

Postmodernism in Second Third and Fourth World Literatures:
Postcolonial Literary Theory

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This paper attempts a skeletal delineation of postcolonial theory in a manner that may hopefully grant it some palpable shape in novices' minds, on the one hand, and protect it from subversive forces that wish to see it disappear from the field of literary theory and criticism, on the other. The first need I have sensed in students of graduate programs in our universities. The second subversive intention I have observed in graduates of Western universities arriving home to the Arab world pedantically boastful of knowledge of loopholes in the theory without demonstrating reasonable understanding of its basic import.

The first step the paper takes towards its goal is to highlight an important aspect of the theory that remains scattered among theorists in the field and is, subsequently, kept vaguely known to eager readers and practitioners. The clouded aspect is the systematic correspondence of the large variety of postcolonial writings to four cultural locations or worlds. Such correspondence often lies unsettled in postcolonial theorizing and its value neglected. Other aspects of the theory often receive more attention and end up overshadowing the relevance of postcolonial writing to their respective worlds. Consequently, readers remain insufficiently illumined about a significant aspect of postcolonial theory, a state that precludes proper understanding and application of theory to postcolonial texts.

The second step the paper takes is to underscore significant similarities that exist between postcolonialism and postmodernism despite some differences. This step is necessary to give more weight to postcolonialism in the sense that its activities will not be regarded as isolated enterprises of underprivileged countries but more of a response to a state of unequal distribution of power in world relationships that has given birth to postmodernism in some cases and to postcolonialism in others.

Primarily, postcolonial literary and critical theory is a way of writing and responding to literature in a postcolonial world during a postcolonial era. The historical dimension of the title is controversial and so is the geographical scope given in its interpretation. Critics disagree whether postcolonial eras start with the termination of a political and

military occupation of a country or with the onset of occupation. In their preface to The Post-colonial Studies Reader, the editors introduce the argument "between those who believe that the postcolonial refers only to the period after the colonies become independent and those who argue [. . .] that [post] is best used to designate the [. . .] societies of the postcolonial world from the moment of colonisation to the present day" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin xv). In the first case, writings come as a reflection on the aftermath of occupation and in the second as an expression of unrest at the presence of foreign powers in one's own country. The implication of both views is that postcolonial literary and critical writings are performed by peoples of occupied nations when, indeed, it includes writings executed by the occupier. This suggestion involves writings of first and second world peoples in postcolonial theory instead of limiting it to third and fourth world literatures. And since the postcolonial definition of the four worlds has its peculiarities, it is necessary to examine it first.

Postcolonial theory does not rest content with the traditional "Three Worlds Theory" that dichotomizes world power into two and assigns the rest into a third category. It, therefore, engages the traditional theory in a dialogue with the intention of deflating its purport. Postcolonial argument starts with the assertion that Capitalism is not exclusively limited to the Western camp or Communism to the Eastern one. To this effect Aijaz Ahmad contests: "First and Second Worlds are defined in terms of their production system (capitalism and socialism, respectively), whereas the [. . .] Third world—is defined purely in terms of an 'experience' of externally inserted phenomena [. . .] the 'experience of colonialism and imperialism.'" This dichotomy leaves the "so called" third world in "limbo [. . .] forever suspended outside the sphere of conflict between capitalism (First World) and socialism (Second World)" (78-79). Ahmad also exposes another limitation in the dichotomy by pointing out the problem of "the location of particular countries within the various 'worlds'" that the traditional theory ignores. He gives the example of India that has "all the characteristics of a capitalist country" yet is not assigned to first world category (78). He also adds that socialism "was not by any means limited to the so-called Second World (the socialist countries) but is a global phenomenon, reaching into the farthest rural communities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, not to speak of individuals and groups within the United States" (80). To

elaborate, some countries in the Middle East are socialist, while others in eastern Europe like Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland are more assertively communist, yet none of them was assigned to the relevant camp. If the key to division is high economic power and military and industrial supremacy that the previous countries do not seem able to score, then postcolonial theory has more reason to object. It steps in to assert that the traditional theory ignores other countries' cultural background and the complexity of their traditional assets by evaluating them through an external criterion that deprives them of their right to demonstrate their best while giving its promoters the privilege to do so. Commenting on the "experience of colonialism and imperialism," Abdul R. JanMohamed explains how the "colonialist's military superiority ensures a complete projection of his self on the Other: exercising his assumed superiority, he destroys [. . .] the effectiveness of indigenous economic, social, political, legal, and moral systems and imposes his own versions of these structures on the Other" (20). Cultural heritage is a source of power to the underprivileged countries and should, therefore, be introduced into the criteria of classification in order to restore balance and grant fair chances to all. If properly employed, the principle would definitely disturb the old ordering of forces and instate balance.

The alternative to the present state of imbalance that postcolonial theory offers is to accept "metropolitan sources like Britain or France" as first world only because they are motherlands of immigration waves to the New Worlds (North and South America, the West Indies, Australia and New Zealand), or what John Docker calls "fellow colonising societies" when he speaks of the Australian experience that resembles the Caribbean, New Zealander and Canadian (445). Postcolonial theory's acceptance of Europe as first world is not done without irony. Its "[c]olonialist Literature is an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of 'civilization,' a world that has not (yet) been domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology" (JanMohamed 18).

Apart from the ironic tone that colors statements of the sort, the acceptance is usually ironic in the sense that it redefines the first world as an aggressor that unrightfully occupied the land of others and arrogantly subverted its people. An Antiguan writer, Jamaica Kincaid, addresses the English occupier of her country saying: "You loved

knowledge, and wherever you went you made sure to build a school, a library (yes, and in both of these places you distorted or erased my history and glorified your own)” (94).

