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**THE ROLE OF TRADITION IN THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL AND
PERSONAL IDENTITIES IN VIKRAM SETH'S NOVEL *A SUITABLE
BOY***

In this paper, the author analyses the way in which Vikram Seth's novel *A Suitable Boy* deals with tradition as a crucial part of the Indian national being that influences all aspects of Indian life: religious, social and caste segments of tradition challenge the secularization of the young Indian state, whereas family tradition represents a serious obstacle to individual freedom. This paper focuses on some theories and concepts of *the classics* of the postcolonial literary and social criticism, namely: H. Bhabha, G. Ch. Spivak and R. Guha, showing the capacity of Vikram Seth's work to embody the main concerns and issues of the modern postcolonial literature. On the other hand, this paper points out the conclusions of modern postcolonial critics, among others: K.K. Kapur, H. S. Mohapatra and S.R. Mohapatra, who define the specificity of Seth's work based on the adopted literary form of *European novel* and its style of narrative realism. This paper also focuses on literary and formal choices of expression used by the author as an instrument of depicting an authentic portrait of the Indian postcolonial social and political scene, underlining the narrator's capability of capturing the historical moment and mix it with the fictional, thus reaching universal literary and human values.

Key words: *tradition, religion, secularization, subalternity, hybridity, family, freedom*