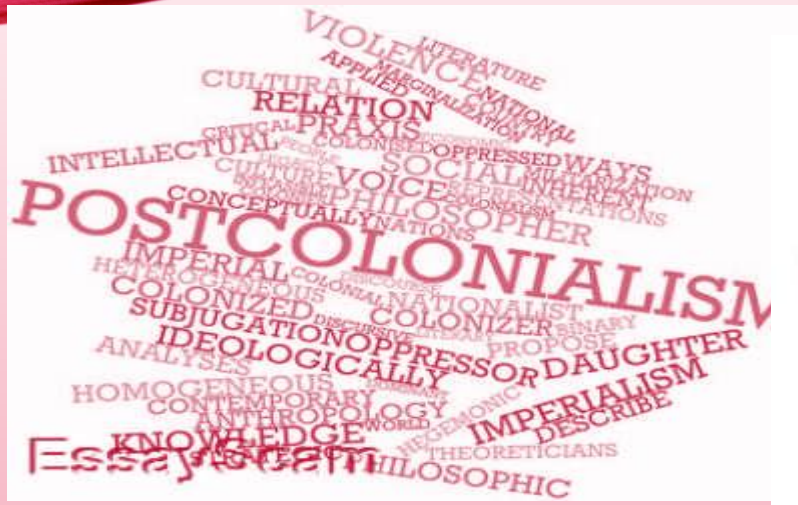


P. G SEM-II
CC-8
UNIT-III

POST COLONIALISM

By
Dr. Vandana Singh
Assistant Professor
P.G Dept. of English
Maharaja College ,Ara

BIRD'S EYEVIEW OF POST COLONIAL STUDIES



Example of post colonial text

African writing

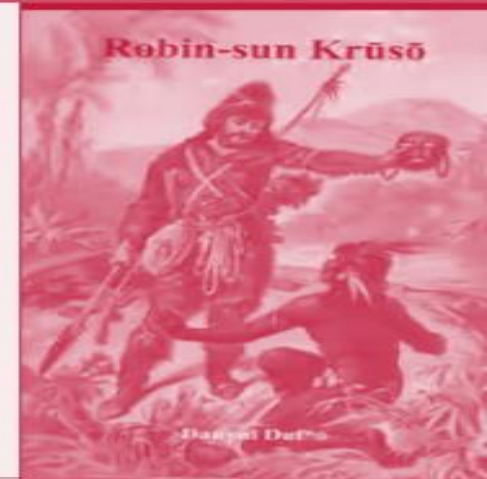
- 'Heart Of Darkness'
- By Joseph Conrad

Indian texts

- 'Rang de Basanti' A film by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra
- 'Lagaan' A film by Ashutosh Gowarikar.

Colonizer's stand

- 'Robinson Crusoe' by Daniel Defoe.(British Writer)
- 'The Heathen' by Jack London (American Writer)



POSTCOLONIAL THINKING



SOME BASIC CONCEPTS OF COLONIAL AND POST COLONIAL

- Before beginning with postcolonial studies Lets discuss difference between colonial and post colonial literature
- **What is colonial and postcolonial literature?**
- “**Colonial literature**” is most easily defined as **literature** written during a time of colonization, usually from the point of view of colonizers.(British and European) “**Postcolonial literature**,” then, refers to **literature** written in a “**postcolonial**” period, generally by members of the colonized community

WHAT DOES POST COLONIAL THEORY MEAN?

- **Postcolonial theory** is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European **colonial** rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century. ... It also suggests that colonized world stands at the forgotten centre of global modernity.

