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**English Speaking World Literature:
Lectures for First Year Master's Students**

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General Introduction

English Speaking World Literature (ESWL) is one of the key modules for Master's students specialised in English Literature and Civilisation in Algeria. The module provides students with the needed theoretical background to widen their perspectives of literature from different periods and contexts and to further develop their critical thinking as specialists in literature. ESWL intends to introduce students to World Literature, a form of literature different to what they were exposed to throughout their undergraduate courses. Throughout this course, they are exposed to literary texts, writers, and thinkers from different parts of the world instead of merely focusing on the UK and USA. By so doing, students are meant to learn new terms and themes that allow them to critically analyse and discuss different literary texts which in turn grants them the ability to express their opinions and thoughts on the texts and films/documentaries they read and watch during the course.

Throughout the two semesters, ESWL covers literature from Africa, Asia, and other communities that were once part of the British Empire. With a focus on the colonial period, and by providing an overview of postcolonial literature, the module provides a multidisciplinary space where literature is discussed in relation to politics, history, economy, culture and more. Such aspect is one of the main objectives of the module where students—at the Master's level—are expected to read and analyse texts in relation to the context from different perspectives. It should be noted that students are also exposed to more up-to-date literary productions as a way to allow them to understand how the changes in society impact literature throughout the time.

ESWL is taught as a tutorial session which facilitates the process of testing the students' abilities in applying the techniques they learn to analyse the literary texts they are given. The nature of the session also allows students to showcase their skills through various activities from initiating discussions individually to group research presentations.

1. Introduction: What is (World) Literature?

1.1 What is Literature?

Throughout history, the term ‘literature’ had different definitions and meanings according to the period discussed. Generally, it is commonly defined as ‘written with letters,’ which means any written text in any field. From a cultural perspective, literature is associated with works of imaginary narratives and creative language such as novels, short stories, poems, or plays. In some cases, literature is also referred to as ‘belles-letters,’ which only includes literary texts that reflect the beauty of language and fine writing instead of focusing on the content. However, since the 18th century and up until the 20th century, literature moved beyond these boundaries. In the modern understanding of literature, films/ oral compositions, animations, and graphic stories are now discussed as a form of literary works.

From a historical perspective, the use of the term literature goes back to the works of the Greek philosopher Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.) in relation to poetry. It was not until the 14th century (the Middle Ages) that literature entered the English language as a way to describe a person’s knowledge of letters and languages. Access to literature during this period was limited to people from higher classes—the nobles—while commoners and those of lower classes did not have access to any form of education. Throughout the Middle Ages, literary works told stories of old legends and myths, of heroic quests and imaginative creatures in a poetic form like the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* (c. 700-750 AD) for example.

By the late of the 18th century, literature in English developed a new meaning that of professionalism and occupation, in which writers and poets started to be paid for their writings. Since then and well into the 19th century, especially during the Romanticism period, English literature was dominated by lyric poetry that uses nature as a source of inspiration. By the turn of the 20th century, however, literature has started to cover various forms of writings (novels, autobiographies, ...) as it turned to reflect real-life events from surrounding communities and the writer’s personal experiences.

In his essay ‘What is Literature?’ (2004), Alex Thomson identifies three main points that help in defining literature. The first point is fiction, which allows the literary text to move between reality and

imagination freely, therefore creating entertaining stories. The second aspect is the style and language used by the writer as literary texts should be creative and have an artistic value (Mays, 2017) that directs the reader's attention to how the story is written (e.g., poetry). Finally, Thomson turns to the importance of how a literary text is approached and read by readers. On this point, Thomson explains that what used to be defined as literature in the past might not be considered as one in the present or future. For example, the work of Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789) was read for its historical views when it was published, but nowadays Gibbon's work is read as a literary text because of its writing style.

1.2 What is Literary Genre?

The term 'genre' originally comes from the Latin word 'genus' which means kind or type. In literature, literary texts are categorised into genres (i.e. groups) that share the same characteristics such as style of writing, content, or purpose.

When it comes to literary texts, they can be divided into three main genres: fiction (novel, short story, novella), poetry, and drama (theatre). These genres can first be distinguished by their writing style: prose or verse.

a. Prose: 'Prose' comes from Latin which means 'straight and forward.' Prose is the most used form of writing, in which it applies the usual grammatical structure and natural flow of speech. This style of writing is commonly used in novels and short stories.

b. Verse: The word 'verse' refers to a single line of poetry or sacred book. Verse is a writing style that poets tend to use in order to shadow their change of thoughts and it adds an aesthetic sense to their work.

E.g.: A Dream Within A Dream (1849) by Edgar Allan Poe

All that we see or seem => A verse

Is but a dream within a dream.

1.3 What is World Literature?

The term World Literature was first coined by the German writer and critic Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1827. In a conversation with his student Johann Peter Eckermann, Goethe remarks that

‘National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach.’ (quoted in Damrosch, 2018, p. 3). What Goethe aspired for is to create a network for elites and intellectuals to exchange knowledge. Goethe’s term ‘*Weltliteratur*’ came in time when he was interested in works from different parts of the world. He was reading his own works translated into English and French, while at the same time reading Persian and Chinese literary texts in their French translations. Even though Goethe aspired for a world literature that creates international relationships between different writers and readers, he limited his view to Western literature, that is works written in English, French, German, or Latin. By so doing, Goethe was not able to separate himself from his privilege of being a Western European (Eurocentric view) who saw literary texts from other parts of the world as unworthy, for even if they reflect a way of thinking and behaving like Europeans, they still do not rise in value to that of West European texts.

Despite Goethe’s cautionary remarks that world literature should be strictly limited to Western texts, with the spread of technology and globalization, *Weltliteratur* is no longer limited to the elite circle he once envisioned. Along with colonialism, non-European writers from different social belongings succeeded in entering the world literature scene through their creative literary works. This type of works is referred to by Goethe as ‘bad world literature,’ that is literary texts that do not reflect any form of exceptionality or literal quality. In other words, modern world literature is not about literary texts that moved from the center (the West) to the peripheries (former colonies), rather with the new open global market, writers from different parts of the world are provided with an opportunity to publish their literary works anywhere, everywhere. Perhaps the list of non-Western writers winning Western prizes and awards in literature is an example of how modern world literature is different from Goethe’s vision. For instance, the Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka won the Noble Prize for literature in 1986, and Jokha Alharthi—an Omani writer—won the Man Booker Prize for her novel *Celestial Bodies* (2010) in 2019 after it was translated from Arabic into English. These two examples show how world literature nowadays has moved beyond the few selected European writers to cover an international range of writers despite their origins background or the language used in their works.

1.3.1 How to Define a Literary Work as World Literature?

When we discuss world literature written in English, often these literary texts are produced from former colonies of the British Empire, such as Africa (Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt...), Asia (India, Pakistan, Malaysia...), the West Indies, etc. However, with the large number of written literary works from these regions, how can a reader define which text is considered part of world literature

and which text that does not? To solve this complication, David Damrosch (2003) sets two main points that help in defining world literature. Damrosch (2003, p. 6) explains that ‘A work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read as literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin.’ It should be noted first that world literature is not a stable field, works can be considered part of world literature at some point in history and then drop out of the list at another time. Therefore, in Damrosch’s statement (2003), the text should be viewed first as a literary text, whether it is fiction, poetry, or drama. Second, because world literature is about the circulation of literature beyond its national boundaries—point of origin (translated or in their original languages), it should maintain its artistic value, resist cultural changes, and adapt to different places and times. In other words, world literature is formed by literary texts that create an impact or speak to the reader across time and space.

For example, George Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is written to describe the political unrest in the post-WWII era between three authoritative global powers. Since its publication, expressions like “Big Brother” and “newspeak” (meaning controlling people’s thoughts) have become widely used in political and social studies. In recent years, after the former American president Donald Trump used the term “fake news” to mislead people, Orwell’s novel saw a rise in sales as readers related Trump’s strategy to that used in the novel. Therefore, despite being published in 1949, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is still, until today, used to describe and study oppressive and authoritative political rules and their different strategies control and oppress their people.

1.3.2 Why Do We Read/ Study World Literature?

a. Reading across time: Reading literary texts from different eras provides the reader with an opportunity to understand how images, themes, and problems are discussed and approached through the centuries. Moreover, writers sometimes tend to use references and images from earlier works that introduce the same idea from a different perspective.

b. Reading across cultures: While reading literary texts from different cultures expands the reader’s knowledge of other communities and societies, it might also be challenging. By reading a text from another culture, the reader faces unfamiliar settings, characters, and points of view that form an obstacle in the process of understanding the literary work. Therefore, the reader has to use their

prior knowledge to compare the foreign text to and be critical of the founded similarities and dissimilarities that the text presents.

2. Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonialism, according to Nayar (2016), is a theoretical-philosophical reaction to the state of post coloniality which provides critics, writers, and theorists from the former colonies with the needed tools to analyse the new political and social conditions caused by colonialism. As a field of study, postcolonialism addresses the coloniser/colonised relationship with a focus on the colonised experience. The term often covers non-Western regions and former colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and their demands for equality and freedom.

***Note:** Post-colonialism Vs. Postcolonialism

. The prefix 'post' in post-colonialism refers to the period that comes after colonialism, therefore, it is used to discuss the historical period after colonial domination of the former colonies.

. In postcolonialism, 'post' means 'anti.' Postcolonial studies attempt to challenge earlier colonial narratives and misconceptions that situates colonised communities as inferior, non-human, and lesser than the Euro-American white subject and culture.

