditions, and articulating important and close historical and cultural narratives will ensure the return of India's ability to independently determine its historical subjectivity.

It is particularly important that Indian researchers demonstrate a constant dialogue between ancient traditions and modern dimensions of political and ethical reflection rather than a linear development of culture, which makes India's intellectual tradition both local and universal.

#### **Discussion and conclusions**

Thus, Indian postcolonial thought is not secondary or purely reactionary to Western theoretical paradigms. It forms original concepts that can transcend the local context and thus influences global scientific and philosophical discourses. Through key concepts such as subalternity, hybridity, mimicry, and the "third space", Indian theorists have created intelligent tools that allow them to analyze the postcolonial experience of any part of the world – from Africa to the Caribbean.

Thus, Indian postcolonial thought is a source of new doctrines and methodologies that not only explain historical

and cultural processes but also reveal mechanisms of resistance, adaptation and creative rethinking of traditions.

In our opinion, the prospects for further research and discussion may be the question of the universality or suitability of India's postcolonial doctrines for other regions. That is, the study of whether colonial and postcolonial practices can become the basis for universal models of rethinking colonial experience that can combine historical continuity, ethical principles, and intellectual innovation.

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## ІНДІЙСЬКІ ПОСТКОЛОНІАЛЬНІ ДОКТРИНИ: ФІЛОСОФСЬКІ ПІДХОДИ ДО ПОШУКУ ТА РЕКОНСТРУКЦІЇ ВЛАСНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ

**Вступ.** Присвячено дослідженню специфіки формування постколоніальної думки Індії, яка вирізняється не запереченням, а активною інтеграцією власної філософської традиції у сучасний дискурс. Індійський досвід демонструє те, як культурна тяглість, концепти дгарми, агітси та моральної відповідальності стають основою для постколоніальних доктрин.

**Методи.** Застосовано описовий, аналітичний, синтетичний та порівняльний методи для виявлення специфіки індійських постколоніальних доктрин, а також міждисциплінарний підхід для охоплення більшого спектра культурних, соціальних та політичних аспектів формування постколоніальних доктрин.

**Результати.** Установлено, що постколоніальна думка Індії формується не просто як реакція на колоніалізм, а як продовження та переосмислення власної історико-філософської тяглість. Традиційні індійські філософські школи не витіснила модерність, вони продовжують впливати на сучасні теорії ідентичності та опору. Множинність мов, релігій, кастових і регіональних традицій ускладнює ідентифікацію єдиної внутрішньої структури ідентичності індійця. Виявлено, що колоніальний досвід не зруйнував цієї множинності, а радше актуалізує потребу у філософському переосмисленні єдності через різноманітність, тобто у формуванні ідентичності як свідомої внутрішньої консолідації, а не зовнішньої наві'язаного проекту.

У ході аналізу виокремлено доктринальні відмінності між ключовими індійськими постколоніальними авторами. Представлено огляд доктрин Гаятрі Співак (асиметричність політичної влади та "голос" маргіналізованих спільнот), Парти Чаттерджі (внутрішній культурний суверенітет), Хомі Бгабга (доктрина гібридності та "третього простору") та Ромілі Тгапар (деколонізація історіографії та відновленні історичної суб'єктності Індії). Таким чином, доведено, що індійська постколоніальна думка не є однорідною, а представлена різними методологічними стратегіями, які утворюють альтернативний до західного тип мислення про націю, історію та суб'єктність.

**Висновки.** Обґрунтовано, що індійська постколоніальна думка ґрунтується не на запереченні минулого, а на творчому діалозі між традицією та сучасністю, що забезпечує її живу еволюцію. Це дозволяє індійським мислителям формувати власні теоретичні моделі, які не залежать від західних рамок і виходять за межі локального контексту. Завдяки цьому Індія пропонує універсальні інтелектуальні інструменти для аналізу постколоніального досвіду в глобальному масштабі. Постає питання про можливість застосування цих доктрин як універсальної методології для інших регіонів, що пережили колоніальну залежність.

**Ключові слова:** постколоніалізм, індійська філософія, доктрина, субалтерність, "третій простір", деколонізація історії.

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