

The Postcolonial Theory and Literature

Post Colonial Theory

- Focuses on the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries.
- The literature is composed of colonizing countries that deals with colonization or colonized peoples.
- The Postcolonial theory is a term that refers the theoretical and critical observations of former colonies of the Western powers and how they relate to, and interact with, the rest of the world.
- Greatly interested in the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized, postcolonial theory seeks to critically investigate what happens when two cultures clash and one of them ideologically fashions itself as superior and assumes dominance and control over the other.
- The field of postcolonial studies has itself been hotly contested ever since its rise in the 1970s.

The 3 Pillars of Postcolonial Theory

1. Edward W. Said
2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
3. Homi K. Bhabha

Edward Said

- Probably the most important figure for the rise of postcolonial studies and theory.
- Born in 1935 in Jerusalem and dies 2003
- Palestinian-American scholar, critic, and writer
- **Said**, raised as an Anglican, attended a British school in Cairo then at Princeton and Harvard, he became an academic literary critic.
- From 1963 until his death he was a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University in New York.

Edward Said continued

- He soon became the best-known American advocate for the Palestinian cause.
- His **1978** book ***Orientalism*** reevaluated an entire historical tradition of European-American thought, examining the relation of political power to the representation of the world, and generated an entire field of cultural and postcolonial studies as well as informing the thinking of scholars in every area of cultural, social and historical work.

Edward Said

- Other significant books include
 - *The Question of Palestine* (1979),
 - *Covering Islam* (1981),
 - *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983),
 - *Culture and Imperialism* (1993),
 - *The Politics of Dispossession* (1994), *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994),
 - *Peace and Its Discontents* (1995),
 - *The End of the Peace Process* (2000),
 - *Reflections on Exile* (2000) and
 - *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (2004).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was born in 1942
- Is thought of as one of the three co-founders of postcolonial theory.
- Her main work on the postcolonial theory was her *Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999)
- Her work combines Marxism, feminism, and deconstruction.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

- She introduced many to this type of postcolonial theory when she published three pieces in the 1980s:
 - "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,"
 - "Can the Subaltern Speak?," and
 - "'Draupadi' by Mahasweta Devi."
- She also **translated the novels of Mahasweta Devi**, a fiction-writer in Bengali, which have been influential in establishing the parameters of the literature of postcolonialism; these include
 - *Imaginary Maps* (1995),
 - *Old Women* (1999), and
 - *Chotti Munda and His Arrow* (2002).
- In Mahasweta Devi fictional novels, she presents the native in her otherness and singularity.

Homi K. Bhabha

- He wrote the *Nation and Narration* (1990)
- This considers how to conceptualize the nation under colonialism and, by default, in postcoloniality.
- Here he takes issue with the anthropologist Benedict Anderson's view of the relationship between imperialism and its resistance in *Imagined Communities* (1991).

Places of Post colonialism

- Latin America
- Africa
- East and Southeast Asia
- South Asia
- Carrabin
- Polynesia
- United States

Latin America

- Alejo Carpentier, *The Lost Steps* (1956);
- Carlos Fuentes, *The Death of Artemio Cruz* (1964);
- Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch* (1966);
- Mario Vargas Llosa, *The Green House* (1968);
- Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970);
- Manuel Puig, *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* (1971);
- Marta Traba, *Mothers and Shadows* (1983);
- Severo Sarduy, *Colibri* (1984);
- Isabel Allende, *House of the Spirits* (1985);
- Silviano Santiago, *Stella Manhattan* (1985);
- Diamela Eltit, *The Fourth World* (1995);
- João Gilberto Noll, *Hotel Atlantico* (1989);
- César Aira, *The Hare* (1998);
- Ricardo Piglia, *The Absent City* (2000);
- Pedro Lemebel, *My Tender Matador* (2003)

Africa

- Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Dead's Town* (1953);
- Naguib Mahfouz, *Palace Walk* (1956–1957);
- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958);
- Ousmane Sembène, *God's Bits of Wood* (1962);
- Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me on History* (1963);
- Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1969);
- Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975);
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (1977);
- Mariama Bâ, *So Long A Letter* (1980);
- Nadine Gordimer, *July's People* (1981);
- Buchi Emecheta, *The Rape of Shavi* (1983);
- Nuruddin Farah, *Maps* (1986);
- Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (1989);
- Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Love in Two Languages* (1990);
- J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (1999);
- Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (1988);
- Zoë Wycombe, *David's Story* (2001);
- Tahar Ben Jelloun, *This Blinding Absence of Light* (2002)

East and Southeast Asia

- Eileen Chang, *The Rouge of the North* (1967);
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Fugitive* (1975);
- John Okada, *No-No Boy* (1975);
- Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (1982);
- Wendy Law-Yone, *The Coffin Tree* (1983);
- Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club* (1989);
- Jessica Tarahata Hagedorn, *Dogeaters* (1990);
- Pak Won-so, *The Naked Tree* (1995);
- Yu Miri, *Family Cinema* (1996);
- Lan Cao, *Monkey Bridge* (1997);
- Cho Chong-Rae, *Playing with Fire* (1997);
- Murakami Haruki, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* (1997);
- Wu Zhuoliu, *The Fig Tree: Memoirs of a Taiwanese Patriot* (2002);
- Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt* (2003)

South Asia

- R. K. Narayan, *Swami and Friends* (1944)
- Kamala Markandaya, *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954)
- Raja Rao, *Serpent and the Rope* (1960)
- Bharati Mukherjee, *The Tiger's Daughter* (1972)
- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981)
- Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)
- Meena Alexander, *Fault Lines: A Memoir* (1993)
- Mahasweta Devi, *Imaginary Maps* (1994)
- Jhumpa Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999)
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace* (2001)
- Rohinton Mistry, *Family Matters* (2001)

Caribbean

- George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953);
- V. S. Naipaul, *Mystic Masseur* (1959);
- Kamau Brathwaite, *Rights of Passage* (1967);
- Aimé Césaire, *Tempest* (1986);
- Maryse Condé, *Heremakhonon* (1976);
- Wilson Harris, *Guyana Quartet* (1985);
- Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (1990);
- Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* (1990);
- Erna Brodber, *Louisiana* (1994),

Polynesia

- Albert Wendt, *Sons for the Return Home* (1973);
- Keri Hulme, *The Bone People* (1985);
- Epeli Hau'ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs* (1983);
- Witi Tami Ihimaera, *Bulibasha: King of the Gypsies* (1994);
- Haunani-Kay Trask, *Light in the Crevice Never Seen* (1994);
- Sia Figiel, *Where We Once Belonged* (1996);
- Patricia Grace, *Baby No-Eyes* (1998)

United States

- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987);
- Américo Paredes, *George Washington Gomez* (1990);
- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Almanac of the Dead* (1991);
- Sandra Cisneros, *Caramelo, or, Puro cuento* (2002)

Work Cited

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2. [*Dictionary of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Said, Edward \(1935–2003\)*. Vol. 2. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p413-414.](#)
3. Huda, [Qamar-ul. *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World; Orientalism*](#). Ed. Richard C. Martin. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. p515-516.
4. [*Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice; Postcolonial Theory*](#). Ed. Gary L. Anderson and Kathryn G. Herr. Vol. 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Reference, 2007. p1149-1151.