2.1 What is Postcolonial Literature?

Postcolonial literature (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, etc) refers to literary texts produced from cultures influenced by colonialism and imperialism. On the one hand, postcolonial writings are anticolonial as they provide an image of the experiences colonised populations went through and revive traditional cultures as a way of self-identification. On the other, they can also be about learning about new cultures and the conflict between tradition and modernisation, especially in narratives about immigration. Two of the main characteristics of postcolonial literature are writing back and self-representation.

- a. Writing Back: Writers from the (former) colonies used their literary texts to correct the false claims and counter-narrate the myths spread by colonial powers on the inferiority of the colonised. To do so, writers tended to use the coloniser's language (English, French, Spanish...) coated with local expressions, vernacular terms, and different structures that only exist in African, Caribbean, or Asian local languages. In so doing, African and Asian writers challenged

one of the main values of colonialism, that is the European language. Usually, this form of writing is addressed to the centre, i.e. the coloniser/ Euro-American community to prove that colonised regions have their own culture, history, and identity.

***Note:** Mixing vernacular and local (African, Asian...) languages with European languages often results in a new language as to facilitate the communication between the two groups. The mixture of these two languages results in what is known as pidgin, a language that abandons most of the grammatical structures of the two original languages to avoid confusion. Nigeria is one of the regions that pidgin is widely used in its communities. When a pidgin language develops into a mother tongue and then into a first language for later generations, it becomes known as creole. The use of creole is common in Caribbean regions where French, Spanish, or Portuguese is mixed with African language brought by enslaved African. Unlike pidgin, creole develops its own grammatical structures.

- b. Self-representation: Through their writings, intellectuals from the (former) colonies aspired to represent themselves, to write their own stories. Narrating the consequences of colonialism on their communities is a main topic as the colonised subject is usually silenced and marginalised in the colonial discourse. Self-representation is one of the main characteristics of artistic movements like Harlem Renaissance and Negritude for instance.

E.g. Daniel Defoe's novel, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), is one of the well known European/colonial texts that provide an image of the silenced colonised character. After being shipwrecked in the sea, Crusoe ends up in what he assumes to be a deserted island. Taking over the place and positioning himself as the king of the island, Crusoe later comes across the region's native inhabitants, whom he describes as 'cannibals.' In a fight with these group of people, the main character manages to save one of their victims and names him Friday. Crusoe teaches Friday English and converts him into Christianity. While positioned as a slave for Crusoe, Friday uses his few English words to help Crusoe take control of the rest of the island. Through his novel, Defoe represents a colonial character—Crusoe—who needs to save the African character—Friday—through teaching him English and converting him to Christianity. Crusoe, like colonialism, does not make any effort to learn Friday's languages or his story.

2.2 Main Themes

- a. Self Vs. Other (Power/Authority): As explained in the above example, the image of the colonised in Western/colonial literature is often marginalised, silenced, and Othered. Otherness is always positioned in contrast to the Self. In postcolonial writings, the Self is the white man, the coloniser, and the oppressor. In other words, the Self is the subject that exists at the centre, who have access to power and authority that allow them to dominate the Other (i.e. colonised, oppressed subject). The Other, on the other hand, has a different racial, ethnic, or cultural belonging to the Self. The character of the Other is usually powerless, does not have a voice or history, therefore, does not have identity. Postcolonial writers use this theme to portray the position and struggles of their own people under colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism. Self-Other binarism or conflict is usually represented through coloniser-colonised, master-slave, superior-inferior, civilised-savage and so on relationships.

For instance, in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), the unnamed African-American protagonist is continuously Othered because of his skin colour. Even though the main character manages to be a member of the Brotherhood—a political organisation led by white men—he is expected to follow the leaders' rules and not to make his own decisions. The character here is set on the margin and denied access to the centre and the power that his white leaders have.

- b. Identity: To be at the centre of their narrative, postcolonial subjects had to separate and free themselves from the coloniser's dominating authority. To do so, they need to reshape their independent sense of being in the world, their identity. This new identity is presented against what the coloniser used to define them with (inferiority, illiteracy, lack of history...). Due to this, postcolonial writers go back to their traditions, pre-colonial folktales, and heritage of cultural values to show their differences from and to the Euro-American subject. Moreover, forming a separate identity from that of the coloniser sets the first steps towards the colonised/oppressed ability to achieve freedom and self-determination.
- c. Hybridity: In his essay 'Named for Victoria' (1973), the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe describes the life of his people under colonialism as the 'crossroads of cultures.' (p. 98). Achebe explains how, as a child, he went to church and read the Bible while he witnessed his uncle praying and

offering food for idols. This clash of cultures (colonial and traditional) resulted in a hybrid generation, a generation that belongs to two conflicting contexts. Critics, like Homi Bhabha, consider being positioned between two cultures (in-between cultures as he describes it) as empowering, for it allows the writer to criticise Western cultures as both an insider and an outsider at the same time.

When it comes to postcolonial literature, characters often struggle with their position between these two cultures. For instance, Achebe's *No Longer at Ease* (1960) tells of the confusion of the character of Isaac Okonkwo (Isaac is Nwoye from *Things Fall Apart*. He changes his name after converting to Christianity). The hybridity of Isaac's identity is viewed in giving his son a traditional name, Obi, while raising him as a Christian. Also, in some instances Isaac refuses to perform traditional celebrations while at the same time fears breaking some traditional rules even though it is allowed in Christianity. Therefore, Isaac's character represents the hybridity of the colonised subject who grows up surrounded by two conflicting cultural values.

2.3 Main Figures: Frantz Fanon (1925-1961)

Frantz Fanon is a psychiatrist and a writer from Martinique. Fanon was raised under the French colonial rule where he was taught that his people are French and that those of the West Indies are superior to Africans. After WWII, Fanon moved to France to continue his studies in medicine and psychiatry. In France, Fanon started to understand his position as a Black person. Even though he was taught that he is French in his home country, in France, French-ness equalled whiteness. This experience with racism led Fanon to write his highly critical work *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952, *Black Skin, White Masks*) where he uses psychology and sociology to understand how colonialism and racial discrimination influences the colonised subject. In his work, Fanon addresses the Self-Other relationship and the confusion colonised subjects experience in their attempt to be accepted into the white man's culture. Fanon is considered to be one of the first psychiatrists who used their Western education to understand colonialism and racial oppression from the Black subject's point of view.

In addition to his works in psychiatry, Fanon was also actively involved in politics. This is clear from his works such as *A Dying Colonialism* (1959) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1962). His political writings are more direct in his criticism of colonial institutions as he argues that the only way for colonialism and oppression to end is through a violent revolution. Fanon's involvement in anti-colonial arguments was not only in his written works for he joined the Algerian Liberation Front

(FLN) in 1954 and held number of diplomatic positions to other African nations. Through his involvement in the Algerian revolution and African politics in general, Fanon aspired to build a free united Africa.

***Discussion: Are We Post(-)colonial Subjects?**

Even though post-colonialism as a term is used to refer to the end of colonialism, African writers and critics argue that the former colonies are not in the post-colonial period yet. True that colonialism and racial oppression has come to an end during the 1960s, but it does not mean that oppression against Black people is something of the past. In a conference discussion, the Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo states: ‘Ask any village woman how postcolonial her life is. [Colonialism] has not been “posted” anywhere at all’ (Osundare, 2002, p. 41). In her statement, Aidoo reflects on how despite independence, African nations and peoples are still struggling politically and economically. The impact of colonialism and how it destroyed stable communities and economies is still evident until nowadays. While colonialism—in the old meaning of the term (i.e. direct)—no longer exist, as the contemporary period it has been replaced by other forms of oppression that maintains the same power structure: centre-margin, powerful-powerless, metropolitan-periphery regions. These new forms of domination are represented through systems like neo-colonialism and globalisation (See Lecture 6).

3. African Literature

African literature is the range of literary texts produced by African writers whether in African or European languages. African literature is usually used to describe literature from the sub-Saharan region of Africa.

Often, African literature is referred to as ‘postcolonial literature,’ which gives the impression that ‘precolonial’ literature does not exist. Contrary to this claim, African societies are rich with their oral literature. Different occasions and celebrations are always accompanied with folktales, poems, and performances that go back to old/ precolonial traditions. Writing also can be found in different regions across the African continent. Travel and historical narratives were written down in native languages like Arabic and Hausa in Nigeria or Ge’ez and Amharic in Ethiopia. These manuscripts tell of precolonial communities and their ways of life.

***Note on African Literature and Language:** The act of defining African literature is often dominated by the question about which language to use when writing African literature. This argument is led by two prominent African figures; Chinua Achebe and the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong’o. Although the two writers have used their works to demand freedom for their people and express anti-colonial sentiments, they approached their goals differently. On one side of the debate, Achebe (1990) argues that using metropolitan languages to write African literature helps in delivering African writers’ works to a wider audience. Moreover, when it comes to Nigerian literature for example, Achebe believes that such literature should address the whole nation. Therefore, with more than 500 languages spoken in different regions in Nigeria, English is the only language that unites the country. Still, Achebe stresses the importance that the African writer should avoid “imitating” European languages and, instead, they need to create “new English” that can reflect the different sides of the African experience. According to Achebe’s point of view, he considers the use of metropolitan languages in literature as a way to break down the barriers set by “tribal” differences and achieve international recognition.