First world’s moves have not always been waves of peaceful immigration. Voicing the perspective of the Algerian people, Frantz Fanon asserts that “colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country [. . .]. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it” (154). Gayatri Spivak collectively calls the different forms of subversion the “epistemic violence of imperialist law and education” (“Subaltern” 25). Abdul R. JanMohamed asserts that the “colonizer’s invariable assumption about his moral superiority means that he will rarely question the validity of either his own or his society’s formation and that he will not be inclined to expend any energy in understanding the worthless alterity of the colonized” (18). Sarcastically, Kincaid concludes “people like me will never be able to take command of the thing the most simpleminded of you can master” (94).

This ironic and subversive yielding to one part of the dichotomy allows postcolonial theory to carry on with its own logic of classification. The countries that have emerged through a continuous influx of waves of immigration (rather than direct military occupation) are a second world. Referring to a “neither/nor territory of white settler-colonial writing which Alan Lawson has called the ‘Second World,’” Stephen Slemon is more geographically conscious (104). His “Second World” is not just “a reading position [. . .] taken up in settler and ex-colonial literature,” it is also specific countries that he names when referring to theorists who “have argued long and hard for the preservation of white Australian, New Zealander, southern African, and Canadian literatures within the field of comparative ‘post-colonial’ literary studies” (109). It is second world in the sense that it is linked to the motherland with linguistic and cultural ties though falling short in primacy. “It is metropolitan-derived, but not metropolitan, both European and not European [. . .] threatened by the inevitable inferiority of distance from the cultural source.” In operation is “that same ultimate criterion of, and rationale for the right of invasion of other people’s territories” which forces “the white colonial society [. . .], by its own removal from the metropolitan center [. . .], into a necessary inferiority in what Franz Fanon calls the ‘hierarchy of cultures’” (Docker 443).

Had it not been for the post World War II developments in world politics and power relations this division and its logic would have incorporated the United States of America in the second world criterion of postcolonial theory and placed it on the same footings with Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for it had grown, to a great extent, in a similar manner as other countries of the second world. Furthermore, recognition of its literary potentials came relatively late. American literature remained outside the literary canon of English for decades and found its way into it towards the mid thirties of the twentieth century. Slemon argues that “the term ‘post-colonial’ is an outgrowth of [. . .] ‘commonwealth’ literary studies—a study which came into being after ‘English’ studies had been liberalized to include ‘American’ and then an immediate national or regional literature (Australian, Canadian, West Indian)” (105).

Postcolonial theory also accepts the third world labeling in the ironic sense that it applies to countries that first world imperialism has taken advantage of, exploited, and subverted. Gauri Viswanathan exposes the “sordid history of colonialist expropriation, material exploitation, and class and race oppression behind European world dominance” (436). To Spivak the West is a “concealed subject [that] pretends it has ‘no geo-political determination’” when, indeed, this subject “belongs to the exploiter's side of the international division of labor” (“Subaltern” 24). The “Subject” in this context is “Europe” and “the colonial subject” becomes its “Other” and the “self's shadow.” The “textual ingredients with which [Europe] could invest its itinerary” are “not only [its] ideological and scientific production, but also [. . .] the institution of the law [. . .] and the economic factor when it claims to be the final determinant” (Spivak “Subaltern” 24). However, the third world is now awakening to its rights and to the realization of its own potential that resides in the revival of past heritage and in a building of a new identity that explores cultural resources. Benita Parry considers “rejection of imperialism's signifying system [. . .] a move” that requires more than “a conception of the native as a historical subject and agent of an oppositional discourse” (44). Though moving beyond the quest of the past, Frantz Fanon's initial position is one of “delving into the past of a people in order to find coherent elements which will counteract colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm” (154).

Because the relationship between the first and the third worlds is characterized with subversion, exploitation and resistance, postcolonial theory introduces minorities that inhabit first world countries (first in both the traditional and the ironic postcolonial sense) into the third world classification. Slemon points out in his analysis that the “critical field” that “employs the term 'post-colonial' in considering the valency of subjectivity” does so “specifically within Third-and Fourth-world cultures, and within black, and ethnic, and First-Nation constituencies dispersed within First-world terrain” (105). Blacks, coloreds and ethnic minorities in their protest against social inequality are third world people. Barbara Christian defines the postcolonial “we” as “(black, women, third world)” (457). Women in their struggle against patriarchal order are included in the category of third world peoples. On suggesting models to challenge critical theories that lack social responsibility of resistance, Ketu Katrak also equates women with colonized nations. “Their texts deal with, and often challenge, their dual oppression-patriarchy that preceded and continues after colonialism [. . .] a worsened predicament within a capitalist economic system introduced by the colonizer” (257). Spivak follows a similar track when she writes: “Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effected. [. . .] If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (“Subaltern” 28). Although she disagrees with Spivak on the point of the silenced “Other,” Benita Parry shares her inclusion of women in the category of the colonized subject of postcolonial theory (38). In short, the criterion for the classification of third world peoples is not geographical, military or exclusively economic as the traditional three worlds theory likes to proclaim. It is a case of cultural identity, power struggle and social hierarchy.

