

A Selected and Annotated Bibliography on Post-Colonial Literature and Theory

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1. Introduction

In recent years post-colonial literature and theory has pushed itself to the forefront of literary and cultural studies demanding a well-deserved place among the traditional disciplines of English studies. The beginner may easily be bewildered by the barrage of texts available on the subject and be at a loss as to where to begin reading to find out the perspective of the previously silenced peoples of the world as regards ethnicity, gender roles, identity, political and personal relations and so forth. Certain critics, such as Homi Bhabha or Gayatri Spivak, are best tackled once the main aims and objectives of the field of study have been understood as they are examples of the tendency to present a basic idea in a highly convoluted prose style. Others, such as Edward Said and Frantz Fanon, should ideally be read first as their ideas were in fact the seed of the anti-colonial discourse which would sprout into post-colonial theory as a method of reading and understanding texts produced by writers of previously colonized countries.

We have restricted our bibliography to the works that refer specifically to the non-settler colonies, that is those countries with a large indigenous population and where the Europeans made up a very small minority. Therefore, the texts referred to deal with the Indian subcontinent, Africa and, to a lesser extent, the Caribbean, although we have included five texts that have Australia as their focus, as an example of how post-colonial theory in and about the settler colonies negotiates the aboriginal presence. The former British colonies constitute the basis for the works outlined but because of the similarities of the core concepts, the reader will find that many texts can be used as a

tool for analyzing other post-colonial texts such as those written in former French colonies or even South America (see the article by Stephanie Newell in this issue). We have not included any works which relate specifically to Ireland, Canada or the United States. The current tendency is not to regard the United States as *post-colonial* because it achieved its independence a long time before the remaining countries, however flimsy this justification may sound. Having said that, we should add that non-white minorities inside the USA, and of course Canada, *can* be labelled post-colonial, although perhaps *neocolonial* would be somewhat more appropriate.

This selection of texts is by no means exhaustive as there are numerous other highly prestigious studies available to the reader which, for reasons of spatial and thematic limitations, we have not mentioned here. Despite these restraints, we believe that the present bibliography is representative of the kind of work being done in this ever-increasing area. Owing to the novelty of the field of research, new studies are quickly replacing the old ones but certain texts (entitled *foundation* texts) remain as classics. The enormous amount of creative writing published in English all over the world makes it impossible to include any novelists, playwrights or poets but we have included John Thieme's recent collection of post-colonial writing as it gives the beginner a chance to become acquainted with several writers without the necessity of purchasing an enormous number of books.

2. Readers

Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (eds.) (1995). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge. 526 p.+ xvii.

Mongia, Padmini (ed.) (1996). *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory. A Reader*. London: Arnold. 407 p. + viii.

Williams, Patrick and Chrisman, Laura (eds.) (1993). *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 570 p. + xii.

The obvious advantage of these three readers is the availability of major articles on post-colonial studies in one volume. For those people who feel overwhelmed by all the terminology that the study of post-colonial literature has engendered, the reader edited by Ashcroft et al. is post-colonial theory made accessible and reasonably palatable. The volume contains almost ninety extracts from more than fifty different writers, which means that anybody who is anybody in the world of post-colonial studies is represented in this reader. The three editors were responsible for one of the earliest studies of post-colonial theory (see below), which makes them highly qualified to select and contextualize the extracts chosen.

Williams and Chrisman's reader was the first collection of post-colonial theory to be published and no doubt for that very reason contains numerous suggestions about the directions future work in this field should take. This

reader offers extracts from the work of thirty-one critics who cover a number of issues, locations and approaches. The texts are a fairly representative selection of the development of post-colonial studies from the 1950s to the early nineties. The book has its inevitable shortcomings, such as a lack of bibliographical entries on race, racism and anti-colonial writings, as although the introduction promises to explore anti-colonial resistance, which it does through several texts, the interested reader will find few sources in the bibliography to continue his/her research.

Padmini Mongia clearly states her purpose in editing a new post-colonial reader. For her it is important to make available a selection of key articles which deal with issues central to contemporary postcolonial theory. This goal takes priority over providing a comprehensive overview of all the areas of debate, which necessarily entails editing or abbreviating the original texts. The inclusion of «key articles» logically results in a repetition of articles and/or critics in the three readers. Thus, Said, Spivak, Bhabha, Suleri, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Stuart Hall are seen to be major figures in post-colonial studies who can only be ignored at the reader's peril.

Thieme, John (ed.) (1996). *The Arnold Anthology of Post-Colonial Literatures in English*. London: Arnold. 936 p. + xxiv.

This mammoth anthology contains extracts from the work of almost two hundred writers from all over the world. The book is divided into seven geographical areas: Africa, Australia, Canada, Caribbean, New Zealand and South Pacific, South Asian and South-East Asia, plus an additional section devoted to trans-cultural writing to prevent migrant writers such as Salman Rushdie from being unnaturally confined within meaningless national or regional frontiers. However, in spite of these structural divisions, the anthology can be seen to challenge even these categories as some writers (such as V.S. Naipaul) feature in their national category as well as in the trans-cultural section.

