
M.A. English

Part II

Course VI

**POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES IN
ENGLISH**

BLOCK

I

Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures



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POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

BLOCK I

Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Welcome to this course on Postcolonial Literatures in English; in many ways, this course is most probably about texts that are close to you as a citizen of the world. In fact, personally I feel jealous of you because you are being exposed to this area of understanding and reading these texts that are the product of a situation similar to ours; these texts come from a postcolonial world and are concerned with issues that are known to us. This does not mean that they are not concerned with other things, but even those are closely related to the basic goal of postcolonialism, which ultimately is an effort to give voice to communities unheard earlier. Twenty-five years ago, we only read literature that came out of England written by the English people, but now at least we are in a position to listen to all those voices that have been ignored earlier and that certainly is a big step forward in our understanding of the world.

Behind Postcolonialism is Postcolonial Theory, and let me quote Robert Young to explain the basic thrust of it:

“Postcolonial theory” involves a conceptual reorientation towards the perspectives of knowledges, as well as needs, developed outside the west. Postcolonial theory, so-called, is not in fact a theory in the scientific sense, that is a coherently elaborated set of principles that can predict the outcome of a given set of phenomena. It comprises instead a related set of perspectives, which are juxtaposed against one another, on occasion contradictorily... Above all, postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the west as well as the non-west. It seeks to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world. (*Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP, 2003, 6-7)

This course comprises three blocks. The first block contains two units that are slightly theoretical in nature and they acquaint you with the basic principles of Postcolonialism. The second block will expose you to some British prose writers of the colonial period and a prominent British novelist who scripted the complex relationship between the dominant group and the natives. The third block tries to familiarize you with Postcolonial Writings from different parts of the world.

We could have done much more; we could have included a lot of other texts so that you could have a more comprehensive view of the area. But various constraints did not let this happen. However,

we expect that you will read on your own much more than what you have in these blocks and familiarize yourself with the area.

The variety and exuberance of Postcolonial Writing is amazingly refreshing and we hope you will enjoy reading this course to the fullest extent. While there has been a lot of discussion on the significance of the term Postcolonialism, we are not getting into any such problems. As you know, there are two ways of writing the term: Post-colonial (i.e. with a hyphen) and Postcolonial. The first term refers to the historical development after the independence of the European colonies, while the second refers to the entire period following the colonization of Asian and African countries and includes writings from the pre-independence period. That is the reason why you will read texts written before the independence of countries which embody the state of affairs of that time as well as those written after independence.

I hope you will enjoy these texts and read them with the critical attention required to comprehend the complex world that we live in. You are reading voices that were not heard earlier, voices that represent the very complicated intermeshing of the European modernist and the other older civilizations. History and geography both play a very important role in postcolonial writing and you will see how writers are circumscribed by the time and place of their production.

Enjoy the course.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BLOCK

This is the first block in the course on Postcolonial Literatures in English. Therefore it presents the theoretical concepts and issues that underlie the designing of the course. The two units in this block introduce the overarching concepts in postcolonial theory and the concerns of postcolonial literatures in general.

Unit 1 defines “postcolonialism” and the related key terms. It introduces postcolonial theory, which is an important branch of contemporary critical theory; the Unit also briefly discusses the work of the major postcolonial theorists.

Unit 2 starts by defining “postcolonial literatures” and goes on to examine the political, ideological, cultural and literary issues and concerns that inform postcolonial literatures. The discussion is amply illustrated with quotations from representative writers and critics.

Taken together the Units in the block will prepare you adequately for the study of the writers and works that you will undertake in the remaining blocks of this course on Postcolonial Literatures in English.

Unit 1

Postcolonialism

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Unit 1

POSTCOLONIALISM

1.0 Objectives

In this Unit, we introduce to you the concept of postcolonialism and the various fields of knowledge and study that it has produced. We begin with definitions of some of the key terms related to postcolonialism and then briefly discuss the work of major postcolonial theorists. We conclude with the forms and shapes that colonialism and imperialism have recently taken.

1.1 Defining the Key Terms

The term ‘postcolonialism’ is connected to and contextualized within a specific history and set of related terms. ‘Postcolonialism’ is an intellectual project, an academic or theoretical approach to literature, the arts, politics, economics and science.

