

Postcolonial Studies

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Lecture 01 : Introducing the Field

POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

The term 'postcolonial' appeared first in the scholarly journals in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's writings in the 1980s. By the 1990s, the term established itself in academic discourse. Its subjects include : power dynamics, representation, resistance, diaspora, ethnicity, feminism, language, education, history and politics(Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2004).

It basically stemmed from the colonized peoples' frustrations, their direct cultural clashes with conquering oppressive culture, and their fears, hope, and dreams about the future, and their own identities. It is a field that has been created to serve as a voice to the powerless (voiceless) and the poorest members of the global community. (Al-Saidi ,2014)

Postcolonial: does not only denote a particular historical period (e.g after colonialism/after independence) but also refers to a transformed historical situation and new cultural formations, reading practices and values.

It is an academic discipline that analyses, explains and responds to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism.

It also describes a whole new experience of political freedom, and provides a set of analytical tools to unpack colonial writings and postcolonial literature.

Postcolonialism=Without hyphen (It's a theoretical concept, a theory, a philosophy).

Post-colonialism=With hyphen (Its an era coming after colonialism/ independence).

Postcolonial Literary Theory :

It deals with the literature written in previously or currently colonized countries; a literature that deals with colonization and colonized peoples. **It focuses on: the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities, and inscribes the inferiority of the colonized people, and on literature by colonized peoples which attempts to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of inevitable Otherness .**

Postcolonial theory: a lens through which the following significant issues are addressed :

- 1-Colonial strategies of the representation of the natives (Colonized).
- 2-The rise of nationalist /nativist discourse that resisted colonialism.
- 3-The marginalization and dehumanization of the native.

Historical Background for Postcolonial Studies :

- De-colonisation process : after WW II.
- An attempt of the formerly colonized peoples regain and reestablish their native culture and identity.
- The emergence of neo-colonialism.

In literature : (As mentioned earlier)

The body of the writings produced by both:

- a)The colonised people. (the literature of the colonised)
- b)The colonising people. (the literature of the coloniser)

Objective :

An attempt of the colonized nations to **assimilate** their experiences during the time of colonisation and of **today's neo-colonialism** as well.

Postcolonial studies flourished in the **1970s** and **1980s** particularly after the publication of **ORIENTALISM** (1978) by **Edward Said**.

- *The Orient : exists for the West and is constructed by and in relation to the West. The West strives to restructure the Orient and therefore gain control over it.*
- *The Orient is always the « **Other** » the conquerable and the inferior.*

Lecture 2 : Major Figures of the Field

Besides **Edward Said** , other Leading Theorists include :

***Frantz Fanon:**

He suggests the three phase of the formation of national culture:

- 1-Unqualified assimilation: [Copying the colonizer's trends]
- 2-Turns back: [Falls back on]
- 3-Resistance: [Fighting phase]

In his book : *Black Skin , White Masks (1952)* :The white man is the master ,the one to be desired and even feared. The black man strives to be more like the white man. **He puts on a white mask.**

*-Homi K.Bhabha:,

He contributed to the making development and the discussion of important concepts such as: **Mimicry, Ambivalence, Hybridity and Binarism.**

***Mimicry** :In the novel *Twilight in Delhi* by *Ahmed Ali* ,Asghar the character of this novel, **mimics/copies the style, language etc of the colonizers.**

***Hybridity**: mostly associated with the analysis of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised .Bhabha argues that the coloniser and the colonised **are mutually dependent in constructing a shared culture.**The term is commonly used to describe the phenomenon of two **different cultures merging into one in-between culture.**

***Ambivalence**: It suggests that **both resistance and complicity exist within the colonial subject.**

***Binarism** :Oppositeness,[civilized/uncivilized]this binarism can be seen in the J Conrad *Heart Of Darkness*

*Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

She coins the concept of ‘**Subaltern**’, known for harnessing (relating) **deconstructive** critical thought, **feminism** and **marxism** within postcolonial studies.

In her essay “**Can the subaltern speak?**” (1988)-Spivak worries about the inability of subaltern/oppressed to represent themselves.

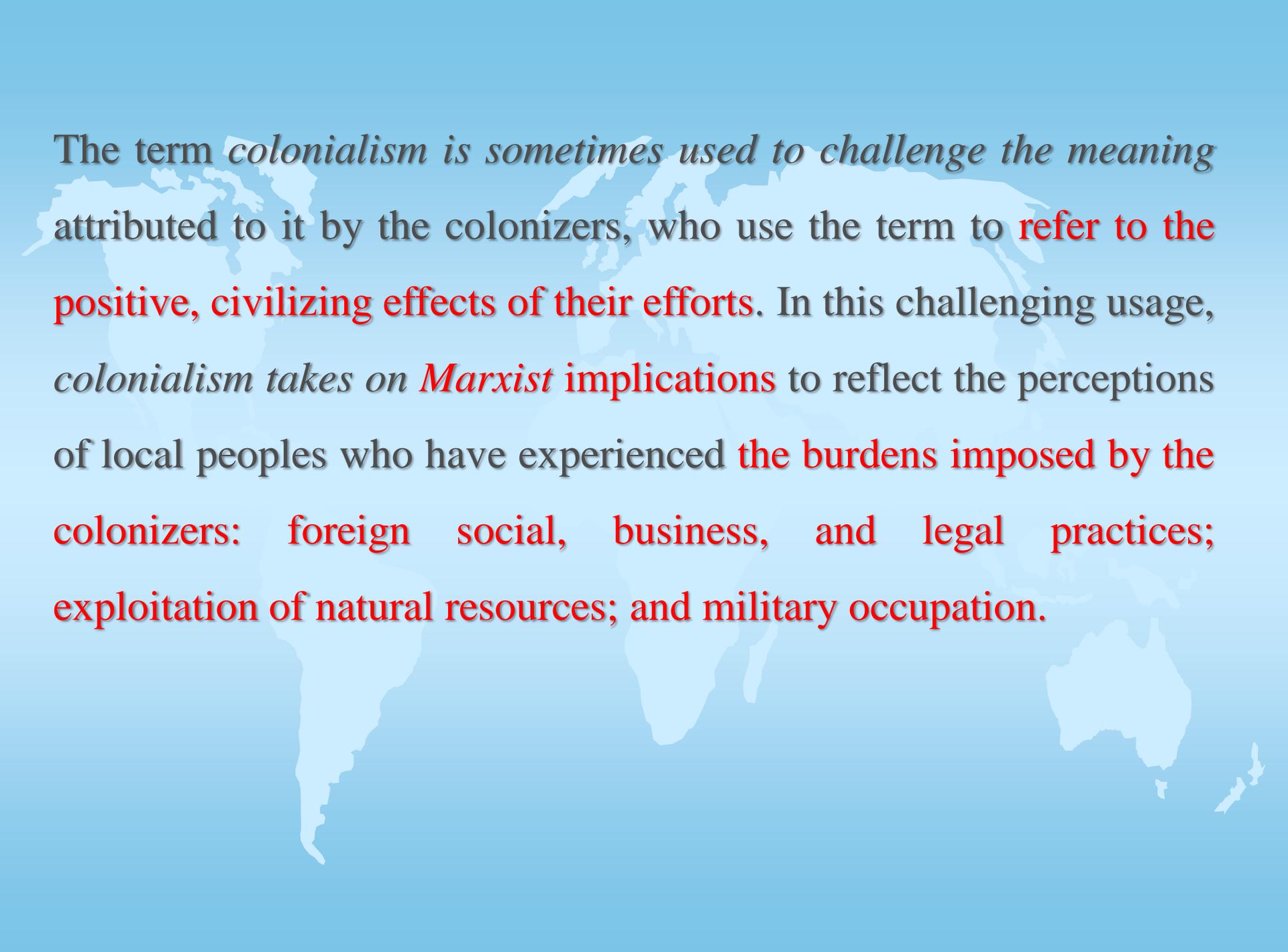
Origins

Interest in **postcolonialism** dates back to the 1950s when **Alfred Sauvy** coined the term *Third World* to refer to *developing nations, such as those in Africa or South America*. They differ from what has come to be known as the **First World countries**—those in most of **Europe and North America**—which are characterized by **industrialization, democracy**..etc. Postcolonialism is interested in all but the First World; however, because many members of the First World have historically been the **oppressors, they too are involved in the discussion.**

Impact of Colonialism :

Definition: Colonialism is the **subjection of one population to another**. It is clearly seen in **physical conquest**, but in its more **subtle forms**, it involves **political, economic, and cultural domination**.

The British rule in India and the French one in Algeria did not only involve the use of force to subdue people ,but also they concretized the **imposition of their institutions and tastes**. When people are under colonization, their traditions and practices are supplanted **by imitations of those of the colonizer**. Parts of the **indigenous** culture tend to disappear because they are either hidden or replaced, thereby removing that culture from history.



The term *colonialism* is sometimes used to challenge the meaning attributed to it by the colonizers, who use the term to refer to the positive, civilizing effects of their efforts. In this challenging usage, *colonialism* takes on *Marxist implications* to reflect the perceptions of local peoples who have experienced the burdens imposed by the colonizers: foreign social, business, and legal practices; exploitation of natural resources; and military occupation.

Postcolonial Studies: A Multidisciplinary Field

Although the *postcolonial studies did not start until the late 1970s*, theories surrounding its concerns have been published since the 1960s. Over the years, the study of postcolonialism has primarily attracted the interest of **literary scholars and critics**. However, because it is concerned **with what happens to a culture from the beginning of colonization to the present**, the theory is also making inroads in diverse fields **as *political science, sociology, and psychology***. Postcolonialism theories offer topics of interest to members of these fields because **the formal termination of colonial rule does not wipe out its legacy, and the culture that is left is a mixture of the colonized one and that of the colonizer**, often marked by **contrasts ,antagonism,**



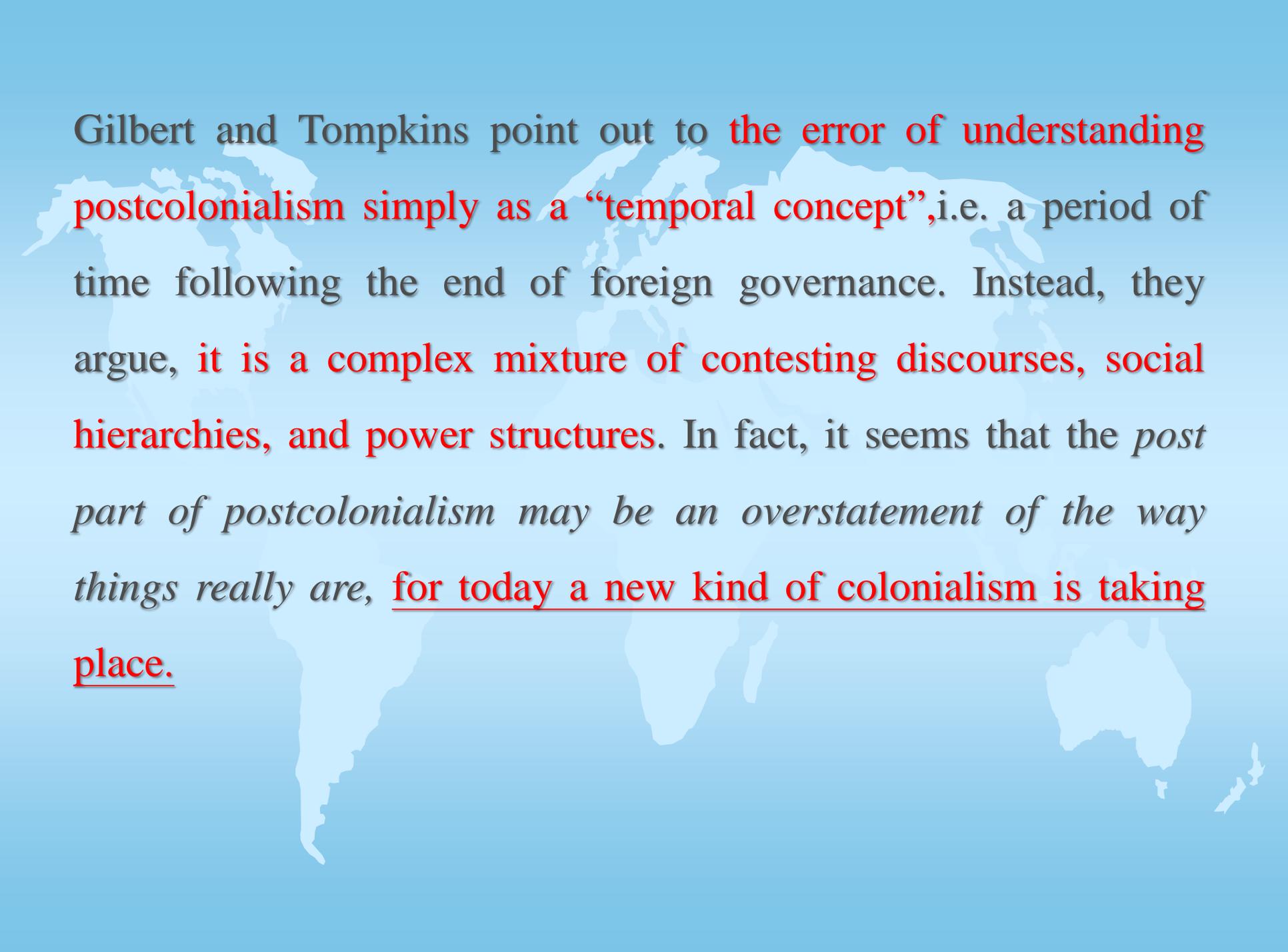
ressentment and blended practices. Consequently, issues abound regarding the development of *national identity*, *identification of cultural histories and knowledge*, *the precolonial nature of the colonized*, and the colonized's resistance to the power that has subjugated them.

Lecture 3: Edward Said's *Orientalism*:

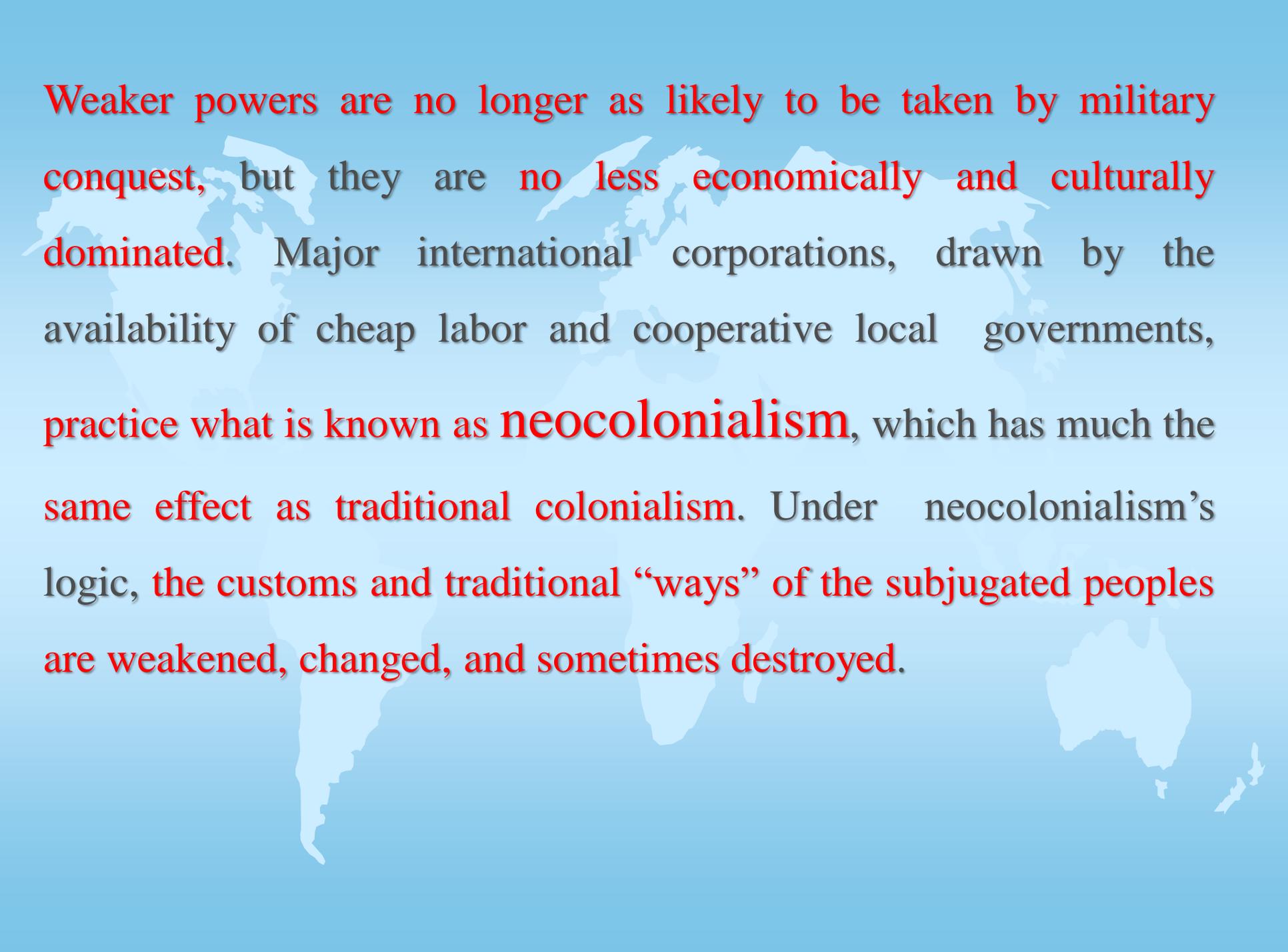
His book *Orientalism* (1978) was significant influence on what would become known as **postcolonialism**. In his analysis, Said called attention to the **pejorative stereotypes** that **the British, other Europeans, and Americans** created of the peoples unlike themselves, thereby making it easier to justify **military or economic conquest**. Their view of the “**other**” world—“**Orientalism**”—is **inevitably** coloured by their own cultural, political, and religious backgrounds, leading them to depict **those unlike themselves as inferior and objectionable**—for example, as **lazy, deceitful, exotic and irrational**.

The self, by contrast, is defined as good, upright, and moral. The Eastern nations are given all the negative characteristics that the West does not want to see in itself.

In *Orientalism*, Said called upon the literary establishment to raise questions about colonization, imperialism, and constructions of the “other.” Over the ensuing decades, postcolonial theorists have probed those issues by examining such subjects as language, feminism, oppression, cultural identity, race, and education. The intent is to study what happens when one culture is dominated by another.



Gilbert and Tompkins point out to **the error of understanding postcolonialism simply as a “temporal concept”,** i.e. a period of time following the end of foreign governance. Instead, they argue, **it is a complex mixture of contesting discourses, social hierarchies, and power structures.** In fact, it seems that the *post part of postcolonialism may be an overstatement of the way things really are, for today a new kind of colonialism is taking place.*



Weaker powers are no longer as likely to be taken by military conquest, but they are no less economically and culturally dominated. Major international corporations, drawn by the availability of cheap labor and cooperative local governments, practice what is known as **neocolonialism**, which has much the same effect as traditional colonialism. Under neocolonialism's logic, the customs and traditional “ways” of the subjugated peoples are weakened, changed, and sometimes destroyed.