Some of the passages are complete texts, but the majority are fragments of poems, novels or plays. Not all the writers included are well-known names, which is one of the strengths of this anthology. The post-colonial canon, by definition, is in constant flux. The anthology is highly recommendable for beginners in the area as, contrary to the usual practice, unfamiliar cultural references are explained in a footnote and most of the passages are followed by a brief list of other texts in the volume which deal with a similar issue or which can be read contrastively.

At first glance the reader may be tempted to think that after digesting this anthology s/he will have a fairly representative idea of the kind of writing being produced in all of the geographical areas dealt with. Unfortunately, however, it must be said that Canada and Australia are clearly overrepresented with almost forty percent of the writers, virtually all their major authors. While no-one can deny the enormous difficulty of making a fair selection, the balance need not have swung quite so clearly on the side of the

two white settler colonies. The juxtaposition of such disparate literatures as the Australian and the Indian is in fact the object of much criticism from some academics who foresee post-colonial theory attempting to contain all cultures in a giant monolithic discourse. In his introduction the editor in fact warns of the danger of silencing the writers with the onslaught of so much elaborate theory. With anthologies of this size, this danger has been staved off at least for the time being.

Whitlock, Gillian & Carter, David (eds.) (1992). *Images of Australia: An Introductory Reader in Australian Studies*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press. 268 p.

As the title suggests, this text offers a series of essays as an introductory guide to Australian studies. Contemporary debates on identity and nationality, Aboriginality, multiculturalism, gender, among others, serve to outline the historical development of Australian culture and identity. Each section is presented by a general discussion and followed by a careful choice of readings. A very good resource book for those approaching Australian studies for the first time.

3. Foundation and Introductory Texts

Fanon, Frantz (1993). *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press. 232 p. + xxvii. Originally published in France as *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952).

Frantz Fanon, who died in 1961, may be considered to be the founding father of post-colonial thinking. Born in Martinique, Fanon specialised in psychiatry in France and was assigned to a hospital in Algeria during the war against the French. He became an active participant in the Algerian revolution and his views on race politics influenced other colonized and suppressed minorities. In particular, he would be revered among African Americans in the 1960s and 70s. His two best known works, *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press Inc, 1968, originally published in France as *Les damnés de la terre*, 1961), were radical, angry, passionate manifestos for black subject peoples before decolonization and, to a certain degree, they continue to be relevant for the Third World in the neocolonial world of today. *Black Skin, White Masks* contains eight chapters which, as Fanon himself states in his introduction, are a clinical study of the attitudes of a black person in a white world towards his or her ethnic community, the white community and, most important, towards him/herself as a person. Fanon states that his analysis deals with black people in countries colonized by whites (for example the French or British Caribbean) but his work has proved to influence intellectuals and post-colonial theorists from various parts of the world.

Despite the fact that Fanon was a psychiatrist, his books are pleasantly jargon-free and extremely readable. It must be said, however, that like some social-

ist or Marxist tracts, Fanon's work becomes repetitive almost to the point of tedium, which unfortunately is counterproductive as the force of his arguments is weakened considerably. *Black Skin, White Masks* is a book that needs to be read (or at least a few chapters) in order to understand the issues around which subsequent theory has evolved. Fanon wrote his books in the 1950s and 60s, which explains his oversimplification of gender issues, a fact that should be borne in mind by contemporary readers. However, despite this word of caution, Fanon's work remains a classic in the field of post-colonial studies.

Said, Edward (1991). *Orientalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 368 p.

Most critics working in the field of post-colonial studies would agree that colonial discourse analysis was initiated by Edward Said's highly influential and extremely scholarly work, *Orientalism*, first published in 1978. Said proved how the analysis of the concepts and representations used in literary texts, travel writings and various academic disciplines could reveal the ideological practices of colonialism. In this way, those apparently impartial academic disciplines, such as history, sociology or anthropology are shown to have actually collaborated with colonial administrations and therefore the subjugation of indigenous peoples. One of the major theses of this mammoth study is that Western knowledge created a non-existent entity, «the Orient», and forced colonized peoples to fit into this paradigm, which subsequently proved the validity of such a body of knowledge. Said's work was groundbreaking in that it brought a whole new field of academic enquiry into being. While it is not without its critics (some argue that Said is himself too reductive), the importance of this book cannot be underestimated. Post-colonial critics of the eighties and nineties have emerged from under Said's umbrella and launched on more localized criticisms. *Orientalism* is clearly a foundation text in contemporary post-colonial studies, proof of which is the fact that extracts from the work appear in all the readers available on the market.

Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (eds.) (1989). *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge. 246 p. + viii.

This introductory text by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth and Helen Tiffin, which owes its name to Salman Rushdie's famous phrase «the Empire writes back to the centre», has become basic reading for everyone interested in the postcolonial field. At its close, there is a useful reader's guide with comments on contemporary studies, journals and collections dealing both with particular world regions and with general methodologies and perspectives. The volume is addressed to people who already feel confident in canonical literature but who are now willing to move towards the arena of New Literatures in English. Easily comparable to Elleke Boehmer's *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* in the sense that both present text and theories to newcomers to the field

through a discourse aiming at objectivity, *The Empire Writes Back* shares some of Boehmer's «imperfections» (see below). One major criticism of Ashcroft et al. is the already somewhat obsolete lumping together of colonized white settlers and colonized indigenous peoples. Subsequent post-colonial theories tend to differentiate between the two. However, its incongruencies are tolerable due to the novelty of the research at the time this work was published.

Broadly speaking, the book will offer explanatory discussions on all topics that are central to comprehend the literature of the former British possessions, from concepts of the style of power, language, displacement, hybridity, syncretism, abrogation, metonymy, silence, marginality or the creole continuum to the new theories, views and methods which are being used to read the new literary corpus or to re-read metropolitan texts. All these lead us to a conclusion, meaningfully entitled «More English than the English».

Boehmer, Elleke (1995). *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 305 p.

Colonial and Postcolonial Literature is an introductory summary to the present state of criticism concerned with the imaginative acts involved with colonization and its aftermath. Thanks to a simple structure, readers are introduced to concepts such as *othering*, *the colonial gaze* or the idea of *sameness across difference*. Firstly, definitions are given of the most commonly used terminology. Immediately after that, the author analyses how colonial and colonialist literatures were used politically to legitimize British power. From that standpoint, the colonized's nationalism, the consequences of the metropolitan ideology and the natives' reactions are scrutinized. The most interesting section comes when Boehmer tackles the process of de-westernizing cultural representations in the era of independence and neo-colonialism. Since the emphasis of this study is historical, maps of the Empire and a useful chronology of key events and publications are included. Throughout the whole book, the author's tone is invariably neutral and pedagogical. Hence current consensus (rather than the writer herself) is responsible for the «debatable tendency» of firstly, beginning chronologies with *Robinson Crusoe* instead of with *Oroonoko* (1688). Secondly, excluding the U.S. almost totally from secondary literature on the grounds that it obtained its independence earlier than other places and, thirdly, framing postcolonial criticism in the Eastern version of Western history rather than in Eastern history itself. On the other hand, Boehmer is to be praised for dealing efficiently with a large number of writers in relation to their pre-, post- or imperial historical position. (Dickens, Woolf, Forster, Thompson, Yeats, Greene, Waugh, Narayan, Walker, Rushdie, Nichols, Naipaul, etc.)

At the end of the book, the question has the First World already appropriated the last resource that developing countries possessed (i.e., creative writing) is raised indirectly. Surprisingly, though, the author does not consider the alleged will of the developing countries to *sell* their last resource.

The text is an excellent introduction for those wanting to acquire a general overview of the area. For further information on this work see the review section in this issue.

4. General Post-colonial Theory

Ahmad, Aijaz (1992). *In Theory*. London: Verso. 358 p. + x.

For those who understand literature as an entity concealed from ideology, the fact that *In Theory* deals with politics more often than it does with fiction will come as a surprise. In fact, Ahmad's volume is closer to political activism than it is to literary criticism in the sense that he reverses the very weapons of Western and Eastern scholarship and uses them for his own interest. Away from indigenous obscurantism, literature is for Ahmad so complex and contradictory that it must be dispersed into many disciplines for a proper understanding. His readers are likely to learn more about theoretical incongruencies, worldwide socialism and martial conflicts in the Third World as direct influences on literature than about actual texts or authors. Ahmad is concerned with fiction only as a vehicle to comprehend a world united through the global struggle between capital and labour. Similarly, theory is for him little more than a necessary relation between real facts and their explanations. In this book, the concept of «Third World Literature» as a homogenized category based on misrepresentations is dismantled and socialism rather than nationalism is established as the dialectical opposite of imperialism in the developing countries (Western society ignores all non-allegorical texts as authentic third world literature).

Ahmad's pointing to those questions which are being marginalized in the current creation of a counter-canon is also interesting as is the fact that he smoothes the path for those interested in constructing a «national» Indian literature through translating and comparing, through the use of linguistic difference and of English as links. Actually, *In Theory* can be read as a guide for understanding the context from which Black literature emerges and as a set of questions applied to theories and authors who may be only partially understood if third world variants are not applied to them.

Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge. 285 p.+ xiv.