Colonialism: Colonialism refers to the conquest of and settlement in Asian, African, South American, Canadian and Australian continents by Europeans (mainly the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Belgian, French and British) from the 15th century. It was initially a military conquest. This was followed by an extensive exploitation of native resources and people when the Europeans settled down to rule. Colonialism also produced a vast amount of knowledge about the colony in the form of ethnographic studies, translations of native texts and histories. Colonial powers often intervened in the cultural practices and beliefs of the natives under the guise of ‘reform’. The colonial masters introduced new systems of education, architecture and agriculture. Colonialism was both a political-economic conquest/domination as well as a cultural one.

Imperialism: It is the process wherein European nations governed and administered Asian or African nations without actually settling there. This is possible because European or American powers control the financial, military and political activities in these Asian, African or South American nations. It is a system of economic domination and exploitation.

Neocolonialism: This term refers to the period of the late 20th century when Asian and African nation-states continue to be exploited by their former colonial rulers, the Europeans, and by American powers. This is possible where economic control rather

than military conquest of territories is the key aim of the European. Neocolonialism makes use of organizations like the IMF, and is presented in the form of trade policies, trade treaties and interference in the economic policies of the Asian countries. Neocolonialism refers to the process of globalization in the late 20th century as an extension of older modes of colonial domination.

Postcoloniality: It refers to the historical and material conditions of formerly colonized Asian, African and South American nations. It refers to the economic and political conditions in countries such as India after the European ruler handed over political power to the native population. 'Postcoloniality' today emphasizes the role and effect of global geopolitics, globalization, and economic shifts upon Asian and African nation-states. It looks at the continuing use of 'Third World' labour in the West, the condition of Asian and African migrant workers in the West, new exploitative economic policies and military campaigns in Arab, Asian, South American nations for natural resources like oil or minerals and globalization. What postcoloniality examines are the ways in which colonialism has become neocolonialism now.

Decolonization: The process whereby countries and societies in Asia, Africa and South America seek to achieve economic, political, intellectual freedom from their European masters. Decolonization is a quest for freedom from colonial forms of thinking, and part of its effort has been to revive native and local forms of knowledge. It offers an alternative to European science and ways of thinking – which, during the colonial period had all but destroyed the native cultures.

Postcolonialism: This is a set of critical approaches, ideas and critical methodologies that analyzes colonial practices and structures. It refers to a mode of reading, intellectual work, political analysis and cultural resistance used by formerly colonized nations. It is an intellectual effort to examine how colonialism worked, and to seek cultural resistance to such race-based exploitation. Postcolonialism invokes ideas of social justice, emancipation and democracy in order to oppose oppressive structures of racism, discrimination and exploitation. It emphasizes the colonized's resistance to European oppression. Postcolonial theory, a component of postcolonialism, is an analytical strategy that focuses mainly on the ways in which racial_differences between Europe and Asia, or West and East, have been represented.

Postcolonialism, in literature and the arts, examines the cultural dimensions of the colonial project. It shows, how in the colonial project:

- Political expansion, conquest and dominance had its effects and equivalents in the cultural domain such as arts, literature, law, architecture as well as in sciences (medicine) and technology in the Asian and African countries.
- the ideologies of empire – dominance, difference, benevolence, and ‘improvement’ – found their greatest expression in the cultural domain.
- there were specific modes through which these ideologies were circulated through the subject races: the arts, education, religious instruction, the law or architecture. Thus they were not seen as political or colonial, but merely as aesthetic or literary or moral forms by the subject races.
- Imperial ideologies thus circulated became acceptable and ‘natural’ so that racism, imperialism and conquest were justified, naturalized.
- Imperial ideologies were internalized by the natives as ‘true’ representations. natives thus began to accept and even support the empire.

1.2 Race Studies

Racial identity, as history has shown us, has been a dividing line between people. The slavery of the black race for centuries by the whites was based on fixed assumptions about the nature of the black race.

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, **Critical Race Theory (CRT)** and **Critical Race Studies (CRS)** have had a very close link with postcolonialism for obvious reasons: both are concerned with the centrality of race to questions of identity, political matters and literary representations. CRS, like postcolonialism, uses race and ethnicity as analytical categories for examining the law, history, politics and culture. CRS now includes Black Feminism, Aboriginal and First Nation peoples’ studies, Mestizo and ‘mixed race’ studies.

Native studies are affiliated with social and political movements seeking aboriginal rights, land rights, welfare and recognition in Australia, Canada and among the Native Americans. **Aboriginal and First Peoples literature** is the literature of the exploited, the culture of resistance and the culture of revival. Aboriginal writing

gestures at cultures of oppression (of the Europeans) and ‘cultures of survival’ (of the aboriginals).