MAJOR CONCERNS

- **What are the major concerns of postcolonial theorists?**
- The formation of empire, the impact of colonization on **postcolonial** history, economy, science, and culture, the cultural productions of colonized societies, feminism and **post colonialism**, agency for marginalized people, and the state of the post-colony in contemporary economic and cultural contexts, capitalism and imperialism contexts.
- **What is the purpose of postcolonial theory?**
- **Postcolonial theory** is a body of thought primarily concerned with accounting for the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impact of European colonial rule around the world in the 18th through the 20th century. ... It also suggests that colonized world stands at the forgotten center of global modernity.
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COMPONENTS OF POST COLONIAL STUDIES⁷

- **Appropriation of Colonial Languages**
- **Meta-narrative**
- **Colonialism**
- **Colonial Discourse**
- **Rewriting History**
- **Decolonization Struggles**
- **Nationhood and Nationalism**
- **Valorization of Cultural Identity**
- **Counter-Discourse**
- **Challenging Stereotypes**

APPROPRIATION OF COLONIAL LANGUAGES

- Postcolonial writers have this thing they like to do. They take the language of their colonizer (English or French, for example) and turn it on its head.
- A writer from the Caribbean, for example, may write a novel or play in English, but he or she may twist the English around, write in dialect, make the language sound spoken instead of written, pepper it with native phrases and terms. It's still English, but it's a different kind of English.
- Why do postcolonial writers do this? Because it's a way for them to challenge the authority of the colonial language. "You want English?" they say, "Oh I'll give you English." And then they go off and do all these crazy things with it. In fancy postcolonial theory jargon, they "appropriate" the colonial language. They take the language that was used to subjugate them and use it to challenge their oppressors.
- how Chinua Achebe incorporates proverbs and indigenous **Igbo** vocabulary in **Arrow of God**. Marlon James twists English into Jamaican dialect in **The Book of Night Women**.

META-NARRATIVE⁹

- Colonizers liked to tell a certain story. In this story, Europeans were created to rule over other, lesser people, from the Irish to the Igbo. Europeans were the designated masters, the rulers of the earth. Therefore, they were justified in ruling over others: that was their destiny. And anyway, they weren't really in it for their own profit. They were enlightening the darker peoples, you see. They were civilizing them.
- Postcolonial writers have a big problem with this story. After all, from their perspective, colonization wasn't about civilization or enlightenment. It was about brutal economic exploitation. And what *really* bothers them is the fact that this story was told, and repeated by the colonizers, as though it were a fact. Europeans wanted everyone—including their colonized subjects—to accept it as true.
- So postcolonial writers started pointing out that, actually, there's more than one side to the story. In fact, there are often loads of different sides to the same story. A story that we take to be "true" or "factual" is often just one point of view among many. So in their own work, postcolonial writers tend to play around with (jargon alert!) *metanarrative*: they like to draw attention to the way that stories—or narratives—are constructed, and especially how they're always told from a certain point of view or angle.
- Check out these reflections on writing and narrative in J.M. Coetzee's novel ***Age of Iron***. How does Coetzee talk about metanarrative?
- See how the narrator of Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* calls attention to the act of writing in **these quotations**.
-

COLONIALISM

- For many cultures around the world, colonialism was a massively traumatic thing. Imagine: all of sudden this stranger shows up in your town or your village, takes all your stuff, forces you to learn his language (only to tell you how lame you are), and then proceeds to run things any way he wants. Oh, and just to add a little icing on the exploitation cake, he does all this while destroying your environment, your culture, and your livelihood.
- In fact, the effects of colonialism were so deep that even after independence, many countries and cultures continued to suffer from its effects. Often the colonizer's language displaced **indigenous** languages. Many people abandoned indigenous religions after being converted to Christianity by missionaries. Even the postcolonial "nations" that emerged after independence were modeled along Western-style European nations, with the same type of administrative and bureaucratic setup.
- So, given what a huge deal colonialism was, is it any wonder that writers from formerly colonized countries became obsessed with understanding it, representing it, and challenging it? And given that the consequences of colonialism extended well beyond the actual period of decolonization (a lot of people say that these consequences continue even to this day), is it any wonder that writers are still dealing with the legacy of colonialism?
- Check out how the conflict between colonizer and colonized divides the community in *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe.
- Assia Djebar shows us France's violent colonization of Algeria in the 1800s in Part One of her novel **Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade**.

