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***Abstract Liminal Communities in Contemporary Postcolonial Novels***

This PhD project analyses recent novels that can be situated in the field of postcolonial studies. At the heart of these novels are characters that must come to terms with certain events in their personal past in order to be able to conceive of their future. For their ability to do so, the sojourn in a temporary, heterogeneous community is of prime importance. In my project I will investigate the ways in which the communities at the heart of my primary texts prepare the ground for a more stable environment, into which the characters may be integrated after the dissolution of their small social units. For this investigation the concept of liminality, which plays a central role in Victor Turner's anthropological research on life in ritualised societies, will be of prime importance.

Initially I will approach the environment opened up by the novels' communities as a form of the "in-between" (Bhabha 1), i.e. the hybrid space, infused by but not subordinated to different cultures (Rutherford 211), in which postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha locates the negotiation of cultural identity and social organisation. The concept of hybridity therefore forms the backbone of my research. However, the aim of my project is to depart from established approaches to the 'in-between' and to discern recent developments in the novelistic approach to one of the central concepts in postcolonial studies.

Works Cited

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