On the other hand, Ngugi is commonly known for his return to his native language, Gikuyu, in his writings. By so doing, the writer believes that by using his native language, he is able to reach the peasantry and working-class people easily. According to Ngugi (1986), to

decolonise the African mind, Africa needs to claim back its cultures and languages, which in turn leads Africans to regain their identity. Despite the fact that Ngugi (1972) does not ignore the role of using European languages in helping to deliver African voices and claims to the rest of the world, what he criticises is how the imposed European language, with downgrading/banning native languages, sets Europe with its history and culture at the centre of the African universe. In short, Ngugi believes that writing Afro-European literature—that is literature written by Africans in European languages—is not a form of resistance, but an acceptance of imperialist and neo-colonial European oppression.

Despite the contradicted views of the two writers, critics like Chinweizu et al (1983) and Charles Larson (2001) emphasise the importance of the shared values, cultural ethos, and experiences that define the African text instead of the language used or the writer's background.

3.1 The Development of African Literature

When the term 'modern' African literature is used, it is generally associated with literary texts written in European languages: English, French, Spanish, etc. The emergence of this form of literature was a result of the European education introduced to the continent through missionary schools and colonial institutions. Therefore, when discussing the emergence of African literature, it means literary texts by African writers written in European languages. To cover the large range of African literary texts produced since the colonial period until current times, critics divided African writers into three generations according to the themes discussed in their works.

3.1.1 First Generation

This generation of writers published their works during the colonial period to reflect on their people's situation during colonialism. Moreover, as a reaction to colonial claims that Africans are inferior to white people and have no history, these writers aimed to re-establish an identity rooted in their African cultures through their literary texts. Most notable writers of this period are Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Kenya), and Mongo Beti (Cameroon).

. Characteristics

Hybridity: This generation of African writers is known for its conflicted background, for they lived in societies that still hold to pre-colonial traditions and cultures while at the same time

being educated in missionary/ colonial schools. The conflict between these two contexts (traditional vs. colonial) largely shaped their literature.

Counter-narrative: Most of the literary texts produced in this period are set in a pre-colonial context. Writers tended to use proverbs and rituals from their traditions in their narratives to explain Africa to the coloniser/outsider. To do so, this generation relied on **realism** as a technique in their writings in order to deliver an accurate and realistic image of their people and communities.

. Themes

Tradition Vs. Modern/Colonial Values: Due to the hybridity of their context, the first generation of African writers struggled with topics that address the conflict between their traditional cultures and the values presented by colonialism. For example, African writers of the colonial period were taught European languages (English, French...), while their communities kept using native languages. This conflict between European and local languages, and from it conflicts between traditional and colonial values, resulted in what is known as a clash of cultures—African vs. European—in the African communities.

Anti-colonial Sentiment: African writers of the first generation used their literary texts to reveal how colonialism has negatively affected their people and traditions. Due to this, these writers called for the end of colonialism and demanded self-government, while also drawing an image and forming an illusion of a free and developed Africa ruled by African leaders.

3.1.2 Second Generation

After independence, a new generation of African writers dominated the literary scene. With the end of colonialism, these writers turned their attention to discuss the **local** sociological and ideological (e.g., feminism, social equality, ...) problems in their countries. This period saw the emergence of writers like Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana), Mariama Bâ (Senegal) and Kole Omotoso (Nigeria).

. Characteristics

Explaining Africa to Africans: Unlike the first generation who used their literature to speak to the coloniser, this generation used their works to communicate with their own people. The

second generation of African writers attempted to draw a new image of Africa taking into consideration the political and economic changes that took place during the years after independence.

Criticising Political Regimes: During the post-independence period, African countries experienced various forms of political unrest such as military coups and civil wars. These events became the main focus of writers of this period who used their literary texts as a form of protesting against the fight for leadership and wealth by the new leaders while ignoring the problems experienced by their people. However, by showing their direct anger at the new African leaders, most of the African writers of the second generation were either killed, imprisoned or forced to flee their own countries.

. Themes

Disillusionment: Images of disillusionment and disappointment became the main characteristic of African literary texts of the 1960s and 1970s. African literature of the second generation address the issue of how not colonialism, but African leaders are the ones ruining their own countries. The dreams and hopes of stability and development that Africans had for their newly independent countries were torn down by the continuous political crises that dominated the post-colonial period.

3.1.3 Third Generation

By the turn of the 1980s, African writers turned their attention to address everyday life problems like unemployment, diseases, and domestic violence. Furthermore, while separated from experiences of colonialism and the crises of the post-colonial periods, this generation tends to revisit these events and provide a contemporary commentary on them. Some of the key figures of this period are Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria), Véronique Tadjo (Ivory Coast), and Alain Mabanckou (Republic of the Congo).

. Characteristics

Emigrants/ Diaspora: These writers are often located in the Diaspora; USA or Europe, which gives them more freedom than the previous generations. Unlike the other two generations,

being outside Africa provides this generation of writers a certain level of freedom from the political and cultural pressure of their communities.

Diverse Literary texts: Due to their existence in different contexts, the African writers of this generation managed to develop and experiment new forms of literary writings and linguistic expressions. While the previous generations used traditional structure of the novel as a main literary form to deliver their ideas, this generation of writers used plotless structures and individualism in their narratives.

. Themes

New Form of Otherness: Throughout the writings of the first generation African writers, Otherness is used to address the relationship between the colonised/African and the coloniser/European. However, in the case of the third generation, Otherness refers to a different and more contemporary struggle—that is their Otherness as foreigners in a foreign land. Such a theme is commonly used in Adichie’s works, for instance, who narrates the Otherness and marginalisation Nigerian characters experience after moving to the USA (i.e., the Diaspora).

Breaking Taboos: As a result of being free from political and cultural limitations, third generation African writers are able to discuss topics that would be considered taboo in their African communities. Issues like gender identities, criticising patriarchy, and protesting political corruption are key topics the new generation of African writers can address from the Diaspora.

Note: As the names of writers mentioned above show, most of the main figures of African literature are males. This is usually explained with the fact that women were not allowed to get an education, especially during the colonial period. Flora Nwapa (Nigeria) is an exception as she is the only African female writer that can be considered part of the first generation. Through her works, Nwapa tells stories of women who can set an identity for themselves and reach social fulfilment in their traditional communities without the need for marriage. It was not until 1980s (third generation) that literary writings by African women flourished and spread widely among readers. These female writers, whether located in Africa or the Diaspora, use their literary works to bring to the surface the struggles and role of African women during civil wars, the process that women go through to

understand their own identities, and so on. In so doing, African female writers set female characters at the centre of their narratives that grants them a voice and power.

4. Harlem Renaissance

Harlem renaissance is an artistic movement that appeared in Harlem, New York between 1920 and 1935. African-American artists and writers used their access to arts and literature to criticise the racist system and raise awareness about racism and its impact on the lives of Black people in the USA. The movement provided Black artists with a space to create and form their own identity and to vocally express their desire for freedom and equal rights.

*Harlem Renaissance is also known as: The New Negro Movement and Black Renaissance.

4.1 Historical Background

- a. South Vs. North Policies: Since the Civil War (1861-1865), the South and North of the USA held different policies when it comes to dealing with African Americans. While the South openly supported slavery and later formed the Jim Crow laws to continue its subjugation and oppression of Black Americans, Northern cities provided Black Americans with some extent of freedom. Due to this, since slavery period, African Americans considered the North as their haven that grants them the desired freedom and equal rights.
- b. The Great Migration of 1920s: Due to their inability to secure stable jobs and the rise in the cases of lynching against Black people in the rural South, around six million African Americans moved up to the urban North during the 1920s. The Black Migration of 1920, as it is known, came around the time of WWI in which the industrial economy and factories opened their doors for African Americans as they were in need for working hands.
- c. Racial Discrimination: New York has always been the destination for African Americans—in addition to immigrants from the West Indies and Africa—for its position as a cultural, political, and economic centre. Although the North of the USA was known for its perceived freedom and as a space of equality, racism took different (subtle) forms in it. With the move of large numbers of African Americans to the city, especially around Harlem, white Americans started to move out of these areas leaving them for minorities. Through time, Harlem became the destination of Black

Americans from different parts of the USA, which turned it, in Alain Locke's words, into a 'Race Capital' for Black people.

With its churches, clubs, and shops, Harlem brought numerous African Americans from different parts of the USA together, creating by that a collective community. Intellectuals from different social backgrounds came together and used the space created by Harlem as their base to launch their calls for equal rights, to educate their people about different forms of racism that they struggle with, and to explain what does being an African American mean in a white society. To do so, African American artists celebrated their Blackness and tended to take pride in their ties with Africa. Moreover, Harlem became a place where new forms of music emerged, like Jazz and Blues, in addition to new forms of fashion, new techniques in paintings and sculptor, and new generation of writers and poets.

4.2 Its Literature

Through the use of realism, African-American writers were able to portray an accurate and realistic image of the Black experience instead of what some white writers used to represent in their works as in the case of minstrel shows. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, African-American writers tended to use their literary texts to narrate the social and psychological struggles of African Americans with racial discrimination. In so doing, African-Americans writers addressed two main points:

- a. Collective Memory: In order to form an identity separate from white America, Black Americans needed to connect themselves to a history. Through their works, African-American writers went back to the origins of the Black community in the USA, that is African cultures and slavery/freedom narratives. By celebrating their African roots and embracing the struggles of the slavery period, the Black community formed a shared heritage that became the base for its identity and then freedom.
- b. Psychological Struggles: By giving a realistic image of the experiences of Black Americans with racial discrimination, African-American writers turned inward to discuss the psychological traumas that racism causes for their own people. Problems like feelings of loss, inferiority, and

lack of confidence are few of the psychological topics that Harlem Renaissance literature brings back to the surface and addresses directly.