In short, E. Said is most famous for the description and analysis of “**Orientalism**” as the source of the inaccurate cultural representations that are the foundations of Western thought towards the Middle East, of how the West perceives and represents the East. The crux of “Orientalism” is the existence of a persistent Eurocentric prejudice particularly against Arabo-Islamic people and their culture. Such perceptions, and the consequent cultural representations, have served, and continue to serve, as implicit justifications for the colonial and imperialist ambition of the European powers and the United States. Edward Said concludes his book Orientalism (1978) by saying that he is not saying that the orientalists should not make generalization, or they should include the orient perspective too, but creating a boundary at the first place is something which should not be done. (Ranjan,2015:88)

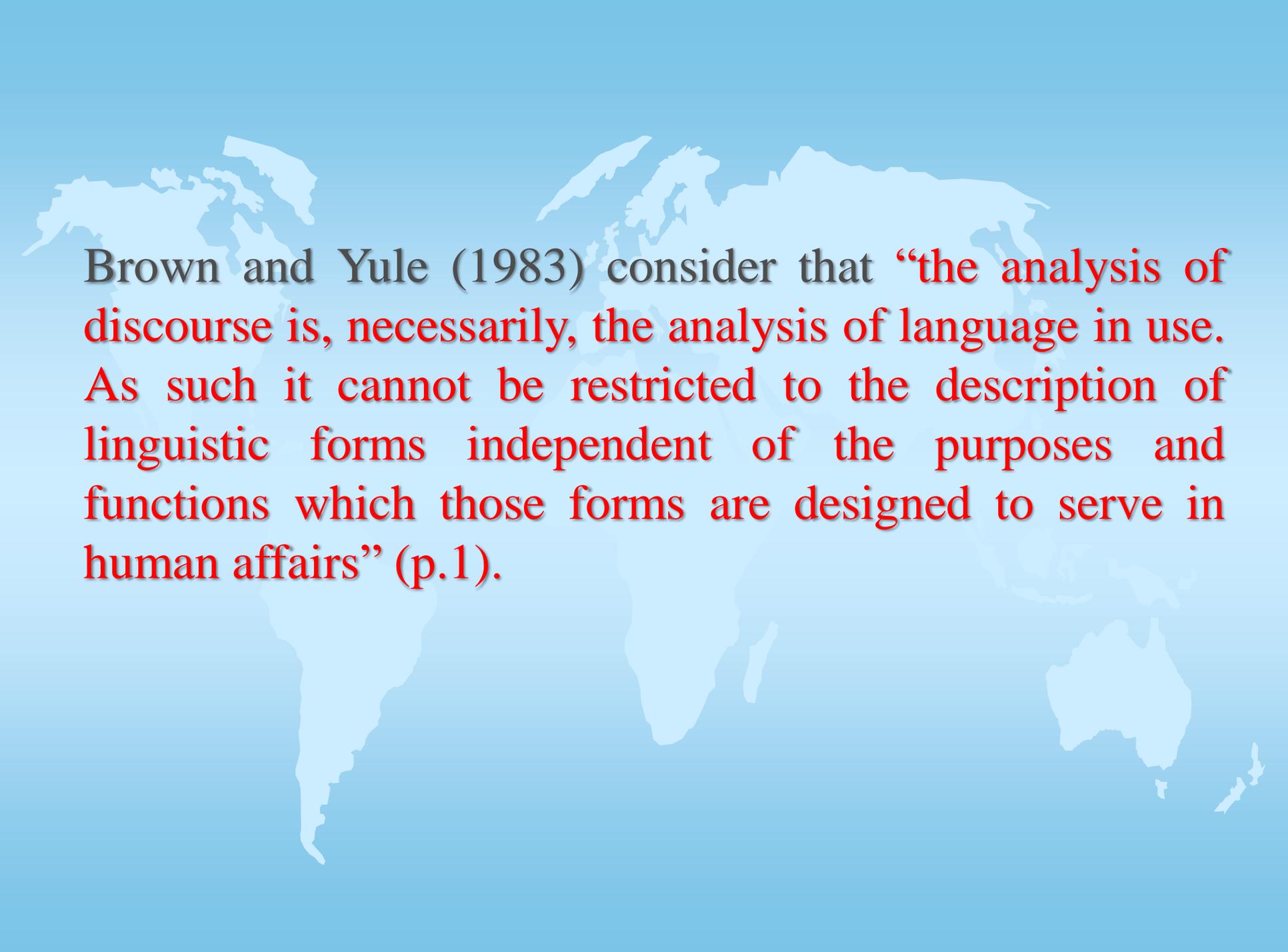
Lecture 4: Theoretical Influences on Said's Work

- **Michel Foucault: Notion of Discourse**

Edward Said, found it useful to employ Foucault's notion of discourse in order to explain his work on "Orientalism"

“My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European Culture was able to manage-and even produce- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. »(Said,1978:03)

- By the 18th century, the understanding of Orient is discovered through the **Western authority** of knowing the Orient, how the Orient has been reconstructed, how Orient has been ruled when it was a colony of Europe under Britain or France. He thus, tried to emphasise upon how the **interpretation of the Orient is made by the dominant discourse of the West through Foucault's notion of discourse**. Without examining Orientalism as a discourse it is difficult to understand how Europe has managed to organize and produce the “**Other**”.



Brown and Yule (1983) consider that “the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes and functions which those forms are designed to serve in human affairs” (p.1).

Foucault adopted the term 'discourse' to denote a historically contingent social system that produces knowledge and meaning. He notes that discourse is distinctly material in effect, producing what he calls 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'. Discourse is, thus, a way of organizing knowledge that structures the constitution of social (and progressively global) relations through the collective understanding of the discursive logic and the acceptance of the discourse as social fact.

For Foucault, the logic produced by a discourse is structurally related to the broader episteme (structure of knowledge) of the historical period in which it arises. However, discourses are produced by effects of power within a social order, and this power prescribes particular rules and categories which define the criteria for legitimating knowledge and truth within the discursive order. These rules and categories are considered *a priori*; that is, coming before the discourse.

Discourse, as a social construct, is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication.

For example, those who are **in control** decide who we are by deciding what we discuss. Foucault holds that **truth, morality, and meaning** are created **through discourse**. (Weedon 1997:

105)

In short :

Foucault's work on discourse is a useful forerunner to postcolonial philosophy in its revolutionary analysis of the relation between power and knowledge. Foucault establishes a complete theory of the intersection between the production and dissemination of knowledge and the operation and expansion of power structures. His philosophy has invented a unique mode of analysis, which he terms "archaeology", and which holds on as its goal the exploration of how knowledge operates as a part of a system supported and reinforced by social and political structures of power.

This means that **the creation and use of knowledge itself is political**, and can serve **to propagate and reinforce the social marginalization and oppression of those who do not conform to the norms of the dominant discourse.**

In exploring the potentially totalitarian, or at least authoritarian, effects of discourse and representation, moreover, Foucault crucially opens the way for thinkers such as **Edward Said** to uncover the forms and uses of **colonial knowledge.**

In drawing on Foucault, E. Said examined the academic study of the Orient, together with the **fantasized images** of colonial territories that seep **into cultural representation**, and the ways in which these feed into **the politics of the colonial mission.**

Hiddleston (2009:76-96)

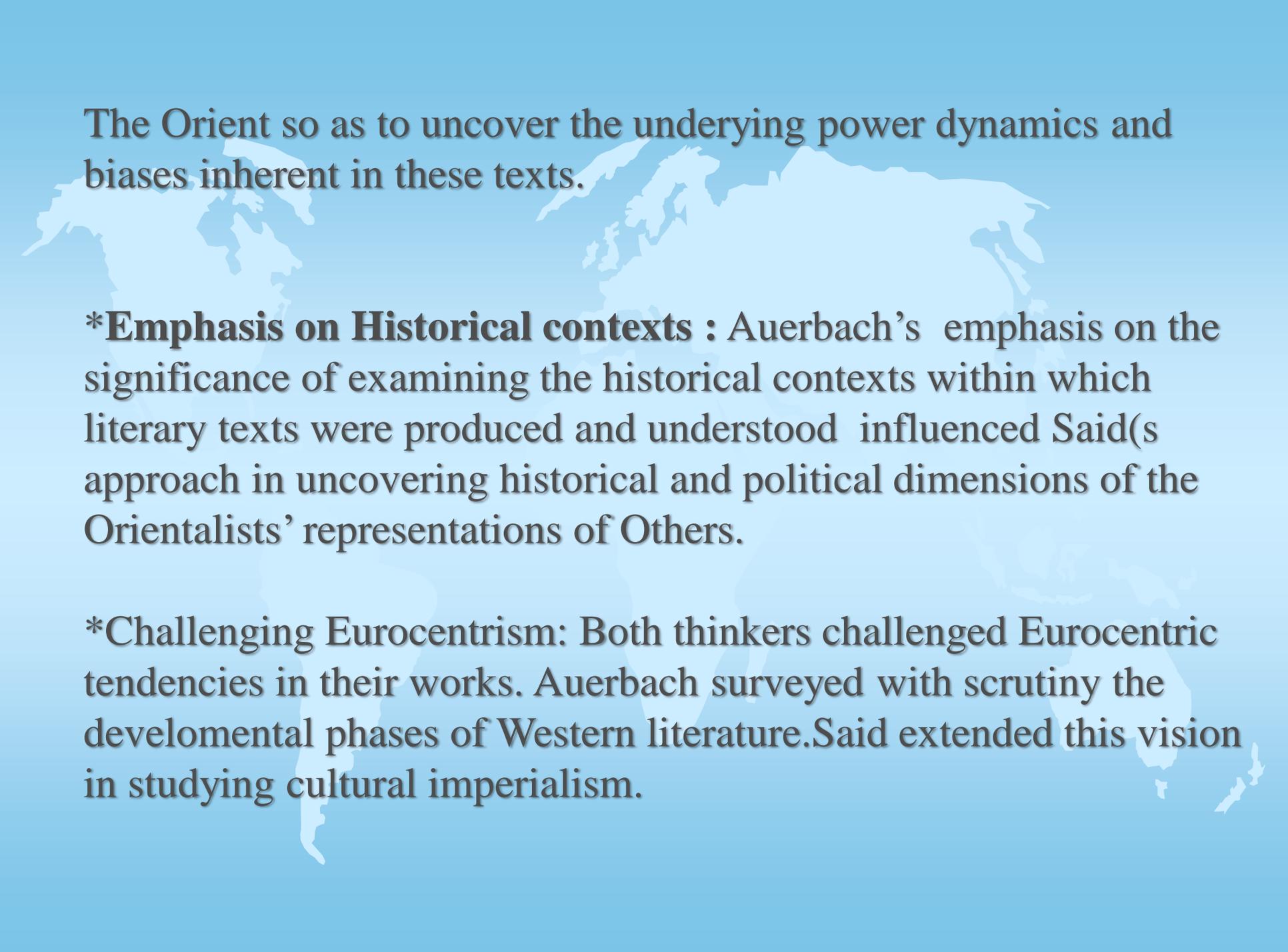
• **Erich Auerbach** :

Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature.(1953)

*Edward Said shares with Eric Auerbach the significance of the impact of **exile** on **displaced people** , both of them quoted Hugh of St Victor's *Didascalicon* who wrote in 10th century that: **“The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner;he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land.”**

(cited in Said,1978:259)

****Close textual analysis*** : Auerbach's emphasis on close textual analysis influenced Said's analysis in the examination of both :Western literature and texts related to



The Orient so as to uncover the underlying power dynamics and biases inherent in these texts.

***Emphasis on Historical contexts :** Auerbach's emphasis on the significance of examining the historical contexts within which literary texts were produced and understood influenced Said's approach in uncovering historical and political dimensions of the Orientalists' representations of Others.

***Challenging Eurocentrism:** Both thinkers challenged Eurocentric tendencies in their works. Auerbach surveyed with scrutiny the developmental phases of Western literature. Said extended this vision in studying cultural imperialism.

***The significance of the interdisciplinary Approach:**

- Auerbach's interdisciplinary approach in the sense that he integrated the study of history, philology and literary analysis influenced and resonated with Said's Work.

- **Antonio Gramsci: Concept of Hegemony**

To grasp the meaning of **Hegemony**, we have first to understand **Power**. **Power** in its plain sense refers to the ability to get things done by others. It generally involves **coercion (force/compulsion)**.

However, Hegemony, according to **Gramsci**, is **an invisible power**. It does not only seek to control **your body** but also your **mind** and **soul**. It is particularly manufactured through **consent**.

It is usually **a dominant ideology** for **e.g. Capitalism**. Capitalism is said and believed to be good and beneficial because **intellectuals along within the state make people believe so**.

Gramsci, therefore, advocates **building counter-hegemony**.

Antonio Gramsci was a Marxist. His concept of hegemony was the result of the question :**why didn't western Europe witness the kind of revolution that Marx had predicted?**

Because Marx predicted that the revolution would sweep away the most advanced **capitalist societies.** But, on the other hand, it occurred in **backward Russia.**

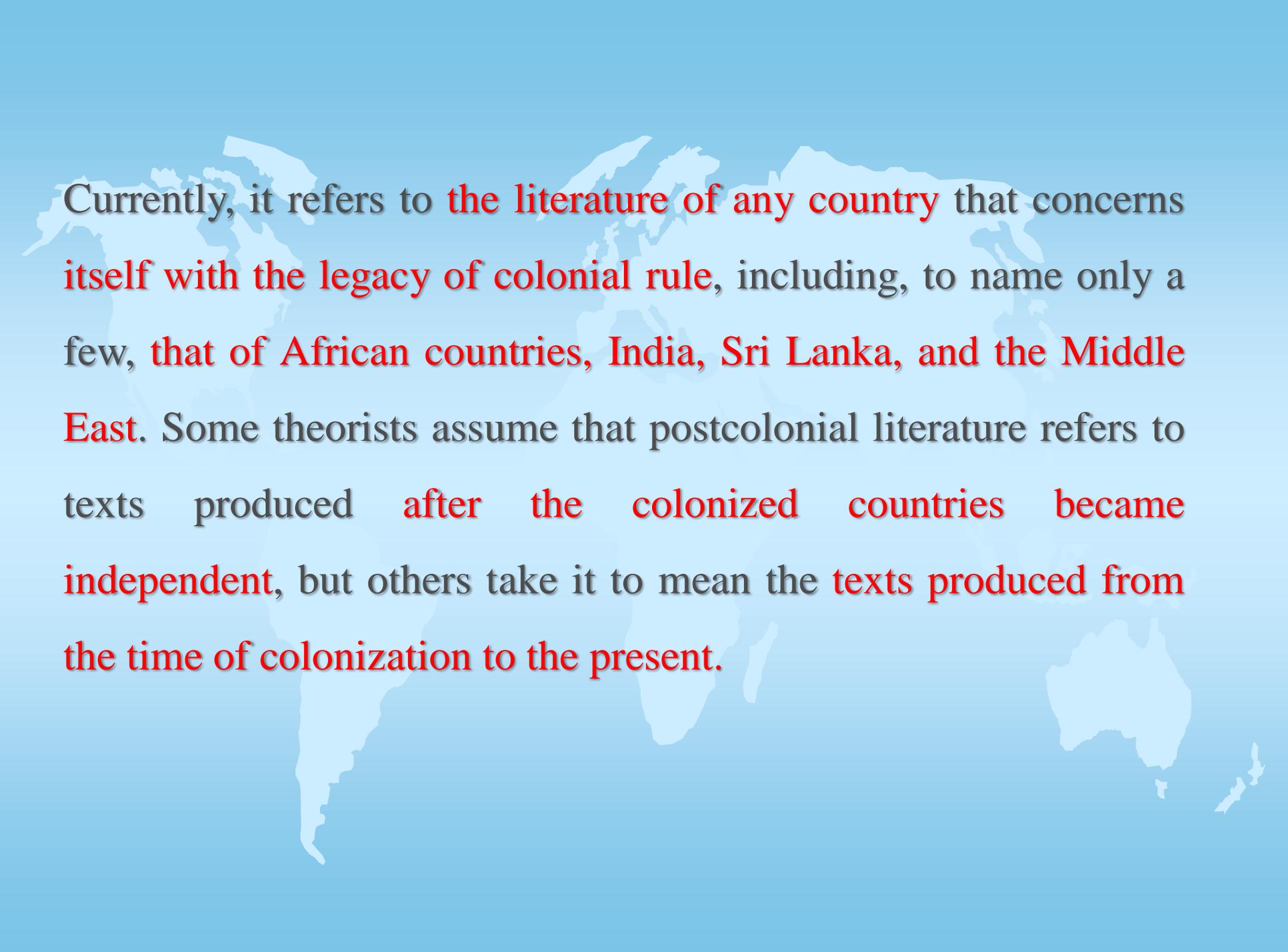
In his view ,**hegemony** rests on the idea **of consent.** He therefore deviates from the orthodox Marxist view, and argues that **ruling class is able to maintain its dominance or hegemony over the masses** using different **instruments such as : civil society, media, education systems, ..etc.** Through such means, **ruling class increases its political, social, moral and cultural values to be spread in the society in such a way that the masses (the ruled) tend to accept and embrace them as their own.**

This is what we call *practicing hegemony by consent.* (Merad & Trump, 2018)

Lecture 05: Postcolonial literature:

The broadest view of postcolonial literature is that it is the literature written by people in **formerly colonized countries**.

Yet, some works authored by the colonizers and/or their descendants can be considered postcolonial (E.g. J Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*)



Currently, it refers to **the literature of any country** that concerns **itself with the legacy of colonial rule**, including, to name only a few, **that of African countries, India, Sri Lanka, and the Middle East**. Some theorists assume that postcolonial literature refers to texts produced **after the colonized countries became independent**, but others take it to mean the **texts produced from the time of colonization to the present**.

The subject matter of postcolonial literature :

-Mostly written by culturally displaced people (those in diaspora), it investigates the clash of cultures in which one deems itself to be superior and imposes its own practices on the less powerful one. As such it focuses on the issue of the loss of identity among the colonized.

Postcolonial writers examine their histories, question how they should respond to the changes they see around them, and wonder what their society will become. They recognize in themselves the old culture and the new one : elements of the native one and the imposed one.

Lecture 06: Postcolonial Criticism :

Which began to attract widespread notice in the **early 1990s**, looks at the works of **postcolonial writers but is not limited to them.**

Because its practitioners are interested in how the colonized came to accept the values of the more **powerful culture** and **to resist them too**, it looks at **canonical texts as well as postcolonial ones.**

Attitudes toward the “**other**” are evident in works that may not, on the surface, seem to deal with colonialism at all.

Basic Assumptions :

1. Colonizers not only physically conquer territories but also practice **cultural colonization by replacing the practices and beliefs of the native culture** with their own values, governance, laws, and belief. The consequence is loss or modification of much of the precolonial culture.

2. When their own culture is forbidden or devalued, natives come to see themselves as inferior to the conquerors. They abandon (or hide) their own cultural practices to adopt (imitate) those of the assumedly “superior” one.

3. Colonial subjects practice **mimicry**—**imitation of dress, language, behavior, even gestures**—instead of resistance. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952, Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist, reasoned that the inferiority complex created in black people who have accepted the culture of another country as their own will cause them to imitate the codes of their colonizers.