In postcolonial theory, fourth world countries are the recipient of immigration waves from the first world. Its people are the natives of the two Americas, the West Indies, Australia and New Zealand. They are the American Indians (as they prefer to be called, Guerin et al 263), the Maori and the Pakeha of New Zealand, the Aborigines of Australia and the Indigenes of the West Indies. Mudrooroo refers to “Australian Aboriginal literature” as “literature of the fourth world, that is, of the indigenous minorities submerged in a surrounding majority and governed by them”(231). Speaking of the

impossible state of “authenticity” in literary writings of “Fourth World” people, Margery Fee highlights a complex cultural state of “mixed ancestry” between the Maori and the Pakeha of New Zealand; the use of English as a “mother tongue” by some purely Maori writers; the “ignorance of [. . .] ancestry” between some “Aboriginal” writers of Australia; the growing up in “White foster homes” of some “Canadian Metis” (242). These nations are fourth world peoples because the risk of identity loss in their case is higher than it is in the third world. Their enemy has ceased to be so a long time ago. The settlers have become an inescapable part of their new evolving cultural identity. The enemy’s language has dominated and caused the native tongues to retreat and remain as obsolete practice of past generations. Mudrooroo contests: “Aboriginal languages must be allowed to live and [. . .] form the basis of the means of expression”(231). If they ever survive, aboriginal tongues usually remain oral in form.

Postcolonial literature comes out in response to military occupation or as a result of immigration and subsequent formation of settlers’ colonies. Generally speaking, it is caused by the clash of subversive forces with local resistance. “Postcolonial Literatures are a result of [. . .] interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices” when “the immensely prestigious imperial culture” encounters “counter-colonial resistance” in a process “of self-determination to defy, erode and sometimes supplant the prodigious power of imperial cultural knowledge” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1). It exposes religious prejudices as well as racial and sexual segregation. It speaks of slavery and freedom, attacks the imbalance of forces and calls for the implementation of a new order. It emphasizes cultural, historical, and ideological differences for the purpose. Significantly, some of these elements do also appear in first world writings. However, the way they are handled depends on the political and cultural stance of each of the four worlds, with the result that postcolonial literature becomes rich, complex and varied in nature and sometimes contradictory in objectives.

First world literature is relevant and significant when it touches on this world’s relations with the third world. It is a literature that calls for universality of values and uniformity of human experience. In his “Preface to the Plays of William Shakespeare,” Samuel Johnson introduces as a criterion for excellence the principle of universality. “Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of *general* nature.

Particular manners can be known to few, [. . .] the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted [but] the mind can only repose on the stability of truth” (emphasis added;1067). Johnson excludes cultural particularity from his conception of Truth. Shakespeare’s stories might “require Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men” (1069).

This concept of universal human nature seems, on a surface level, to be a positively constructive tenet that aims at elimination of cultural differences and unification of all human communities. However, postcolonial theory has its insights on the principle of universality in first world writings. Chinua Achebe writes: “In the nature of things the work of a western writer is automatically informed by universality. It is the other who must strain to achieve it.” “As though universality,” he mockingly elaborates, “were some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe or America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home” (“Colonialist” 59-60).

The universalist vocabulary of eighteenth century England runs through contemporary Western critical writings as well. A. Norman Jeffares claims that “[t]o write for one’s own race, is obviously the most satisfactory situation for a writer. And yet the audience outside his immediate circle of friends, outside his region, is very important.” The “existence of an outside and overseas audience” protects “the different kinds of English written today in India, in Africa, in the Antipodes, in Asia, or in the West Indies” from becoming “too local in interest, too diminished in continuity, too immediately appealing, and therefore, in the long run, too unacceptable throughout the world” (qtd. in Brahms 67). A. M. McLeod also asserts that “[m]ere race and color problems never produce good literature.” He praises Olive Schreiner’s The Story of an African Farm as “a good novel because the author deals with human universal values” and Joseph Conrad’s Nigger of Narcissus “where Jim is the amalgam of many kinds of man, not just a black man” (7-8). Conrad’s Heart of Darkness has its share of his approval at a time when Achebe speaks of the ironies of teaching the novel in African universities (Tiffin 97).

Postcolonial theory, then, regards the implementation of the principle of universality in Western literary writings and criticism with suspicion and considers it a dangerous

attempt to deny the cultural identity of the occupied nation. Arun P. Mukherjee argues that ignoring “the realities of ‘power, class, culture, social order and disorder’” actually “mystifies” “the true nature of reality” and “pretends that human beings and their institutions have not changed a bit during the course of history, that they all face the same problems as human beings” (450, 451). In response’s to the universal claims of the Western writer, JanMohamed contests: “If he assumes that he and the Other are essentially identical, then he would tend to ignore the significant divergences and to judge the Other according to his own cultural values” (18). Cultural differences are sources of power that the occupier tries to eliminate under the pretext of universality. “Instead of being an exploration of the racial Other,” Western literature “merely affirms its own ethnocentric assumptions; instead of actually depicting the outer limits of ‘civilization,’ it simply codifies and preserves the structures of its own mentality” (JanMohamed 19).

First world literature, thus, judges an occupied nation through first world values, ignoring in the meanwhile that nation’s cultural particularity and individuality. In the absence of the occupier’s cultural values from the cultural matrix of the occupied, an imbalance of forces ensues, with the latter losing in the comparison. The conqueror feels superior and regards the other as low. Indeed, postcolonial theory finds that first world writings present the occupied nations as non-entities hanging on the outskirts of civilization. Hegel has written off an Africa that lives outside history because history only registers the achievement of civilization. “What we properly understand as Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit [. . .] which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World’s history.” “For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement of development to exhibit” (qtd. in Lamming 15). Postcolonial theory subsumes Hegel’s theorizing by redefining the word civilization. History, culture and language are particulars and cannot become universal.