Homi Bhabha has come to be associated with certain key concepts in post-colonial studies: hybridity, ambiguities, ambivalences, slippages and so forth. By no means an easy author to follow, Bhabha should not be tackled by the new arrival to post-colonial theory. The «problem» with Bhabha is that his work exemplifies his theories as his personal style is slippery and, at times, opaque. However, as pointed out in section 1 (the readers), Bhabha has had an enormous impact on post-colonial criticism as his notions of cultural

hybridity and resistance through mimicry have proved very useful in the analysis of much post-colonial writing. This book is a collection of some of Bhabha's main theories, including his rejection of the culturally perceived binary oppositions of self/other and East/West. In the twelve essays included in the volume he develops his ideas on the «third space», in-between forms of difference, and a political subjectivity based on multi-dimensional identifications. Negotiating a «committed theoretical perspective» (p. 21), Bhabha maps out new directions away from both the absolutist demands of fundamentalism and the limiting narratives of liberalism.

Landry, Donna & Maclean, Gerald (eds.) (1996). *The Spivak Reader*. London: Routledge. 334 p.

Although the editors promise the beginner easy navigation through the complete works of G.C. Spivak, this aim is not completely achieved. The fact that G.C. Spivak constantly exemplifies her viewpoints with the large number of notes at the end of every chapter is responsible for most beginners feeling somewhat confused when going through the reader for the first time. Landry and MacLean should warn the reader that G.C. Spivak is difficult to follow because she reads texts with the full apparatus of Western critical discourses and because those same texts that she scrutinizes are used to decipher the presuppositions of that very apparatus. The explanatory comments that we are promised in the introduction prove undoubtedly helpful, they precede each of the twelve essays by Spivak and they offer valuable comments on them, although they fail to raise the interest of those unfamiliar with G.C. Spivak's style. All the above mentioned comments should not be interpreted as a critique of Spivak herself but as an attack on the editors' presumption that this reader is addressed to the uninitiated. Actually, for those already in the field, the volume has many a good point: to start with, it is arranged in a thematic and developmental way rather than in chronological order. The first five essays represent the key moments in Spivak's deconstructive critique. They address special attention to the manner that her theories have transformed the development of feminism, cultural theory and Marxist analysis. The following four essays examine the politics of translation and multiculturalism in various arenas. Chapters ten and eleven deal with Mahasweta Devi and subalternity respectively. At the end of the volume a useful checklist of Spivak's publications is included.

Clearly, G.C. Spivak is interested in educating people critically about race, ecology, gender and the media. Reading her work is vital since it has influenced 20th century intellectual movements such as European deconstruction and third-worldism enormously (for instance, she translated Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and introduced the notion that the subaltern cannot be heard and that if they ever are, that means that they have ceased to be subaltern). Somewhere between literary criticism and political activism, *The Spivak Reader* can be recommended to those already well introduced into the

field of postcolonialism. The volume, on the one hand, shows us where to start reading G.C. Spivak and, on the other hand, it broadens our vision of contemporary thought in many areas.

Rushdie, Salman (1991). *Imaginary Homelands. Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta Books. 432 p.

This 432-page volume is a collection of seventy-five essays written by Salman Rushdie between 1981 and 1991 covering a wide variety of subjects. Rushdie writes critical articles on contemporary authors from all parts of the world including Nadine Gordimer, John Le Carré, Heinrich Böll and Gabriel García Márquez among many others. He analyzes political events ranging from the assassination of Indira Gandhi to Charter 88 and the campaign for a written British constitution. Perhaps the most useful articles for people interested in post-colonial studies are those dealing with life in Britain for black people, Indian cinema and the essays Rushdie wrote in the aftermath of the fatwa imposed on him after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. Rushdie is a caustic, but always brilliant writer. This book of essays, written by a leading British author who can write about and from the migrant's perspective, is a useful addition to the wealth of criticism of contemporary, not only post-colonial, culture. Certainly, Rushdie is a writer who cannot be ignored and this volume is an eloquent reason why.

Spivak, Gayatri C. (1988). *In Other Worlds*. London: Routledge. 309 p. + xix.

In this volume, the writer applies her deconstructivist, Marxist and feminist views firstly to texts of the Western canon, secondly to the academic world and thirdly to the literature of the developing countries. If you are convinced by the author's approach, you will regard the volume as a great project with inevitable minor inconsistencies as for example, Spivak's insistence that the word «patria» is masculine in gender and that Julia Kristeva lacks a political, historical and cultural perspective on psychoanalysis as a movement. The possibility exists, though, that part of the readership will reject the entire work as erected on false foundations. Surely the author is wrong to claim in her criticism of «Draupadi» that the First World in general and its male members in particular are as responsible as —if not more responsible than— certain cultural and religious third-worldish practices in the oppression of black women (how can a critic generalize about the First World and attack Third World generalizations at the same time?). Moreover, it is not difficult to see that the author's examples have been especially designated to prove her concerns, but if white, male readers are not ideology-free, neither is Spivak herself.

