

Postcolonial and Diaspora Studies Seminar – Annotated Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013.

The rhetorical question of Abu-Lughod's text refers to the trope of Muslim women as needing to be saved by the West from oppression. This logic has been used to bolster many political campaigns, including the War on Terror. The author explores the predicaments of Muslim women today; in particular she questions generalisations about Muslim culture and looks at what motivates the promotion of Muslim women's rights.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. 'The Danger of a Single Story'. TED talk. 07 October 2009. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>> Accessed 06 January 2016.

This influential TED talk is included in the list to give a contrast to the traditional postcolonialism and/or feminism from the 1990s that tends to be from Western academics. Like fellow Nigerian figure Chinua Achebe, Adichie is both a novelist and political commentator. In this talk, she draws on personal anecdotes to do with storytelling, the legacy of colonial education and the danger of homogenous representations of other countries. Adichie's appeal perhaps indicates the way the convergence of feminism and postcolonialism has become 'mainstream' in recent years. She also recently published this talk as a book entitled 'We Should All be Feminists'.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991 [1983].

Anderson's seminal text about the theorising of nationalism has been highly influential. The social construct or 'imagined' notion of nationhood is distinct from its physicality, yet it is these imaginaries that cause the growth of the nation-state. Anderson gives a historical reading of nationhood, including the growth of capitalism and print culture, territories of religion, and the development of languages of state. The text also explores similarities and distinctions between imperialist nationalisms and those of nationalist movements in ex-colonial countries in Africa and Asia.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*. London: Routledge, 2002 [1989].

This famous text is seen as one of the foundational text of Western postcolonial literary studies in terms of its breadth and linkage between different contexts. The emphasis of this text is the interrelationship between literatures from different decolonised lands, the critique of Eurocentricism integral in postcolonial literature, and debates over language in such literature. Although it was seminal for its time, as a introductory guide to the field it is now largely seen as out-dated.

bell hooks. *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press, 1982.

bell hooks (a pen name for Gloria Jean Watkins after her great-grandmother, always written in lower case) has been an influential figure in black feminism in the USA since 1980s. This

formative text looks at the convergence of racism and sexism in American history, including sexism during slavery, the way black womanhood is stereotyped and devalued, the imperialism of patriarchy and a history of black women and feminism. Within this, hooks critiques the way white feminists minimise the oppression of black women, particularly the intersection of racism and sexism.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

In this set of interdisciplinary essays, Bhabha sets out his postcolonial intellectual project, in particular the notions of ambivalence, mimicry and third space. Bhabha's theorising of mimicry and ambivalence are the basis for conceptualisations of colonised people. Mimicry is seen when members of a colonised society attempt to 'mimic' the colonisers' language, attitudes, dress, etc. as a means to accessing their power. Ambivalence is inherent in this mimicry: it is 'almost the same, but not quite', to use his famous words. Bhabha's theorising of ambivalence argues that there is a duality of identity present in the colonised between their own cultural identity and that of the coloniser, which in turn undermines the authenticity of colonial identity and thus the authority behind it. The concept of 'third space' developed by Bhabha considers the space in which cultures meet. Bhabha describes how 'third space' is created through cultural 'enunciations'. Crucially, this space is inherently one of tension, where the possibility of hybridity resides through the negotiation of differences. This space challenges assumptions about cultures as pure or homogeneous, especially the authority of colonial cultures. We can see how 'third space' is entrenched in Bhabha's considerations of hybridity.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London, New York: Routledge, 1996.

Heavily influenced by poststructuralism and intersectional feminism, Brah explores questions of culture and identity in this seminal text on diaspora. As well as conceptualising and deconstructing notions of diaspora, home, cultural difference and borders, Brah also draws upon the sociological study of the particular contextual experience of South Asian women in 20th century Britain. Within the text, Brah explores border theory, diaspora space, multiculturalism and processes of home making in order to theorise diaspora and its associated identities.

Césaire, Aimé, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Trans. by Joan Pinkham. New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

Césaire was one of the founders of the *négritude* movement in Francophone literature. Ground breaking for its time, this essay argues for an understanding of colonialism as first and foremost exploitation rather than a 'civilising mission'. In this respect, the essay is highly critical of colonisation and the European cultures that instigated the racial constructions of colonial relationships that, in his eyes, are similar in epistemic structure to Hitler's anti-Semitism. Indeed, Césaire claims that European civilisation is responsible for two major world problems: those of the proletariat and those of the colonial.

**Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans Constance Farrington. London: Penguin Classics, 2001 [French 1961, English 1965].
Black Skin, White Masks. Trans Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press.**

Written in French in 1952, *Black Skin, White Masks* argues for the dehumanising effects of colonialism and the psychological trauma felt by colonised subjects. Similar in subject, *The Wretched of the Earth* was influential for its insight into how colonialism dehumanised the colonial subject. Through an analysis of a series of case studies, Fanon shows the psychological effect of colonialism on both the individual and the nation. With this, Fanon demonstrates the political and social imperative for movements of decolonisation. In this text, Fanon also discusses class-consciousness, nationalism and the way language is used to enforce imperial identities.