Apart from the evident sense of failure at human reciprocation implied in subversion, postcolonial theory also exposes the motives in operation underneath false claims of superiority. Its insights highlight, at least, two: a political as well as a psychological motive. JanMohamed describes subversion as a European “self-sustaining cycle” (23). Politically speaking, the call for universality precludes having the native subject believe

in his own potentials and rebel. Spivak elaborates on the psychological side of the issue when she speaks of the “heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” and of “the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious subjectivity” (“Subaltern” 24-25). Fear of the Other, the conquered in this particular case, lies at the roots of the European subversive maneuvers. It is safer to put down the native than face the consequences of his threateningly developing a separate entity. An imperialist self-interest of prolonging occupation seems to be the driving force behind both psychological and political motivations.

If the theory of a universal man provided imperialism with power, it concurrently became the starting point for the literature of resistance that emerged in the third world. Third world writings set out to deflate the principle of universality by depicting different responses to human experience than what first world thinking erroneously assumed to be universal. For example, a British high school instructor found it difficult while teaching a Thomas Hardy novel to explain to his Nigerian students the concept of a kiss simply because the act of kissing is absent from their scope of experience. Reminiscing on this experience, Charles Larson writes: “I was more than surprised to learn that Africans, traditionally at least, do not kiss; to learn that what I thought was ‘natural’ in one society is not natural at all, but learned, that is, cultural.” Therefore, he concludes that the “term ‘universal’ has been grossly misused when it has been applied to non-Western literature because it has often been used in a way that ignores the multiplicity of cultural experiences” (63). Similarly, the concept of romantic love is absent from the African mental frame of reference. Larson comments: “Western romance is only one theme that may puzzle the African reader” (64). Their literature highlights marriage, not love, as means to life prolongation and tribal extension.

This last fact explains the African concern with the cultural consequences of death and the Western reader’s lack of interest in this aspect. A good example of such disparity of responses is the reaction of both readers to Sembene Ousmane’s story of the Senegalese girl who accompanies a French family to Europe as housemaid. Mistreatment as well as psychological and cultural isolation cause the girl to commit suicide. At best, the European reaction to her death would be condemnation of racial segregation and its inhuman consequences. This response is good enough on the moral level, but it exposes

the European ignorance of the proper African interpretation of the incident and speaks against the Western principle of universality. The African reaction to the suicide blames and condemns the girl for breaking “the cycle of life.” The question of whether she is the only child in the family becomes crucial because if the girl proves to be its last surviving member, she would have put an end to “the family lineage” (Larson 65).

Third world literary voices, thus, emphasize cultural differences. Such emphasis enables its people to free themselves, at least psychologically, from the dominance of imperialism. This feeling of freedom is necessary whether such force still resides in their country or is exercising some postcolonial influence in the way that postcolonial theory calls neocolonialism. The emphasis on differences carries a sense of resistance which takes several forms in third world writings.

The first form of the literature of resistance in the third world is the “national” one that openly attacks the imperialistic presence and calls for liberation from its power and influence. Slemon calls it “resistance literature” and defines it “as that category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle for national liberation”(107). Frantz Fanon also defines “national literature” as a “literature of combat because it moulds the national consciousness, giving it form and contour and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons.” This literature also represents “the will to liberty expressed in terms of time and space” (Fanon 155). Similarly, Trinh T. Minh-ha voices a nationalistic stance in her attack on the policy of “separate development” of the White South African authorities. She lashes at the fact that they use “the tools of Western liberalism for the defense of their racialistically indefensible cause” by allowing “you [the black subjects]” to “keep your traditional law and tribal customs among yourselves, as long as you and your own kind are careful not to step beyond the assigned limits” which ironically “means” “that each one of us [black subject and white colonizer] minds her/his own business (I will interfere when my rights are concerned since I represent the State) and that your economical poverty is of your own making” (265).

This form of nationalist resistance entails a nostalgic return to the past to revive cultural roots and rebuild identity. Dennis Walder believes that the postcolonial “has to do with the past” for the “‘post’ does not, cannot shut off historical process” (82).

Kirsten Peterson and Anna Rutherford more explicitly assert that the past “conditions our present responses. [. . .] By entering into a fruitful dialogue with the past one becomes able to revive the fossils that are buried within oneself and are part of one’s ancestors” (185). Moving beyond the psychological domain of the Jungian collective unconscious, these two critics comment on the practical “uses to which a people could put their common past or cultural heritage” which “can either act as positive forces or can become prejudices,” as “was the case with Nazi Germany where the past was evoked to serve present feelings of national and racial superiority” (185-86). Walder highlights the positive forces in the case of Marcus Garvey of Jamaica in the 1930s “who encouraged black people to think of Africa, especially Ethiopia, as their religious and cultural home, from which everywhere else is Babylon” and subsequently inspired another “black cultural minority” calling its members “Rastafarians” during the 1960s in the Caribbean and the UK to adopt an “appearance, behaviour and language” that denoted a “‘back-to-Africa’ religious cult” (Walder 133). Trinh T. Minh-ha also affirms how she, despite precautions about the subversive implications of the step, does “feel the necessity to return to” her “so-called roots, since they are the fount of [her] strength, the guiding arrow to which [she] constantly refer[s] before heading for a new direction” (268).

