

Post-Colonial Contours

***In Selected Works
of***

***Gabriel Garcia Marquez
&
Toni Morrison***

A Critical Approach

**A Dissertation Submitted In Fulfillment of The Requirements For The
Ph.D. Degree**

**By:
Eman Mohammed Awad Mohammed ElSherief**

Under The Supervision of

**Prof.Fawzia Al-Sadr
Dept.of English
Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Ain Shams University**

**Prof.Sarah Rashwan
Dept.of English
Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts
Ain Shams University**

Acknowledgements

At such crucial juncture in my life, I feel thoroughly fraught with profound gratitude for the colossal mentors, Prof.Fawzia Al.Sadr and Prof.Sarah Rashwan for their worthy expertise, sincere guidance, and indispensable back-up. They were always there to endow me with helpful feed back ,and I'll; in return, remain incessantly indebted to such great figures. I do; furthermore, extend profuse thanks for the great examples in my life, my dear father and my loving mother, for their boundless sacrifices. Eventually, without my husband's sustenance this dissertation would have never been accomplished.

Preface

First and foremost, in his December 1982 Nobel Prize lecture, Gabriel Garcia Marquez emphasized that it is never a far-fetched fancy or a preposterous aspiration to resolve setting up:

A new and sweeping Utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible , and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.(qtd.in Ortega 90)

Via such epitomized and exquisite canvas, the colossal literary icon, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, endowed us with the profound tenor of Post-colonialism. Henceforth, the first chapter of the present study is anticipated to be an endeavor towards unveiling the post-colonial ideology, the main rationale beyond its emergence, together with its core and validity. A prior and indispensable target is evincing the ample reservoir of post-colonialism, as a miraculous outlet for jostling masses of people, who were tormented for long under the austere oppression and ruthless subservience of the colonizer.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that the indigenous people are incessantly embracing the post-colonial doctrine, since it emerges to be the sole glimmering speck at the end of their ruthless and dim path towards survival. In sum, postcolonial personages are perpetually sweating to engrave for themselves solid underpinnings in the future

phase. In an interview with Bill Moyers, Morrison asserted:

At the end of *Beloved* , Sethe can barely move her head, and she is a little out of her mind. She's gone through a lot. And somebody comes to her-a man-and resurrects her. The resurrection is short but it's powerful because of what has gone on before. But it is the resurrection that I'm interested in.(2)

Equally substantial is to dismantle the pertinent scheme, exploited by post-colonialism in order to liberate the colonized from the rigid restrictions, implanted by the colonizer to guarantee that even if colonization comes to an end, the colonized will never be capable of escaping his tight grip. Thus, post-colonialism is corroborating that more substantial than emancipating the land, is to franchise the colonized entities and souls. Thereupon, we are compelled, throughout the thesis, to consider the post-colonial props, collaborating to endow the colonized with gallant emancipation.

In the aftermath of setting forth the inexorable mazes, wrapping the terminological plight of post-colonialism, we are to expound the most pertinent of the conflicting definitions. Moreover, putting under scrutiny the intelligible postcolonial resonances, pervading the fictional reservoir of the two eminent figures, Toni Morrison and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, we'll be capable of grasping their stands towards the weary burden of the colonized legacy; whether abiding by, or rebelling against the ferocious

span of such colonized past. Around such essence the second chapter will be revolving.

In his *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell writes that: " one thing that comes out in myths is that from the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light"(39). Handed from ancestors to descendants through generations of time and place, the mythic legacy imparts diverse tales that transform us in the interface between past and present; and simultaneously transform themselves in interaction between cultures. This is intrinsically the creed which the whole bulk of the final chapter is scrutinizing.

Table of Contents

Ch. 1: <i>An Introductory Chapter</i>	1
Ch. 2: <i>Postcolonial Dilemmas</i>	68
Ch. 3: <i>Salvation Lurking in Mythical Legacy</i>	102
<i>Conclusion</i>	150
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	160

Chapter One

An Introductory Chapter

Postcolonials were virtually fraught with the burden of resisting the attitudes and assumptions which facilitate colonial domination and which foster the continued centrality of a western worldview. Such opposition to colonialist power is emerging in literature and art as postcolonials' endeavor to scrutinize and minimize the influence of the colonial past on their present existence. Their endeavor ; in large proportions, was to approach and reconstruct their precolonial worlds as foundations for a postcolonial future.

The prior task of the colonial mother never ceased to be:"protect[ing] the child from itself, from its ego and from its physiology, its biology and its own unhappiness which is its very essence"(Fanon 1990:170). Presumably, the colonizer was never satisfied with merely overruling the present and the future of the native population. Recreating their past in order to engender a cultural vacuum was equally indispensable.