One must acknowledge, however, that *In Other Worlds* doubtlessly achieves its main goal, which is the production of certain modes of expression able to reflect our contemporary society and literature through a comprehen-

sible discourse which—in the future— may end up producing forms of political liberation for the subaltern. It goes without saying that the volume also offers students who are not familiar with Spivak the possibility to understand her questioning of the imposition of Western transcendental ideologies on the world's unprivileged. Other concerns she expresses are a scepticism about the universality of feminine nature or the suggestion of plural forms of feminist struggle which may vary in different situations. The newcomer to the field may also be surprised by the writer's belief that womb-envy is a determinant in the process of acquisition of a male identity, her proposal of the addition of a clitoral dimension to our society and—especially—the way Spivak weaves her vision of Marx with the female body as an exploited producer.

The third section of the volume; «Entering the Third World» is particularly attractive because there the author's theories are put into practice in two brilliant short stories by the Bengali M. Devi which Spivak has translated. Despite the fact that the text is relatively accessible in comparison to Spivak's other writings, it is recommended for people who already have some notions about the field of postcoloniality.

Said, Edward (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Vintage Books. 380 p. + xxviii.

Following on from his scholarly masterpiece, *Orientalism* [see above], Edward Said has produced another landmark critical work on the relationships between the metropolitan West and its overseas territories. In clear, orderly accessible prose Said outlines the connections between the expanding European empires and the imperial attitudes and experiences reproduced in Western cultural manifestations. At the same time, Said analyzes the narratives written by subject peoples which resisted and opposed the mainstream. This proves his point that because of, rather than despite, imperial expansion all cultures are involved in one another and that hybridity is in fact the norm. This text is absolutely essential reading for anyone working in the area of post-colonial studies. Beginners in the field should not be discouraged by the immense scope and scholarship of Said's work as it is extremely readable. For further information on this work see the review section in this issue.

Young, Robert (1990). *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West* London: Routledge. 232 p. + xviii.

Young's work is an investigation of the history of Western History, in which he examines the Eurocentrism of many twentieth-century theories of history. His analysis ranges from Hegel and Marx through to Althusser and Foucault and demonstrates how the Third World remains on the margins of what claims to be «World History». He discusses the work of such «Third World» critics as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, who offer different

frameworks as opposed to alternative forms of history. *White Mythologies* is a valuable book for anyone interested in the problem of «history» in the post-modern world. The chapters on Bhabha and Spivak are helpful introductions for the beginner to come to terms with their, sometimes complex, theories.

5. Specific Areas

5.1. Gender Studies

Davies, Carole Boyce and Graves, Anne Adams (eds.) (1986). *Ngambika. Studies of Women in African Literature*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. 298 p. + xi.

The nineteen essays in this volume seek to redress the lack of attention paid to women, both as writers and as characters, in African literary scholarship. The authors of the essays, both male and female scholars, re-read the works of established male writers and analyze the more recent fiction of both male and female writers using a diversity of approaches, although the predominant debate seems to be centred around the role categories traditionally designated to African women. The works under study come from East, West, Central and South Africa plus the Maghreb, and cover Francophone and Anglophone literature. Muslim, Christian and indigenous African religious ideas come into focus as do a variety of lifestyles and values. Among the best known writers discussed are Ama Ata Aidoo, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Mariama Bâ and Wole Soyinka. The volume is very useful for its breadth and scope, despite the fact that the editors insist on its being a «selection, rather than an overview or comprehensive study» (p. viii). A highly recommended text for people interested in African studies in general, as much of the criticism focuses on social and political themes such as marriage, genital mutilation and the economic exploitation of women.

Nasta, Susheila (ed.) (1991). *Motherlands. Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*. London: The Women's Press. 366 p. + xxx.

Motherlands was the first critical anthology to link the fiction of black women from South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. The quality of its essays together with the need for literary studies of this kind at the time it was published have made this piece of work compulsory reading for anyone interested in the process of creation of black female identities. The book connects with theories by Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Hélène Cixous and Simone de Beauvoir to mention but a few influential thinkers. In a parallel manner, the volume summarizes a considerable number of works by talented authors (Jean Rhys, Anita Desai, Bessie Head, Jamaica Kincaid, etc.). Susheila Nasta, founder of the international journal *Wasafiri*, tied up the volume by writing its introduction and by organizing it around three areas of interest.

In the first area, «Breaking the Silence: New Stories of Women and Mothers», critics are mainly concerned with the process of female liberation from their past and with the voicing of «herstory». In the second section of the anthology, «Mothers/ Daughters/ Sisters?», women get rid of the colonization exerted by History and by patriarchy while opening up their own textual space. Those able to see native and adopted countries both as outsiders and insiders (i.e., women-writers of the diaspora) are offered the link mother-homeland as a solution to their fragmented personalities in «Absent and Adopted Mother(lands)s».