The revived interest in native tongues and the increasing awareness of the role they can play in liberation are part of this historically-oriented cultural resistance. Simon During asserts that “Nationalism emerges when some languages get into print [. . .] allowing subjects to identify themselves as members of the community of readers” (126). Starting with the conviction that the “bullet was the means of the physical subjugation” and language “of spiritual subjugation,” Nugugi Wa Thiong’o calls for the use of his Kenyan mother tongues “so as to restore the Kenyan child to his environment” (287, 290). Such move would be “a first step” to “bring about the renaissance in African culture,” for the power of language lies in what it carries of “moral, ethical and aesthetic values” that are the “basis of a people’s identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race” (290, 289). Closely on the footsteps of native tongues, a literary “content” that voices a peoples’ “anti-imperialist struggles” would follow in order not only to “liberate their productive forces from foreign control,” but also “defeat imperialism and create a higher system of democracy” (Nugugi Wa Thiong’o 290).

The Second form of resistance writings is presumably a more progressive one that considers the other two as lacking in dynamic interaction with the occupier and his mental framework. Against the principles of nationalism, cultural “purity” and “authenticity,” it establishes those of “hybridity” and “diversity.” Homi Bhabha contests that “hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity” (209-08). Helen Tiffin asserts that postcolonial “cultures are inevitably hybridised” and “it is not possible to create or recreate national and regional formations wholly independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise” (95). Graham Huggan calls for “a creative revisionism” of postcolonial theory of resistance, which would include an “internal critique of the postcolonial culture (or cultures), [. . .] takes into account the transitional nature of postcolonial societies” and “challenges the tenets [. . .] of an essentialist nationalism which sublimates or overlooks regional differences and of an unconsidered multiculturalism (mis)appropriated for the purposes of enforced assimilation rather than the promulgation of cultural diversity”(410). Resistance, according to Gareth Griffiths, is “founded not in the closed and limited construction of a pure authentic sign but in endless and excessive transformation of the subject positions possible within the hybridised” (241).

In this context, nationalist stances related to the use of languages, like Nugugi Wa Thiong’o’s, undergo modification. Gabriel Okara, for example, calls for “the utilization of African ideas, African philosophy and African folklore and imagery to the fullest extent possible [. . .] and the only way to use them effectively is to translate them [. . .] into whatever European language” the native writer “is using as medium of expression” (15). Okara’s attitude that asks for “a Nigerian or west African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our own way” exemplifies that of many other hybrid authors (15-16). Achebe, though a vehement critic of Eurocentrism, believes that “the English language will be able to carry the weight of [his] African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings”(Morning 62). Raja Rao also calls for a dialect of Indian English “which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American” (qtd. in New 307).

In literary writings, this interactive form of resistance, or what critics call postcolonial discursive counter-discourse, depends on questioning in an indirect manner the European and Western enterprise in the land of others and exposes the maneuvers that have enabled it to dominate. It employs mimicry, irony, symbolism, magic realism and subversive rewriting of famous Western literary works for the purpose. Though more common (especially in its last two forms) in second world's writings, this discourse is gaining ascendancy in the third world as well. Its different methods enable resistance literature to take a subtle and more influential form. It pretends to adopt western thinking only to deconstruct its values, criticize its ethics and reinstate them in a different form more suited to the sufferer.

Unlike the literary writings of the third world, second world postcolonial literature is not directly concerned with resistance. Slemon designates this kind of writing as “not sufficiently pure in its anti-colonialism [. . .] because its modalities of postcoloniality are too ambivalent” (107). Instead of resistance, it tends to focus more on identity formation and on the psychological inhibitions and social impediments to its growth. Flemming Brahm speaks of “the West Indian and Canadian obsessions with cultural identity” and of how postcolonial writings of “Canada, Australia and New Zealand” reflect “a sense that life as a nation has only just begun and the future is still being made” (66). Alan Lawson also writes of the “psychological responsibility” of the “colonial writers, especially those of Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the West Indies, and Australia,” to “define, that is, images of identity, of community, of history, of place” (168). Highlighting the case of the second world writer, Walder has as an authority the south African novelist Nadine Gordimer who believes that “the novelist in south Africa starts from scratch” like that of the “colonial writer” of the “kind familiar in Canada and Australia as well: Lacking a sense of tradition, alienated from their own, colonial culture, uncertain of their identity, they look towards an ideal which [. . .] has its origins in the metropolitan centers abroad and so they cannot see what is around them” (161).

The complex cultural relations resulting from settlement are major causes of such ambivalence and inhibitions. These relations are complicated by the settlers' links with the motherland, on the one hand, and with their contact with the native inhabitants of the new land, on the other. The relationships do not exactly fit on either side into the

occupier/occupied dichotomy, nor are they completely free from it. Tiffin writes of “the ambiguous position of [. . .] white Australians, who, though still colonised by Europe and European ideas, are themselves the continuing colonisers of the original inhabitants” (96). Similarly, Docker writes of how the “white colonising society removes the indigenous culture to an inferior level by virtue of the superiority of the metropolitan culture it is establishing,” but “is itself, by its own removal from the metropolitan center, forced into a necessary inferiority” (443). In other words, though they have an upper hand of the country than the natives, the settlers themselves feel colonized. They feel inhibited by the presumed superiority of the first world. Their linguistic and cultural ties with it as well as their political allegiance to its head of state make them feel occupied. Canada, Australia and New Zealand pay homage to the British crown. The western part of Canada still feels occupied. The “neocolonial cultural matrix itself becomes subject to profound psychological disturbance, at once guilty of enforcing inferiority on others, and haunted by self-doubt and self-contempt before the metropolitan culture’s necessary superiority” (Docker 443). Identity formation of second world peoples is therefore complicated by its people’s ambivalent cultural links with the metropolitan center, on the one hand, and the native inhabitants of the country, on the other.