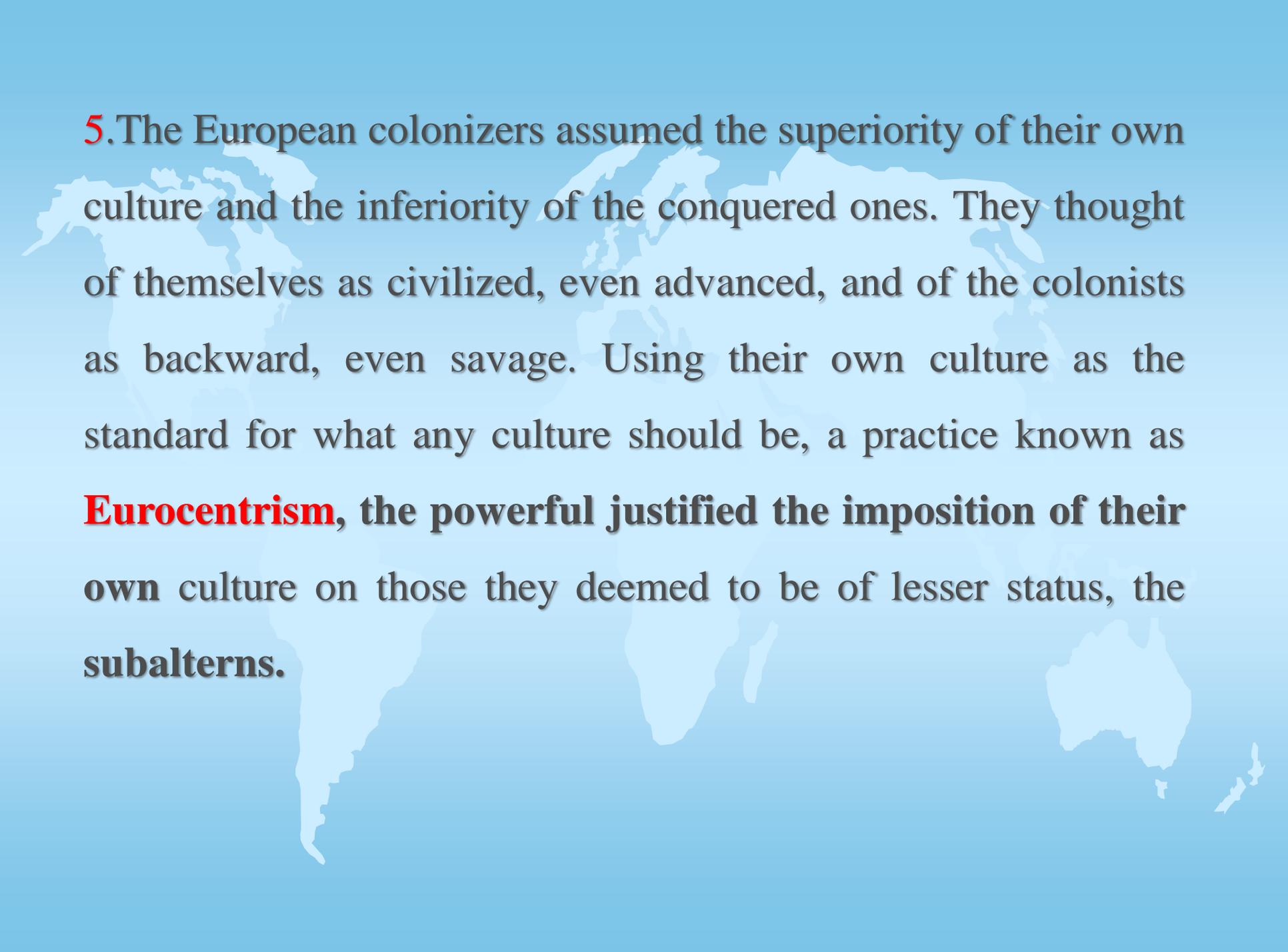
As the colonized become better educated and able to live as their white counterparts, they become increasingly **imitative**. Homi Bhabha points out that **the mimicry is never exact**, however. It **“is at once resemblance and menace.”**



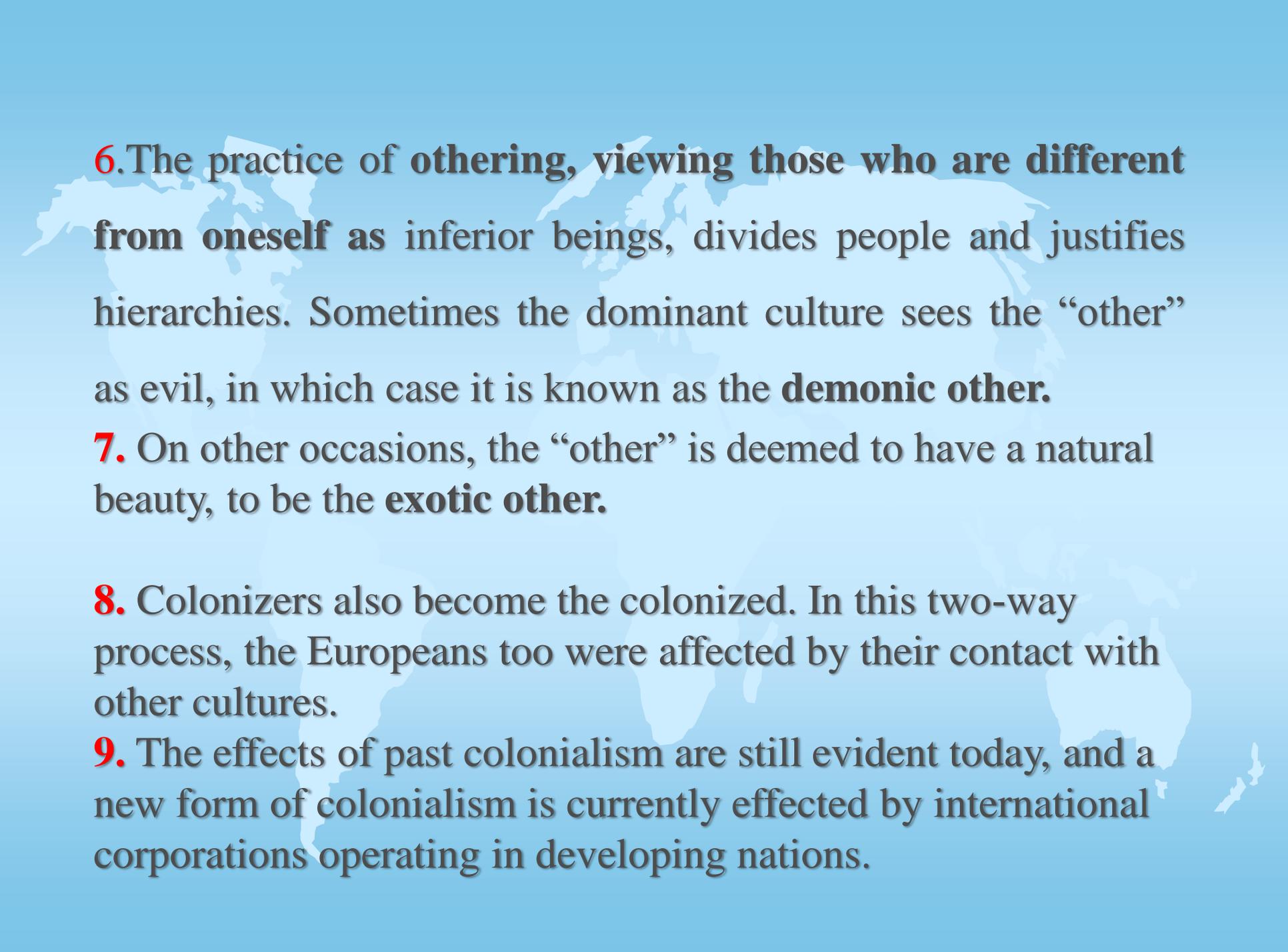
The colonizer both wants and fears that the colonized will be like him because the imitation honors and, at the same time, undermines the “authoritative discourse” of colonialism.

4. European colonizers believed that their ideals and experiences are **universal**.

As a concept, **universalism** is evident in the **characters and themes** in European (and, later, American) literature.



5. The European colonizers assumed the superiority of their own culture and the inferiority of the conquered ones. They thought of themselves as civilized, even advanced, and of the colonists as backward, even savage. Using their own culture as the standard for what any culture should be, a practice known as **Eurocentrism**, the powerful justified the imposition of their own culture on those they deemed to be of lesser status, the **subalterns**.



6. The practice of **othering**, viewing those who are different from oneself as inferior beings, divides people and justifies hierarchies. Sometimes the dominant culture sees the “other” as evil, in which case it is known as the **demonic other**.

7. On other occasions, the “other” is deemed to have a natural beauty, to be the **exotic other**.

8. Colonizers also become the colonized. In this two-way process, the Europeans too were affected by their contact with other cultures.

9. The effects of past colonialism are still evident today, and a new form of colonialism is currently effected by international corporations operating in developing nations.

10. The interaction of cultures creates blended ones, mixtures of the native and colonial, a process called **hybridity or syncretism**. **Characterized by tensions and change**, this process is dynamic, interactive, and creative.



Lecture 7 : Identity Question in Postcolonial Studies

Identity defined :

*“people’s concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others” (Hogg and Abrams 1988: 02).

*“Identity is used to describe the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture” (Deng 1995: 1)

“ It refers to the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities” (Jenkins 1996: 4). (Cited in Fearon,1993:04)

The way an individual / community introduces himself /itself for others .Identity is important for **self-perception** and contributes to the **definition of social determinants** and **the understanding of a national character**. It usually includes the **mechanisms of**

Identity in Postcolonial Literature : An overview

To recall, Postcolonialism Studies (**theory**) did not exist before postcolonial countries regained their independence; however, this notion has been controversial in terms of defining it, since there is a debate over the connotation of this term. Some claim that it denotes the historical period after independence, but many others assert that it deals with all that concerns the postcolonial societies since the early moment of colonization until the present day.

The literature that is classified under the broad term postcolonialism is **mostly the literature produced by writers** who come from postcolonial backgrounds and who write against the notions of **imperialism and marginality**. They oppose them not only because they oppress their societies, but because these elements **distort their Identity**. That is why these writers have a common background since they **all depict this notion of identity throughout their writings in a way or another** . This notion (identity) has been shaped by the colonial experience. Because of **the process of imperialism**, the subjects in postcolonial societies find themselves **in a dilemma as to which side they go for; the traditional identity which cannot fit the new world order**, or to adopt the **western ways which are alien to them**. So naturally this society will find itself divided between those who **incarnate** aspects of western identity and those **who resist them**.

Maintaining a pure identity : Possible?

Maintaining a pure identity is difficult in either ways. We are living in a world of constant change, a globalized world where the notions of multiculturalism and mobility are prevailing. Naturally postcolonial subjects will find themselves unconsciously reshaping their identities to make them fit the new world order. But this does not deny the fact that postcolonial subjects, even if they embrace aspects of western identity, always maintain contact with their traditions and beliefs. This dilemma of finding a place in the new world order contributes together with the bitter experience of colonialism creates a crisis of identity in the postcolonial world. This crisis of identity is what constitutes a fertile ground for postcolonial literatures. Therefore, one of the most prominent themes explored in postcolonial literature is that of identity. Postcolonial writers through their works try to depict the elements that are crucial in forming the identity of the individual and of the group.

This identity has been affected by the imperial reality that these peoples went through. The postcolonial societies lived in harmony without bothering themselves about striving to find an individual or a collective identity. They had their lands to identify with, they had their traditions and beliefs; they knew **exactly who they are**. But with the coming of the colonizer everything fell apart. This colonial power started by disrupting their beliefs through introducing for instance *Christianity*(e.g.in *Africa*) to gain their support. After that, this power deprived them from their lands so they lost their sense of belonging because of **the process of displacement**. In addition **to the process of educating an élite and importing the colonial ways to these peoples**. All these processes together contributed in alienating the postcolonial subjects from their own identity.

This **alienation and massive displacement** also led to two processes which contributed in creating a new mobile world. These processes are **migration** which led to exporting postcolonial ways to the world, and framing a new way of understanding the Other, and the other process is **globalization** which led to importing Western ways to postcolonial societies.

So, this process of importing western ways, together with the attempt of **the colonizer to erase the identity** of the colonized so that to maintain control over them, led to making new postcolonial citizens **with new identities which are neither completely original nor western**, and this is due to the high speed of change that the world undergoes. This rapid change of societies led to creating the mobility and to **framing the multicultural feature of the new world** .

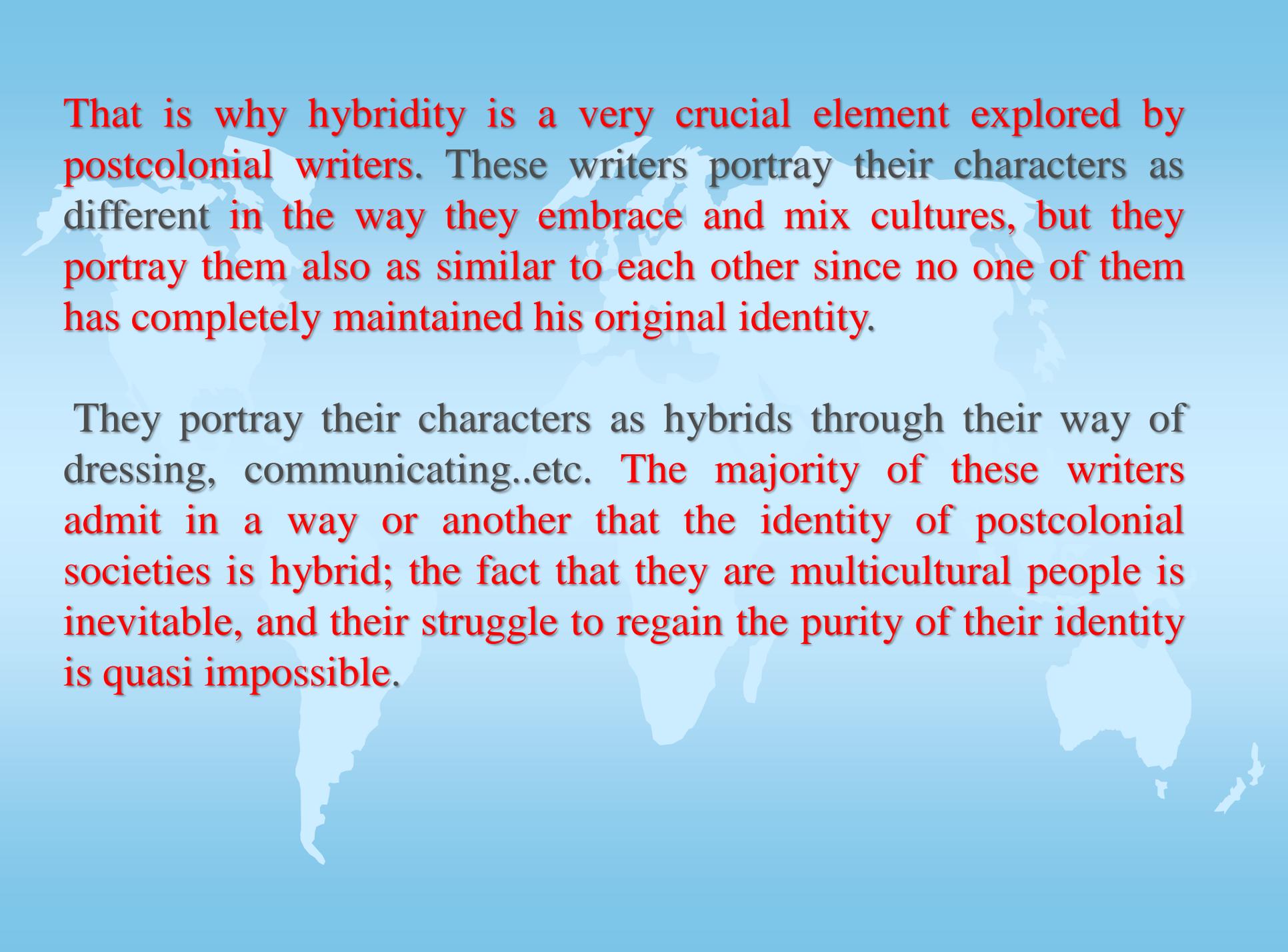
All these changes in society created a distortion in the identity of the postcolonial society. This distortion is what makes the subject matter of postcolonial literature. Postcolonial literature and postcolonial writers try to depict this notion through addressing the elements that make up this identity in the person . Among the elements they discuss and that are of a great importance in framing their own and their society's identity are the notions of language, home, hybridity, and otherness . The issue of language certainly is very important since it denotes the hybrid and multicultural nature of postcolonial societies. But what makes a huge debate over this notion is not only the hybrid language of postcolonial societies, but it revolves around the language of writing in itself. That is, many postcolonial writers write about the experience of postcoloniality in foreign languages, mainly that of their colonizers. This aspect in itself is seen as a defect in the identity of the writer, because it cannot “bear the burden” of their postcolonial experience.

This process is seen as something that empowers the western literatures and does nothing but alienate more postcolonial societies since it makes the colonizer at the centre and it marginalizes the postcolonial self.

On the other hand, it is argued that using the colonial language does not necessarily entail giving up one's origins; it is something that helps in **universalizing** the postcolonial experience.

However, it is better to use an original language to maintain the authenticity of the piece of literature and to determine the sense of belonging.

Yet, in either cases, **hybridity** in most postcolonial writing is **predominant**.



That is why hybridity is a very crucial element explored by postcolonial writers. These writers portray their characters as different in the way they embrace and mix cultures, but they portray them also as similar to each other since no one of them has completely maintained his original identity.

They portray their characters as hybrids through their way of dressing, communicating..etc. The majority of these writers admit in a way or another that the identity of postcolonial societies is hybrid; the fact that they are multicultural people is inevitable, and their struggle to regain the purity of their identity is quasi impossible.

Identity in postcolonial studies (cont)

Postcolonial studies have always been concerned with the effect of colonization on cultures and identities that were shaped during and after colonization. In this context, Ashcroft(2004) claims that ‘ more than three-quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism.’ (p. 01).

It is common knowledge that most postcolonial nations had experienced problems of identity (**identity crisis**).

The issue of **identity begins when it is in crisis** . Accordingly, Mercer (1995 qtd in dizayi,2015) posits that ‘ **identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis when ,something assumed to be fixed,coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty.**’(p.43)

Postcolonial literature stresses the issues of displacement, ethnicity, culture and of course identity.

Identity in postcolonial literature is a predominant theme that all too often denotes the cut between the old identifications and the ones imposed by the imperialist.

In his novel *Things Fall Apart (1958)*, Chinua Achebe depicts the chaos that was left behind after colonization.

Okonkwo- the major character in the novel- witnesses his rise and fall after the coming of the white people (the British).

The white Christian men (British) destroyed the culture and the identity of the Igbo tribe.

Achebe's novel according to many critics was a response to J. Conrad's depiction of Africans as savages.

Achebe therefore wrote from the eyes and perspectives of the colonized, opposing the coloniser's false assumptions that all too often dehumanised the Africans. (Dizayi,2015)

Yet, Bhabha shifted from the **binary opposition**, and introduces instead the concept of **hybridity** that stands in the middle, and hence, challenges the traditional and fixed identification. Bhabha (1994) accordingly states that ‘ **this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains the difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.**’ (p.04)

According to him, the deep impact of colonialism on the individual’s double consciousness and the loss of former identity leads to **the imitation of the coloniser’s culture.**

Hybridity, therefore, is **the result of mimicry** (the act of imitating another culture).

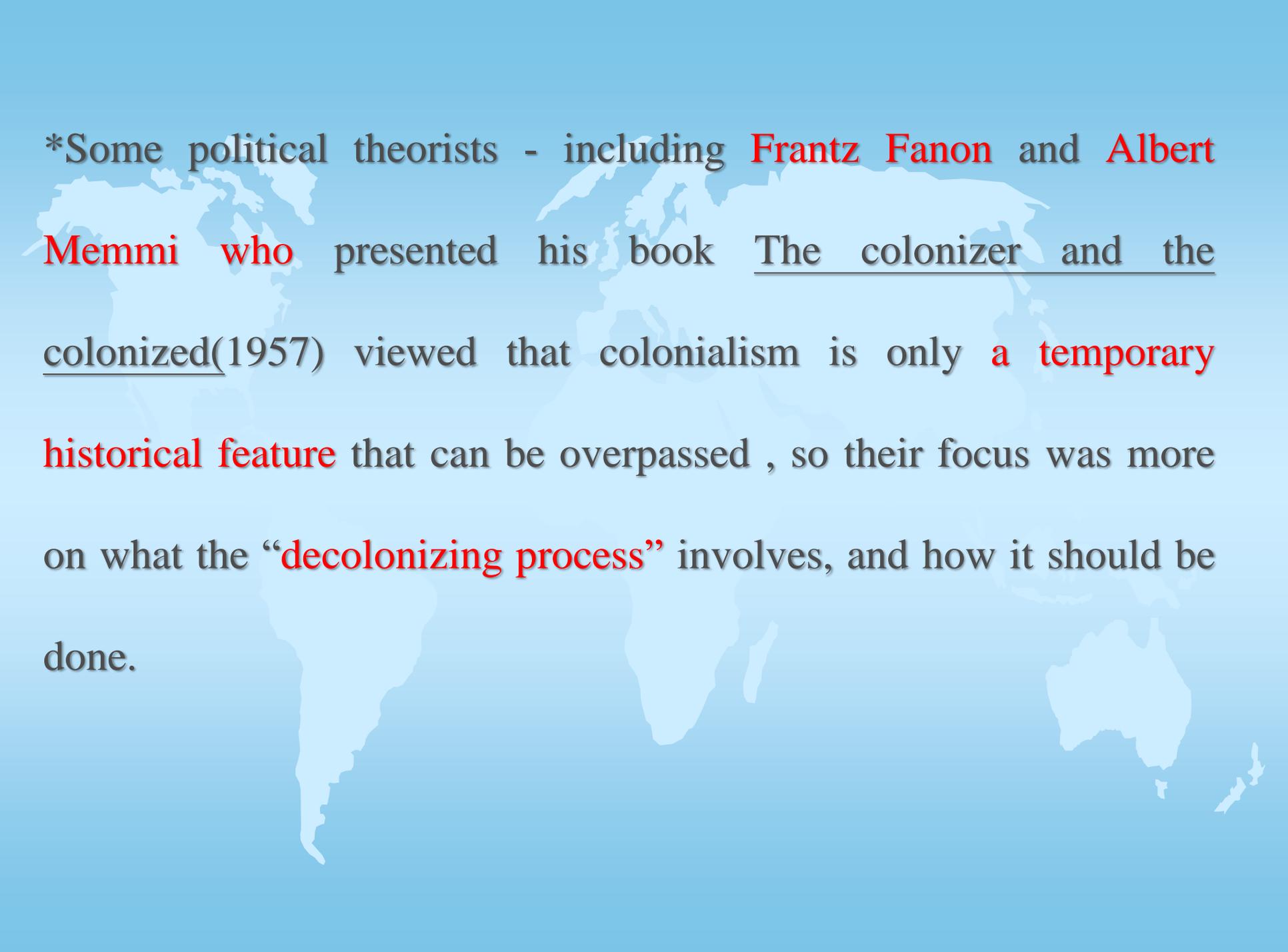
Another illustrative example of this states of affair would be the work of the Caribbean writer Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul

The Mimic Men (1967). The main character in this novel Rlaph Singh , a politician from the West Indies , attempts to write a political memoir in his exile in London. Yet, he soon relailises - after havinng flashbacks – that definitive moments that shaped him from infacy to adulthood **were Europaena made ones**.