Each section avoids creating an artificial cross-cultural unity for texts from such diverse cultural contexts while emphasizing feminine writing as a non-violent weapon to change the world.

The only criticism of *Motherlands* has to do with Susheila Nasta's unjustified stereotyping of Westerners (she insists, for instance, that Westerners cannot understand motherhood as a metaphor for literary creation whereas Easterners can). Be that as it may, it is well worth the time required to read the anthology and it is highly recommended for beginners as a first rate introduction to analyse how First World (feminist) criticism is applied to a burgeoning Third World literature and to initiate students as a springboard to further research.

Stratton, Florence (1994). *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. London: Routledge. 200 p. + viii.

This book by Florence Stratton is one of the first feminist analyses of African literature and as such is a valuable contribution to both African and gender studies. In a very radical and challenging way, Stratton re-reads canonical male African authors such as Achebe and Ngugi, first pointing out the shortcomings in much of their early work and then showing how their more recent novels show signs of acknowledging gender. Four chapters are devoted to four leading women writers, the Kenyan Grace Ogot, the Nigerians Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta and the Senegalese writer Mariama Bâ, in which Stratton shows how they have contributed to a widening of issues and perspectives in African writing. This book is informative and stimulating both for the detailed studies of the four women writers and for the brave and determined standpoint of the author. For further information on this work see the review section in this issue.

5.2. *Ethnic/Geo-Political Studies*

5.2.1. Australia

Bennett, Bruce (ed.) (1988). *A Sense of Exile: Essays in the Literature of the Asia-Pacific Region*. Perth: The Centre for Studies in Australian Literature. The University of Western Australia. 244 p. + ix.

Contributions by well known critics and scholars from various countries of the Asia-Pacific region deal with the concept of mental and/or physical exile, displacement and dispossession. As Robert Drewe has said «These essays offer a valuable insight into the cultural alienation which, in the late 20th century, affects many of us(...)». Although published in the eighties and in spite of the continuing debate regarding the exile consciousness and Empire, this text is still fundamental reading both as background material regarding Colonial and Post-Colonialism in general and with special regard to the Asia-Pacific region.

Bottomley, Gillian (1992). *From Another Place: Migration and the Politics of Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This text is an interdisciplinary study of the migrant experience in Australia with a main focus on the Greek community. The discussion ranges over a wide selection of perspectives including the dynamics of gender and class, ethnicity, identity and culture. Although centred on the Greek community, the book is particularly interesting as a comparative text for those researching non-Anglo-Celtic communities in Anglophone countries because of its interdisciplinary approach to issues fundamental to all ethnic and migrant communities. A useful text for those who already have some grounding in the area of study.

Foss, Paul (ed. (1988).) *Island in the Stream: Myths of Place in Australian Culture*. Leichardt, New South Wales: Pluto Press. 235 p.

An intertextual study of the myths of place in Australian culture. The work offers essays on Aboriginal housing, popular cinema, the history of the Chinese in Australia, and migrant writing, among others. These are combined with artwork and photographic studies. Texts discussed range from the very contemporary to early letters such as Thomas Watling's of 1794 revealing how the question of an Australian identity has been and continues to be at the centre of cultural debate in the country. A complex text, it should be read after having done basic introductory reading on Australian studies.

Grimshaw, Patricia; Lake, Marilyn; McGrath, Ann and Quartly, Marian (1994). *Creating a Nation: 1788-1900*. Ringwood: McPhee Gribble. 360 p.

This text sets out to challenge the notion that nations are constructed solely by men. The authors study the extent and importance of women's contribution to nation building in Australia. A well balanced study, the authors take into consideration both the repressive and generative factors present in the processes of nation building. Further balance is achieved through the discussion of the roles and place of both Aborigine and migrants in this process. Good for those already familiar with Cultural and Post-Colonial studies.

5.2.2. Indian Subcontinent

Kirpal, Viney (1990). *The New Indian Novel in English: A Study of the 1980s*. Delhi: Allied Publishers. 286 p. + xxvii.

Bharucha, Nilufer E. & Sarang, Vilas (eds.) (1994). *Indian-English Fiction. 1980-90: An Assessment*. Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corporation. 242 p + xii.

These two volumes contain a variety of essays mainly by Indian and Pakistani scholars on the recent trends in the Indian novel in English. In both books the essays attempt to assess the significance of the enormous output of creative writing produced in the 1980s and which has signalled the coming of age of the modern Indian novel. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) is regarded as the text that effectively started the new wave of Indian English writing with its combination of postmodern techniques and the Indian oral narrative style. Bharucha and Sarang talk about the Indian novel finally ridding itself of its imperial baggage, nationalist guilt and linguistic complex, and staking its rightful claim in world literature written in English. The eighteen short essays in their book deal with individual authors such as Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Bapsi Sidhwa, Shashi Deshpande, Amitav Ghosh and Nayantara Sahgal, and thematically grouped novels, such as the novels of the Partition of the subcontinent, about Parsi identity, and those about the position of women.