COLONIAL DISCOURSE

- Discourse is a collection of narratives, statements, and opinions dealing with a certain topic. Discourse can be about anything. There's even Justin Bieber discourse, if you think about all those millions of articles, gossip columns, and Twitter feeds obsessing over when he last blinked his left eye.
- *Colonial* discourse, as you might guess, is the collection of narratives, statements, and opinions that deals with colonized peoples—told from the perspective of European colonizers, of course. This discourse isn't very kind to colonized peoples. It usually portrays them as savages, as uncivilized, as lazy, and as servants.
- Colonizers themselves are usually presented as civilized and benevolent and generous. (Could have fooled us.) Given that colonial discourse was so important in justifying the whole enterprise of colonialism, it became a very important theme for postcolonial writers. One of the goals of postcolonial writers is to attack this colonial discourse and show it up for what it is: a load of bull.
- E.g. Want to see colonial discourse in action? Have a look at how much fear surrounds a journey into the Congo in Joseph Conrad's ***Heart of Darkness***, a late Victorian novel about Europeans going into Africa. Chinua Achebe doesn't like this book very much, because he thinks it shows Africa and Africans in a stereotypical light, though others have argued that Conrad is trying to show the true ugliness of colonialism.
- The Martinican writer Patrick Chamoiseau shows us how colonial education and discourse alienate a little boy from his native roots in the "Survival" section of his novel ***School Days***.
-

REWRITING HISTORY

- European colonizers often thought that the people that they colonized didn't have a history before the Europeans "enlightened" them.
- The colonizers thought that the colonized peoples had no culture, had made no contributions to human progress, and were ignorant—so from that perspective, colonialism was a wonderful thing for them. Weren't they just so lucky to be taken out of their ignorance and darkness and civilized by benevolent colonizers?
- Postcolonial writers don't like this version of history. It's a version that casts colonizers as heroes, as rescuers who "saved" everyone from ignorance and darkness. So postcolonial writers set about writing history from their own perspective, showing how colonialism was actually a pretty violent, terrible thing. More importantly, these writers also show how history is a matter of perspective, and there are always many perspectives: there is no one "true" history.
- Memory and history are both pretty unstable in these quotations from Gabriel García Márquez's novel **One Hundred Years of Solitude**.
- Saleem Sinai puts himself right at the center of Indian history from the very first page of Salman Rushdie's **Midnight's Children**.

DECOLONIZATION STRUGGLES

- Freedom fighters in Africa, Asia, South America, and the Caribbean fought colonialism. People like **Mahatma Gandhi** in India, **Patrice Lumumba** in Zaire (now Congo), **Amilcar Cabral** in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, **Toussaint Louverture** in Haiti tackled the colonial powers through politics.
- Without them, **decolonization** wouldn't have happened. But decolonization isn't just a political thing: it's also a cultural and mental thing.
- That's where the writers come in. Postcolonial writers aren't just interested in decolonizing the political structures. They're interested in decolonizing the *mind*, to use a phrase made famous by the postcolonial Kenyan writer **Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o**. Decolonizing the mind means different things for different writers, but the idea is always to gain mental and cultural liberation from the structures and philosophies of colonialism.
- Check out how the struggle for independence is played out between a group of South Indian villagers and the British in Raja Rao's **Kanthapura**.
- Chinua Achebe points to corruption, lies and deceit as ruining hopes for decolonization in Nigeria in these quotations from **No Longer At Ease**.
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NATIONHOOD AND NATIONALISM

- Postcolonial writers are really interested in nationhood and nationalism. A lot of these writers are very patriotic. They write books on behalf of their nations. Their work is often nationalist, because postcolonial writers like to highlight and valorize their nation's cultural, political and social identity.
- Now, things didn't turn out so well for many countries after they gained independence. Whether it was corrupt politicians or a general lack of democracy, the problems were huge, and postcolonial writers got *mad*. Postcolonial literature isn't just about criticizing the colonial powers; it's also about criticizing the native corruption that betrayed the dreams of newly liberated nations.
- The Chilean novelist Isabel Allende reflects on the class problems that plague Chile in these quotations from **The House of the Spirits**.
- Salman Rushdie shows us how dysfunctional Pakistani (and postcolonial) nationhood is in **Shame**.

