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(These sections are taken from J.C.Young's book *Postcolonialism: A Short Introduction*)

1- Colonialisms, Decolonization, and Decoloniality

For centuries, the peoples of Europe, particularly the Venetians, had traded with those of India and China, precious goods travelling overland along the Silk Road which ran from East to West or by sea on the spice trade routes of Asia. What became a Venetian monopoly encouraged the Portuguese and Spanish to find a sea route to India and China, either around the African coast, as in the case of Vasco da Gama, or by sailing due west, as in the case of Christopher Columbus, who happened upon the Americas, previously unknown to Europeans, instead. These trading voyages were to have the most profound unintended consequences: four centuries later, Europeans had colonized or semi-colonized four-fifths of the territory of the globe, causing millions of deaths by violence or disease in the process. **This colonization took two major forms: the first was where the colonizers gradually took over an area of land whose sovereignty was not established in a European way, or occupied a foreign state, and then administered and taxed it, but maintained little more than occupying troops, administrators, merchants, and missionaries.** India would be an example of this kind of 'exploitation' colony, French Indo-China or Dutch Indonesia others. In these cases, colonial rule was increasingly contested—sometimes by political agitation, sometimes by military resistance—and in the decades after the Second World War many such countries gained independence. The postcolonial era involved each country not only establishing its own sovereignty but also decolonizing its institutions and culture where it wished to, or could do so, for example economically or in the areas of language and education. **The second form of colonization** was very different because in addition to everything in the first, **it involved an additional factor whose effect was much more profound: settlement by Europeans who arrived with the intention of adopting the colony as their permanent home.** With a few exceptions, they and their descendants would never leave. While this was the earliest form of colonization—starting with the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas in the 16th century, the continuing effects of such 'settler colonialism' remain painfully acute right up to the present day—not for the settlers, but for the indigenous peoples amongst whom they settled. In almost every instance the settlers, arriving armed with superior technology and imperial logistical support, were able to subdue, slaughter, or enslave the local inhabitants. In many islands of the Caribbean the indigenous population was wiped out; in Spanish America, it is estimated that eight million were killed or died of disease. (The term 'Latin America' has a problematic history: originally conceptualized by the French to give plausibility to their own imperial interventions in South America—they invaded Mexico in 1836–7, and briefly set up

their own puppet monarchy there from 1861 to 1867—it was also developed by the Chilean philosopher-politician Francisco Bilbao and other members of the Creole elite to define themselves against invading Anglo-Saxon America to the north. For this reason, some prefer ‘South America’; however what then gets lost is that Spanish America originally extended, and in some respects still extends, all the way north up to Oregon and westwards up to Louisiana).

Much early writing in postcolonial studies focused on analysing the effects of the first kind of colonialism, offering an alternative view of imperial history from the perspective of the colonized. This was articulated with earlier accounts from **the 1950s, such as those by Césaire and Fanon (both from Martinique) or Albert Memmi (from Tunisia), of the psychology of colonization, that is, how living under colonial rule affects the subjectivity and consciousness of colonized people as individuals.** As we have seen, anti-colonial activists, such as **Fanon and Gandhi**, argued that for colonized peoples **decolonization** began with decolonizing yourself: alongside with seeking the expulsion of the colonizer, it was important to undo all the ways that colonization had affected people’s modes of seeing themselves and their own cultural assumptions and values. Intellectual decolonization had to accompany any attempts at political decolonization.

Many of the major academic figures who emerged in **the postcolonial field in the 1980s**, such as **Edward Said, or Homi K. Bhabha, Partha Chatterjee, Ranajit Guha, or Gayatri Spivak**, were intellectuals who had been born in former British colonies; their writing articulated their experiences of living in a colonized society, together with their experiences as immigrants coming to study and then teach in universities in the UK or USA. In both cases, their analyses formed part of the process of decolonizing themselves and their academic disciplines at the same time. The key factor connecting the colonial past with the postcolonial present was the legacy of the production of racial ideology as justification for colonialism and slavery. The problem was not just the inequities of the past but the continuing effects of stereotyped racialized attitudes in the present.

Since its emergence in the 1980s, postcolonial studies has impacted on almost every discipline in the humanities and social sciences. ... The decolonization of the university goes to the heart of many of its disciplines. In 2019 even Anglo-Saxon scholars woke up to the fact that their discipline was developed in the context of a political-racial project. **In the 21st century, as the memories of decolonization have receded into the past, many postcolonial scholars have moved on to focus on the more enduring second kind of colonization—that of settler societies, particularly in the Americas, Australasia, Ireland, the Middle East, and South Africa.** While some settler colonies, such as those in Algeria, Kenya, or Zimbabwe, were decolonized and the indigenous people able to take back control, in the majority the settlers themselves gained independence from the colonial power and the indigenous people were left to their own fates as subjugated minorities or even majorities. This has led to comparative analysis of **settler colonialism** and the related but often distinct problems that it has produced, which has now become a significant field in its own right. And from the oldest arena of settler colonialism of all, South America, a specific, local form of critical thinking has been developed by a number of academics and activists, such as **Walter**

Mignolo, Catherine Walsh, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres, known as **'the decolonial option' or 'decoloniality'**.