4.3 Main Themes

- a. Double Consciousness: The term was first used by the African-American sociologist and writer William Edward Burghardt Du Bois in his book *The Soul of Black Folks* (1903). Double consciousness, according to Du Bois, represents the state of confusion and duality that African Americans experience due to being both American and Black while inhabiting an anti-Blackness society. This psychological state reflects a ‘two-ness’ of thought that the Black subject struggles with and the conflict between an American identity (i.e. white and anti-Black) and Black identity.
- b. Invisibility: Even though Northern cities claimed that they provide equal rights for African Americans, white Americans were blinded by their prejudice and continued to treat Black Americans as inferior. By being set at the margin of the American society and continuously denied simple civil, political, and economic rights, African Americans were ignored and treated as if they do not exist as a part of the American community.

4.5 Main Figures

As Harlem Renaissance was the birthplace for many great African-Americans writers and poets at the turn of the twentieth century, its role in African American literature opened the door for many other writers from different generations to continue their predecessors’ path and celebrate Black American culture.

- a. Richard Wright (1908-1960): As one of the main figures of the Harlem Renaissance, Wright used his literary texts to address racial discrimination in the political and economic scenes and its impact on Black Americans. In his novel, *Native Son* (1940), Wright narrates how limiting Black peoples’ access to education and stable jobs might result in a violent reaction against those in power—white community.

- b. Ralph Ellison (1914-1994): Double consciousness is one of the main themes Ellison uses in his writings. His first novel, *Invisible Man* (1952), addresses the problems young Black American face in their desire to access the white part of the American society.

- c. James Baldwin (1927-1984): A novelist and an essayist. Baldwin used his access to literature to criticise the church for its discrimination on the basis of race and gender. His first novel *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (1953) is a recount of his childhood experience with the church. In addition to his fictional works, Baldwin's essays and critical writings such as *Notes of A Native Son* (1955) and *The Fire Next Time* (1963) are important texts to understand how racism functions in the American society.

- d. Langston Hughes (1902-1967): Hughes is mostly known for his poetry. Through his writings, Hughes revived African-American traditions while at the same time portraying different life experiences of the Black community across classes. He is commonly known for his poems, like *I, Too* (1926) and *The Weary Blues* (1926).

- e. Zora Neal Hurston (1891-1960): One of the first female African-American writers of the Harlem Renaissance. In her works, Hurston revived the use of folk culture and stories in literature and considered them as a heritage that should be celebrated. Her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) brought to the surface the struggles of Black women who are doubly oppressed because of their race and gender.

- f. Maya Angelou (1928-2014): Even though she is also an essayist and novelist, Angelou is mostly known for her autobiographical series *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). In her autobiography, Angelou reflects on how racism, both psychologically and physically, affects children as much as it does with adults.

- g. Toni Morrison (1931-2019): Through her works, Morrison tends to discuss the continuous traumas left by slavery in the new generations of African Americans as in her mostly acclaimed novel *Beloved* (1987). Morrison was the first African-American writer to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993.

5. Negritude

Negritude is a political and artistic movement that was launched by African and Caribbean intellectuals (writers and poets) in Paris, France during the 1930s. Negritude, as a term, was inspired by figures from the Harlem Renaissance and their going back to African cultures and traditions. Moreover, the movement came as a reaction to the calls of French colonialism to assimilate the colonies in their French culture and civilisation—which they believed to be superior to African and Caribbean cultures. Due to this, Negritude writers used their works to celebrate all that was considered negative and inferior by the coloniser such as: Blackness, pre-colonial scenes, African mythologies, and so on.

The movement was founded by Leopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), Aimé Césaire (Martinique), and Léon-Gontran Damas (French Guiana).

5.1 Its Founders and Their Views

- a. Leopold Senghor: The importance of Negritude as a movement, according to Senghor, is in its philosophical side, that is its role as a cultural movement. In his poetry, the Senegalese writer reflects a return to African traditions through celebrating what French colonialism assumed to be negative. Concepts like darkness, femininity, and traditions and sensuous topics form the basis of Senghor's texts.

E.g.: Prayer to Masks (1945) by Senghor

Masks! Oh Masks!

Black mask, red mask, you black and white masks,
Rectangular masks through whom the spirit breathes,

I greet you in silence!

And you too, my panther headed ancestor.

You guard this place, that is closed to any feminine laughter, to any mortal smile.

You purify the air of eternity, here where I breathe the air of my fathers.

Masks of maskless faces, free from dimples and wrinkles.

You have composed this image, this my face that bends
over the altar of white paper.

- b. Aimé Césaire: Césaire was the first of the three co-founders of the movement to use the term Negritude in his collection of poems *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939; translated as *Return to My Native Land* in 1969). Negritude literature, or any form of writing by Black intellectuals, according to Césaire, is an act of resistance, self-determination, and a refusal of assimilation in French culture. Unlike Senghor who focused on the cultural aspect of the movement, Césaire used his writings to address the social and political impacts of colonialism and imperialism and their dehumanisation and subjugation of Black people.

5.2 Criticism

- a. Wole Soyinka (Nigeria): The Nigerian poet and playwright, Soyinka, is one of the most critical intellectuals of the Negritude movement. In Kampala conference in 1962, Soyinka comments of the movement's continuous calls to celebrate African cultures stating: 'the tiger does not go about announcing its tigritude; it pounces.' Soyinka's criticism of the movement is shared by other Anglophone writers and intellectuals. According to these critics, the movement is based on abstract, romantic, and subjective ideas that maintains the Self-Other relationship between the coloniser and colonised. In other words, Soyinka criticises how the movement positions the African subject in defence as they need to continuously announce their humanity and history in order to be accepted by the coloniser as an equal.
- b. Frantz Fanon (Martinique): Even though Fanon was inspired by Césaire's interpretation of Negritude on how colonialism dehumanises the colonised, he criticised the limitations of the movement to the realms of literature and culture. In Fanon's view, arguing about African music, myths, and folktales does not lead the colonies to achieve their liberation and freedom. Instead, he calls for an anti-colonial (violent) revolution that removes the coloniser from his military and political position of power. Only by so doing, in Fanon's words, the colonised African and oppressed Black subject can regain their humanity, dignity, and freedom.

Despite the criticism, however, the movement has influenced the writings of various Francophone writers and their works such as Ferdinand Oyono's (Cameroon) anti-colonial novels like *The Old Man and The Medal* (1956), Birago Diop's (Senegal) use of folktales in his works as in *Mother Crocodile* (1961), and Jacques Rabemananjara from Madagascar who used local culture and mythology in his plays and poetry to proclaim the African identity.

5.3 Contemporary Views on Negritude

As a movement, Negritude does not have an end date as critics argue that it still forms the basis of postcolonial literature to this day. However, taking into consideration the political and economic problems affecting the Black world (African, Caribbean, and African-American communities) nowadays, the interest in Africa and its cultures and traditions is no longer a uniting characteristic between these communities. Maryse Conde (1934-2024), a French writer from Guadeloupe, comments on Negritude as a movement and the current struggles of Black people around the world. In an interview with Françoise Pfaff, Conde states that Negritude as a movement is no longer 'relevant.' Although Conde's early novels support the unity between Africa and the Diaspora, her recent works, like *Les Fabulex et Triste Destin d'Ivan et Ivana* (2017; translated as *The Wondrous and Tragic Life of Ivan and Ivana*, 2020) reflects the misunderstanding between members of the Black world. Her new novel comes as a reaction to the tragic attack that took place in Paris in January 2015, where a Malian "jihadist" shot and killed a policewoman who is originally from Martinique. This event, according to Conde, 'put[s] an end to the myth of blackness based on intra-racial solidarity. Negritude died in Montrouge that day because it was revealed for what it has always been: a myth' (Chanda 2017).

6. Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism is a movement that was established to unite Black people around the world against colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy. The movement is based on the belief that all Black people share the same cultural background, i.e., African, therefore share the same identity.

Pan-Africanism started in the USA during the 19th century and then spread to the rest of the world, mainly the African continent in the 20th century.

Note: The prefix 'Pan' is of a Greek origin and it means 'all' and 'all-inclusive.'

6.1 The History of Pan-Africanism

After the end of the Civil War in the USA in 1865, the American Colonisation Society started to move African Americans back to Africa in order to stop slave uprisings. This interest in Africa was supported by a number of African-American intellectuals who assumed that the only way for Black Americans to be free is for them to move back to Africa. By the end of the 19th century, the first ideas of Pan-Africanism started to form.

6.1.1 Pan-Africanism in the USA

Due to the long period that Pan-Africanism covered in the USA, it was continuously defined and redefined according to the beliefs and thoughts of the main intellectual figures dominating the scene at the time. With each new definition of the movement, a new understanding of the relationship between the USA and Africa is formed.

. Edward W. Blyden (1832-1912): Blyden is from Caribbean origins who, along with Martin Delany, believed in the common destiny of Black people. However, due to the influence of Christian teachings on these figures, their aim to return to Africa was to 'civilise' its inhabitants. During the end of the 19th century, some African-American intellectuals considered educating Africans and converting them to Christianity as their mission.