VALORIZATION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

- You know how a big justification for colonialism was, basically, that the cultures of colonized peoples were inferior to those of Europeans? Well, postcolonial writers challenge this idea, and they do this by valorizing their own indigenous cultures. "You've got religion?" they say to the colonizer. "So do we. You've got culture? So do we. We've got our own literature and our own art, from sculpture to painting to *body painting*, dudes."
- In postcolonial literature, you'll also see this valorization of cultural identity reflected in the narrative style of a literary work. For example, a lot of African postcolonial literature resembles spoken language. That's because, prior to colonialism, much of African literature was oral literature. People *told* stories. They *sang* poetry to each other. So, one way that African writers valorize their indigenous heritage is by turning back to these oral narrative forms that predated colonialism for inspiration.
- Check out how Chinua Achebe emphasizes and valorizes indigenous culture in these quotations from **Things Fall Apart**.
- See the clash between indigenous **Yoruba** and colonial beliefs unfold in Wole Soyinka's play **Death and the King's Horseman**.

COUNTER-DISOURSE

- If there's one characteristic that we could use to lump together all of these different literatures emerging from all over the world, it's that they form part of a counter-discourse to colonialism.
- Remember how we defined colonial discourse as the collection of narratives, statements, and opinions generated by colonizers about the colonized? Well, counter-discourse is—you guessed it—the collection of narratives, statements, opinions that postcolonial writers generate *in opposition* to colonial discourse.
- In the counter-discourse of postcolonial writers, we'll find beliefs such as "white people are the best," "Africans are lazy," and "Asians are stupid," contradicted again and again. That's because such ideas and statements form the foundation of colonial discourse, and that was made up to justify the economic exploitation of colonized peoples.
- For a great example of counter-discourse, see how Jean Rhys rewrites Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in **Wide Sargasso Sea**.
- Look at these quotations to consider how Charlotte Brontë deals with "foreignness" and "**the other**" in **Jane Eyre**.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES

- In order to justify colonialism, colonizers had to make themselves believe that the people they were colonizing were somehow lesser than they were. Otherwise, how could they go off and enslave and kill and steal from so many people? One way they convinced themselves of their superiority was by developing all kinds of stereotypes about different colonized groups: they were dangerous; they were untrustworthy; they were lazy.
- A big mission of postcolonial writers is to challenge these stereotypes and show that they are based on nothing but the biases of the colonizers.
- Arundhati Roy challenges stereotypes about Dalit (untouchable) people in her novel **The God of Small Things**.