Kirpal's book is divided into three sections. The first one contains two essays about «The Old Masters», R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand. Section two, «The Middle Generation», features essays about a variety of Indian writers including Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Ranga Rao and Upamanyu Chatterjee. The final section of the book, «Towards a Poetics of the New Indian Novel», devotes four of the seven essays to analyzing Rushdie (and in one case severely critiquing his work), one to Nayantara Sahgal, one to Anita Desai and one to both women together. Both books fill a serious gap in recent critical material on the Indian novel and they are extremely useful and informative introductions to the main writers and issues in Indian literature today.

Suleri, Sara (1992). *The Rhetoric of English India*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 230 p.

The Rhetoric of English India is ideal for students interested in the complex evolution of the discursive images that Westerners used to «translate» the subcontinent into a comprehensible language after the colonial encounter had taken place. The book specifically analyses turning points in the creation of such discourse, for instance; (a) the British initial tendency to treat the Raj in a sublime manner, (b) the trial of Warren Hastings, governor general of Bengal during the 18th century, (c) the role of the writings by Anglo-Indian women, (d) the gendering of the imperial discourse, (e) the anti-imperialist metaphor of rape, (f) E.M. Forster's imperial homoeroticism and finally (g) Naipaul's

Arrival. After going through the text, not only will the reader have gained a panoramic view of the history of English language and literature in India but s/he will probably have overcome many Orientalist myths at the same time. Suleri's work is not advisable for beginners in the field as the basic notions of orientalist and colonial discourse should ideally have been mastered first.

5.2.3. Africa & Caribbean

Dabydeen, David (ed.) (1985). *The Black Presence in English Literature*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 214 p. + x.

This book was the result of a conference on the Black Presence in English Literature held in the West Midlands town of Wolverhampton in 1982. Both the year and the place are significant because, as Dabydeen himself points out, «any scholarship relating to black people should not be divorced from consideration of contemporary racist realities» (p. viii). The year before, the Brixton riots had forced many schools to revise their curricula to take into account the «black presence» in schools, and Wolverhampton had been the constituency of Enoch Powell, notorious for his inflammatory speech in 1968 about the perils of black immigrants. This book contains ten essays which are concerned with locating certain literary texts within their social and historical contexts. Thus, Shakespeare's *Othello* is read with the development of racial hostilities triggered by early black settlement in mind; the boys' adventure stories of the nineteenth century are read alongside Victorian concepts of racial hierarchy and more contemporary novels on Africa are shown to permeate myths about savagery and civilization, which say more about the fears and failures of white Europeans than about the Africans themselves. Dabydeen's book applies post-colonial theories to a series of consecrated authors and therefore is an excellent introduction for people embarking either on a historical study of post-colonial fiction or a post-colonial reading of canonical texts.

6. Journals

6.1. General

The Journal of Commonwealth Literature

As its somewhat archaic name suggests, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* is devoted to the study of literatures produced in the Commonwealth countries. Founded in 1965, it is the journal of the European Association of Commonwealth Language and Literature Studies (EACLALS), membership of which includes the three issues published every year. The first two numbers of each volume consist of critical studies and essays and the third is a bibliography issue, which provides an extremely useful checklist of publications from each region of the Commonwealth. The present editors of JCL are John Thieme (Department of English, University of Hull, Hull HU6 7RX, U.K.) and Shirley Chew (School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, U.K.).

Kunapipi

The journal *Kunapipi*, which refers to the Australian Aboriginal myth of the rainbow serpent symbolizing both creativity and regeneration, describes itself as a tri-annual arts magazine with special but not exclusive emphasis on the new literatures written in English. It publishes creative work as well as academic criticism and has helped to promote lesser known writers from outside Britain and the United States. It occasionally publishes monographic issues such as volume XVIII No 1, 1996 on «Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity in Twentieth Century Narrative». It is currently edited by Anna Rutherford, Department of English, University of Wollongong, Wollongong NSW, Australia 2500.

World Literature Written in English

WLWE describes itself as a journal devoted to the study of literatures written in English and in the new englishes throughout the world. It is a well established journal in the area of Commonwealth or post-colonial literatures, already into its thirty-sixth volume. Published twice a year, it focuses on the cultural flows between and among cultures, encouraging debates within issues and fomenting scholarly attention to those literatures which are sometimes marginalized by Britain and the United States. It is edited by the Department of English, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1.