On this basis, Bhabha argues that identity **is never pure and unchanging**,but it is in **a constanant process of formation**.

Conclusion:

Bhabha claims that there is **no unified culture** that would be distinctive for one particular nation. His **concept of “the Third Space of Enunciation”** presents an abstract space where the cultures of **two opposing powers meet and mingle**. His conception is marked as controversial because he rejects the notion of cultural knowledge as an **‘integrated and expanding code’**. A culture cannot become a closed system developing on its own, **it needs to be put in comparison and under the influences of other cultures** even if their differences are incommensurable(immeasurable). It is these incommensurable elements that create **cultural hybridity**. Thus, according to Bhabha, pure and original culture does not exist or to be less radical such a culture is untenable(indefensible). (Cropova,2008:16)



*Some political theorists - including **Frantz Fanon** and **Albert Memmi** who presented his book The colonizer and the colonized(1957) viewed that colonialism is only **a temporary historical feature** that can be overpassed , so their focus was more on what the “**decolonizing process**” involves, and how it should be done.

•On the other hand, Some Africans authors and thinkers offered special research that **supports and emphasizes the need to see a purely African literature on African identity and that has a direct relationship with the society that produced it.**

In this sense, **Achebe** emphasizes a fundamental feature that distinguishes **African artists** from their **European counterparts**. This function is : **Elevating and promoting the social function of writing rather being only as a tool for individual expression.**

Therefore, some African critics affirmed **the distinct features of black thought and black passion.** (the Notion of Negritude developed by Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor)



Lecture 08 : The Novel and Colonialism

•The significance of the Novel :

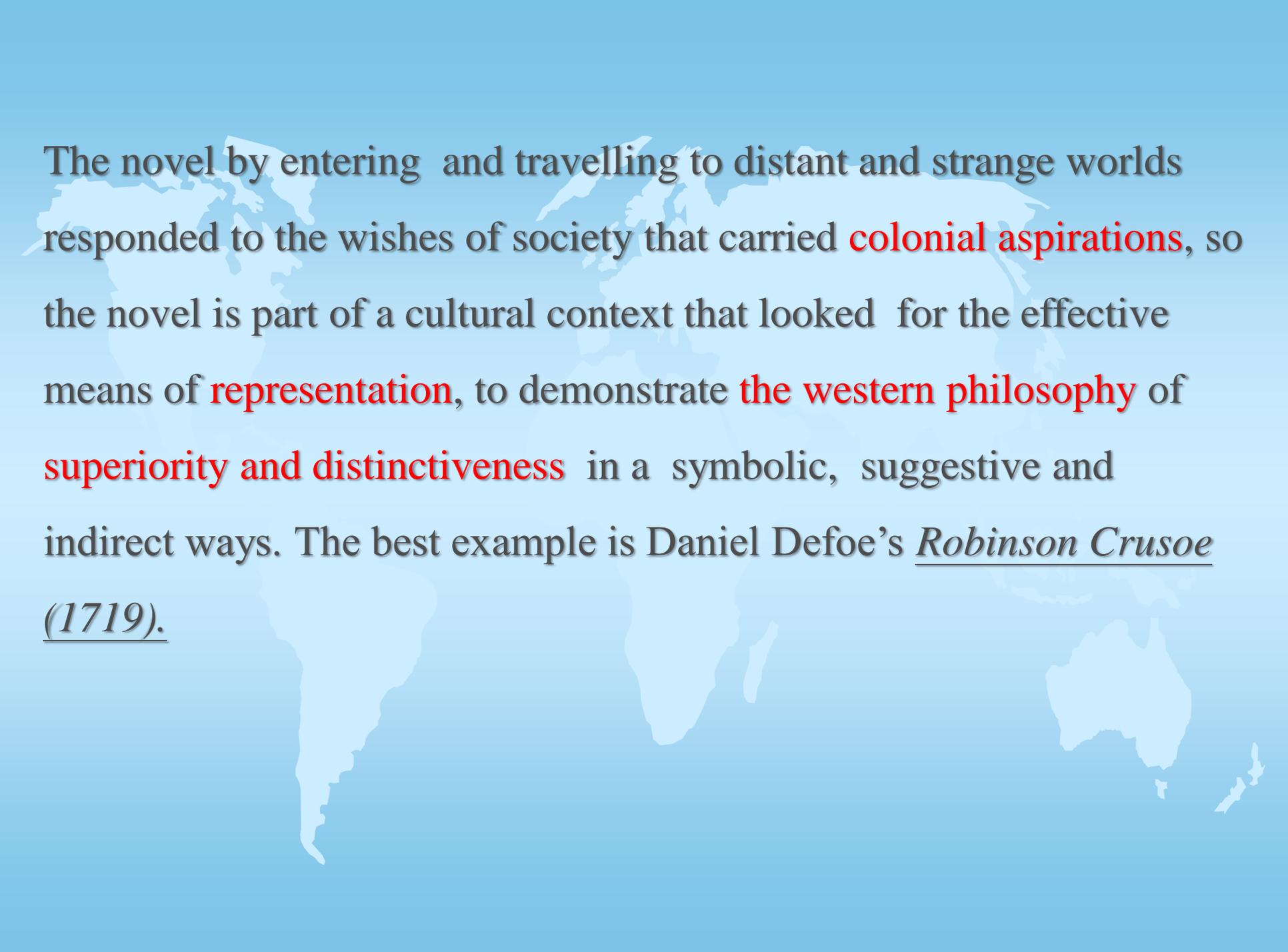
*Critics assert that the novel could gain a prominent place in world literature in a short period of time because of its continuous development of the modes and means of narration .

*The novel's exceptional and unique ability in representing the cultural, psychological and social backgrounds(It surpasses other genres in this particular area).

*The novel, if adequately read, can be considered as a factor in shaping the cultural identities of nations because it has the capacity to shape general perceptions of peoples, historical periods and cultural transformations of societies. This contributes to the representation of the big perceptions of the self and the other.

*The English novel, as asserted by Edward Said, was an imperial center whose function was to **preserve the prestige of the empire and to contribute to the promotion of concepts and attitudes about Britain and the world.**

•English novelists in the mid 19th century agreed on the fact of boosting the **British empire overseas**, this does not exclusively mean that the novel or culture in general was the reason for the advent of imperialism, yet we can not think of the English novel in the **Colonial era in isolation from imperialism.** Both phenomena coincides, and they **even exchanged benefits.**



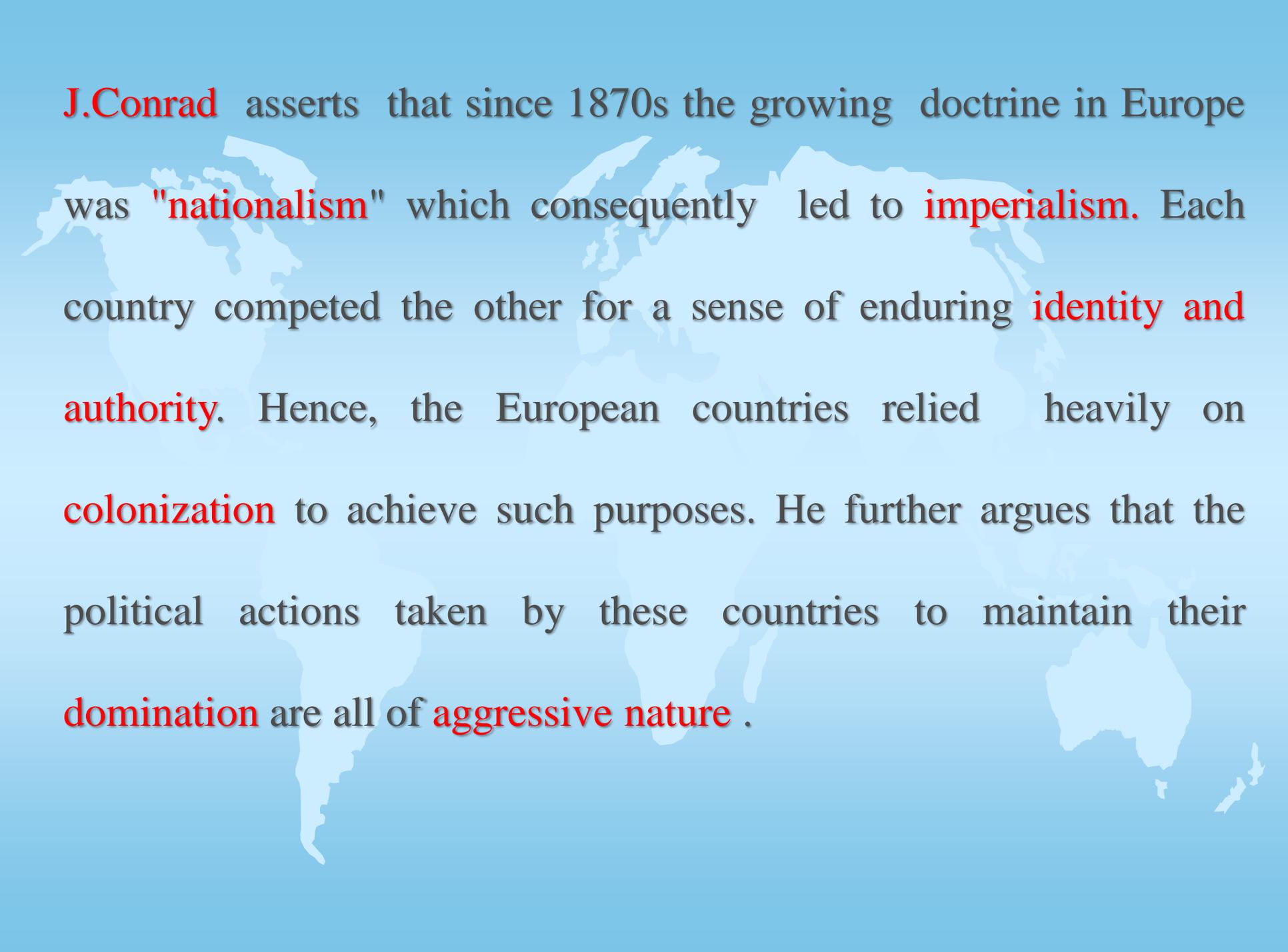
The novel by entering and travelling to distant and strange worlds responded to the wishes of society that carried **colonial aspirations**, so the novel is part of a cultural context that looked for the effective means of **representation**, to demonstrate **the western philosophy of superiority and distinctiveness** in a symbolic, suggestive and indirect ways. The best example is Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

Robinson Crusoe : a story of a European (English) man who could create a colony on a remote non-European Island .The events of the plot are quite expressive about the nature of colonial expansion.Crusoe is a symbol and an example of the civilized European who must be followed and imitated.

In order for the Crusoe (hero) to cultivate a new cultural pattern on the island , he had first to submit nature to his will and his culture .It was also necessary the appearance of another character –Friday- (Who was black)to show concretely the shift he aimed at.

Friday received the ideals, values and ideas that made him a first-rate follower, and it was not strange that the first English phrase he learnt from Crusoe was : YES Sir!

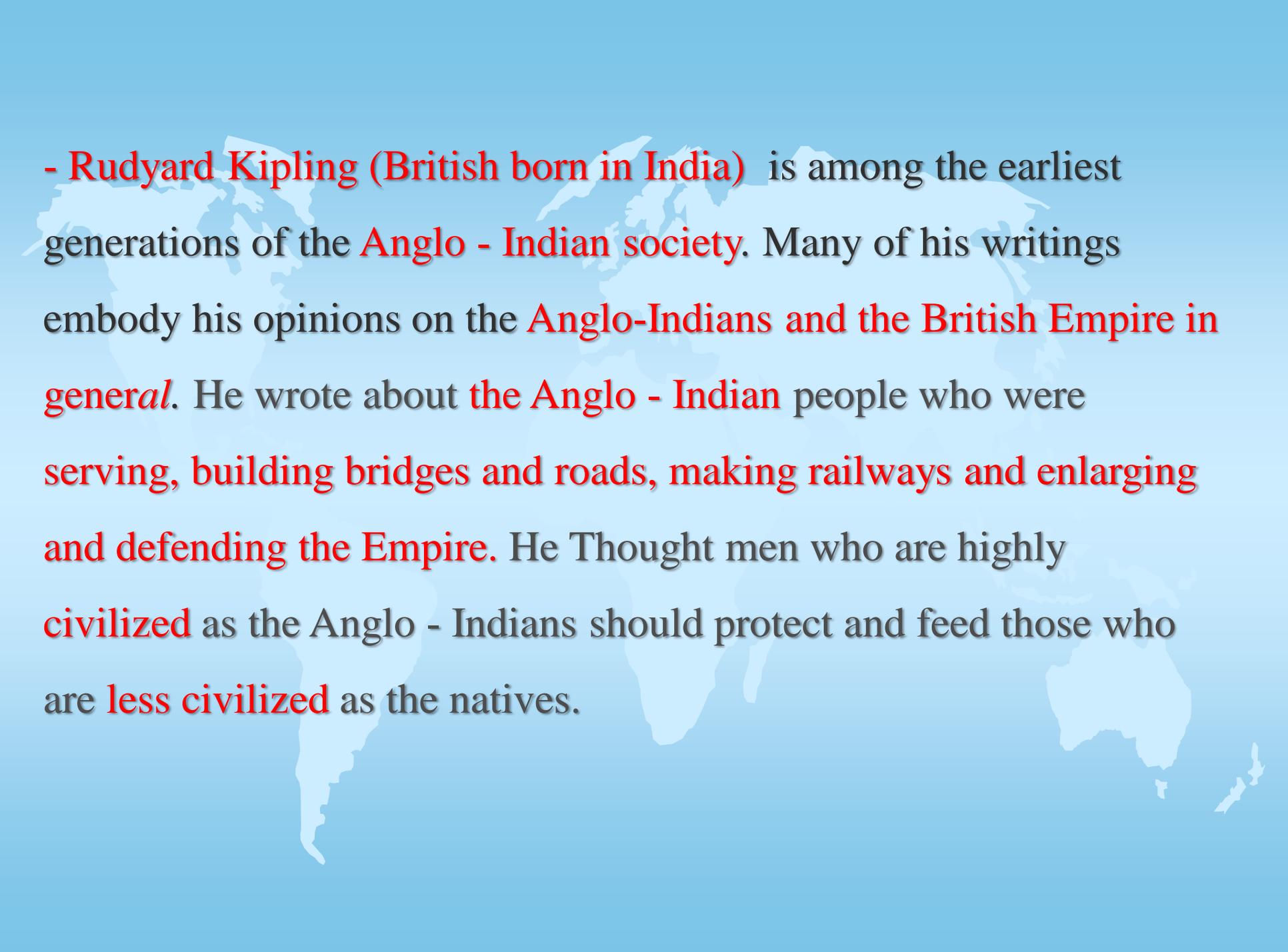
When the white man succeeds to go back homeland, he leaves a manned land and a man with history, language and a religion. (the idea that colonies live thanks to their association with the empire overseas).



J. Conrad asserts that since 1870s the growing doctrine in Europe was "**nationalism**" which consequently led to **imperialism**. Each country competed the other for a sense of enduring **identity and authority**. Hence, the European countries relied heavily on **colonization** to achieve such purposes. He further argues that the political actions taken by these countries to maintain their **domination** are all of **aggressive nature** .

Heart of Darkness (1902) is the outcome of Conrad's journey through Africa and it is remarkably faithful to the facts of the **Belgian occupation of the Congo** in 1890. The story depicts to some extent **the failure of the white man's myth of superiority** through the protagonist, **Kurtz**. How?

He is **a preacher** and his mission in Congo is supposed to **be preaching and civilizing the natives**. **However**, near the end of the story we find him **a cruel and heartless person**. He is pictured as **a machine of anger that pours its savageness and brutality on the innocent natives** for the sake of **ivory**. (*Abdul-Jabbar, 2007*)

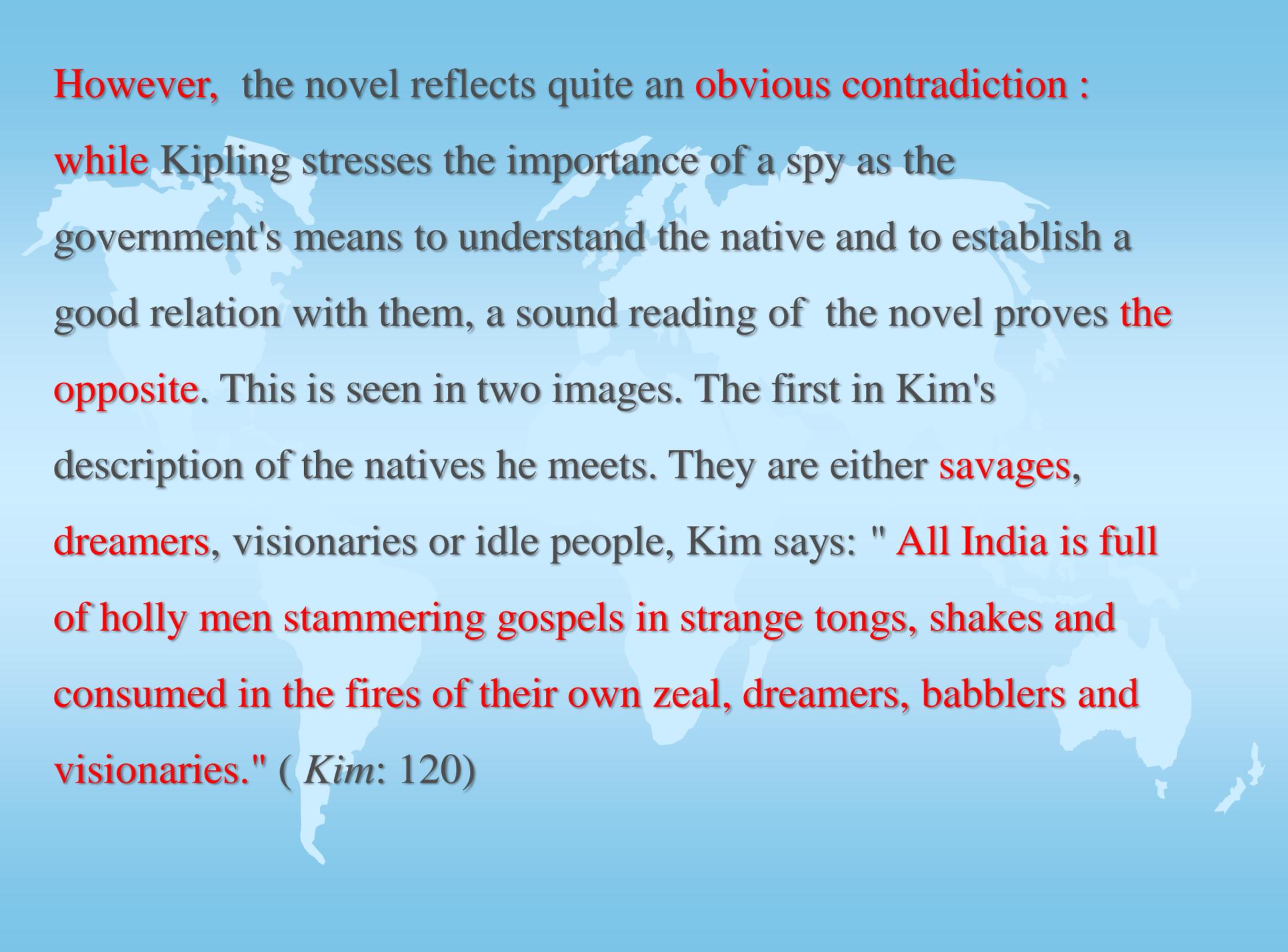


- Rudyard Kipling (British born in India) is among the earliest generations of the Anglo - Indian society. Many of his writings embody his opinions on the Anglo-Indians and the British Empire in general. He wrote about the Anglo - Indian people who were serving, building bridges and roads, making railways and enlarging and defending the Empire. He Thought men who are highly civilized as the Anglo - Indians should protect and feed those who are less civilized as the natives.