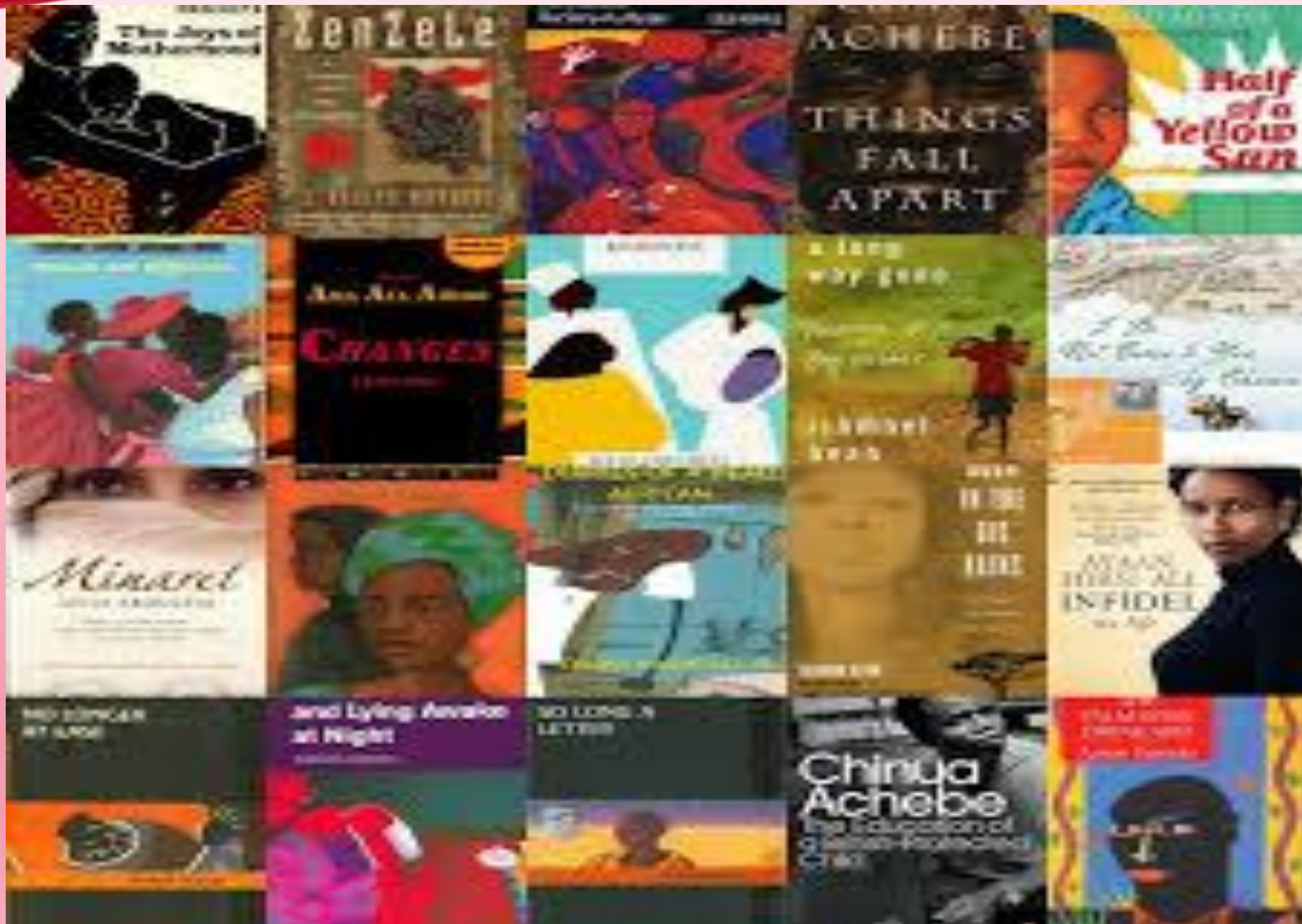
POSTCOLONIAL¹⁸ FEMINIST THEORY?

- **Postcolonial feminism** argues that by using the term "woman" as a universal group, women are then only defined by their gender and not by social class, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference.
- Few Pioneering Women writers of Post colonial Feminism
- **1. Toni Morrison**
- **2. Audre Lorde**
- **3. Jean Rhys**
- **4. Nawal El Saadawi**
- **5. Flora Nwapa**
- **6. Chimamanda Adichie**
- **7. Alice Walker**
- **8. Urvashi Butalia**
- **9. Mahasweta Devi**

9 WOMEN WRITERS WHO PIONEERED POST COLONIAL FEMINIST WRITINGS



AFRICAN POST COLONIAL LITERATURE



COMPREHENSIVE READING LIST

Postcolonialism

- **Postcolonialism**
Colonialism, Imperialism, Decolonization, Postcolonialism, Neocolonialism
From Commonwealth Literature to Postcolonial Literature
- **Frantz Fanon: 'Wretched of the Earth', 'Black skin, White Masks'**
Edward Said and Orientalism
Bill Ashcroft: The Empire Writes Back
- **Nationality, Negritude and Nationalistic Culture**
- **Postcolonialism and Gender**