Mixed race studies emerged from empirical historical research, increased migration and the formation of multicultural societies in First World cities. The increasing role of black and non-white public intellectuals, writers and artists such as Toni Morrison, Michael Jackson, Maya Angelou, Stuart Hall, **bell hooks**, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Gloria Anzaldua have been instrumental in showcasing non-European traditions of intellectual history and analytic procedures. Since the late 1990s ‘mixed race’ has moved towards addressing questions of identity in multiracial populations. Artists and theorists like Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga have spoken of **Chicano/a identity** as border-crossing, hybrid or *mestizaje*.

A new version of the feminist movement emerged in the 1980s, **black feminism**, whose dual focus was gender and racial identity. Black feminism was opposed to both patriarchy and racism, to both sexism and white feminism. Patricia Hill Collins, Hortense Spillers and Hazel Carby aimed at the creation of knowledge built upon the lived experiences of black women that had thus far been marginalized within white feminism. It involved retrieving a tradition of black women’s writing, oral traditions, folk lore and other forms of cultural practices. It unravelled stereotypes of mummies and matriarchs in white literature and culture.

Activity A

What does decolonization seek?

Discussion

Decolonization seeks freedom from colonial forms of thinking. It emphasizes the need to revive native and local forms of knowledge as an alternative to European science and ways of thinking that have been imposed upon native subject cultures

1.3 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory and thought were born in the anti-colonial struggles in Africa and Asia where ideas of political independence, colonial exploitation and cultural identity eventually grew into a substantial intellectual tradition. Among the early thinkers whose influence in postcolonial thought has been significant we can list Mahatma Gandhi and Algerian Frantz Fanon.

1.3.1 Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) launched a major critique of Western modernity. His emphasis on *swadeshi* (economic self-reliance) and *swaraj* (self-rule) were forms of cultural nationalism that he projected as the answer to Western modernity. His emphasis on vegetarianism, support for local languages (influenced by Welsh linguistic nationalism) and culture and anti-industrial stance constituted his cultural nationalism.

Gandhi sought a moral superiority for the colonized nation over the European colonizer. Gandhi's 'satyagraha' system of protest was an indigenous form of struggle that was based on the moral principle of non-violence. Passive resistance, personal discipline, fasting and non-violence contributed to this **moral** stance.

Gandhi argued that European industrial modernity was the prime cause of colonialism. He was therefore opposed to industrialization, which he saw as exploitative. His anti-colonial struggles were therefore class struggles, using peasant and working class resistance.

Gandhi pleaded for a moral rebirth and rejuvenation of India as an answer to colonialism. English civilization being degraded and degenerate, the only way, India could triumph over the colonial, in Gandhi's view, was through a higher moral position.

1.3.2 Frantz Fanon

Frantz Fanon (1925-61) was a member of Algeria's anti-colonial force during the 1940s. He was also a trained psychiatrist who observed the psychological impact of colonialism on the black native and wrote about it in his books *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*

Fanon argued that the black man had lost his culture and his past. The black man is dehumanized by colonialism and develops an inferiority complex. The black man sees himself as inferior because he looks at himself through the white man's eyes. The white man has constantly portrayed the black as less than human, as an animal, and years of such indoctrination have made the black man believe this to be true. For the white man, the native is always the negative, the very *opposite* of white culture.

Fanon argued that the native's dependency complex was the direct *effect* of colonization. When the white master constantly treats the black man as simply the means of hard labour, the relationship between the two is of only one kind: white master-black slave. This enslaved condition contributes to the black man's inferiority complex.

In the eyes of the black man, the white man becomes the symbol of perfection and the former seeks to emulate the latter – he wears a 'white mask' over his 'black skin'. The native believes that the only values that matter are those of the white man. He therefore takes on Western values, religion, the language and practices of the white colonial and rejects his own traditions. But at the same time his own traditions and customs continue to exert a powerful pull on the black man. The result is: the black man is torn between the white man's culture and his own culture, resulting in neurosis and psychological crises.