In this form of **identifying the British Empire as a saviour of the world**, Kipling deliberately ignores the fact that the Empire is primarily a **money making enterprise** and the flag of England, which he pictures as **a symbol for service and sacrifice**, stands in fact for the forcible policy of this Empire.

Kipling defended and praised the servants of the state, particularly the government's spy because , as Kipling thinks, he helps the government to get a better understanding of the natives and to establish a good relation with them.

In his novel Kim (1901), the protagonist Kim (of Irish origins but raised in India) is portrayed as an ideal Anglo Indian spy. On the one hand, he embodies Kipling's notion of the importance of work, which is clearly seen in his enthusiasm and loyalty in his work as a spy. And on the other hand, he enjoys a romantic side that appears in his novel to all the elements of nature around him. He is familiar with India and its people and this makes him better qualified for his job. This ideal picture of a spy is meant only to convince the reader that Kim's qualifications and service are directed to the welfare of India and the British Empire as well.



However, the novel reflects quite an **obvious contradiction** : **while** Kipling stresses the importance of a spy as the government's means to understand the native and to establish a good relation with them, a sound reading of the novel proves **the opposite**. This is seen in two images. The first in Kim's description of the natives he meets. They are either **savages**, **dreamers**, visionaries or idle people, Kim says: "**All India is full of holly men stammering gospels in strange tongs, shakes and consumed in the fires of their own zeal, dreamers, babblers and visionaries.**" (*Kim*: 120)

The second image depicts Kim in front of a **dilemma** , either to go to the village to search for the river of Arrow or to return to the city to **continue in his job**. The **village** stands for **the East** with all its **spiritual and religious values**. It is also, for Kipling, a world of illusions and dreams, while **the city** represents **the West**, a world of action and civilization **which wins at last**.

As **Kim preferred the city**, the center of civilization, on the village, the center of religious and spiritual values; it means that the wheel of the **Empire continues its domination on the East**.

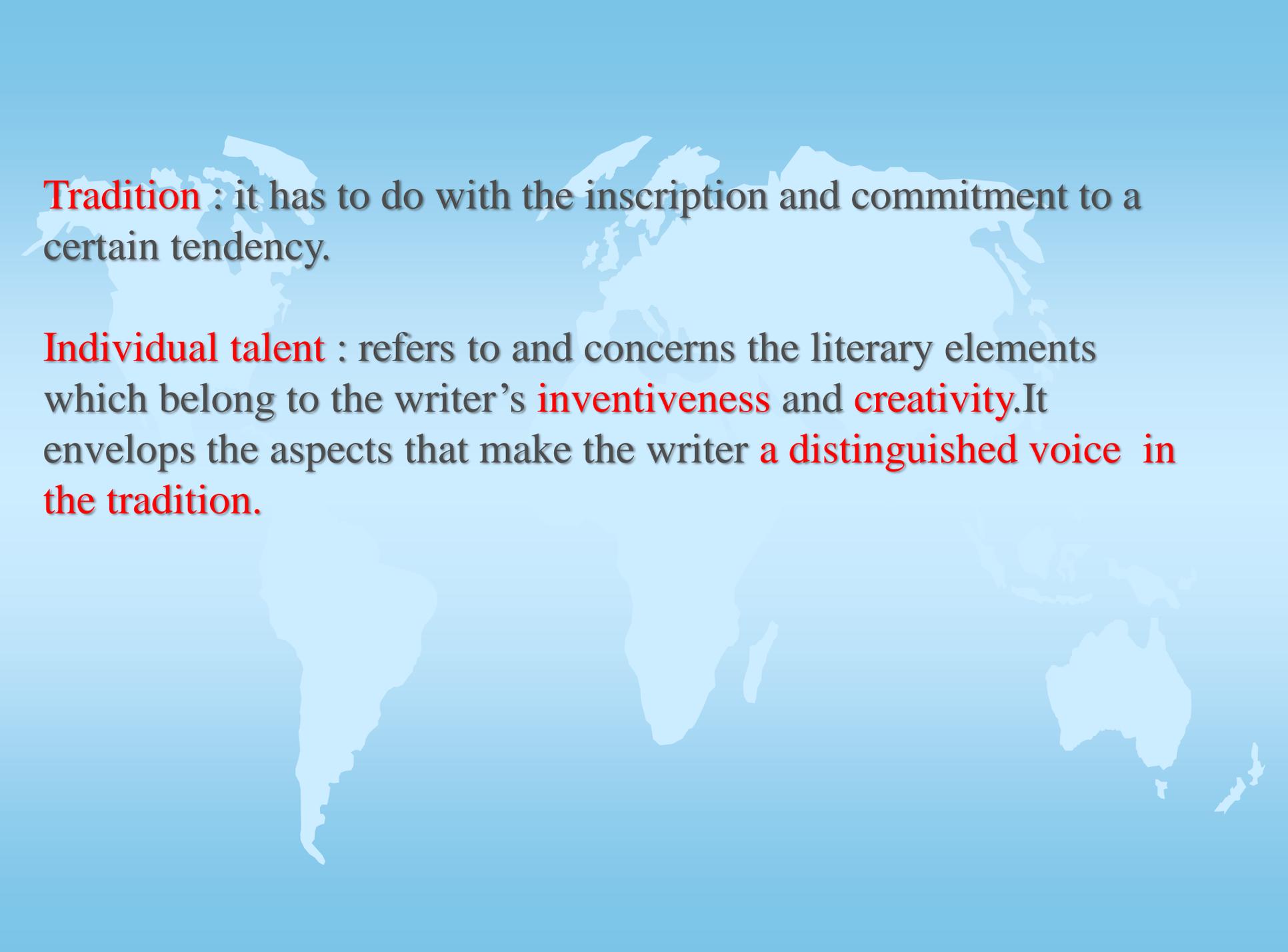
(*ibid*)

Imperialist literary works : Tradition and individual talent

In shaping his postcolonial theory and dealing with imperialist writings, E. Said made reference to T.S. Eliot's concept of **tradition and the individual talent**. In his essay entitled *'Tradition and the Individual Talent'* (1919), T.S. Eliot draws the distinction between the personal and the traditional aspects of any imperialist work.

Within the work of any writer there are *'aspects in which the least he resembles any one else.'* (Eliot, 1919: 24). (**individual talent**).

However, within the same work *'the most individual parts maybe those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality rigorously.'* (ibid) (**tradition**)



Tradition : it has to do with the inscription and commitment to a certain tendency.

Individual talent : refers to and concerns the literary elements which belong to the writer's **inventiveness** and **creativity**. It envelops the aspects that make the writer **a distinguished voice in the tradition**.

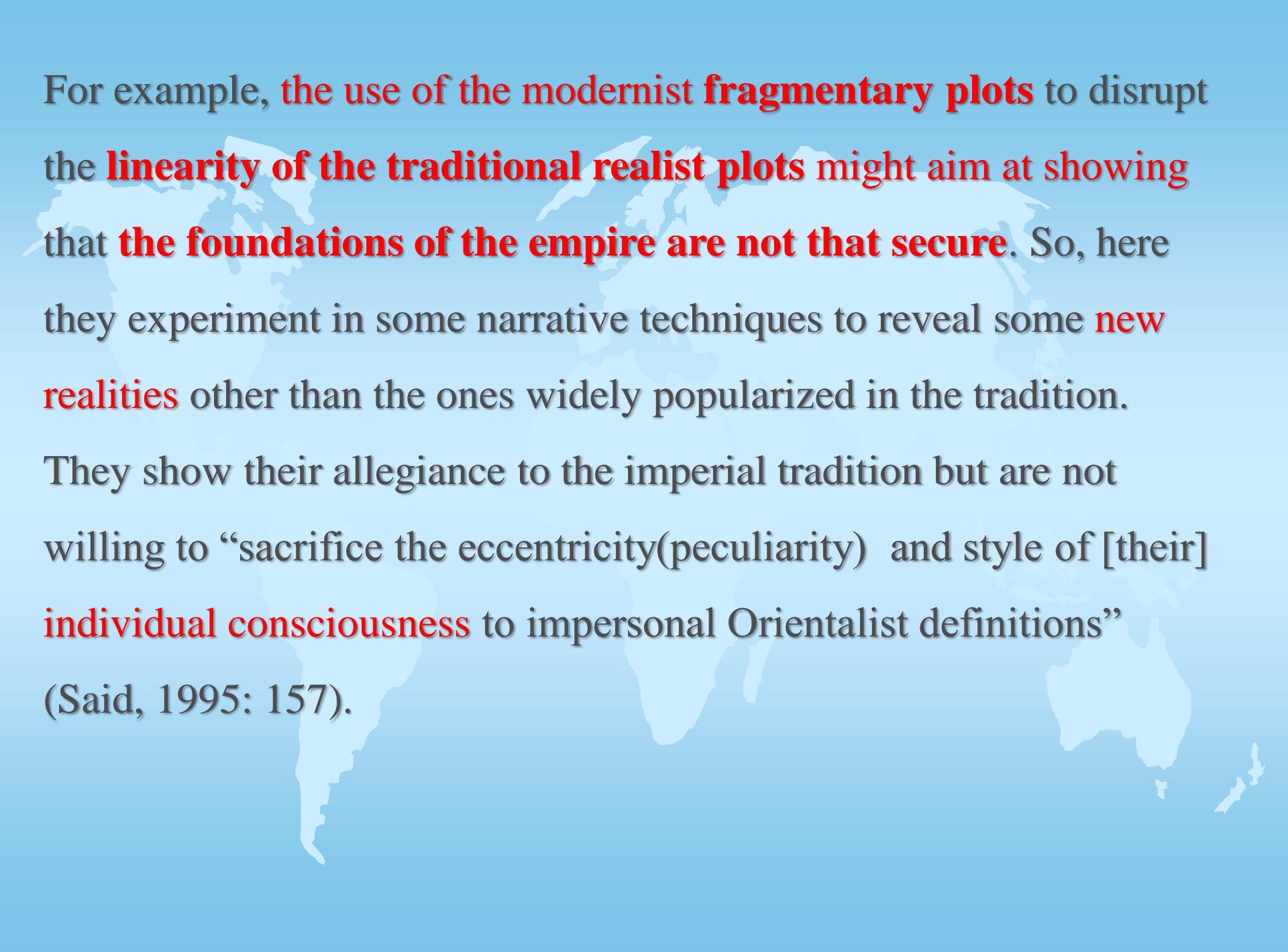
To be traditionalist (in aesthetics): to follow the traditional aesthetic devices such as metaphor, symbol and allegory . These aesthetic elements are traditional,for they are part of literary works throughout time.They are essential to colonial discourse as they involves **modes of representation. Indeed,** the crux of colonial discourse is the endeavour **to represent the colonised subject in contrast to the coloniser.** Ashcroft et al (2007) assert that much of the life of the colonised has been constructed ,that is, metaphorically written by the colonisers. They claim that ‘ **allegory has assumed an important function in imperial discourse.**’ (p.07)

So, it is of paramount importance to mention the fact that **allegory, metaphor and symbol used as extended metaphor** are predominately **appropriated in colonial discourse** to **represent** the colonised peoples as being **savage, inferior and backward** as **opposed to the coloniser as being civilised, superior and upright.**

(e.g cannibalism , primitivism of Friday in contrast to Crusoe's civilisation in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*).

Imperial writers adopt such metaphorical discourse in an attempt to perpetuate(continue) this **tradition** artistically.

To be individually talented : individual talent involves those aspects of the works which are **inventive** and **experimental**. Every writer appropriates elements that are **individual and inventive**, especially those of **the modernist literature**. The talent is not pinned down (restricted) to the devices of representation like metaphor and **symbol**. Individual talent's most important aspects are shown **at the level of language** and **narrative point of view**. The task of any analysis of Orientalist discourse is to show the way the writers deploy such devices to **unveil the ideologies** behind this **discourse**. It is in these elements that the writers' **inventiveness** is given full vent.



For example, the use of the modernist **fragmentary plots** to disrupt the **linearity of the traditional realist plots** might aim at showing that **the foundations of the empire are not that secure**. So, here they experiment in some narrative techniques to reveal some **new realities** other than the ones widely popularized in the tradition. They show their allegiance to the imperial tradition but are not willing to “sacrifice the eccentricity(peculiarity) and style of [their] **individual consciousness** to impersonal Orientalist definitions” (Said, 1995: 157).

To conclude :

The writers of the early twentieth century aspired and strived to bring some changes to the Victorian imperial orthodoxy to consolidate the empire. They found in this aspiration another tendency, namely the adherence to **the modernist experiments in style** along with a **a distinct view of realities**. Such writers correspond to the category of Orientalist /imperialist writers who **were not ready to sacrifice their style for the sake of the imperialist orthodoxy**. (Siber,2012)

Lecture 09: Language and Colonialism

Writing in the language of the other is a controversial issue in postcolonial studies that was raised by Aimé Césaire who said that **he has no problem in writing in French, and that is not what he wanted, but what happened is that the language that he wrote in is the language he has learned at school,** though he emphasized privacy and cultural immunity of black writers, and was the one who coined the term **Négritude** and defended it saying that **"there is no innocent colonization."**

-Many writers justify their **writing in the language of the other** by saying that all countries have turned into societies of **an international or global character**. The Indian Anita Desai, who wrote in English, has advocated a controversial idea: taking advantage of the vast linguistic pluralism in her country, she made of **local English** another language added to Hindi languages.

Also, Taher Ben Jelloun (who write in French) sees that the exposure to the French culture does not forcibly mean **the loss of identity**.

The Spanish **Juan Goytisolo** says that that the Moroccan writers, who write in French, work **on the level of meaning in isolation from the spirit of the French language they use.**

On the other hand , there are those who disagree with this approach, and believe that the discussion of post-colonial writing is in general a discussion of the connotation of **the power that language carries** , and therefore distorting it (as claimed by **Juan Goytisolo**) is meant to **distance it from the imperial European culture.**

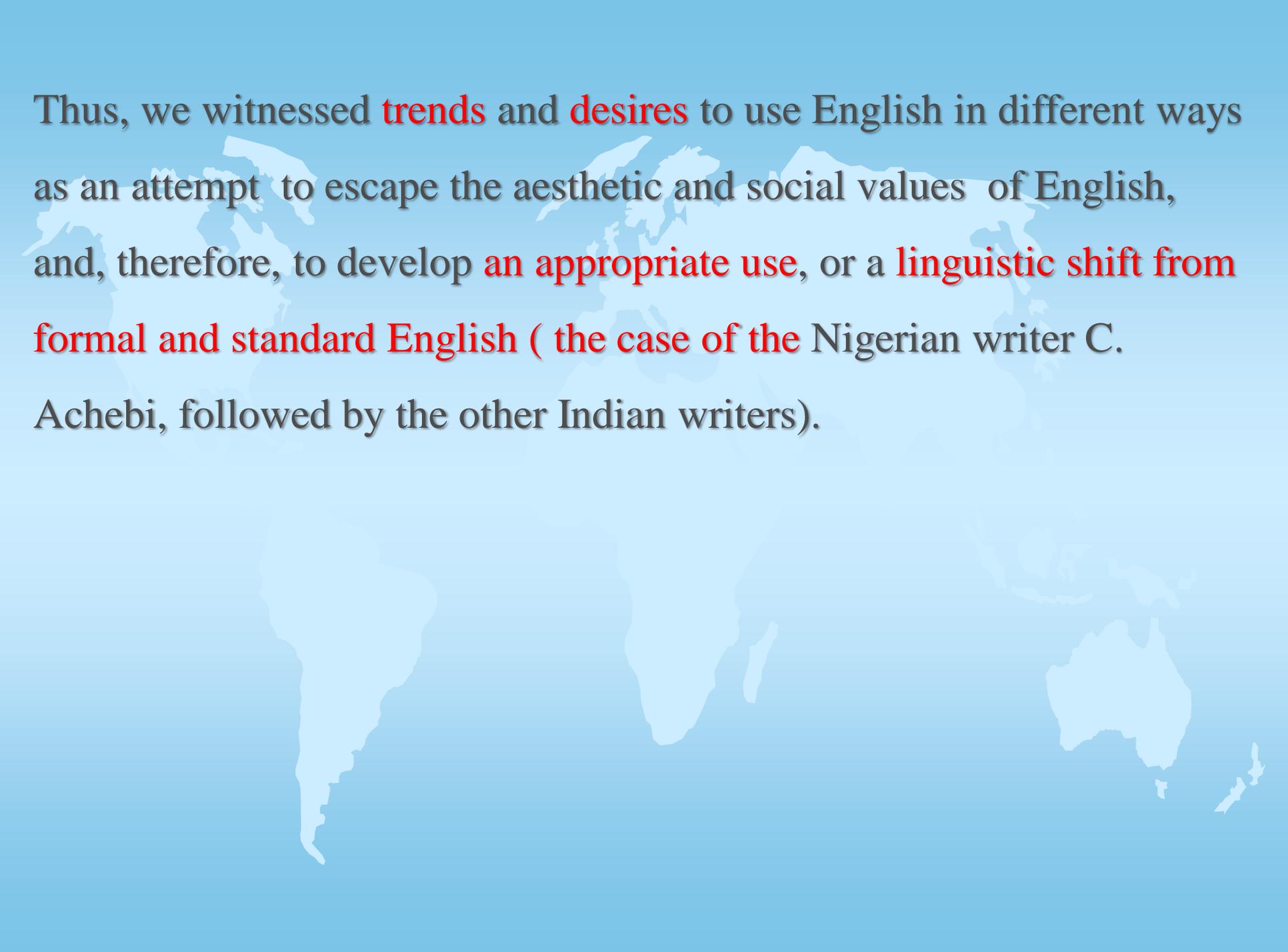
Sometimes it may be necessary, for example, to deny the status of English; and this implies a rejection of the authority of the imperial power, and its hypothetical aesthetics (**the process of acquisition**), the process by which language is taken and set to carry a person's own cultural experience .i.e.-**de-colonising foreign language and writing-**

It can be said that the **study of English** and the **growth of the empire** developed in **the same ideological environment**, and that the development of the one was in essence governed and conditioned by the development of the other, at a conscious level that underscores **brutality and primitivism** (among the colonised) and calls for reform(**Act of Civilizing**).