2- Postcolonial Literatures:

Postcolonial literatures have typically followed two genres. The first has been characterized as **'the empire writes back'**: the result of the fact that older generations of colonial settlers or colonized people were brought up not on their own local literature but that of the colonial metropole. Many early texts by colonial writers as a result are concerned to put forward local perspectives against those of the colonizers—so **Jean Rhys**, who was brought up in Dominica, noticed how in **Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847)**, Jane's narrative, which Western feminists used to invoke as the paradigmatic account of female empowerment, is one in which her success is achieved through the elimination of a woman from the Caribbean, Bertha Mason. Rhys's extraordinary ***Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)** retells that narrative from Bertha's perspective. Many Caribbean and South American writers, notably Aimé Césaire, as well as others such as Ngũgĩ, have taken and offered reversals of **Shakespeare's *The Tempest***, focusing on its animalistic portrait of the enslaved, native Caliban. Much of the work of the South African writer **J. M. Coetzee** draws on comparable resources (e.g. his 1980s novels ***Waiting for the Barbarians*** and ***Foe***). The Moroccan critic Abdelfattah Kilito has described modern North African literature as inevitably doubled, since whatever language authors may write in they always feel the presence of European literature over their shoulder. This interaction with the colonial culture is also marked in a different way by the fact that much 20th century colonial or postcolonial literature was written in the metropole—novelists such as Sam Selvon or V. S. Naipaul from Trinidad, or Mulk Raj Anand from India, for example, began their writing careers in London. **Postcolonial writing as a result has been much concerned with offering different representations of metropolitan cultures as places of migrancy, with a resulting rich cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity—a characteristic found in Salman Rushdie's or Zadie Smith's work.**

On the other hand, one of the pleasures that people enjoy in fiction by writers from other countries are the experiences that it offers of insights into different cultures. What we can call **the anthropological novel** has become one of the dominant genres of postcolonial literatures (the Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh is in fact a trained social anthropologist): here the novelist gives us a detailed portrait of the workings of a different society typically antithetical to that of the West. Whereas travel writing used to offer a personal but always Western view of the exotic experiences of foreign lands, that function has now been taken over by the non-Western novelist who performs the function of the anthropologist's 'native informant', so that today instead of reading travel writing Westerners read novels by writers from far-off countries. The best-selling African novel of all time, **Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958)**, is both a riposte to the demeaning representation of Africans in **Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899)** and a patient **anthropological account** of the ordered seasonal life of a West African village. The first to practise this genre were European colonials such as Leonard Woolf, whose *The Village in a Jungle* (1913) does something similar for rural life in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka).

While much postcolonial writing shares these characteristics, and articulates in an evocative and experiential way many of the issues around migration, race, gender, history, and the decolonial that form the subject of this book, it has also redefined the scope of the literary itself, starting with the dissolution of the relation between literature and national languages. Although postcolonial criticism has been largely written in English or French, postcolonial literatures exist in many languages, small as well as the large or dominant. Creating much of the momentum that in the 21st century has broken down the idea of national literatures in favour of world literatures, the best contemporary postcolonial writing has come to challenge ideas of postcoloniality itself. It can be in this way too that literature always takes us to another place.

3- Subalternity and the subaltern woman

In the 1980s a group of Indian historians, inspired by Mao Zedong's emphasis on the revolutionary role of the peasantry, started Subaltern Studies, a journal designed to consider the role of the peasantry in the recent history of India given that peasants had tended to be ignored by the then dominant groups of nationalist and Marxist historians. The editor, Ranajit Guha, explained in an opening editorial that he took the term 'subaltern' from the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who adapted it from its original military meaning of 'the ranks', that is, the mass of ordinary soldiers who served under the officers. Gramsci, who was himself particularly concerned with the political place of the peasantry in Italy, wanted a word less specific than the standard Marxist category of the 'proletariat' who perform a specific role in the process of industrial production, but which would still suggest the working people who are without power, living at the bottom of the social scale. Guha adapted Gramsci's term to his own definition of the condition of 'subalternity', which he defined as 'the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way'. The term was quickly adapted and extended to describe any marginalized or disempowered individual or group in contemporary society, particularly with respect to gender and ethnicity. Early interest focused on subaltern consciousness—that is, not analysing subaltern people or groups as a category from the outside, as would be the way of sociologists, but on how subaltern peoples themselves think, see, and speak the world. To retrieve their voices from the past requires a particular kind of archival work and retrieval, since typically formal archives preserve the records of the ruling class. It is possible to find scattered traces in the archive, for example law court records, but as the Indian critic **Gayatri Spivak** quickly pointed out, quite often, particularly in the case of **women, especially working-class women or women of colour, they are just absent: we do not find their voice because they were never able to be in a position to speak.** The Algerian/Amazigh/French writer Assia Djebar, and the African-American writer Toni Morrison, have shown how one way to respond to this gap in the history of women is to reimagine it. Their novels, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (L'Amour, La Fantasia, literally Love, Fantasia, 1985) and *Beloved* (1987) offer us powerful stories of Algerian women under French colonialism and African-American former women slaves in the United States told in their own words. In that context, history becomes rich and full of affect as the women from the past come back to life and tell their stories for the first time.