Fanon recognized the significance of cultural nationalism as leading to a 'national consciousness'. The blacks had to create their own history and write their own stories to break free of the colonial shackles. A national culture, believed Fanon, must return to African myths and cultural practices so that black identity can be resurrected. They need to stop thinking of the masses as 'unthinking', and elicit and reinforce their self-esteem and belief in their own ideas. A 'national culture' is constructed in three stages. In the assimilationist phase, the native intellectual is under the influence of the colonizer's culture, and seeks to emulate it by abandoning his own. In the second stage the native discovers that he can never become truly white for the colonial master to treat him as an equal. He therefore returns to his own culture. This is the stage of cultural nationalism where a sense of pride in his own culture develops. In the third stage the native intellectual begins an analysis of his own culture, so that a new future after colonialism is possible. But Fanon also warned that the idea of a 'national literature' and 'national culture' might result in xenophobia. Fanon argued that culture must be dynamic and open to change to suit changed historical circumstances and ensure justice for all.

1.3.3 Edward Said

Edward Said (1935-2003) inaugurated postcolonial theory as we know it today with his 1978 book, *Orientalism*, in which he argued that the political and military aspects of colonialism were

connected to certain ways of imagining, talking about and representing Asia in European writing.

Orientalism can be defined as the theory, poetics and practice of representation, by Europeans, of the Arab world, Asia, China and Japan ('the Orient'). Orientalism informs the act of **creating** fictions and fantasies about the Orient by European travellers, writers and artists. It generates a desire to see and then possess the Orient. Thus Orientalism is a kind of representation which then becomes (i) the source of particular images of wealth, barbarism and emptiness of the Orient (ii) the preliminary moment to European intervention in these lands. Said dates the major Orientalist period as 1815-1910.

The Orient gets written about in diverse ways: fiction, 'authoritative' commentaries, personal memoirs and administrative reports. It also uses scientific modes of writings, including census and archeological surveys, botanical expeditions, medical geographies. Said shows how literary and narrative projects have a political consequence. The Orient, as Said puts it, was a 'textual universe' (52). It was 'a library or archive of information' (41). Orientalism then, in Said's words, is "a manner of regularized writing, vision and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient ... The Orient is taught, researched, administered and pronounced upon in certain discrete ways". [202]

Orientalism takes three main forms:

- i. It generated more awareness about the Arab and Asian worlds through newly discovered texts in translation,
- ii. It produced commentaries, researches and institutions, specialized periodicals (such as the *Asiatick Researches*) and created a 'modernization' of Orientalism,
- iii. It restricted and influenced how the Orient was imagined/written about.

What Orientalism did was to create binary opposites, situating the West as the very contrast to the East. It merged Arab, Chinese and Japanese cultures into one single category, 'Oriental'. Internal differences in Asian cultures were ignored so that the Asian culture's diversity was never a threat.

There was a clear power relation between the West and the East, where the East was the passive, inert object of study and the West effected the studies and made pronouncements and judgments

about it. What Said wants us to understand is that imperial practices are built upon (i) imperialist dreams and unconscious desires (ii) imperial discourses and ways of talking, representing the non-European.

Orientalism also produced the Orient as a stage, on which the spectacle of the Orient was performed to be viewed by the West. It combined accurate knowledge (needed by the colonial administrative and military structure) with myth and fantasy.

Orientalism codified the East into a set of formulas, a set of characteristics and detail that was treated as fixed and unchanging in time and place. By 'authoritative' commentary, Orientalism essentializes the Oriental, fixes him/her in a stereotype. Thus the stereotypes of the 'treacherous Brahmin', the 'effeminate native', the 'child-like native' and the cruel Muslim king were unified, unchanging constructions of the natives that, for administrative and political purposes, 'captured' the Easterner.

Activity B

What was Orientalism and how did it work to impose colonial rule?

Discussion

Orientalism was a method of representation through which Asia and Africa were portrayed as barbaric. It codified the East into a set of stereotypes that were treated as fixed and unchanging in time and place. These representations became the justification for European intervention in these lands because, then, colonial rule could itself be presented as a means of civilizing the primitive native subjects.

1.3.4 Homi K. Bhabha

The work of Homi K. Bhabha (b. 1949) shows how colonial discourse was often contradictory and often failed. Bhabha notes how identities in the colonial encounter are never stable or fixed but function as transactions between colonizer and colonized. The colonizer establishes his identity by positioning himself against and in opposition to the native. 'I am white because I am *not* this brown man'. Thus it is this structure of race-determined *difference* that helps the white man construct his identity. So, it is the presence of the brown or black Other that creates the white man's identity. Bhabha suggests here that we cannot see colonial identity

as fixed or monolithic: it is unstable and dependent upon the native.