- . Marcus Garvey (1887-1940): Taking after Blyden and his believe in the common destiny of Black people, Garvey tried to unite Black Americans on the basis of their race despite their class status. Through his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and his belief in racial solidarity and pride in one's African origins, he started a 'Back to Africa' campaign. To do so, Garvey launched a shipping line—the Black Star Line—to move African Americans who wanted to go back to Africa. This process, however, proved to be a failure after the majority of Black Americans could not assimilate in African communities, which led Garvey to support the assimilation of African Americans in the American society while still celebrating their African heritage.
- . W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963): Unlike Garvey, Du Bois supported the integration and assimilation of African Americans in the American society, while at the same time calling for the end oppression against all Black people around the world. In the second Pan-African Congress in 1921, Du Bois was the first member to bring Africa and colonialism to the forefront as he argued that Africa should be ruled by its own people instead of African-Americans leaders—as called for by previous members. Due to his inclusive views and arguments about racial equality, Du Bois is considered the father of modern Pan-Africanism as his ideas have become the movement's philosophical and practical foundations.

6.1.2 Pan-Africanism in Africa

Since 1900, Pan-Africanism advocates organised and held various conferences across Europe to raise awareness about the struggles Black people go through because of white supremacy. It was only in 1945, in the Congress of Manchester, that African leaders joined the movement. Since this point, the movement has been 'Africanised,' as Africa and colonialism became the centre of the movement.

- . Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972): Nkrumah, who later became the first president of independent Ghana in 1957, was one of the African leaders who shaped the African side of Pan-Africanism. Influenced by the movement's African-American pioneers and their ideas, Nkrumah stressed the importance of African unity as a means towards liberation from colonialism. He aspired to form a United States of Africa that would be united on the political, economic, and social levels.

However, by forcing one perspective on all African nations, Nkrumah downplayed the local differences and problems of each African region.

6.2 Pan-African Literature

Like the movement, literary texts that were published under Pan-Africanism tend to address different forms of injustices experienced by Black people around the world, while at the same time celebrating African cultures and unity. These sentiments formed the main themes in literary texts of the period.

- a. Trans-Atlantic/ African Unity: As Pan-Africanism rose the interest of Africans and those in the Diaspora in their unity and the possibilities that can result from it, debates on unity and imaginative united Black country have become a common theme in narratives.

E.g., *The African* (1960) by the Sierra Leonean William Conton.

The Wreath for Udomo (1956) by the South African writer William Abrahams.

Homegoing (2016) by the Ghanaian-American writer Yaa Gyasi.

- b. Pride in African Cultures: While writers from the Diaspora (USA and Caribbean) used stories of returning to motherland Africa as their way of reconnecting with African cultures, African writers turned their focus to reviving their local traditions, myths, and beliefs. The example of the Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o perhaps clarifies this point further. Although he started writing in English at the beginning of his career, Ngugi shifted to write in Gikuyu—his native language—as a way to show his pride in his Africanness. Ngugi considers the return to his native language as a symbol of his freedom from the colonial domination.

6.3 Pan-Africanism Now!

With African nations securing independence in the 1960s and 1970s and African Americans gaining their civil rights in the USA, the unity between these two communities that Pan-Africanism called for has become a mere metaphorical relationship. For those in the Diaspora, Africa now is just a 'home' that they will never return to. The failure of Pan-Africanism movement (Falola & Essien, 2013) can be attributed to two main reasons:

- a. Nationalism: After the end of colonialism, the newly independent African nations started to focus on their own local problems, such as civil wars, economic collapse, and health issues. Africans in the African continent and Diaspora no longer have a shared enemy (colonialism and white supremacy) that they need to unite to fight against.

- b. The Failure of New Organisations: After the first signs of the movement's failure, African leaders attempted to form new organisations like Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and African Union (AU) to take its place. However, these organisations did not see beyond the continent's political problems. In other words, the new African organisations and African leaders ignored the new forms of economic and social oppression applied on Black people around the world.

***Neo-colonialism and Globalisation**

The new forms of oppression that Black people, especially Africans, struggle with are neo-colonialism and globalisation. Neo-colonialism is mainly economic as the wealth of the newly free African countries is controlled by the former colonial powers and the USA. In Frantz Fanon's (1967) words, neo-colonialism maintains the economic dependence of the African nations on Western decisions. This control is achieved through organisations like Commonwealth (Anglophone regions controlled by Britain), World Bank, and International Monetary Funding (IMF).

Globalisation, on the other hand, is considered as a new form of colonialism. Unlike colonialism, globalisation is indirect and subtle as it controls how people from the peripheries think about their own cultures. For example, speaking in English and wearing from Western fashion brands is now considered the way to prove a person's worth, while those who hold to their own native languages and cultures are commonly viewed as uneducated and uncivilised.

7. Orientalism

7.1 Edward Said (1935—2003)

Edward Wadei Said was born in Jerusalem, British occupied Palestine on November 1, 1935 to a Lebanese mother and a Palestinian-American father. In 1947, the family moved to Cairo, Egypt after the partition of Palestine. There, Edward Said studied in American and British schools where English was the only language allowed. The use of English in his education became one of the reasons that led Said to address the question of identity as he mentions in *Out of Place: A Memoir* (1999). In 1951, Edward Said was sent to the USA to continue his studies. At first, Said went to Julliard School of Music where he studied piano, but then he shifted to study English at Princeton University and then earn a PhD in English literature from Harvard University in 1964.

After Said joined Columbia University in 1963, his interest became focused on topics related to colonialism and the Empire. This shift resulted in one of the main critical texts in postcolonial studies, *Orientalism* (1978), which brings to the forefront the experiences of the Middle East with colonialism and colonial narratives. During the 1980s, Edward Said started to focus largely on Palestine and challenging Western representations of Islam in *Covering Islam* (1981). Besides books, Said wrote many essays and articles that range from discussing (Western) theories in a global context, the problems of intellectuals in colonial and postcolonial contexts, and the political changes in the Middle East. In 24 September 2003, Edward Said passed away after twelve years of fighting leukaemia leaving behind a legacy that influenced various thinkers and theorists like Homi Bhabha and Gayatari Spivak.

7.2 What Does Orientalism Mean?

In his book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said discusses the images of the Orient (East) in Western texts. According to Said, Orientalism is the collection of Western texts—European and American—that depict the Orient in cultural traits and qualities, not just different, but opposite to the West. However, instead of the West vs. East relationship, Said (1978) argues that the Western representation of the Orient is based on a show of power and (colonial) dominance. Due to this, the Occident (the West) portrays people of the Orient as subjects of racial-cultural difference, as an Other. Orientalism, therefore, is a systematic discourse through which the East is studied, administrated, and presented by the West as unchanging, barbaric, and primitive, a space that

occupies the ‘lower end of the civilisation scale’ (Nayar, 2015, p. 119) and in need for civilisation and political domination.

According to Said (1978), the term Orientalism can mean several interdependent forms, mainly as:

1. An Academic Field: According to Said (1978), the term Orientalism is commonly found in the academic field, that is ‘anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient [...] either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism’ (p. 2). Even though specialists and writers on the East are rarely referred to as Orientalists nowadays, literary and critical texts, conferences and debates are still held to discuss the Orient from different perspectives.
2. A Style of Thought: In relation to the previous point, most of the Western writers, political theorists, and economists approach the Orient with an already accepted distinction between it and the Occident. In other words, the representations of the Orient, its people, culture(s), and customs as different and in contrast to the West in Western texts come from a rooted belief in the superiority of the West that forms the basis of most of the theories and discussions of the Orient.
3. An Institution of Domination: Compared to the other two forms of Orientalism mentioned above, this one is more ‘historically and materially’ related (Said, 1978, p. 3). Said, in his work, defines the end of the eighteenth century as the starting point of Orientalism. Since then, the Orient is being analysed, discussed, taught, and ruled by the West. Due to this, the West has authority over the Orient while the Orient and Orientals are denied self-representation. In its authoritarian and dominating representation of the Orient, the Occident represents mere “fantasies” that fits the Empire (colonial) narratives.

An example of Orientalism as a thought that transforms into a form of domination is clear in the 1910 speech by the former British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour. Discussing “the problems with which we have to deal in Egypt,” Balfour stated: ‘First of all, look at the facts of the case. Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government... having merits of their own.... You may look through the whole history of

the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government' (quoted in Said, 1978, p. 33-34).

7.3 Key Terms

a. Exoticism: Generally, the term refers to something/someone that is unusual and foreign. In studying the Orient vs. Occident relationship, Said (1978), describes how the West views the East and its practices as mysterious, strange, and in 'exotic' stereotypes.

For instance, in T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922), Arabs are continuously associated with the desert, which he describes as 'clean' and 'spiritual,' whereas Arabian cities are described as 'deadly' and 'oppressive' (p. 45). By drawing this image, Lawrence depicts Arabs as simple people who have no connection to the material world, therefore (Western) civilisation.

b. Hegemony: the term was first used by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci who argued that social, cultural, and economic domination can be achieved through soft means (consent) instead of force. In *Orientalism* (1978), Said uses the term to describe the ideas, myths, and beliefs that position the West as superior and the East/Orient as inferior. In the film *Aladdin* (1992), for instance, secondary (Arab!) characters are presented as violent who speak English with a thick accent. Such image is constantly used in fictional and non-fictional Western works and even news that it became a defining character that Orientals are (mis)represented as barbaric, irrational, and a source of threat to the Occident.

7.4 Orientalism in Literary Texts

In literature, Orientalist ideas and beliefs are easily detected in works published during the Empire period. While some texts portray the Orient as backward and underdeveloped place, other texts romanticise its religious practices and spirituals, especially in the case of India. Still, a large number of Western literature draws an image of the East as a repressed Other who refuses to live in a civilised society (Ryan, 2012), such as with dressing in traditional/religious clothes and holding traditional celebrations.