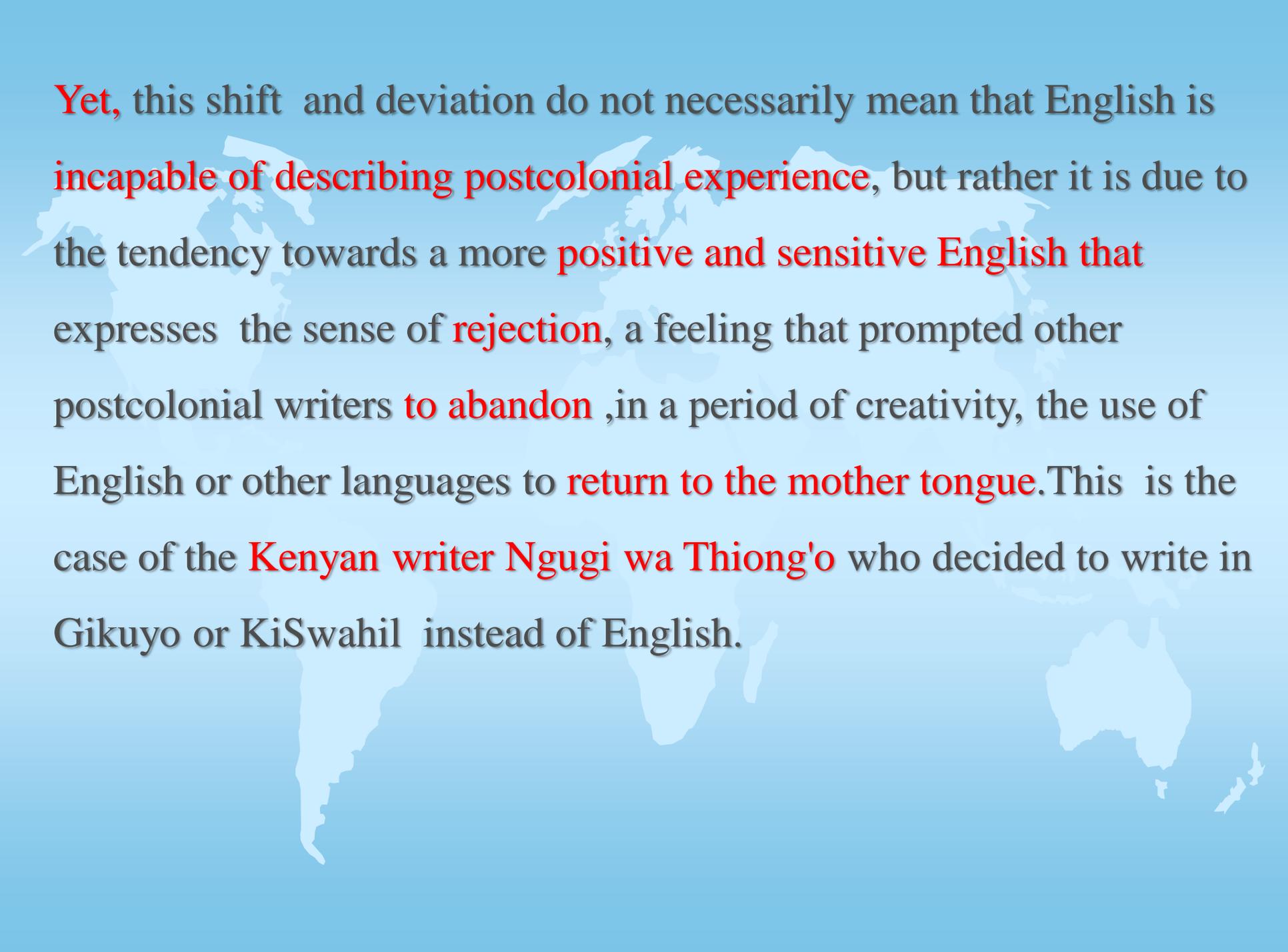
There is a clear link between the historical phase of the growth of English academically and the colonial forms of imperialism in the 19th century. The British colonial administration with the support of missionaries **discovered in English literature an ally to suppress rebellion and control the indigenous peoples-** under what was called **Liberal Education**.

It seems also clear that control of **the means of communication**- as advocated by the French **Tzvetan Todorov**-is a fundamental principle that gives power to any colonial project, and that control is always revealed by **the power of the writing system**.

Even in the practice of writing, there is a common distinction between “**E**nglish” and “**e**nglish” as a reference to the multiple ways in which the language can be used by different groups in the postcolonial world. The language of the Imperial **Center** (English) versus the language of **margins** (english) that was forged in the context of a **repressive discourse**, and that **had to carry the special experience of its producers.i.e. the coloized**.



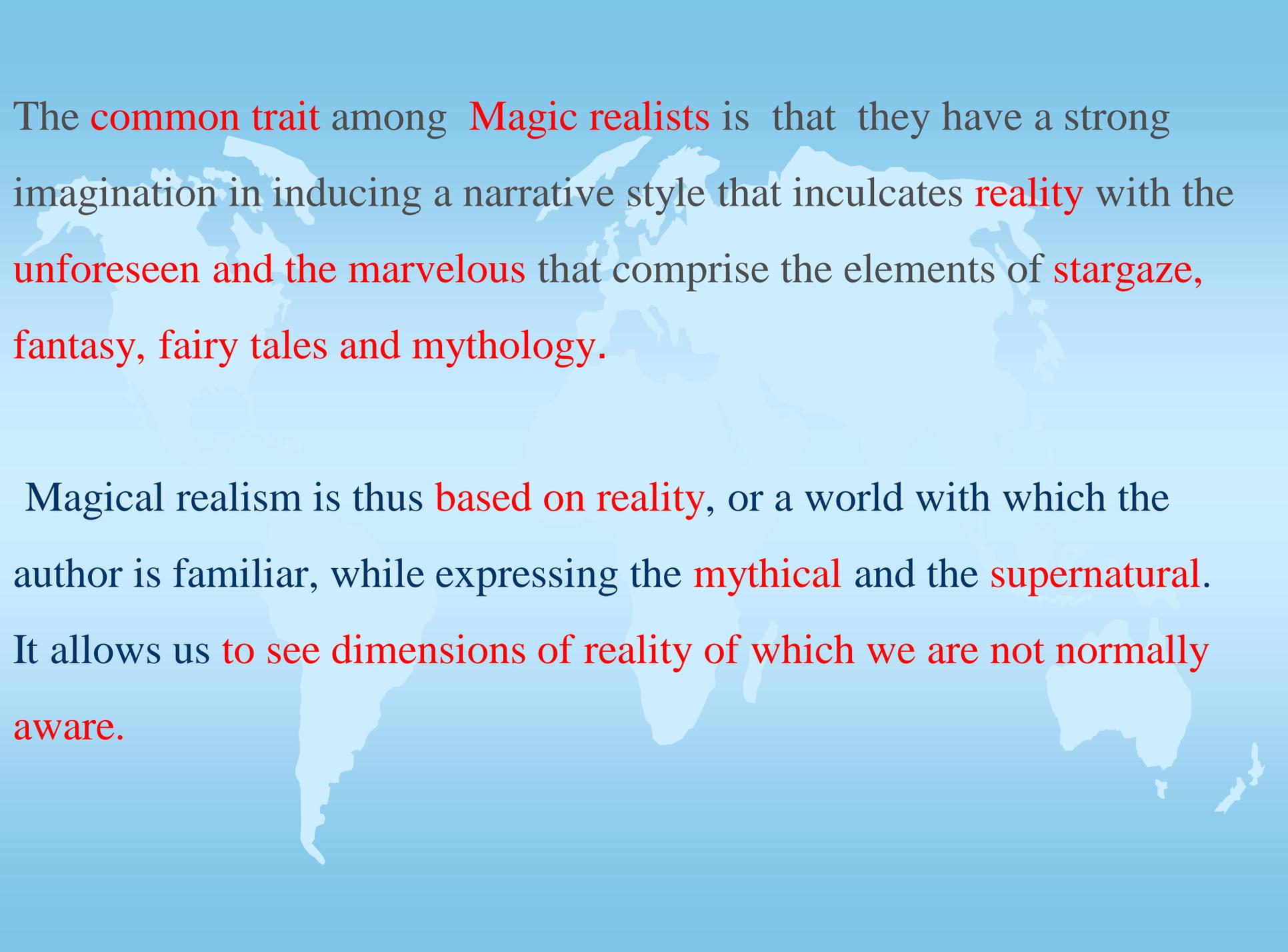
Thus, we witnessed **trends** and **desires** to use English in different ways as an attempt to escape the aesthetic and social values of English, and, therefore, to develop **an appropriate use**, or a **linguistic shift from formal and standard English** (the case of the Nigerian writer C. Achebi, followed by the other Indian writers).



Yet, this shift and deviation do not necessarily mean that English is incapable of describing postcolonial experience, but rather it is due to the tendency towards a more positive and sensitive English that expresses the sense of rejection, a feeling that prompted other postcolonial writers to abandon, in a period of creativity, the use of English or other languages to return to the mother tongue. This is the case of the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o who decided to write in Gikuyu or KiSwahil instead of English.

Lecture 10 : Magic(al) Realism in Postcolonial Literature: Magical Realism: A definition

Magic(al) Realism is a **literary style** that combines **incredible events** with **realistic details** and presents them in a **tone that seems to suggest credibility**. The term was first used in 1925 by **art critic**, Franz Roh; later magical realism grew to become a key feature in the **Latin American literary** traditions. By the 1990s, magical realism, in the words of Bhabha, became the '**literary language of the emergent postcolonial world**' (cited in Hart & Ouyang, 2010:07). This interlacing of fantastical events with the mundane (ordinary) was pioneered in **Latin America in the works of Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez** and others.



The **common trait** among **Magic realists** is that they have a strong imagination in inducing a narrative style that inculcates **reality** with the **unforeseen and the marvelous** that comprise the elements of **stargaze, fantasy, fairy tales and mythology.**

Magical realism is thus **based on reality**, or a world with which the author is familiar, while expressing the **mythical** and the **supernatural.** It allows us **to see dimensions of reality of which we are not normally aware.**

Famous postcolonial magic realistic works :

Magical realism is seen as achieving its canonical materialization in 1967, in Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. However, magical realist narratives of equal importance emerged in later years in non-Hispanic countries. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980) is one of many examples of the magical realist genre migrating to other cultural shores.

Relevance and objectives :

-The formerly colonized nations assert that **it was not just wealth and territory that was taken from them, but also imagination** (Durix, 1998). Therefore, Magical Realism is a **recapturing** of this **imagination in the postcolonial age**.

-Magic Realism as a narrative mode provides a way to discuss **alternative approaches to reality different from that of Western philosophy** (Bowers, 2005).

-Magical Realism ,at least in literary contexts,seems most operative in cultures situated at the fringes of mainstream literary traditions.(Selmon,2004)

-Magical Realism encodes the **notion of resistance** to the massive **imperial centre** and its **totalizing systems**.

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-The **imaginative power and political appeal** of magical realism that its texts capture everyday realism, while simultaneously suggesting **new modes of being (a re-imagining of the past, for instance)**. Magical realism has used this forum for the expression of diverse ideas to a powerful extent, paying particular attention to the postcolonial subject.

-While not all marginal (postcolonial) literary traditions exemplify the traits of magical realism, and while the writing of former colonial powers is not entirely free from the tradition either, **magical realism carries a symbolic representation of a 'resistance toward the imperial centre'** (Slemon, 1995 cited in Miller, 2014:02)

Major elements/aspects of Magic Realism in Literature

- **Ordinary events with a touch of the extraordinary** :marvelous events are presented as normal.

- **Magic**:the extraordinary, things that aren't natural, that are more than man can accomplish by normal means. There is a sense of astonishment about magic that allows us to suspend our disbelief, even for just a moment, to consider whether something like that really truly could actually happen.

- **Realism**: it plays a significant role in magic realism. The primary and basic plot will **be about real things in the real world**, but there is an undercurrent of magic. Realism should play the biggest part in any story with Magical Realism, not the magic.

-Plot : The key to Magical Realistic stories is that they depict everyday events in which extraordinary things happen.

-Time : Time tends to be more fluid in Magical Realism. **It doesn't have to be linear**, or necessarily flow in one direction .

-Authorial Reticence:

The narrator does not provide explanations about the credibility of events described in the text. Further, the narrator is indifferent; the story proceeds with logical precision **as if nothing extraordinary took place.**

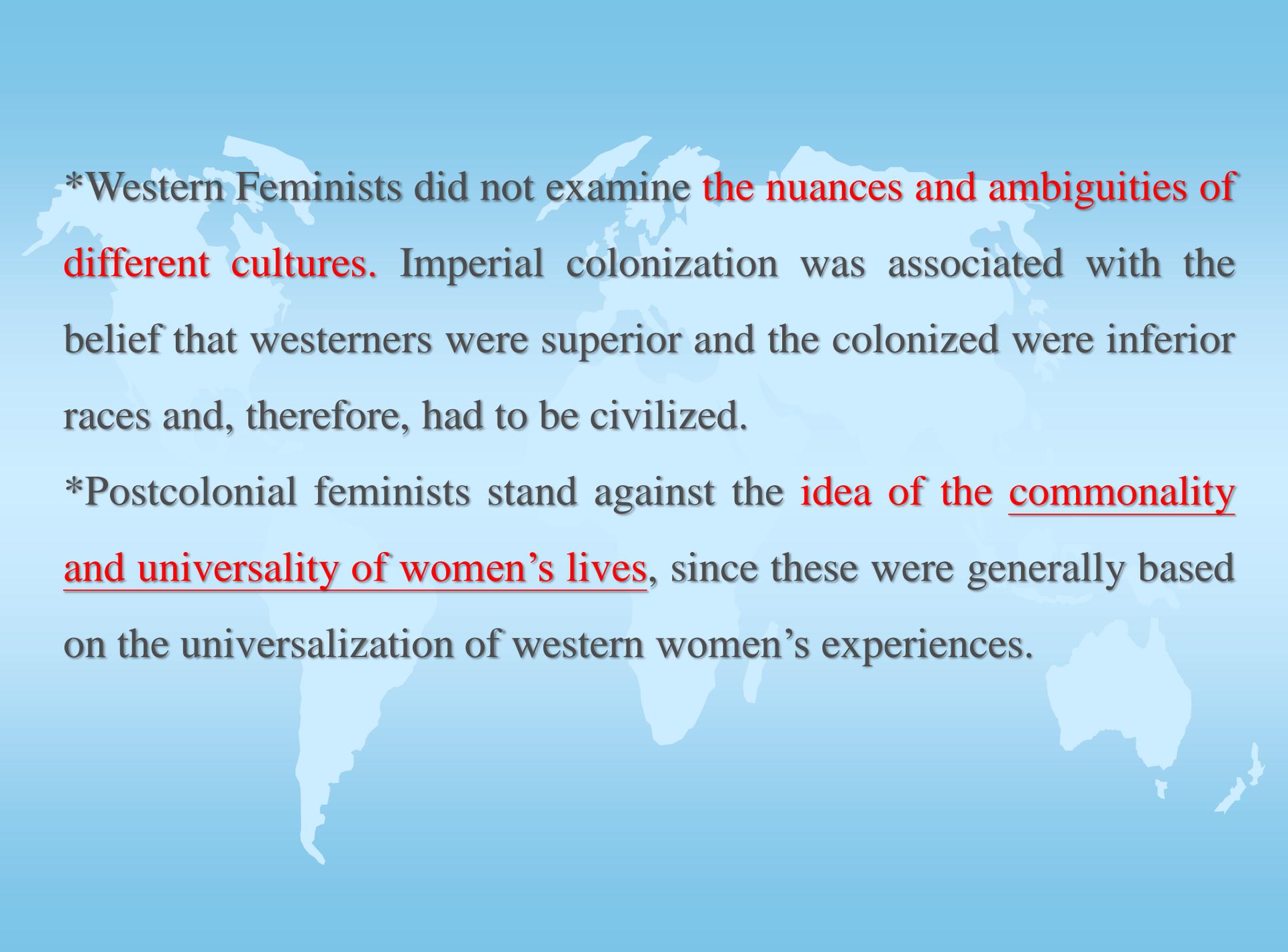
Experimental structure: non-linear, flashbacks, fragmentation in stories, multiple POV switching frequently, stream of consciousness

-Internal logic : even extraordinary things must work within the larger framework of the story and not contradict each other.

Lecture 11: Postcolonial Feminism : An overview

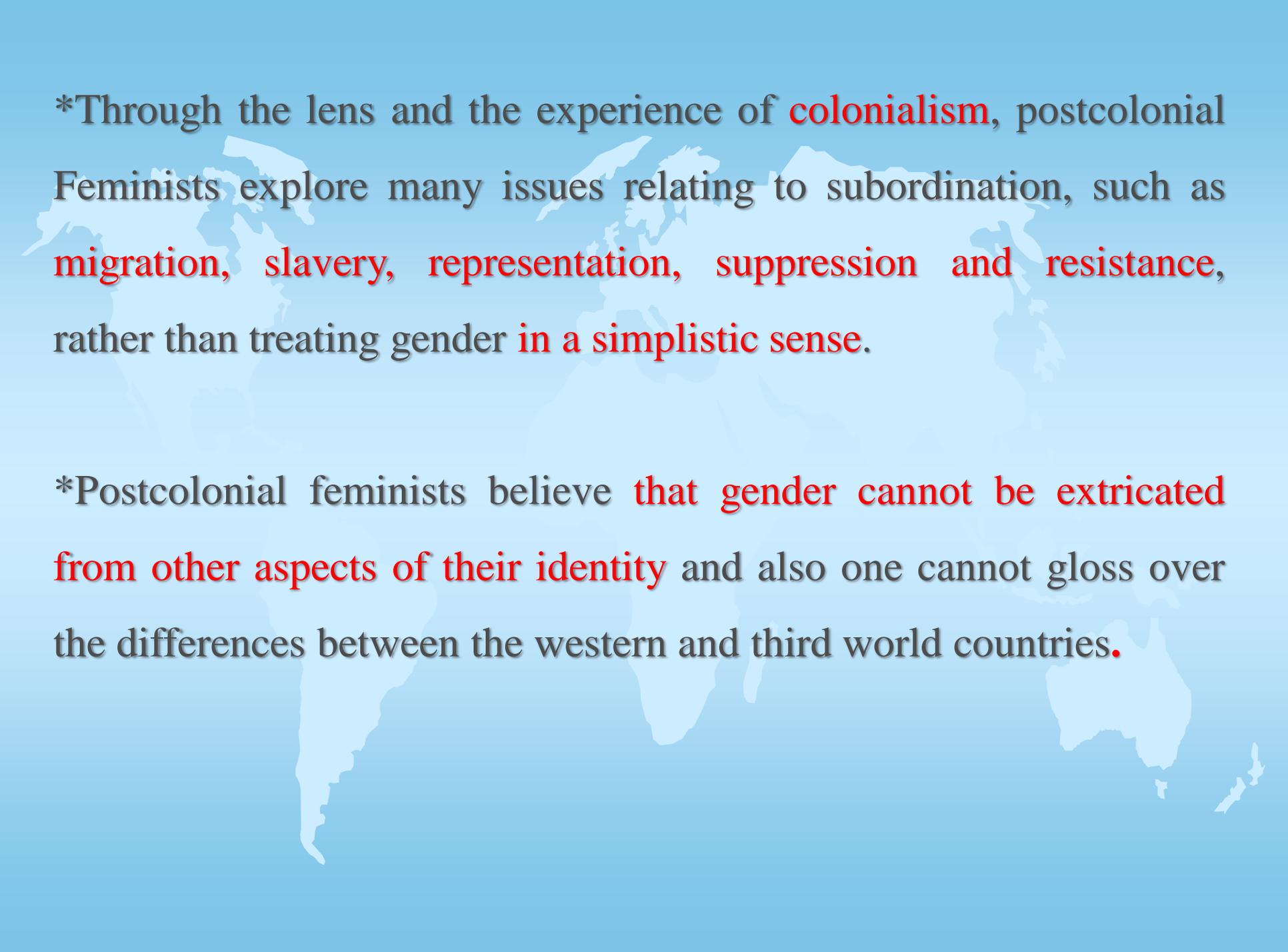
*Basically, postcolonial feminists find parallels between colonialism and the subjugation of women.

*The western feminists had a narrow focus on the general belief that all women should be equal to men and emphasized the sameness and solidarity of women, irrespective of their manifold cultural, social, and economic differences.