[C]olonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of a perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed

people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys
it.(Fanon 1990:169)

Anada Coomaraswamy 's essays on nationalism were published in 1909,at the height of classical colonialism. He recognized that what was needed more than political and economic freedom was cultural liberation. Coomaraswamy hence called for an active decolonizing of the mind:

For this struggle is much more than a political conflict.It is a struggle for spiritual and mental freedom from the domination of an alien ideal. In such a conflict, political and economic victory are but half the battle; for an India, 'free in name, but subdued by Europe in her inmost soul' would ill justify the price of freedom. It is not so much the material, as the moral and spiritual subjugation of Indian civilization that in the end impoverishes humanity.(Coomaraswamy 1909:p.i)

A huge assemblage of critics where discrete as for expounding the post-colonialism term, the matter that engendered a manifest "terminological crisis". In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature*, a monumental text on postcolonial theory, Bill Ashcroft and others state that the postcolonial means "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). Ashcroft's definition of the postcolonial is so broad that it does not actually cover the discussion on

"the postcolonial" in recent scholarship. Regarding the sophisticated and multiple tenors of 'postcolonial,' Arif Dirlik, in his essay "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," expounds the meaning of postcolonial in a more detailed manner:

(1) It is used as a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies, in which case the term has concrete referents, as in "postcolonial societies" or "postcolonial intellectuals." [...] (2) The term is employed as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism, in which case the usage is somewhat more abstract in reference, comparable in its vagueness to the earlier term "Third World," for which it is intended as a substitute. (3) The word is used to describe a discourse on the above conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientations that are products of those conditions. (503)

Extending Dirlik's definition of the postcolonial, one would argue that the postcolonial refers to the efforts of abolishing the colonial condition by the writers and intellectuals who are under the colonization. Thereupon, Simon During's definition of postcolonialism is very helpful in supporting such argument: "the need, in nations and groups, which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images"

(33). Though postcolonial criticism aims at reading the literary texts dealing with the legacy and relics of colonial rule, the criticism also includes the rereading of western canonical texts with a view to unmasking the colonial characteristics of the text and writers.

Edward Said is approached as a precursor of postcolonial theory. His book *Orientalism*, conveying a critique of the West's inferior look at non-West with negative and stereotyping way, influenced the interrogation of the western discourse and knowledge. Based on Michel Foucault's discourse theory and Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, Said's *Orientalism* critiques the way Western knowledge is composed to be an authoritative subject to dominate the Orient and non-West. The notion of Orientalism contributed to the solid establishment of Postcolonialism. Orientalism has much to do with postcolonial theory in that the project of both Orientalism and Postcolonialism is to unveil the western hegemony and knowledge imposed on non-Western others. Hence, Said's notion of Orientalism divulges more influential ways to reconsider the connotations of the literary texts produced by western writers who tackled non-western people and place.

Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, who are the representative postcolonial critics, along with Edward Said, interrogate the problems of the colonial discourse. Via investigating the British canonical texts under the non-Western perspective, Bhabha and Spivak establish postcolonial critique.

Postcolonialism can be categorized as postcolonial writing and postcolonial reading. Postcolonial writing is to make a parody of the canonized works, writing back to the empire. Postcolonial reading

(criticism) is to find the colonial trace in the texts which are embedded in the situation of colonizer and colonized. Postcolonialism has much affinity with postmodernism, but is somewhat distinct:

The postmodern aestheticization of politics only appears radical but is essentially conservative and tends to prolong the imperial, while the postcolonial frequently appears conservative or is bound to use a conventional mimetic mode (related to realism and its many debates) but is essentially radical in the sense of demanding change (Gugelberger 584).

Gugelberger's understanding is that postcolonialism is more radical than postmodernism in terms of political implications.

Meanwhile, Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt define the term post-colonial as "the combination of material, economic, social and cultural practices an indigenous (and/or creolized) population engages with after the removal of the physical presence of a colonizing nation" (18). In addition to this, Ania Loomba in her book, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, approaches "postcolonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism" (12). This kind of flexible understanding of postcoloniality enables us to think of inclusion of the ethnic Americans living in the U.S. as "postcolonial subjects" (Loomba 12).