The ambivalent relationships of settlers/motherland and settlers/natives color the white community’s literary output. The “Second-World writer, the Second-World text, that is, have always been complicit in colonialism’s territorial appropriation of land [. . .] and this has been their inescapable condition even [. . .] when they have promulgated their [. . .] figures of post-colonial resistance” of Eurocentric values (Slemon 110). In short, second world postcolonial literary writings are ambivalent in nature and divided in cultural commitment between the motherland from which the settlers originally came and their new world of settlers’ colony. It searches in the linguistic and cultural differences between all three worlds (first, second and fourth), examines the complex cultural formula that results from their interaction and the identity crisis generated thereby.

The literature of fourth world peoples like the American Indians, the Australian Aborigines, the Maori and the Pakeha of New Zealand is usually oral in form, epical and heroic in nature. It endeavors to preserve moral and ethical values of its communities and strengthen tribal ties. Speaking of the case of the “American Indians,” Guerin et al

explain how the natives “think of themselves first as tribal members.” Their literature emphasizes “themes of tribal constancy in the face of devastation” (264-65). It is narrational with a purpose, for “stories are a source of strength in the face of centuries of silencing by European Americans.” Their case, however, seems to be universal: “In predominantly oral cultures, storytelling passes on religious beliefs, moral values, political codes, ethics and practical lessons of everyday life” (Guerin et al 263).

Assessing his own Australian cultural stance, Mudrooroo identifies with the case of the American Indians because the “literature of the fourth world” people, “must be compared to similar literatures, for example the American Indian” (231). He recognizes how “[b]efore the Europeans brought a system of writing to Australia, all literature was oral [. . .]. Religious traditions and beliefs, legends and historical events [. . .] were handed down from generation to generation, usually in the form of verse” (229). Such literature uses the surviving native tongue, in its unwritten form, to complain of social marginalization and to criticize the settlers for bringing it about. In short, it is a literature of resistance. “Aboriginal literature is and can be more vital in that it is seeking to come to grips with and define a people, the roots of whose culture extend in unbroken line far into a past in which English is a recent intrusion” (Mudrooroo 231).

The introduction of English into the fourth world literary writings does not stifle resistance. Mudrooroo speaks for Australia one more time: “Even today, some modern day Aborigines believe that the advent of the Europeans into Australia was the end of a golden age and a descent into the dark ages” (230). The use of English for resistance, hence, proves to be a mistake. “Aboriginal writings” in “a white form [English]” is “a contradiction in the use of alien form” and “an alien language.” Therefore, Mudrooroo believes it “is imperative that Aboriginal languages must be allowed to live and grow” (231).

In northern America the native tongues did actually survive in a “Traditional” Indian literature, composed in “tribal languages.” Nevertheless, the “Mainstream” American Indian writers have no scruples in using English to criticize, among other injuries, “the duplicities of the U.S. government” (Guerin et al 265). But the inhabitants of Antigua are only forced to write about the crimes of the English occupier in English because their language has been obliterated on the advent of the occupier. Kincaid plaintively exposes

the obliteration act: “isn’t it odd that the only language I have in which to speak of this crime is the language of the criminal who committed the crime?” She finds it quite ironic because “the language of the criminal can contain only the goodness of the criminal’s mind” (94).

However, the link of third and fourth world literature with resistance remains problematic to postcolonial theory. On the one hand, it generates an erroneous impression that all third and fourth world writings contain elements of resistance when they do not necessarily do. Second, the link tends to ignore writings of the second world that directly criticize the imperialistic dealings of the first world..

Postcolonial literary theory finds itself contemporaneous with the postmodern era of western literature and culture. This contemporariness cannot be a coincidence especially in the presence of conspicuous affinities between the two theories in interests, objectives and procedures. The case testifies to the existence of concurrent circumstances, giving birth to postcolonialism in second, third and fourth world writings and to postmodernism in Western culture and literature. Though it is not the objective of this paper to scrutinize these circumstances, it is evident, and significant, that both come in response to a state of imbalance of forces in world relationships that has given birth to postmodernism in the first world and to postcolonialism in the other three.

There is no consensus among critics on the matter of their kinship. Simon During, for example, regards postmodernism and postcolonialism as oppositional for he asserts “that the concept [of] postmodernity has been constructed in terms which more or less intentionally wipe out the possibility of post-colonial identity” (125). Kwame Anthony Appiah subtly tackles both kinship and disparity: “Postcoloniality [. . .] and its post, like postmodernism’s, is also a post that challenges earlier legitimating narrative. [. . .] But it challenges them in the name of the ethical universal. [. . .] And on that ground it is not an ally for Western postmodernism but an agonist: from which I believe postmodernism may have something to learn” (123). Tiffin does not perceive challenge but rather witnesses an insidious assimilation of one disparate entity into the other. She believes that the notion of “literary universality” is synonymous with “the European appropriation

of postcolonial practice and theory as postmodern poststructuralist” (96). The rest of this paper will emphasize the affinities between postmodernism and postcolonialism.