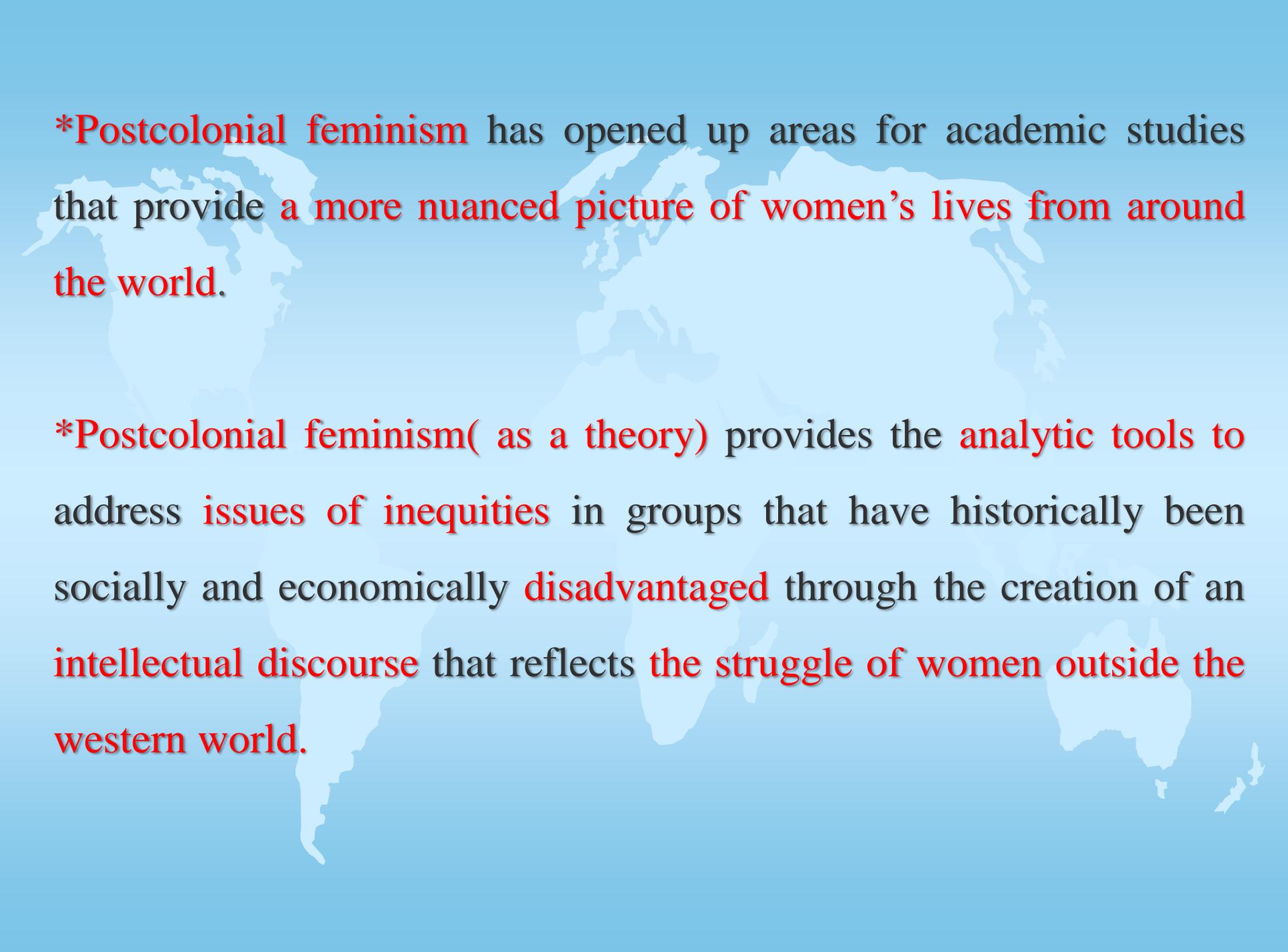
*Western Feminists did not examine **the nuances and ambiguities of different cultures**. Imperial colonization was associated with the belief that westerners were superior and the colonized were inferior races and, therefore, had to be civilized.

*Postcolonial feminists stand against the **idea of the commonality and universality of women's lives**, since these were generally based on the universalization of western women's experiences.



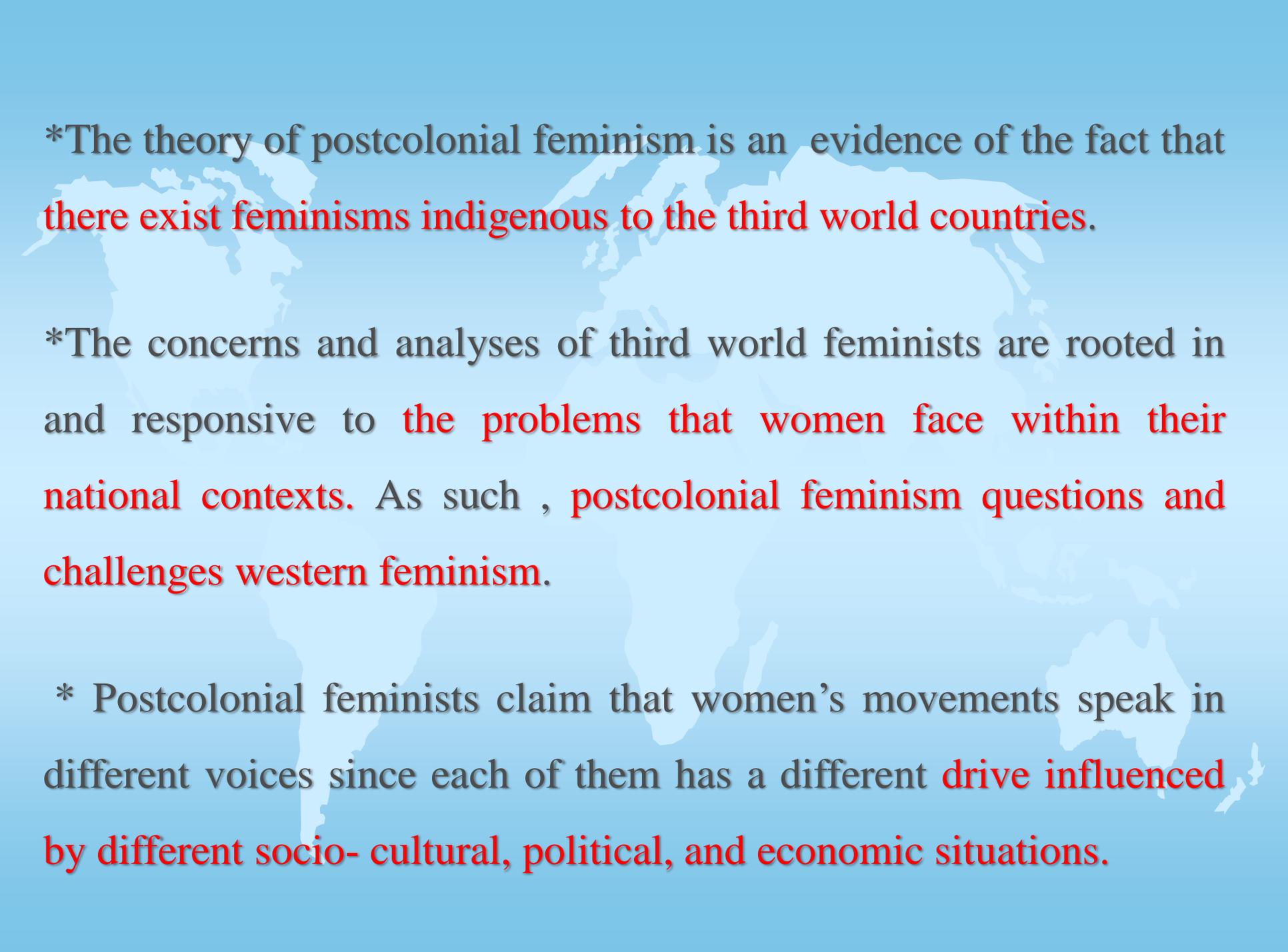
*Through the lens and the experience of **colonialism**, postcolonial Feminists explore many issues relating to subordination, such as **migration, slavery, representation, suppression and resistance**, rather than treating gender **in a simplistic sense**.

*Postcolonial feminists believe **that gender cannot be extricated from other aspects of their identity** and also one cannot gloss over the differences between the western and third world countries.



***Postcolonial feminism** has opened up areas for academic studies that provide a more nuanced picture of women's lives from around the world.

***Postcolonial feminism(as a theory)** provides the **analytic tools** to address **issues of inequities** in groups that have historically been socially and economically **disadvantaged** through the creation of an **intellectual discourse** that reflects **the struggle of women outside the western world.**



*The theory of postcolonial feminism is an evidence of the fact that **there exist feminisms indigenous to the third world countries.**

*The concerns and analyses of third world feminists are rooted in and responsive to **the problems that women face within their national contexts.** As such , **postcolonial feminism questions and challenges western feminism.**

* Postcolonial feminists claim that women's movements speak in different voices since each of them has a different **drive influenced by different socio- cultural, political, and economic situations.**

Conclusion

Postcolonial or 'third world feminism' emerged in response to Western mainstream feminism. Western feminism has never been heedful(mindful) to the differences pertaining to class, race, feelings, and settings of women in colonized territories. Postcolonial feminism rejects Western feminism on the ground of its utter 'eurocentricism'. Hence, it is quite fallacious to hope postcolonial females to be valued, appreciated and justified by the Western hands.

The long Western tendency to homogenize and universalize women and their experiences led to the emergence of 'postcolonial feminism'. Postcolonial feminism is a hopeful discourse ;it seeks social, cultural, economic, and religious freedoms for marginalized women. (Mishra,2013:120)

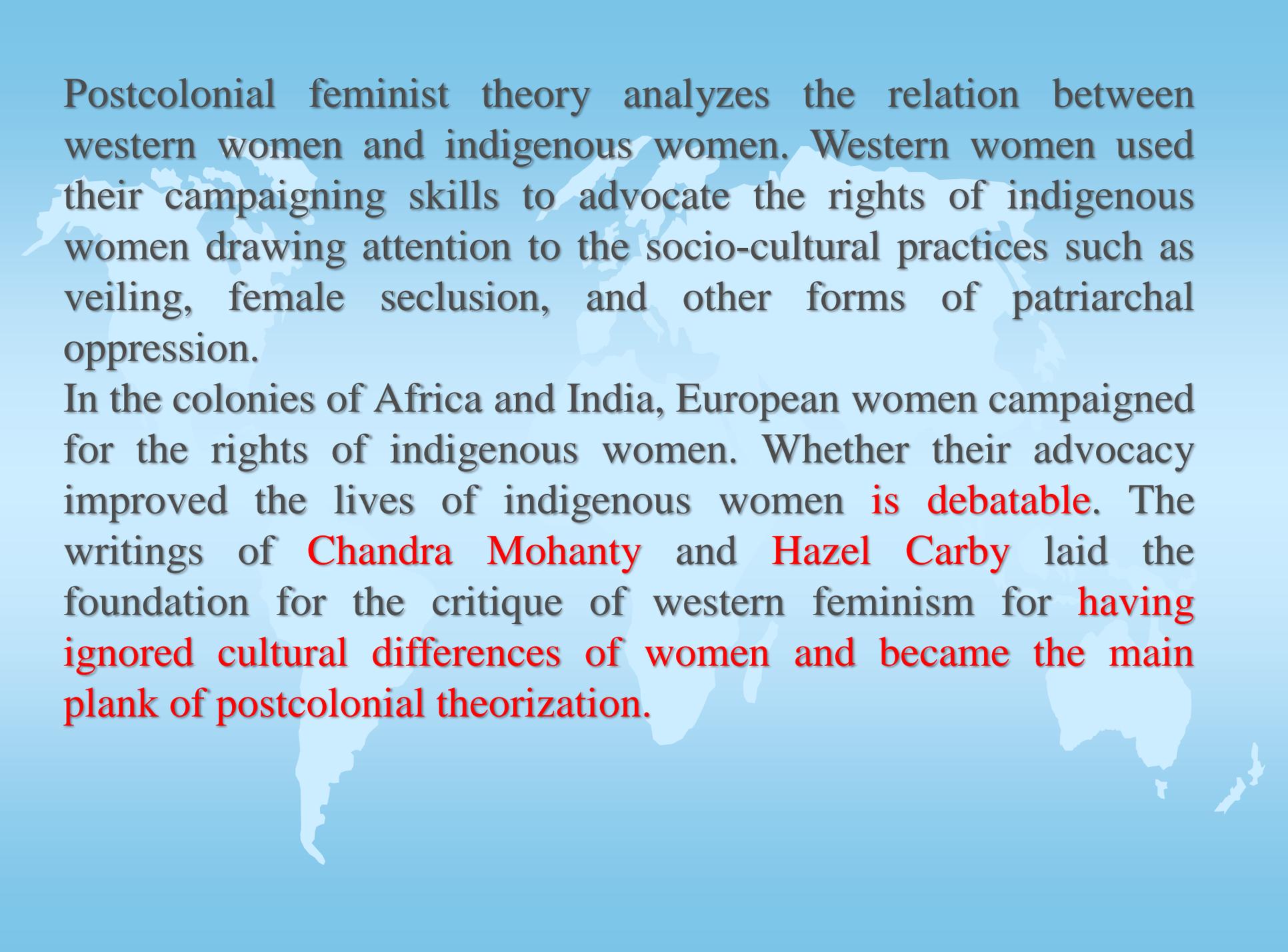


**TENETS OF POSTCOLONIAL
FEMINISM**

Indigenous Cultural Criticism

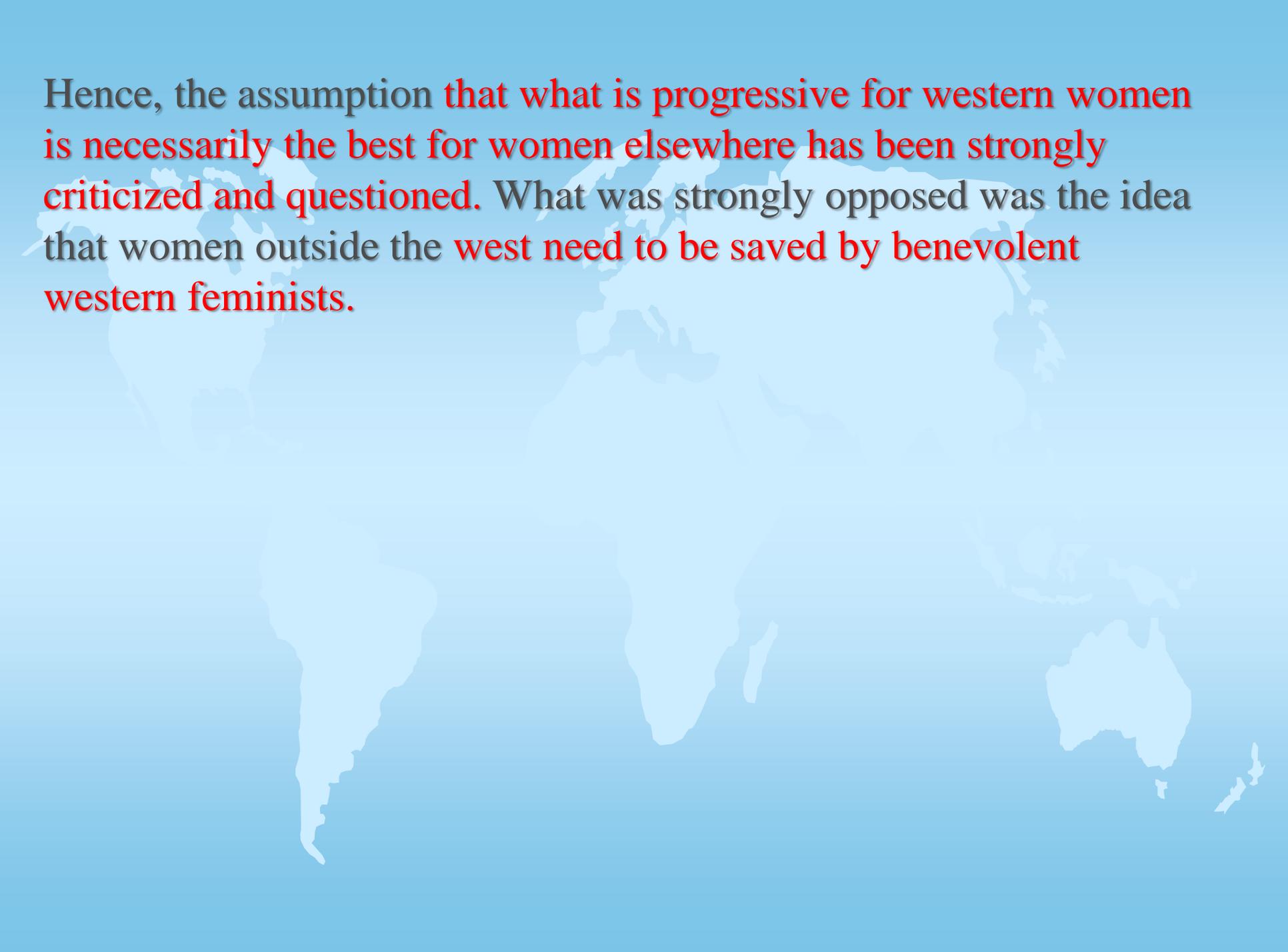
Postcolonial feminist criticism is particularly leveled against the first and second wave feminisms that are entirely western in conception, origin, and development.

Western feminism homogenizes and systematizes the oppression of women without situating them in their culture, ideology and socioeconomic conditions which are different for different groups. Postcolonial feminists raise objections to the consideration of women as “already constituted and coherent groups with identical interests and desires regardless of class, ethnic or racial location... The notion of gender or sexual difference or even patriarchy cannot be applied universally and cross culturally” (Mohanty, 1988, p.52).



Postcolonial feminist theory analyzes the relation between western women and indigenous women. Western women used their campaigning skills to advocate the rights of indigenous women drawing attention to the socio-cultural practices such as veiling, female seclusion, and other forms of patriarchal oppression.

In the colonies of Africa and India, European women campaigned for the rights of indigenous women. Whether their advocacy improved the lives of indigenous women **is debatable**. The writings of **Chandra Mohanty** and **Hazel Carby** laid the foundation for the critique of western feminism for **having ignored cultural differences of women and became the main plank of postcolonial theorization**.



Hence, the assumption that what is progressive for western women is necessarily the best for women elsewhere has been strongly criticized and questioned. What was strongly opposed was the idea that women outside the west need to be saved by benevolent western feminists.

Heterogeneity, Plurality and Inclusion :

Western feminists analyse women as a socially constituted homogeneous group across races, classes, and cultures. But women are also material subjects of their history. Stated differently, women's experiences are not just influenced by their gender but also by the specific contexts of the historical situations that they live in. **Since these will vary across time periods and cultures, it would become impossible to speak of all women as having common experiences, problems or traits.**

The non-homogeneity (heterogeneity) of women is raised by postcolonial feminists like Chandra Mohanty as a counter to the trend of **universalisation of women in western feminist theory.**

The non-homogeneity of women is an obvious fact. Whatever be the approach to the analysis of women, they are a heterogeneous group differentiated by socio-economic, cultural and locational characteristics as well as by degrees of adjustment to cultural and economic process.