A Passage to India (1924) by the British writer E. M. Forster is one of the main literary texts that addresses the coloniser-colonised relationship from an Orientalist point of view. Describing the setting of the novel, Chandrapore city, Forster reveals the difference between the part of the city inhabited by Indians and the other part where Europeans live:

Except for the Marabar Caves—and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary. [...]. The streets are mean, the temples ineffective and though a few fine houses exist they are hidden away in gardens or down alleys whose filth deters all but the invited guest (p. 3).

While the Indian part is associated with images like mean, ineffective, and filth, the European part is described as sensibly planned and beautiful:

As for the civil station itself, it provokes no emotion. It charms not; neither does it repel. It is sensibly planned, with a red-brick club on its brow, and farther back a grocer's and a cemetery, and the bungalows are disposed along roads that intersect at right angles. It has nothing hideous in it, and only the view is beautiful; it shares nothing with the city except the overarching sky. (p.4)

Like his prejudice about the surroundings, Forster also gives an insight to the prejudice English characters have towards the Indians in the novel. For instance, when Miss Moore wants to be introduced to a group of Indian women, Miss Turton reminds her of her position in relation to them: “You're superior to them [the Indian women], anyway. Don't forget that. You're superior to everyone in India except one or two of the Ranis and they're on equality” (p. 19). The characters in Forster's novel reflect a superior (European)-inferior (Indian) relationship that connects it to the colonial/Empire narrative.

7.5 Modern Orientalism

According to Edward Said, Orientalism is a product of the British and French colonial period. The spread of the Empire across the world and the development of science (Darwinism), the inferiority of Arabs and Orientals in general became a fact for them rather than just a mere assumption. The belief in the backwardness of Oriental cultures and the need for

Western control contributed to the continuity of colonial dominance. However, by the end of WWII and the fall of the old colonial powers, America replaced them adopting the same old beliefs about the Orient.

It should be noted that for European colonial powers, the Orient is usually associated with their former colonies and the biblical lands in the Near East, i.e. the Middle East. For America, on the other hand, the Far East—China, Japan, and Korea—is the Orient. This, however, does not mean that the Middle East is no longer under Orientalist views. Instead, new Orientalist images are now characterising the Occident-Orient relationship.

In an interview (1998) with Sut Jhally, Said describes the American orientalism as ‘more politicised’ and indirect (as America is not a traditional colonial power) form. Also, with the ‘white man’s burden’ to spread Christianity in Africa and Asia, Islam was seen as an enemy that does not let its followers exercise self-government (Little, 2008). Moreover, the presence of “Israel” in the Middle East—with the support of America—added fuel to the already tense religious relationships in the region.

Another Orientalist image publicised by American popular culture surfaced after the 9/11 events. Associating the terrorist attacks with Muslims/Arabs, therefore the Middle East, resulted in dehumanising depictions of Orientals such as “demons” and villains ‘who only understand the language of force’ (Said, 1998). These images are clearly—and repeatedly—used in modern American popular culture in which films, books, and shows (mis)represent people of the Middle East (and North Africa) as either barbaric terrorists and/or as weak and oppressed peoples who need to be saved by the American (white) saviour.

Note: While the Arab/Muslim region is the focus of modern Orientalism, we can also see how the recent attacks on Asian-Americans in the USA are based on Orientalist views. Donald Trump, the former American president, calling Covid-19 the “Chinese virus” revived racist beliefs that Chinese (or East Asians) are dirty and irrational, which in turn resulted in the rise of hate crimes against anyone who looks East Asian in America and Europe.

8. Culture and Imperialism

Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) was published fifteen years after *Orientalism* (1978). Even though Said had published other works between the two books, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) is considered the long-awaited successor of *Orientalism* (1978). In his work, Said attempts to address several points that were left out in *Orientalism* (1978).

According to Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) tries to cover a larger range of the Empire than *Orientalism* (1978), as it addresses other regions such as Africa, Latin America, and Australia besides the East. Moreover, this work brings to the forefront the resistance of Western domination through discussing literary and critical works by Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Salman Rushdie, and so on.

8.1 What is Culture?

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said gives the word culture two meanings. He first defines it as 'all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principle aims is pleasure' (p, xii). Here Said means that culture is all about arts that have a message and help in connecting people and entertaining them but at the same time, free from any form of authority whether it is economic, social, or political. Departing from this definition, Said focuses on the novel as a central cultural form in the 19th and 20th centuries Empire. However, what Said criticises at this point is how recent critical comments focus on the art of narrative fiction while little attention is given to its position in the 'history and world of empire' (p. xii). In other words, stories are the first space where (Western) narrators showcase their authority and assert their identity through "representing" foreign and "exotic" regions of the world.

The second definition Said (1993) gives to culture is that it is a 'concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought' (p. xiii). Using the newly independent colonies as an example, culture is important in building the new nation and its identity. However, what happens at this phase is that cultural practices, traditions, and folktales go through a selective focus where only the good, the 'refining and elevating' representations are saved in people's memories, while anything else that is considered negative and degrading is left unmentioned until forgotten. In this sense, culture becomes a source of identity, it

becomes associated with the nation or the state, which results in a hierarchal “us” that is different (and superior!) from “them.”

Due to this, culture becomes a battleground for various political and ideological ideas, which in turn makes it a ‘protective enclosure: check your politics at the door before you enter’ (Said, 1993, p. xiv). It is at this point where Said (1993) takes issue with Western literature. In other words, Said comments on how literary texts that are considered as “classics” and part of Western culture never questioned their countries’ imperial and colonial history. On the other hand, those that do question their countries’ colonial history are not included as part of “culture.”

8.2 What is Imperialism?

In general terms, imperialism is ‘the absolute power of the ruler’ (Nayar, 2015, p. 94). In postcolonial studies, it refers to the main aim behind colonialism. Imperialism is firstly an economic domination and ‘regulation of the colony’ (ibid.), where its resources and wealth are controlled by a distant power. In Said’s words (1993, p. 9), however, imperialism means ‘the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.’ Besides its economic domination, Said describes imperialism as a cultural force as much as it is a militant oppression. The impact of imperialism on culture (or what is known as imperial culture) can be viewed in the rise of the use of words like inferior, subordinate people, authority, and expansion during the 19th century.

Even though imperialism, like colonialism is something of the past, it formed what Said (1993) calls ‘overlapping territories [and] intertwined histories.’ In this comment, Said refers to the common history (and memory) with its baggage of historical sense, emotions, and traditions between the coloniser and the colonised. For example, if we take the present history of India, British colonialism is always part of this history with its military attacks, torture, and exploitation of both people and wealth. The same thing goes for any other British or French former colonies. In the case of the coloniser, there is always a sense of “loss” and humiliation that lingers in their history due to the failure in their colonising mission. Therefore, how can imperial acts—i.e., domination, authority, superiority,—be separated from (national) culture in the West when it can be seen that a whole history of new independent nations is built as a reaction to former colonial rules. In the case of literature, how can we separate for example Dickens’s representation of Victorian businessmen from the national and international context of their period, i.e., the Empire. In *Dombey and Son* (1846-1848), for instance, Dickens describes how Dombey thinks that the universe and time are all his to

‘trade in.’ This manner of thinking and the sense of authority expressed in this literary text is, according to Said (1993), a result of a reality where the world is dominated by the imperial freed trade, i.e. the Empire.

8.3 The Robinson Crusoes: A Rhetoric of Power

Due to imperialism and the colonial rule over the colonies, these regions are considered open spaces for Western subjects and their intervention, whether for trading, punishment, or ‘exotic experiences’ (McCarthy, 2010). Claiming authority over regions and peoples that are viewed as lesser is a common image in literature like that represented in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). In Defoe’s work, the story is told from the perspective of Robinson Crusoe who claims authority and domination of an island he ends up in after his ship gets destroyed by a storm. What the novel leaves untold, however, is the story of his “slave,” Friday and the native inhabitants of the island. This type of narrative reflects the power that both (Western) writers and characters have when it comes to deciding whose story is heard and told and whose is blocked and ignored.

To clarify this point further, throughout *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Edward Said studies various Western literary texts that provide reference on how culture and imperialism impact the writer’s narrative and representations of the Other. Below are few of the texts that Said analyses in his work and his main arguments concerning their direct or indirect relation to imperialism and colonialism.

. Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902): Marlow’s narrative in Conrad’s novella is the narrative of the Empire *par excellence*. Conrad is self-conscious to the space and time of the story, that is during the colonial rule of the Empire. The story therefore reflects what Said (1993, p. 23) describes as ‘Europeans performing acts of imperial mastery and will in (or about) Africa.’ In other words, as the narrative largely revolves around Kurtz and his looting of ivory in Africa, Marlow’s authoritarian narrative, and the group of listeners on the boat—at the heart of London (the empire of business), eliminates those who exist outside of the imperialist world, as their space is left unnarrated, empty, and dark.

. Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (1814): In this novel, Austen tells the story of Fanny Price and her life with her wealthy uncle and aunt. Mainly, the novel focuses on themes of morality and

religion. However, what Said (1993) points out here is the connection between Mansfield park and Thomas Bertram's (Fanny's uncle) slave plantations in Antigua in the Caribbean. Said (1993) argues that the novel reflects a 'hierarchy of spaces,' (p. 58) in which the wealth, beauty, and prosperity at "home"—i.e. Britain—is only possible with the economic exploitation of the colonies.

. Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860-1861): Since the 18th century, Australia was established as a 'penal colony' that Britain used to send its criminals and unwanted subjects to. In Dickens's literary work, Magwitch is convicted and is sent to Australia as a punishment. According to Said's argument, Magwitch's forced move to Australia is more of an 'imperial act' than a punishment. This is due to the fact that he no longer fits in the centre, the metropolitan space. Those who get moved to Australia are stamped as 'outsiders,' their only success and redemption is related to their existence in Australia instead of the "mother country" to which they can no longer return.