Gilroy, Paul. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Using the context of contemporary Britain, this text links on-going disillusionment with immigration and multiculturalism with the nation's inability to properly mourn and come to terms with its colonial heritage. Gilroy draws upon Freud's famous essay 'Mourning and Melancholia' to investigate the social pathology of neo-imperialism. In particular, it is Britain's refusal to see the connection between political life (i.e. current attitudes to refugees) and the enduring effects of imperialism that has led to a misunderstanding of the ordinary nature of difference as well as multiculturalism.

Gregory, Derek. *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. London: Blackwell, 2004.

Gregory links the colonial past of the West's involvement in the Middle East to the neo-imperialism that characterised the 'war on terror' in Afghanistan. The text argues that the response to 9/11 by Western nations was distinctly colonial in nature. The text also links events in Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq. As a geographer, Gregory gives a particular emphasis on geopolitics and the way Western nations have created other people's geographies as well as their histories to serve their own neo-imperial ends.

Holst Petersen, Kirsten and Anna Rutherford. *A Double Colonization: Colonial and Post-Colonial Women's Writing*. Mundelstrup, Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1986.

In this text, Holst Peterson and Rutherford develop the idea of 'double colonisation', which concerns how colonised women are doubly oppressed because of their ethnicity and gender through colonial domination and patriarchy. This text includes a range of contexts (West Indies, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada) and timespans (from the Seventeenth century to the present). Some feminists argue that postcolonial nationalism after independence still entails the patriarchal oppression of women.

Huggan, Graham. *The Post-colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*. London: Routledge, 2001.

This text is referenced widely in discussions of authorship, marketing and publishing within postcolonial contexts. The central tenant of this text argues that postcolonial texts have become a commodity of otherness in the late capitalist system. Therefore, there is implicit exoticisation through the processes by which these texts are valued. Huggan considers the use of authors' 'staged marginalities', assesses the way the Booker prize values otherness, and explores debates about authenticity. He concludes by querying whether the rise of postcolonial studies is itself embedded in these processes of commodification and exoticisation.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Drawing on a wide range of contexts and sources, this seminal feminist text addresses the movement from scientific racism to consumerist racism during imperialism in the late nineteenth century. McClintock links together race, gender and sexuality in her exploration of how empire was legitimised through its mass-marketization. It is in this way that the production of race became central to domestic spaces of home in Victorian Britain. The text then considers feminist resistances to these racial consumerisms that led to the dismantling of empire. McClintock's influential work here gives us an example of intersectional postcolonialism.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London, New York: Routledge, 1992.

This text explores how travel writing enabled the construction of relations between European/non-Europeans in the colonial era. Drawing on the ethnographic term 'transculturation', Pratt seeks to go beyond binaries of metropole/periphery and white/other by establishing the notion of colonial 'contact zones'. In these zones, on-going relationships between colonised and coloniser are places of exchange (albeit unequal ones) whereby the existence of each (colonised or coloniser, feminine or masculine) is defined by its relationship to its other.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge, 1978.

Published in 1978, *Orientalism* is one of the most influential texts in postcolonialism. Said argued that much of Western culture in the modern era is infused with colonial ideology. Through an investigation of Western history, art, anthropology and literature, Said attempts to demonstrate how the differentiated image of 'the Orient' (or 'the east') as exotic has bolstered the self-conceptualisation of Europe/the West through its contrast. In turn, imperialism was legitimised through these representations of 'the Orient'. Said argues that without examining the processes of Orientalism, one cannot understand the way European culture managed and produced the Orient politically, scientifically, imaginatively, etc. since the post-Enlightenment period.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1988, pp. 271-313.

Reacting to 'subaltern studies' ('subaltern' is a Gramscian term to mean 'the economically dispossessed'), this hugely influential essay attempts to demonstrate how postcolonial studies, paradoxically, oppresses subjugated peoples by speaking on their behalf. This suggests that postcolonial studies is implicit in the very neo-imperialist ventures it is trying to dismantle. Writing about an Indian context, Spivak argues that this 'epistemic violence' done to subalterns occurs through their representation as a collective, essentialist body that requires western intellectuals to speak on their behalf.

wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers; New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1986 [1981].

The focus of Kenyan novelist Ngugi's collection of essays is centrally language and how previously colonized nations must linguistically decolonize themselves. The text questions whether writers and theatre makers from Africa should write in an indigenous language or a European language. Language is central to the maintenance of culture, including imperialist structures. It is with this text that Ngugi famously said he would stop writing his fiction in English.