Both theories aimed at subverting power centers that impede identity formation and inhibit self-expression. The power center that postcolonial theory attacks is imperialism whereas postmodernism targets the high modernist literary movement. Postcolonialism attacks imperialism for its subversive call for universality that would presumably make it a world center. Arun Mukherjee is disappointed by his Canadian students’ response to a short story by Margaret Laurence entitled “The Perfume Sea,” a story that aims at exposing “the nature of colonialism as well as its aftermath” (449). Mukherjee expected his students to criticize the hairdresser salon owner in Ghana after independence for making “the African bourgeoisie slavishly imitate the values of its former colonial masters” in beauty and fashion (448). The students’ analysis digressed and focused on how “believable” or “likeable” the main characters are and on how they found happiness at the end by accepting change. Mukherjee blames the “source” of his students “universal” vocabulary, the “literary critics and editors of literature anthologies” who rather than “facing up to the realities of power, class, culture, social order and disorder, hide behind the universalist vocabulary that only mystifies the true nature of reality” (450). It is interesting how Mukherjee’s criticism of his students for failing to provide a postcolonial reading of the text evolves into an indictment of the critical theories inspired by high modernism. “Surely literature is more than form? What about the questions regarding the ideology and social class of the writer, the role and ideology of the patron and the disseminators of literature, the role of literature as a social institution”(Mukherjee 451). Significantly the two voices, the postmodern and the postcolonial, seem to merge in his comment, an evidence that speaks for the affinities between the two theories.

Postmodernism targets modernism for focusing on the text as art object, significant for what it is and exclusive of external historical, literary and biographical matters that could be relevant in understanding the text. Astradur Eysteinnsson discusses the “organic theory of art” and its principle of “*formal* awareness and emphasis.” He points out how T. S. Eliot was “a pioneer” of modernism who, though “not a practicing academic, had immense influence on academic criticism” (10,76). The practice of “close textual scrutiny” Eliot promoted “was later to be echoed in much American criticism” (76-77).

Modernists may acknowledge, but do not resist this “dehumanization of art” despite its obvious dissociation of “human sensibility” from “artistic sensibility” (Gasset 11).

Postmodernism targets this stance.

Postmodernism believes that the domineering capitalist system and patriarchal order have created a social stratum that regards itself elite in artistic taste and literary interest and capacity. It attacks such class for failing to respond to the needs of blacks and ethnic minorities and to solve the problems of working classes and women. It also targets the political center and the capitalist economic system that helped form the elite group and its isolated, self-centered literary text. Frank Davey notes how modernism proves to be an “elitist, imperialist, ‘totalizing’” movement (119). Eysteinnsson also highlights the “analogy between modernism and fascism [that] has persistently been drawn.” This “formal-ideological nexus” disturbs the usual “place [of] modernism with regard to the prevalent capitalist-bourgeois culture of the twentieth century” with which it is usually associated (15).

The alternative that both theories offer is “de-centricity,” an act that challenges marginalization and results in “granting value to (what the center calls) the margin or the Other” (Hutcheon “Circling”132). The act contests previous power centers, imperialism in one and capitalist social hierarchy in the other, without allowing the margin to become another center. The “postmodern challenges any hegemonic force that presumes centrality, even as it acknowledges that it cannot privilege the margin without acknowledging the power of the center [. . .] and this is, of course, where its significance for postcolonialism comes in” (Hutcheon “Circling”132). The reactivated margin in the postcolonial context is the occupied nations, their submerged past and neglected cultural roots, while in postmodernism it is the social groups that wish to voice their needs through a non-elite social literature. Spivak elaborates on the economic dimension of the issue when she defines the “margins” or “circuit marked by the epistemic violence” of Europe as “men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat [. . .] silenced [. . .] under the standardization and regimentation of socialized capital” (“Subaltern” 25). Once these marginalized groups are reinstated, imperialism, capitalist social system and patriarchal order would be undermined.

Subverted nations of occupied countries and minorities in the first world will have more chance to demonstrate their power, assert their importance and obtain their denied rights.

Strategic devices of resistance employed by both theories are similar in falling back on the past in search for forgotten values. Postcolonialism encourages, during the nationalist phase, its people to seek identity in their neglected past and to derive from revived values power to resist occupation. The past in postmodernism is literary. Critics note that, as an extension of postmodernism, “poststructuralism [. . .] licenses a return to the canon (particularly the canon of Romanticism) and to traditional forms of literary criticism” (Ashcroft Griffiths and Tiffin 118). In an American postmodern short story called “The Cliff” an old man teaches a young boy how to fly by invoking the natural elements (sun, ocean, sky and land). The story turns to be an invocation of the Romantic act of transcendence into nature (Sadiq 18). However, the postmodern return to the literary past of Romanticism is not an absolute embracing of its values. It usually expresses hidden tension between a powerful desire to adopt romantic experience and simultaneous doubt in its efficiency. To Linda Hutcheon the return to the past in postmodernist texts involves an “ironic discontinuity [. . .] at the heart of continuity” that becomes possible through parody. Parody “paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies” (Poetics 11).

