



POSTWAR AND POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE

1945-1968

POSTMODERNISM AND POST COLONIALISM

- Essentially a continuation, but modification of cultural modernism, a way of telling stories.
- Main elements of this movement function primarily involving practices of irony, parody, self-consciousness, fragmentation, playful self-reflexivity.
- This movement critiques culture and wages war on totality.
- New lack of faith in legitimizing narratives of emancipation and enlightenment. Our age is concerned with local issues, not with history. Better to concentrate on local micro-physics of power that surround the individual than on a grand narrative.



POST COLONIALISM

- The term refers broadly to the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity are represented in the modern and postmodern eras.
- As previously stated, it also refers to the influences of colonialism on the individual. Post colonialism begins in 1947, but was not named until 1978.
- During the 20th century, countries such as India, Jamaica, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Canada and Australia gained independence from their European colonizers.
- Themes of postcolonial literature include: racial discrimination, the influence of the master's language on the individual, and reclaiming identity.



IDENTITY AND LOCAL EXPERIENCE

- The critique of essentialism encouraged by post modern and post colonial thought is useful for writers concerned with reformulating outmoded notions of identity.
- However, postmodern discourses are exclusionary even as they draw attention to the experience of difference and Otherness.
- By normalizing the colonial state or subject, the dream of a post-enlightenment society alienates its own language of liberation and produces another knowledge of its norms. In other words, the colonized society begins to see itself through the Other's eyes.
- Edward Said: "Culture and Imperialism." The term refers to both the post colonial condition and the discourses about it. He reminds us that post colonialism may refer to the Roman conquest of Britain as well as to our recent recovery from the scramble for Africa.



MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

- The U.S. and the Soviet Union were locked in the Cold War. They were powerful enough to use weapons that could annihilate the planet.
- The Warsaw Pact united the military forces of the Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe.
- By 1949, the Communist Revolution in China led by Mao Zedong, left almost half of the world living in communism.
- The competing blocs understood that if either one launched a nuclear attack, the other would retaliate with mutually assured destruction.



GREAT TOLL ON HUMANITY

- Holocaust Literature: written about the Holocaust; it includes true stories and fictional works which tell of survival in concentration camps, escape, and life after the war.
- Trauma narratives examine the way trauma shatters one's fundamental assumptions about the world. There is also cultural memory. For example, although Israelis are not all victims of the Holocaust, they would jump at sound of German shouting instructions in a train station.
- The Korean war (1950-53) and the Vietnam War (1955-73) had both sides fighting over world communism.
- Soviet dictator Stalin's death in 1953 revealed prison camps, Gulags, where he sent "dissidents." Scholars discuss how these prisons are part of World War II's "traumatic memory," along with Hitler's death camps.