Bhabha proposes that **colonial discourse** (colonial ways of writing and thinking about the colonized native) is actually ambivalent. Bhabha argues that the fetish/phobia structure of colonial relations results in a condition where the white man both fears *and* desires the Other (the black or brown native), while at the same time wishes to erase the difference. The colonizer is both fascinated by the difference and also repulsed by it. Bhabha thus proposes a divided colonial discourse. The repetition of stereotypes of the native is not a sign of the power of colonial discourse. Rather, it is a sign of its instability.

Bhabha argues that the Bible functioned as a sign of colonial power: the authority to disseminate the book throughout the colony. However, Bhabha notes, the sign (or book) is ambivalent as soon as it is disseminated. Bhabha suggests that the book is 'translated' by natives into their own contexts, a process that often involves subversion and sometimes resistance. There is no 'original' Bible that can reflect colonial authority totally because the natives have transformed it into what they see fit and which suits them at that time and even loses its authority as a colonial sign becoming instead a sign that has been re-written by the native. Bhabha uses the term 'ambivalence' to describe this rupture between the intended original authority of the English book/sign and the effect of repetition and difference.

In his next key move to demonstrate the instability of colonial discourse, Bhabha proposes the idea of 'mimicry'. **Mimicry** is the disciplined, conscious imitation of the white man by the colonized and supposedly subservient native. The native has been taught that he must ape the white man and immerse himself in the white man's culture. Western education, religion and structures are modes through which the native is trained to think/ behave **like** the white man. Bhabha argues that in mimicry colonial authority actually breaks down. The native becomes Anglicized but is never truly white. He is a mimic who can now respond in English and argue rationally because of Western education. Mimicry here reveals the incomplete and fractured nature in the colonial discourse which can therefore never be total in its authority. Mimicry also fails because the colonial master wants the native as similar to himself as possible and yet wishes to retain the difference between himself and the native. That is, the colonial wishes to both erase and reinforce difference. Similarly, the native repeats or mimes the master, but with subtle variations and nuances. The mimicry of the

native often consists of both a superficial obedience and a deeper disobedience and mockery (what Bhabha terms 'sly civility'). The native seems to express servility but in fact articulates resistance. This dual state of mimicry by the native is what Bhabha terms '**hybridity**'.

This hybridized native, who refuses to acknowledge the colonizer's authority, is placed between 'adopted' Englishness and 'original' native condition or identity, between obedience and resistance. This hybridity creates a 'third space' where:

- colonial identity and native identity meet and often contest;
- colonial discourse is both asserted and subverted;
- there is deference and difference;
- there is a split and a negotiation (within colonial discourse);
and
- where mimicry and mockery occur.

Bhabha's work therefore shows the failures of colonial discourse. He shows how native resistance emerges because colonial discourse is incomplete.

Activity C

What is the 'ambivalence' of colonial discourse?

Discussion

Homi Bhabha proposes that the white man both fears *and* desires the black or brown native. He seeks to erase the difference between races, but does not want the black man to become too much like the white man. This is the 'ambivalence' of colonial discourse.

1.3.5 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (b. 1942) adapts poststructuralist, feminist and Marxist approaches and combines them into a postcolonial criticism. Spivak argues that an individual develops an identity because s/he is the subject of discourses over which s/he may have little or no control. Such a subjugated subject is what Spivak terms the 'subaltern'. The **subaltern** is one who has no position or sovereignty outside the discourse that constructs her as subject. In her most-quoted essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985), Spivak rejects the idea that one can access a 'pure' subaltern consciousness because the subaltern cannot speak, and is

hence spoken *for*, cannot represent herself and hence must be represented.

Examining the case of a woman's suicide in early twentieth century India, Spivak argues that the structure of colonialism prevented the woman from speaking out. The native woman is doubly silenced and marginalized: through both patriarchy and colonialism. That is, she is silenced on account of her gender as well as racial identity. Spivak argues that the subaltern woman wrote her body, offered it to the world through her death, because there was no other way of speaking.

The subaltern woman has no position of enunciation: she remains within the discourse of patriarchy and colonialism as the object of somebody else's discourse. All notions and representations of 'subaltern' consciousness or 'Third World' women are constructions of Western discourses. Spivak then proposes that the subaltern can figure only in an ethical relation where there has to be a space created for the voice of the radical Other.