Despite the theoretical assertion that “postcolonial literary production precludes any return to a canon” (Ashcroft Griffiths and Tiffin 118), the return to past literary canons is not alien to postcolonialism. Some significant postcolonial literary writings draw on past literary pieces of the first world in order to criticize their values and subvert their assertions. Very much in line with this form of subversive rewriting of Anglocentric texts are works like Wide Sargasso Sea, Moses Ascending and Foe. According to Tiffin, Jean Rhys writes back to Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre in Wide Sargasso Sea (1968) to “directly contests British sovereignty—over persons, place, culture, language” (98). Spivak also comments that Rhys rewrites the scene of the encounter with a bleeding Richard Mason in Jane Eyre as a keeping of “Bertha’s humanity, indeed her sanity as a critic of imperialism, intact.” Bertha flares at Mason not prompted by “innate bestiality” but because she discerns “a dissimulation” in his handling of the law. Spivak also finds in Rochester’s change of Antoinette name to Bertha, in Rhys, a critical commentary on

how “so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism” (“Women’s Text” 271). Tiffin also points out that both Samuel Selvon’s Moses Ascending and J.M. Coetzee’s Foe write back to Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe and that these two works are “not simply writing back to an English canonical text, but to the whole of the discursive field within which such a text operated and continues to operate in postcolonial worlds.” For Robinson Crusoe “continually displays and repeats for the colonised subject the original capture of his/her alterity and the processes of its annihilation, marginalisation, or naturalisation as if this were axiomatic, culturally ungrounded ‘universal,’ natural” (98).

Both theories also utilize the technique of magic realism for the purpose of resistance. Postcolonial literature depicts a magical, supernatural world to relieve its subjects from the sense of injustice they usually feel in the ordinary world. The tactic works to eliminate barriers between two worlds one is cruel yet inescapable except to the magical other that supersedes it in charm and compensatory powers. A good example of the practice is Toni Morrison’s Beloved. The slaughtered child of a black American slave woman comes back from the world of the dead as a young woman to live the life she has been denied earlier. She describes the white men she has encountered in the other world as “the men without skin” (210). The description suggests that blackness is the essence of man that would on skinning produce the white man.

In a similar, though not identical, manner, postmodernism uses magic realism to break the barrier between two literary genres, realism and supernaturalism. Baxter’s story “The Cliff” is a good example of the type where “an actual flight unaided by modern technological means takes place” in a modern setting (Sadiq 9). The objective behind the postmodern use of magic realism is to mock past literary representational modes for claiming ability to reproduce psychological and empirical reality. Diana Brydon asserts that postmodernism “focuses on the problems of representation, and on the impossibility of retrieving truth” (142). Magic realism allows postmodernism to mock its predecessors by emphasizing alternate magical realities unrelated to ordinary experience. Hutcheon notes that the “formal technique of ‘magic realism’ (with its characteristic mixing of the fantastic and the realist)” represents “challenges to genre

distinctions and to the conventions of realism” which “are certainly part of the project of both enterprises,” the postcolonial and the postmodern (“Circling”131).

The hero almost disappears from postcolonial and postmodern writings. In the literature of the colonized, the tribe often replaces the individual in order to generate a counter force to imperialism. This side we have seen in the African readers’ condemning response to the Senegalese girl’s suicide in Sembene Ousmane’s story because it would put an end to her clan. Tribal values also become evident when feminist caller groups found difficulty to have African women share their views because women in Africa gave priority to the principle of national solidarity, of standing hand in hand with their men to face imperialism. To become feminist would allow dissension to occur at a time when union is needed for racial extension and continuity. Petersen rhetorically inquires: “which is the more important, which comes first, the fight for female equality or the fight against Western cultural imperialism?” (252). The hero is also absent from the writings of postmodernism. He has become a farcical “Shrek” movie figure that mocks both the anti-hero of modern literature and the hero of old romance.

Ambivalence characterizes the writings of both groups. Postmodernism strives to take in all values. The text becomes a playground of contrary views. This form of openness, receptiveness and flexibility is understandable in light of the movement’s attempt to give voice to marginalized communities (including gay groups) and destroy power centers. To Linda Hutcheon “postmodernism is politically ambivalent: its critique coexists with an equally real and equally powerful complicity with the cultural dominants within which it inescapably exists” (“Circling”130). that postcolonialism, unlike postmodernism, “possesses a strong political motivation that is intrinsic to its oppositionality” (130).

Nevertheless, postcolonial writings have different and varied forms of ambivalence depending on which of the three worlds they come from. For example, third world writings in their more developed form of resistance utilize irony to subvert imperialism. This deliberate ambivalence meets with an involuntary type in second world writings. The ambivalent relationships that color second world people’s interactions with the natives of the land and the motherland is largely responsible for this ambivalence. Their literature depicts a quest of identity that has become uncertain under the complexities of cultural relations.

Fourth world people find themselves in a compulsory state of ambivalence especially in use of language. The American Indians use English to criticize the American government; writings in their native tongue will not be allowed to enter the literary canon. The inhabitants of Antigua write about the crimes of the English occupier in English because their language has been obliterated on his arrival to their land.

This is the postcolonial literature written in the third world in response to imperialism and in the second and the fourth world as a result of colonial settlement. However, having lost legitimacy to its presence in the third world, the first world still feels its economic interest at stake. Therefore, it tries to stifle third world's voice by denying its literary output admission to the canon and its critical writings publication. Walder points out how "Achebe's own penetrating and influential (outside Oxbridge and London) critical essays on, for example, 'Colonialist Criticism' (1974) were, as they often still are, ignored" (4). W.J. T. Mitchell criticizes the National Association of Scholars in their response "to the emergence of ethnic and women studies" on "declaring that the barbarians are in our midst." He describes their reaction as "the hysterical rhetoric of an empire in decline" (477). Furthermore, the first world also makes competition for second world writers very difficult. Their writings have to meet Anglocentric standards before publication. The voice of fourth world peoples is subsumed because its native tongues are often buried in the cradle. However, the third world is now awakening to the realization of its own potential; the second is receiving world prizes for its literary output and some of the fourth world countries are struggling to revive their native tongues. Resistance goes on and is making progress.

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