

# Postcolonialism



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Postcolonial approach Literally, postcolonialism refers to the period following the decline of colonialism, e. g. , the end or lessening of domination by European empires. Although the term postcolonialism generally refers to the period after colonialism, the distinction is not always made. In its use as a critical approach, postcolonialism refers to " a collection of theoretical and critical strategies used to examine the culture (literature, politics, history, and so forth) of former colonies of the European empires, and their relation to the rest of the world" (Makaryk 155 - see General Resources below).

Among the many challenges facing postcolonial writers are the attempt both to resurrect their culture and to combat preconceptions about their culture. Edward Said, for example, uses the word Orientalism to describe the discourse about the East constructed by the West. Major figures include Edward Said (sah-EED), Homi Bhabha (bah-bah), Frantz Fanon (fah-NAWN), Gayatri Spivak, Chinua Achebe (ah-CHAY-bay) , Wole Soyinka, Salman Rushdie, Jamaica Kincaid, and Buchi Emecheta. Key Terms:

Alterity - " lack of identification with some part of one's personality or one's community, differentness, otherness" Diaspora (dl-ASP-er-ah- " is used (without capitalization) to refer to any people or ethnic population forced or induced to leave their traditional ethnic homelands, being dispersed throughout other parts of the world, and the ensuing developments in their dispersal and culture" (Wikipedia). Eurocentrism - " the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and values at the expense of those of other cultures.

It is an instance of ethnocentrism, perhaps especially relevant because of its alignment with current and past real power structures in the world"

(Dictionary. LaborLawTalk. com) Hybridity - " an important concept in post-colonial theory, referring to the integration (or, mingling) of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures (" integration" may be too orderly a word to represent the variety of stratagems, desperate or cunning or good-willed, by which people adapt themselves to the necessities and the opportunities of more or less oppressive or invasive cultural impositions, live into alien cultural patterns through their own structures of understanding, thus producing something familiar but new).

The assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices, the cross-fertilization of cultures, can be seen as positive, enriching, and dynamic, as well as as oppressive" (from Dr. John Lye - see General Literary Theory Websites below).

Imperialism - " the policy of extending the control or authority over foreign entities as a means of acquisition and/or maintenance of empires, either through direct territorial control or through indirect methods of exerting control on the politics and/or economy of other countries. The term is used by some to describe the policy of a country in maintaining colonies and dominance over distant lands, regardless of whether the country calls itself an empire" (Dictionary. LaborLawTalk. com). Further references: • Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, and Tiffin, Helen.

The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures • Ashcroft, Bill. Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. The Post-Colonial Studies Reader. • Guneratne, Anthony R. The Virtual Spaces of Postcoloniality:

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Rushdie, Ondaatje, Naipaul, Bakhtin and the Others. • Harding, Sandra and Uma Narayan, ed. *Border Crossings: Multicultural and Postcolonial Feminist Challenges to Philosophy 2*. Indiana University Press, 1998. • Fanon, Frantz, *Black Skin. White Masks*. Trans. by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto, 1986. • Soyinka, Wole. *Myth, Literature, and the African World*. Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. London: Routledge, 1990. • Trinh, T. Minh-Ha, *Woman. Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Suggested Websites: • " Post-Colonialism" - Wikipedia Encyclopedia • " Some Issues in Postcolonial Theory" by Dr. John Lye (Brock University) • " Introduction to Postcolonial Studies" by Dr. Deepika Bahri (Emory University) • " Postcolonialism" - handout by Dr. Aaron Kelly - University of Edinburgh