1.3.6 Paul Gilroy

The work of Paul Gilroy (b. 1956) on black identities in Britain has added a new dimension to postcolonial theory. His focus is diaspora, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism. Gilroy refuses to treat black or native cultures as simply the different, or the Other of white cultures. Gilroy argues that British identity was built by consciously excluding Asians and blacks who since the fifteenth century were central to the very idea of English identity. A 'pure' English identity was possible because the English could show themselves as different from the blacks and Asians in Britain. The Atlantic and American culture was the consequence of black cultures in contest and contact with white ones. The 'black Atlantic', as he terms it, is the space of diaspora, transnational and hybrid cultures.

Such hybrid spaces emerge when African cultures meet European ones and vice versa. Right from the time of the slave trade in the 15th and 16th centuries Africans moving towards the 'new world' became diasporic. They possessed the consciousness of *both* European and African cultures, a 'double consciousness'.

Gilroy argues that we must see displacement, the trans-Atlantic voyage and interaction, the origin-new world binary as culturally productive in its hybridity. One cannot, therefore, see African

American culture as rooted in the mythic African ‘home’ cultures either because the trans-Atlantic experience has always been a part of Black consciousness.

1.4 The New ‘Empire’

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have seen the persistence of imperial structures in the globalized era. In their important book, *Empire* (2000), they show how new forms of colonial domination have emerged since the 1980s, the era of globalization, technological connectivity and extensive migration. Hardy and Negri define the new Empire thus:

It is a decentered ... apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow. (xii-xiii)

This is an important formulation.

Traditional colonialism was based on a clear binary: ‘us’ (as in white, European) and ‘them’ (as in brown or black non-European). European metropolises sent in armies to conquer and control parts of Africa, Asia and South America. Today imperialism takes a very different form. The ‘Empire’ is now diffuse, without a real political centre or periphery. Interest groups, business conglomerates and international organizations (NATO, IMF, G8) create policies that affect the financial, social and political decisions of all other countries. Such an **Empire** is more ‘total’ than earlier regimes because it lacks a specific centre – such as London used to be for the British Empire – that can be attacked.

Nation-based power structures, borders and regulations collapse so that finance flows from the new colonies (the postcolonial states) to the Microsoft or McDonald’s coffers. This in a way continues what earlier empires did. The frames and structures of this new Empire are not clearly visible, its leaders not knowable and its headquarters never identifiable. The Empire shifts shape and nature, spreading across military, political, economic and social domains. Instead of national and regional territories during colonialism we now have global networks. Global economic

inequalities exist, of course, and power remains centred in the West.

Globalization works through specific economic, cultural and juridical structures, including the IMF, the World Trade Organization, global NGOs, etc. We all end up participating in the process of globalization, and that of the Empire.

Hardt and Negri identify three 'principles' of the new Empire:

- US nuclear supremacy represents the new monarchy;
- the economic wealth of the G7 (Group of Seven – the advanced nations) and transnational corporations represent the aristocracy; and
- and the internet represents the democratic principle.

Empire, now, encourages multiculturalism so that there is no resistance or conflict: it takes all races, and identities along with it, absorbs them into itself. It encourages differences as a mode of imperial control.

Activity D

What are the features of the new Empire?

Discussion

The new Empire now incorporates the entire global realm. It is expanding and flexible. There is no fixed centre. Instead of national and regional territories during colonialism we now have global networks. It encourages multiculturalism so that there is no resistance, and includes or incorporates within itself all races and identities.

1.5 Conclusion: Postcolonialism, Cultural Criticism and its Politics

Postcolonialism is a form of cultural criticism with a political agenda. We can list some of the key themes in this agenda as follows:

- emancipation from restrictive forms of thinking;
- a political consciousness of literary and cultural traditions of the Third World;
- an alertness to the ways in which non-European/non-white races and their cultures have been represented and

‘naturalized’ by colonialism and neocolonialism for consumption;

- an engagement with continuing forms of intellectual (as well as economic) dependence of the Third World upon the First; and
- a consciousness of the new forms of colonialism emergent in globalized conditions, among others.

Postcolonial theory and criticism are political because they are alert to the power structures and struggles within the cultural domain. In the 1990s postcolonialism addressed issues of human rights, environment, neocolonialism, diaspora and globalization. There have been more studies of race and new technologies such as the internet and their role in furthering the cause of globalization and the new Empire as well.

1.6 Summing up

We have in this Unit studied the basic ideas relating to postcolonialism, the major authors who have developed postcolonial theory over the last few decades and the forms that colonialism and imperialism have taken in recent years.

1.7 References and Suggested Reading

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