Third Text

Founded in 1987, *Third Text* is an international art journal which aims at providing a critical forum for those artists who have been marginalized on racist, sexual or cultural grounds. It contains art criticism, art history, cultural and literary studies seen from a Third World perspective, with the majority of articles offering a critique of Eurocentric aesthetic criteria. As an interdisciplinary journal that sets out to challenge mainstream assumptions about art, it is the kind of publication where one can almost always find a thought-provoking article. A good example of the type of issues dealt with is No. 11, Summer 1990 which contains various articles by scholars from different disciplines on the *Satanic Verses* controversy. *Third Text* is published quarterly by Carfax Publishing Co., P.O. Box 25, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3UE, United Kingdom.

Ariel

Subtitled «A Review of International English Literature», *Ariel* was founded in 1970 and has established itself as a widely respected quarterly devoted to the study of the new and the established literatures written in English around the world. Among the recent special issues are «Postcolonialism and Its Discontents» (January 1995); «New Voices in Caribbean Literature» (January 1993) and «Commonwealth Women Writers» (October 1986). It is available

from the Department of English, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive, N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2N 1N4.

New Literatures Review

This journal is published twice a year by the English Department, University of Wollongong. It emphasises the study of post-colonial literatures and the application of comparative approaches and literary theory. Although most of the contributions focus on literatures in English, it also features studies on post-colonial literatures in other languages. A recent issue centred around the topic of «Decolonising Bodies» (Number 30, Winter 1995) contains an article on the Chinese writer Ding Xiaoqi and the 1936 French film *Pépé le Moko*. It is obtainable from the English Department, University of Wollongong, Northfields Avenue, Wollongong, NSW 2522 Australia.

Wasafiri

This journal, which describes itself as being Britain's only international magazine for Caribbean, African, Asian and associated literatures, takes its name from the Kiswahili word for «travellers». Founded in 1984, it is published twice a year. It contains articles, interviews, reviews and creative writing. It is an ideal journal to keep up to date with new post-colonial writing in English. The articles are very clear and accessible but at the same time often very stimulating. The editor is Susheila Nasta, one of the pioneers in putting black authors, especially women, on the literary agenda. Some of the special issues published are on «India, Asia & the Diaspora» (Issue 21, Spring 1995) and «Focus on South Africa» (Issue 19, Summer 1994). It is available from the Department of English, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS, United Kingdom.

6.2. Specific Areas of Study

African Literature Today

Theoretically a series of books, *African Literature Today* functions almost like a journal as each annual issue contains a number of critical essays by different authors centred on a specific theme. Recent issues have focussed on Women in African Literature Today; the Oral Tradition; Critical Theories, and New Writers. It contains an index, which makes it very reader-friendly. It is edited by Eldred Durosimi Jones from the University of Sierra Leone and is available from James Currey Ltd, London.

Research in African Literatures

This is the official journal of the African Literature Association and the African Literatures Division of the Modern Language Association. It contains critical articles on a wide range of African writers and literary traditions, reviews and a section entitled «forum» for raising particularly

contentious issues. It is generally published in English although articles may be submitted in French and Portuguese. The oral and written literatures of the whole of the African continent in both European and indigenous languages are analyzed. The issues tend to cover a wide range of topics but No. 1, volume 27 (1996) contained a selection of articles on «Shakespeare in Africa». This very prestigious journal, edited by Abiola Irele, appears quarterly, in February, May, August and November published by Indiana University Press in collaboration with the Ohio State University, P.O. Box 3509, Columbus, OH 43210-0509.

Nova Africa and Studia Africana

These two journals are published by the Centre of African Studies in Barcelona. *Nova Africa* is published in Spanish twice a year and has a clear political slant featuring articles on the contemporary situation of the African continent. It is enormously useful for post-colonial studies because of its up-to-date information about Africa, for example its chronology of the year's main events, and the sections on new books and reviews. *Studia Africana* is an annual journal which devotes each issue to a monographic theme. Issue 6 (1995) dealt with the concept of orality and oral literature and issue 7 with Classical Africa. The language of the journal is Catalan but articles are also published in a variety of languages including French and Portuguese, depending on the contributors. Both journals are available from the Centre of African Studies, Via Laietana 54, 4rt. 3a. 08003 Barcelona, Spain.

Caribbean Quarterly

Caribbean Quarterly deals with a variety of subjects, not merely literature, including sociology, the media, the environment, history and so forth of the English-speaking Caribbean. It is a useful journal for anyone interested in the internal realities of this region made of small island-communities. It is published by the University of the West Indies. The editorial committee is headed by R.M. Nettleford, School of Continuing Studies, University of the West Indies, Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica.

Journal of Indian Writing in English

Journal of Indian Writing in English is subtitled a biannual of creative and critical Indian writing in English. It publishes creative writing by Indians and critical articles on Indian writing in English by both Indian and foreign scholars. It is useful for people wishing to keep up-to-date with the main trends and recent criticism of literature in all genres written in English in the Indian subcontinent. The editor is G.S. Balarama Gupta at the Department of English, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga - 585 106 (Karnataka), India.