9. The Story of India

9.1 India as a Colony: British Raj

Precolonial India was formed by princely states and empires like the Mughal Empire and the Maratha Empire. The Western interest in the region started in 1498 with Vasco da Gama exploration trip. The newly discovered route that connects Europe to the Indian subcontinent increased Europeans greed for exploiting the region's wealth and goods. Moreover, the internal conflicts between the Indian empires and kingdoms allowed Europeans to pursue a political control of the region besides the economic one, as with the case of the British Empire.

To do so, the British needed first to be the sole ruler in India, which became a reality after their defeat of the Mughal Empire and the Mutiny revolution. Second, to justify their colonial rule in relation to their claimed "civilising mission," India and its people were viewed as inferior who suffer under oppressing political regimes. Such situation is often described from an Orientalist perspective, as in the writings of the British historian Robert Orme. Comparing the Mughal Empire to the British government in his 1659 historical account, Orme wrote:

The sons of Liberty may here behold the mighty ills to which the slaves of a despotic power must be subject: the spirit darkened and depressed by ignorance and fear; the body tortured and tormented by punishments inflicted without justice and without measure: such a contrast to the blessings of liberty, heightens at once the sense of our happiness, and our zeal for the preservation of it. (quoted in Fischer-Tine & Mann, 2004, pp. 5-6)

Orme's use of the term "sons of Liberty" is a reference to the free and civilised British community in contradiction to the "despotic power" or the oppressive rule that dominated the populations of the Indian subcontinent. The quote also reflects an Orientalist view as Orme describes Indians as ignorant and weak, who are unable to self-govern. Therefore, the relationship between Britain and India was viewed in terms of master-slave, teacher-pupil, and father-child relation. In other words, Britain, through colonialism, had positioned itself as the source of order, education, and civilisation to Indians.

Even though the idea of the "civilising mission" is associated with the late 18th century Christian movement led by England, India's relation with the British rule goes back to the 17th century—since the

reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Considering India as part of the British Empire started with the establishment of the East India Company in 1600.

***The East India Company (1600-1873)**

Perhaps India's colonial history is a clear example of how imperialism turns into a colonial state. In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I gave permission to a group of travellers to take part in the Spice Trade between England and various countries in the East Indies. Such step became the launching point of the East India Company or the English East India Company. While the formed company enlarged its interest in other goods like textiles, the competition between it and similar companies from France and Netherlands grew. Due to this and as a way to protect its routes and trade, the British East India Company hired Indian soldiers—or sepoys—and formed its own army. However, this militant power was not only used for protection but also to control and force different Indian regions who refused to agree to the company's rules when it came to trade (exploitation!) as with the case of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century.

With the rising power of the company and its control of larger parts of India, the British Parliament passed the India Act of 1784 which granted the company full control of commerce in India while political matters were secretly controlled by the British government. The British involvement in the Indian political and social systems such as introducing Christianity as a way to break traditional rules resulted in the Mutiny or the Great Rebellion of 1857. This revolution was led by sepoys who used to protect the English East India Company with the belief that the applied rules threaten India's traditional society. While the rebellion successfully ended the economic power of the East India Company, it resulted in the shift of power to the Crown. Therefore, in 1858, India became officially a British colony, fully under the British Raj (rule).

9.2 India's Social System

The social structure in India is largely dominated by their caste system. The concept of the caste system is currently viewed negatively and often criticised. However, according to Indian scholars and critics—such as Sasha Riser-Kositsky (2009), the caste system is part of the Indian tradition and Hinduism as it forms the basis of their social life. Moreover, according to these critics, any negative views directed towards this tradition is a result of how British colonialism used and reformed such system for its own benefit.

The Indian society is divided by birth into groups, or castes. The Upper caste are the Brahmins who take roles such as priests or part of the academic class, followed by Kshatriyas who serve as rulers and administrators. The two lower castes are the Vaishyas and the Shudras. While the former group is involved in farming or business, the latter is formed by manual labourers. As these four castes form the basis of the Indian society, there is a fifth caste known as the Dalits. Dalits, or the Untouchables, are out of the caste system who do unclean jobs and—until recent times—were denied basic rights such as education, land ownership, and health care. These castes live in segregated areas, marriage is forbidden between them, and often they use separate facilities, especially when it comes to the Dalits.

While the caste system is basic to Hinduism, colonialism took advantage of it to further advance its goals. British colonialism turned the caste divisions from a social and religious structure into a system, which ‘made caste what it is today’ (Dirks, 2001, p. 5). In other words, colonialism appointed upper-caste Hindus to important political and economic positions, therefore enforcing the inequalities and divide between Indians. In recent years, the Indian government is trying to build an all-inclusive nation without any religious or caste discrimination with the continuous protests led by the Dalits and their demands for their civic rights.

9.3 India’s Political System

The British colonialism of India officially started after the 1857 Mutiny, or what Indians call the First War of Independence. India, during this period, was formed by modern day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded to demand the country’s independence. The Congress included more than 2,000 members from different parts of India, who come from different religions and classes. One of the first demands of the Congress was the admission of more Indians in civil services and governmental jobs which were mostly held by British officers. During the 1920s and the 1930s, the Indian National Congress shifted its focus to securing complete political and economic independence of India from Britain. In this period, the Congress adapted Mahatma Gandhi’s “satyagraha” campaigns, that is civil disobedience through non-violent protests. In 1942, the Congress negotiated India’s cooperation in WWII beside Britain in exchange for independence. By 1947, the Congress served as the first ruling party of independent India.

However, the Congress was not the only political institution that played a key role in India’s anti-colonial struggles. In 1906, the Muslim League was established to defend the rights of Muslims in India. Even though both political organisations, the Congress and the League, had the same aim—which

is securing India's independence—the League did not agree to the 1920s and 1930s non-violent method supported by the Congress. As the Congress laws were viewed as more directed towards the benefit of the Hindus, more Muslim Indians joined the League which led into a call for an independent Muslim nation (Pakistan) in 1940. In 1946, the League reached an agreement with the British and the Congress to the partition of the subcontinent into two separate nations, India and Pakistan. The partition of the region took place on the same independence date, August 14/15, 1947.

Despite the partition of the nations and the secured independence, political unrest characterised the area. Mahatma Gandhi's assassination in 1948 was followed by peasant protests in India. In the span of three years, India was involved in the Indo-Chinese war in 1962 and the First India-Pakistan war in 1965. Pakistan had its own share of political troubles. In 1971, protests erupted in East Pakistan—modern day Bangladesh—after its elected prime minister was not allowed to take office. The civil disobedience led Pakistan to interfere using military force, which in turn caused India's participation in the war. After the issue took on a global attention and criticism of Pakistan's actions, in addition to the Bangladesh-India alliance, Bangladesh was announced a free state in December 1971.

9.4 Indian Literature in English

Until the nineteenth century, most of English literature written about India was by British writers narrating the lives and experiences of the British in India. When Indian writers started to use English in their literary texts at the end of the 19th century, the influence of English writers and their narrative methods were obvious. Works like E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) or Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) played a major role in forming the first works of Indian English literature. Still, Indian writers used their works to shed light on villages and the domestic life of their people that Europeans and colonial subjects could not access.

Since the appearance of the first Indian Anglophone novel with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife* in 1864, the social and political changes in India formed the Indian novel. For instance, the depiction of the 1857 Mutiny, the partition of the Indian subcontinent as in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), or the continuous reformation of the Indian state as in Salman Rushdie's *The Midnight's Children* (1981) are all topics that characterise the Indian novel written in English. When it comes to themes, however, there are three main themes that these novels address heavily.

- a. West vs. East: Like most of the postcolonial novels, the conflict between the West and the East, colonialism and native cultures is a recurrent theme. Discussing the difference between the two cultures comes in the form of reflecting on the impact of the colonial culture on Indian cultures and traditions.
- b. 'What is India(n)?': As explained in the social and political parts above, India went through various processes that changed its status, socially and politically. The question of "what is India" and what does being Indian mean is an important topic in Indian anglophone novels. This point has turned into a debate on how to define India(n), whether through geographical belonging, religious beliefs, languages spoken, political affiliations, and so on. In other words, the question of identity and the formation of the Indian nation are often connected and interrelated in Indian literature.
- c. The Use of Mythology: To revive their traditions, Indian writers attempted to bring back their people's myths and folklores into their writings. Such step was achieved through using magical realism, in which writers combine real events with fantasies and stories about gods, queens, and supernatural events in the same text.

9.5 Key Figures: Gayatri C. Spivak (1942-)

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is a postcolonial theorist and feminist critic. She first became known for her translation of Jacques Derrida's work *De La Grammatologie* (1976) to English. Spivak was born in 1942 in Calcutta (modern day Kolkata), India where she had most of her education. In 1961, Spivak moved to New York to finish her MA studies at Cornell University under financial difficulties which led her to change her field to comparative literature. Moving between Cornell and Cambridge university, she was able to finish her PhD degree in 1967 in the USA and start her teaching career. In 2007, Spivak was appointed as University Professor at Columbia.