As Loomba explains, "the prefix 'post' complicates matters because it implies an 'aftermath' in two senses-temporal, as in coming after, and ideological, as in "supplanting" (7)."Post" in postcolonial, first and foremost, hints at the phase following colonialism, when used in a chronological context. From this perspective, postcolonial texts can mean the literary texts, tackling the trauma of people after colonization. Secondly, "post" in postcolonial can be explained as a method, tactic, or strategy, meaning "beyond" and "overcoming" the colonialism. In this connection, the postcolonial imagination signifies the writers' literary imagination for overcoming the colonial legacy. As Ella Shohat demonstrates, "the postcolonial implies both going beyond anticolonial nationalist theory and a movement beyond a specific point in history, that of colonialism and Third World nationalist struggle" (128). Like postmodernism, which attempted to overcome the limitation of modernism, postcolonialism can mean moving away from colonialism with the tactics of appropriation and abrogation.

With the emergence of postcolonial theory, many scholars have tried to interpret ethnic American literary texts under the aura of postcolonial criticism. By situating the marginalized and excluded life of non-white people living in America as one that is internally colonized, scholars tend to read Native American texts, African American texts, Asian American texts, with postcolonial theory.

The forthcoming chapter is anticipated to evince the intersections between postcolonial theory and African American literary theory. Akin to other contemporary literary theories such as postmodernism, new historicism, and cultural studies, the two theories have helped the

readers understand the lives of the marginalized in terms of race, gender, and class in a different way. Postcolonial theory and African American literary theory proved to be indispensable critical practices in unveiling the false ideology of western-centered hegemony and cultures.

Because both postcolonial theory and African American literary theory attempt to launch their critiques of Eurocentric white dominant discourse, both of the theories challenge Western dominant hegemony that incurred the tormenting 'life of the colonized and marginalized people. Shedding further light on the principal affinities between the two theories, Lots Tyson states:

Postcolonial and African American criticism are particularly effective in helping us see connections among all the domains of our experience-the psychological, ideological, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic-in ways that show us how inseparable these categories are in our lived experience of ourselves and our world. (363)

My argument in this chapter demonstrates that both African American literary theory and postcolonial theory share more similarities than differences since they aim at celebrating the inclusive and integrationist agenda, rather than performing the rigid and ideologically-oriented critical practices. I would assume that the major commonalities of both African American literary theory and postcolonial theory lie in

establishing the equal and harmonious bonds between the dominant and the dominated, recovering the voice of the marginalized group.

In his article, "American Literary Emergence as a Post-Colonial Phenomenon," Lawrence Buell argues that the year 1776, when America declared its independence from England, demarcates postcolonial America. Nonetheless, the colonial and postcolonial implications of the U.S. are quite different from those of other third world countries, since the U.S. emerged as a powerful nation state which controls the destiny of the third world countries after the colonial rupture from Great Britain. When we attempt to situate the postcolonial in the American context, it would be reasonable to handle other ethnic Americans living in America. In this argument, I will deal with internal colonization with regard to the African Americans.

Responding to Buell's argument, Timothy Powell attempted to analyze the 19th century African American writer Martin Delany's *Blake* from the perspective of postcolonial theory, particularly showing interest in the notion of internal colonization. According to Powell, Delany's novel offers "one of the most probing and insightful explanations of the inner workings of both internal and external colonialism in its uniquely American form" ("Postcolonial" 349). Powell argues that Buell regards writers in the American Renaissance, such as Melville, Whitman, and Thoreau, as postcolonial subjects, since they were under England's cultural colonization ("Postcolonial" 349). Still, we cannot deny the fact that after the independence, white authors and white politicians became the colonizing forces of the non-white subjects, particularly toward black people who were their slaves. Powell

makes a critique of Buell's argument for his lack of discerning the diverse relations of coloniality, saying that "Buell is locked into a binary vision that sees the problem of postcolonial subjectivity solely in terms of Britain and (white) America" (351). By calling America's concealing attitude about its imperial and colonial impulses as "the self-cloaking mechanism of American colonialist discourse" ("Postcolonial" 351), Powell offers insights in reading Black people's condition under the postcolonial perspective. Powell argues that "internal colonialism in the United States can also be seen as a form of postcolonial colonialism in that the post-colonial rhetoric of the 1776 American Revolution effectively cloaks another, more subtle form of colonialism at home" ("Postcolonial" 353).

In discussing Charles Chesnutt's "The Wife of His Youth," Anne Fleischmann explains, "Though slavery cannot be equated with colonialism, the post-bellum era invites comparison with postcolonial situations because of the cultural syncretisms occasioned by the biological and cultural intermixing of master and slave, white and black" (250) . Seen from the African American viewpoint, not the 1776 Independence, the Civil War; indeed, demarcates black people's postcoloniality. Nonetheless, the emancipation of black people did not presumably bring about the de facto postcolonial life for black people, since freedom was given to black people by the interest of white people. Thereupon, the authentic postcolonial life for black people comes after the civil right's movement in the 1960s, when black people achieved a de facto freedom.