Spivak used her position as a critic, educator, and theorist to encourage more women to be involved in critical studies, especially the deconstructive theory and its evolution. In the postcolonial field, she published numerous works where she criticises European theorists such as Kant and Hegel who do not only exclude the subaltern subject from their studies, but they also treat them as not fully human subjects. Besides her other works and publications, Spivak is mostly known for her article 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985). In this work, Spivak addresses the suicide of Bengali women as an indication of their inability to achieve self-representation in their community. Focusing on the patriarchal context, Spivak argues that women try to express themselves in different ways but when it comes to speaking, it

is “a transaction between speaker and listener.” A state that oppressed women are denied experiencing. Moreover, Spivak points out that movements like feminism—or Anglo-American feminism—comes from a privilege related to its imperial and colonial history. In other words, white women do not share the same cultural and historical burden as women for the former colonies (as in Africa and Asia), which makes their experiences and struggles different. Therefore, non-Western women do not only fight patriarchal practices, but they also try to reform a set of existing beliefs rooted in a colonial and imperial history.

***Subaltern:** The term was first coined by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci who used it to refer to groups of people who are excluded from socio-economic institutions in society in order to deny them agency and voice. In postcolonial studies, subaltern is used to refer to oppressed people who do not have access to cultural imperialism, such as refugees, untouchable castes, or homeless people. Spivak, throughout her works, criticises the exchangeable use of the words oppressed and subaltern as she argues that subaltern subjects are never allowed to speak and never allowed to be represented as social organised groups, i.e., the working class is oppressed but still represented, a privilege the subaltern subject does not have.

10. Australian Literature

10.1 Historical Background

Even though Australia was inhabited by natives, or aborigines—or Aboriginals, for thousands of years, (Western) accounts narrate the island's history from the first arrival of Europeans to the land. Aboriginal Australians inhabited the coastal areas for water and worked as hunters and farmers. European explorations reached the island early 1600s, where the land was considered barren and without value. In 1770, the British explorer Captain James Cook spent four months discovering the island. After mapping the eastern coast, he claimed it as a possession of the British Empire in the name of George III. Captain Cook pointed in his writings that the land was fertile and “natural.” Here, Captain Cook's description of the land as “natural” was his way of saying that the island was uninhabited, or at least uninhabited of human beings who can “cultivate” and farm the land. Such claim established that the island was *Terra Nullius*, i.e. an empty land that belongs to no one.

After claiming possession of the island, Joseph Banks—Captain Cook's companion to Australia—suggested that the island should be used as an outlet for convicts. This took place in a time when Britain was struggling with the rising number of convicts in prisons due to industrialisation, crowded cities, classism, and its strict judicial system. Moreover, the agreement of the British government to Banks's idea was a result of its loss of colonies in North America. On January 26, 1788, Captain Arthur Phillip led a fleet of eleven ships to Australia. Among the 1,000 people sailing to the far away island, more than half were convicts. There, upon reaching Botany Bay (Sydney) and rising the British flag, Australia—or New South Wales—became officially a British colony. However, unlike other colonies under the Empire, the island was used as a “penal colony,” meaning that it was used as a large prison for the convicts which they could not escape from due to the ocean that surrounds it and the desert that forms most of its space.

The transportation of convicts to New South Wales continued for 60 years, and as it came to end in the Easter side of the island, it continued the Western coast until 1868. Other settlers moved to the island with hopes of acquiring lands, which was only granted for those of high social status. In 1851, gold was discovered in New South Wales. With this increase of wealth and growing number of the skilled newcomers to the island, the British government granted the Australian colonies the right to be responsible for its political issues, therefore self-government. Such decision led to the formation of the

Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 based on the federation of all the six colonial states which gave them certain powers without a return to the British government. Nevertheless, in WWI and WWII, Australia fought beside Britain voluntarily without any formalities. Since 1945, Australia became more aligned with the American system and policies rather than the British. Even though it had its own political and social systems, it was only in 1986—according to the Australia Act 1986—that Australia became free by ending its constitutional ties with Britain.

Note: To this day, Australia still celebrates January 26th as a national day, or Australia Day. However, since 1938, indigenous Australians called for the change or cancellation of the day as it marks the British colonisation of the island. Referred to by them as the ‘Invasion Day’ where they mourn the loss of their lands and people.

10.2 Australia Postcolonial Literature

In the postcolonial field, Australian literature was often marginalised due to its position as a settler colony. This goes back to the fact that until mid-twentieth century, most of the published works in Australia were British. Moreover, because of the large number of the population that traces its origins back to Britain, writings by (white) Australians tended to forcibly fit the Australian experience to the English standards (Talib, 2002). Publishers on the continent also tried to limit the access of Aboriginal writers to publication, and even if they managed to publish, their works were edited in which the influence of their cultures and languages in their writings is removed—to make their works fit the white readership.

It was only in 1960s, with the Vietnam war, the African-American experience, and the anti-colonial movements in the rest of the world that changed views on Australian literature. A new generation of Australians started to see the similarities between their position as indigenous/ second rank citizens in their own land and the demands of the other colonies for self-government and self-determination. This state of self-consciousness of their status led this generation to protest their government rules which led to granting full citizenship rights to Aboriginal Australians in 1967. Looking back at their own history and position in the world—a time when Australia was still dominated by the Crown—related (Aboriginal) Australian literature to its traditions, therefore making it a postcolonial literature. While most of the literary works were either orally narrated or written in indigenous dialects, by 1970s and 1980s, Aboriginal Australian writers started to use English in their

writings. The Aboriginal English as it is known, however—like the process followed by Africans and Asians—is coated with characteristics from indigenous dialects such as short and simple sentences.

10.3 Key Terms and Themes

- a. Aboriginality: Aboriginality comes from the word Aboriginal in reference to the indigenous and the native people of Australia. In colonial literature, and after it (white) Australian literature, aboriginals were described in negative terms (e.g. barbaric and savages) as they were viewed as inferior to Europeans. In literary texts by white writers, Aboriginal subjects were often marginalised and represented as secondary characters who only exist in the story as a vehicle and to support the main (white) character achieve their goals.

As mentioned earlier, writings by Aboriginal Australians started only in 1970s and 1980s. This came after social and political changes in the Australian context that raised awareness about the position of Aboriginals in the land—especially to the claimed *Terra Nullius*—and their struggles to secure their rights. Writing, therefore, is part of these changes that led this marginalised group to assert their identity as Australians. Moreover, providing a different narrative of the Aboriginal experience is considered an act of empowerment against marginalisation of the experiences both by the colonial discourse and the white Australian community.

E.g.: Sally Morgan’s *My Place* (1987) is one of the most important works by Aboriginal Australian writers. Her work is in the form of an autobiography and her quest to know about her family past and her identity as an Aboriginal. The quote below shows how there is a sense of embarrassment and shame in being identified as Aboriginal in the Australian context. The mother of the protagonist in the story prefers being identified as Indian (foreigner) instead of Aboriginal.

‘The kids at school want to know what country we come from. They reckon we’re not Aussies. Are we Aussies, Mum?’ Mum was silent. Nan grunted in a cross sort of way, then got up from the table and walked outside. ‘Come on Mum, what are we?’ ‘What do the kids at school say?’ ‘Anything. Italian, Greek, Indian.’ ‘Tell them you’re Indian.’ I got real excited, then. ‘Are we really? Indian!’ It sounded so exotic. ‘When did we come here?’ I added.

‘A long time ago,’ Mum replied. ‘Now, no more questions. You just tell them you’re Indian.’ (p. 38)

- b. Place and Belonging: The sense of belonging is often related to the land and landownership, of being attached to a space and a place that can be called “home.” While belonging to white Australians is more related to their position of power and authority in the new nation that they created, for Aboriginals, it is a sense deeply rooted in their traditions and cultures. In these cultures, every individual belongs to their birth “country”—a term they use to refer to their land and territory. Aboriginal Australians believe that the land was created by their ancestral beings that ties them to specific parts of it and with it to its past and future. These lands also hold moral codes that its inhabitants should conform to. In other words, Aboriginal Australians are attached to their land physically and spiritually which forms their existence as an organised community.

E.g.: The quote below is a statement by Big Bill Neidjie (1920-2002). Neidjie was one of the last surviving native speakers of an Aboriginal native language from northern Kakadu, Australia. To secure his knowledge, he wrote two books expressing his passionate relation to the land and the importance of protecting it according to traditional methods.

Our story is in the land... it is written in those sacred places. My children will look after those places, that’s the law. Dreaming place ... you can’t change it no matter who you are. No matter you rich man, no matter you King. You can’t change it ... Rock stays, earth stays. I die and put my bones in cave or earth. Soon my bones become earth...all the same. My spirit has gone back to my country ... my mother.

- c. Displacement/Dislocation: Displacement refers to the act of disconnecting and separating one thing from another. In the Australian context, and despite the attachment Aboriginals have to their land, they were forcibly displaced by British colonialism. This act of dislocating indigenous Australians from their land and identity was performed in two ways; physical and psychological.

- Physical: As Britain started to realise the importance and the richness of the Australian lands, it worked to remove its native inhabitants from it and shifting its possession to colonial subjects

to enlarge their farms and mines. While the removal can be in the form of forced migration from one land to another, contagious diseases (such as smallpox and typhoid) and industrial/chemical products the British brought with them resulted in a genocide of Aboriginal communities.

- Psychological: The act of displacement can also be viewed as a psychological and cultural process. To separate the natives from their traditional heritage, European institutions tended to force native “to be like” Europeans. This meant separating them from their languages, beliefs, and traditional practices. An example of this can be seen in the case of what is known as the Stolen Generations. The term refers to Aboriginal children who were taken from their parents and placed in European schools and institutions—or what is known as residential schools—as a way to force them to assimilate in the white society. In these spaces, Aboriginal children were not allowed to speak their native languages and learn about their cultures and traditions which were introduced as illiterate and inferior.

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