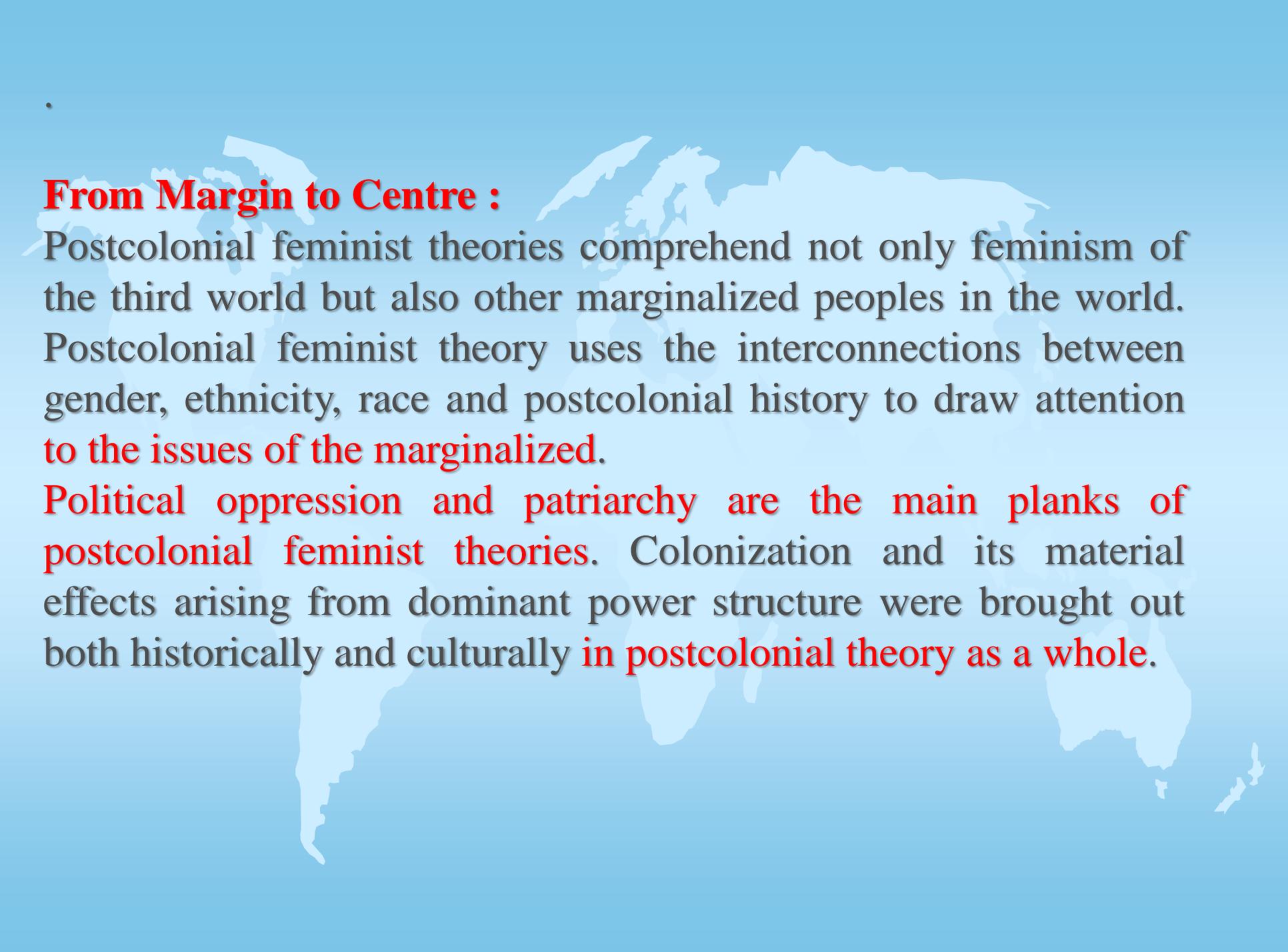
Postcolonial feminism celebrates plurality through its explorations of marginality and heterogeneity. It rejects the universalisation of values and conventions. Postcolonial feminist theory contradicts a universalized, homogenous concept of women and the exclusion of race, class and other factors in the analysis.

Double Colonization of Women :

‘Double Colonization’ is the description of the two forms of dominance, **patriarchy and imperialism.**

Both forms of dominance-patriarchy and imperialism- are comparable and overlapping.

Double colonization **refers to women of colonized nations being doubly oppressed due to their race as well as their gender.** It analyzes the concerns of women as members of marginalized groups within postcolonial societies, the case of indigenous minorities, **and as women with a history of unbroken oppression**



From Margin to Centre :

Postcolonial feminist theories comprehend not only feminism of the third world but also other marginalized peoples in the world. Postcolonial feminist theory uses the interconnections between gender, ethnicity, race and postcolonial history to draw attention to the issues of the marginalized.

Political oppression and patriarchy are the main planks of postcolonial feminist theories. Colonization and its material effects arising from dominant power structure were brought out both historically and culturally in postcolonial theory as a whole.

First, there are questions of relationship between western feminism and postcolonial people. **Gayatri Spivak** questions the prominence given to European cultural notions and values in western feminism.

Second, the issue of language is a significant one since the bulk of postcolonial studies has been mainly in English. Language implies power. Third world writings used in western universities are primarily those written originally in English, even though translations from indigenous to dominant language and vice versa have recently provided a wider reading circle.

Third, postcolonial theory has enabled third world intellectuals to participate in global discourse. Although postcolonial experiences vary widely depending on each culture's specific history and culture, the discourse of postcolonialism has enabled all of these voices to find a central and powerful plank from which to share their common as well as different experiences.

Intersection :

This simply means that Postcolonial and Feminist theories are parallel and convergent, and they intersect each other. Through symbolism of women and their sharing of oppression and repression with colonized races and culture as colonized, Feminist theory and postcolonial theory run parallel to each other since both discourses are predominantly political and concern themselves with the struggle against oppression and injustice.

(Adapted from **Shenmugasundaram,2017,pp.387-388**)

Lecture 12 : Feminist Theory and Postcolonial Criticism

Feminist views had an increasing importance in postcolonial criticism. Contemporary feminist strategies and postcolonial theory overlap and exchange interest. There is a clear parallel between the history and concerns of feminist theory and postcolonial theory. This is indicated by feminist critics such as **Jean Rhys, Doris Lessing, Tony Morrison** and **G.Spivak** whose works have reflected special visions seeking to restore **the marginalized**, as they strive to put an end to the structures of hegemony and confront the unfair **patriarchal traditions**. The most important issue is questioning the hypotheses that arose the perceptions of **repression and subjugation**. This questioning entails revealing and exposing the ways through which **the dominant** silence **the dominated**.

The task of feminist criticism is to oppose and exclude the patriarchal reading and replace it with another, healthier, self-imposed type of reading having an equal presence with the patriarchal one that all too often reflects the vision of man only.

This is in line and parallel with postcolonial theory, which deals with caution with the value systems developed by the “Superior Western Man”, and that granted him a range of privileges

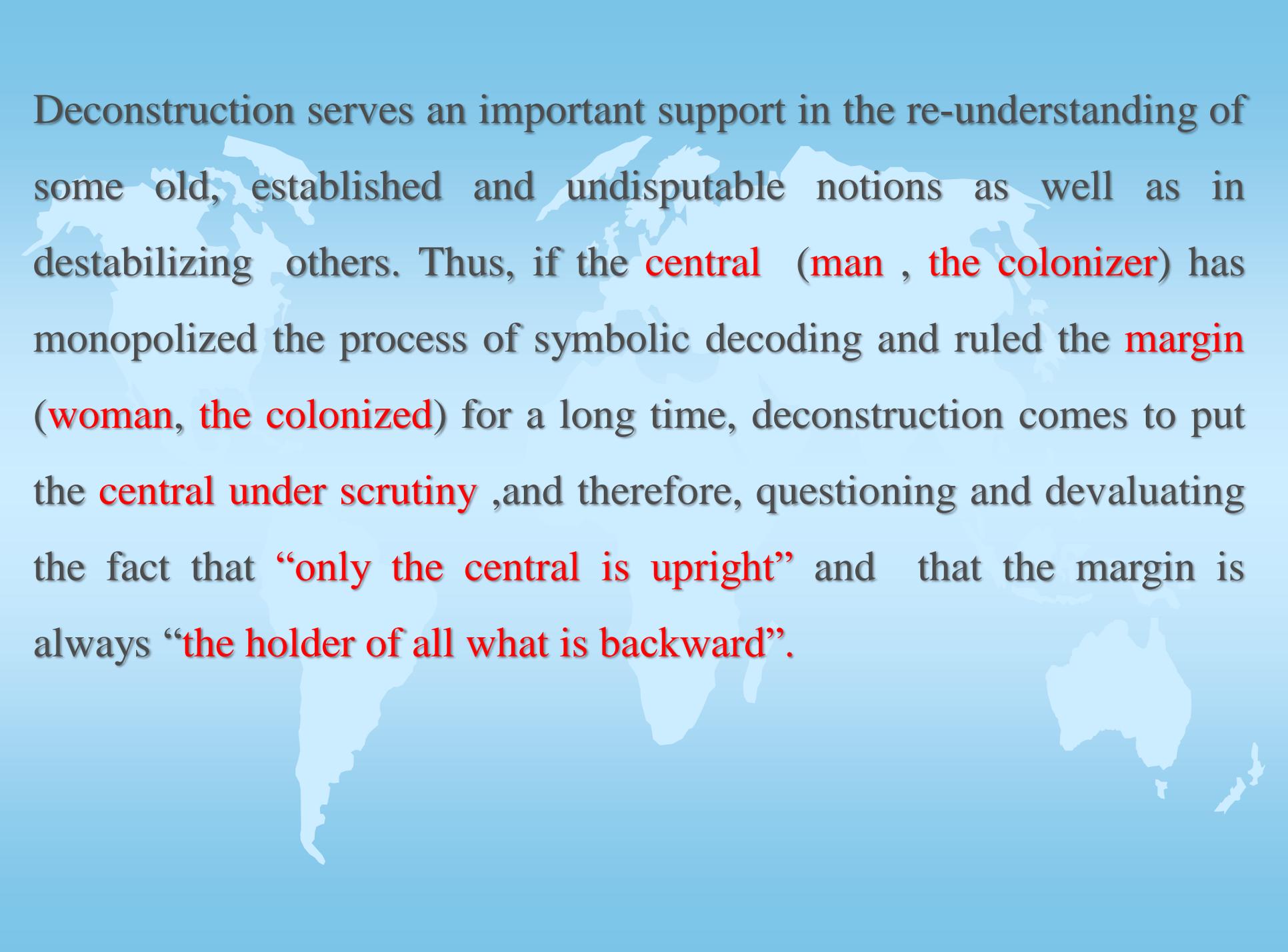
These privileges enabled him to obtain the mechanisms of repression and hegemony, some of which is silencing the other, as expressed by Spivak in her research on the double oppression/colonialism practiced on colonial women.

This silencing aimed at establishing a set of **entrenched moral and social perceptions** that **ignore basic human rights**, a fact that was strongly rejected by Spivak in her claim for drawing attention to **the political, social and ideological power of racism in societies**.

Here lies the necessity and the significance of the parallel -side by side running of what is **deconstructive** with what is political. And here also it becomes very clear that both feminist criticism and postcolonial criticism are attached to **the deconstructive stream(line)**.

they both found themselves standing in front of concepts such as “**white and black**” , “**men and women**”; concepts that inculcate and deepen an arbitrary tendency within the collective consciousness of societies.

Some critics view **deconstruction** as an activity whose first objective is to redress certain human sectors whose rights have been distorted within old theory.



Deconstruction serves an important support in the re-understanding of some old, established and undisputable notions as well as in destabilizing others. Thus, if the **central** (**man** , **the colonizer**) has monopolized the process of symbolic decoding and ruled the **margin** (**woman**, **the colonized**) for a long time, deconstruction comes to put the **central under scrutiny** ,and therefore, questioning and devaluating the fact that **“only the central is upright”** and that the margin is always **“the holder of all what is backward”**.

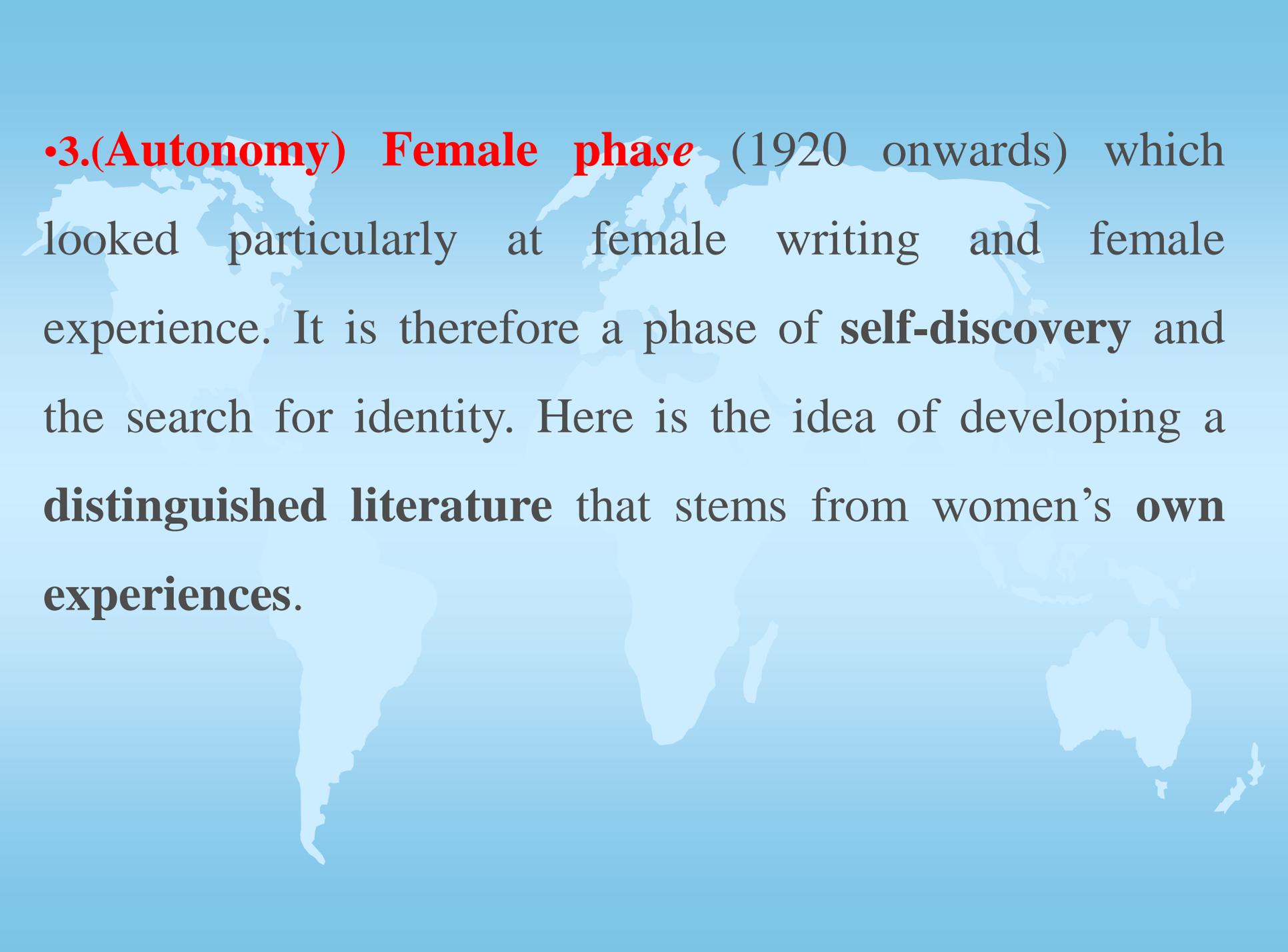
The parallelism between feminist and postcolonial theories is also strikingly evident in the stages of the development of literary writing in both camps.

In her book *A Literature of Their Own* (first published In 1977). Elaine Showalter points to the developmental stages of women writing :

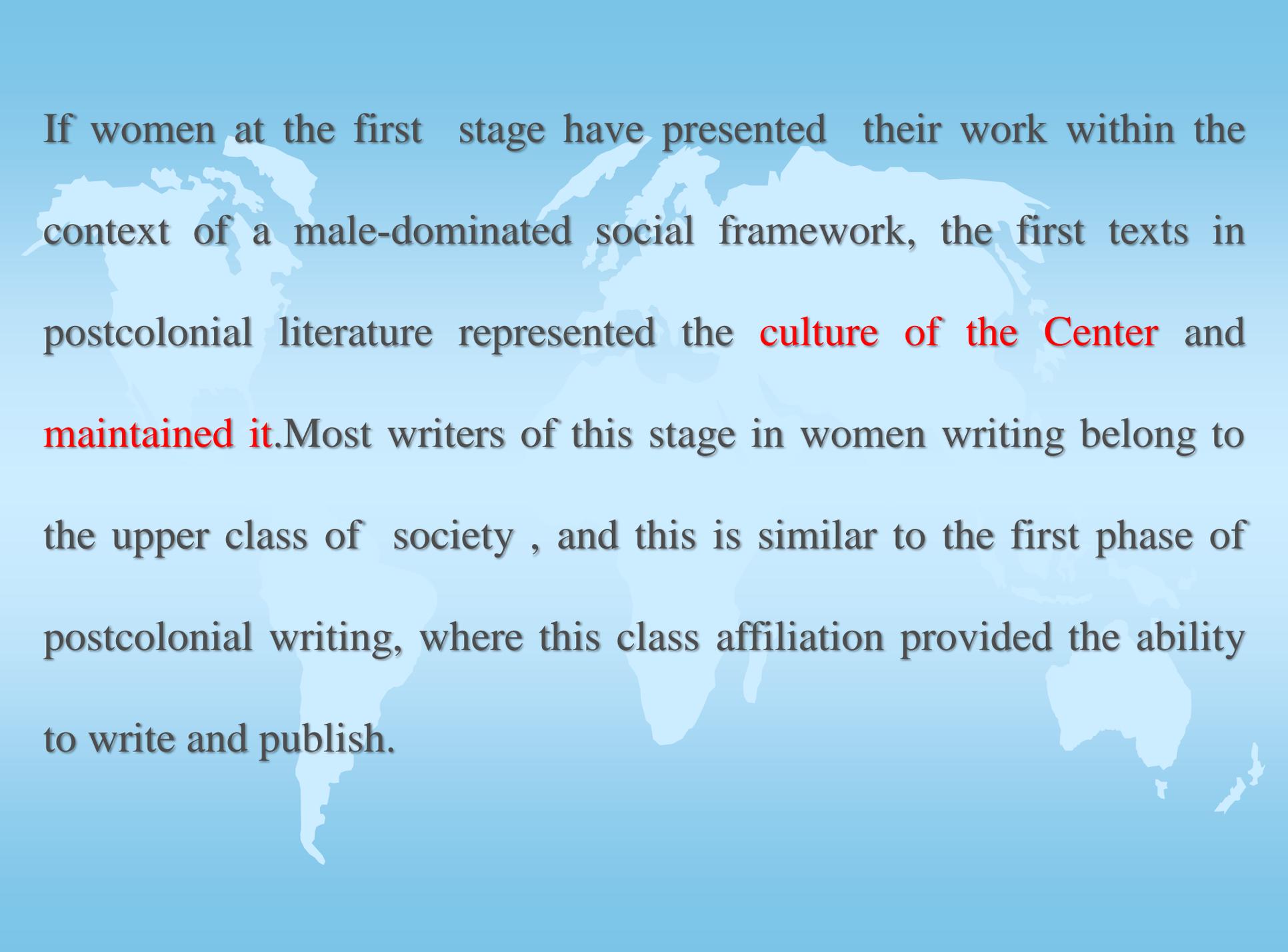
1.(Subordination) Feminine phase (1840-80): a phase in which women writers **imitated** dominant male artistic norms and aesthetic standards. Women writings were presented within a patriarchal social framework. Women writers adhered to male values (writing as men) and usually did not enter into debate regarding women's place in society. They even used male pseudonyms.

2.(Protest) *Feminist phase* (1880-1920):

A phase in which radical and often separatist positions were maintained. It is a protest against the prevailing male standards and the advocacy of minority rights. Women's writers defended and protested for equality; they resisted adapting the norms of the previous phase. Their writings depicted both the criticism of women's role in society and the oppression of women.



•**3.(Autonomy) Female phase** (1920 onwards) which looked particularly at female writing and female experience. It is therefore a phase of **self-discovery** and the search for identity. Here is the idea of developing a **distinguished literature** that stems from women's **own experiences**.



If women at the first stage have presented their work within the context of a male-dominated social framework, the first texts in postcolonial literature represented the **culture of the Center** and **maintained it**. Most writers of this stage in women writing belong to the upper class of society, and this is similar to the first phase of postcolonial writing, where this class affiliation provided the ability to write and publish.

In the second stage, postcolonial literature produced a huge amount of poetry and prose by Indians who learned English. They wrote in the language of the **dominant /central culture**, but they were deprived of the full disclosure of their anti-imperialist culture because of the material/financial conditions for the production of literature in some early postcolonial societies. The literary enterprise in colonies was still under the direct control of the imperialist ruling class, which alone had the power to distribute literary productions.

In women's literature, in the second stage, women writers tried to defend the unity of women's advocacy for equality, after rejecting the idea of full adaptation to the conditions of the previous stage. So, they used literature to portray tragedies experienced by women, although they were unable to get out of the existing political systems.

The third stage for both sides (feminism /postcolonial) is the stage of self-discovery, or the phase of internal transformation, which is free of dependence on the other, and seeks primarily to search for an identity . During this stage , we witness the development of an independent and distinct literature for both parties . It is a literature that truly stems from their own experiences.

As for the postcolonial side, the term African literature advocated by Leopold Senghor, appeared to express the spirit of Negritude and to stick to the homeland instead of melting in abroad. The term Caribbean literature also appeared and challenged the hegemony of the British and sought to regain and confirm pre-colonial Indian heritage.

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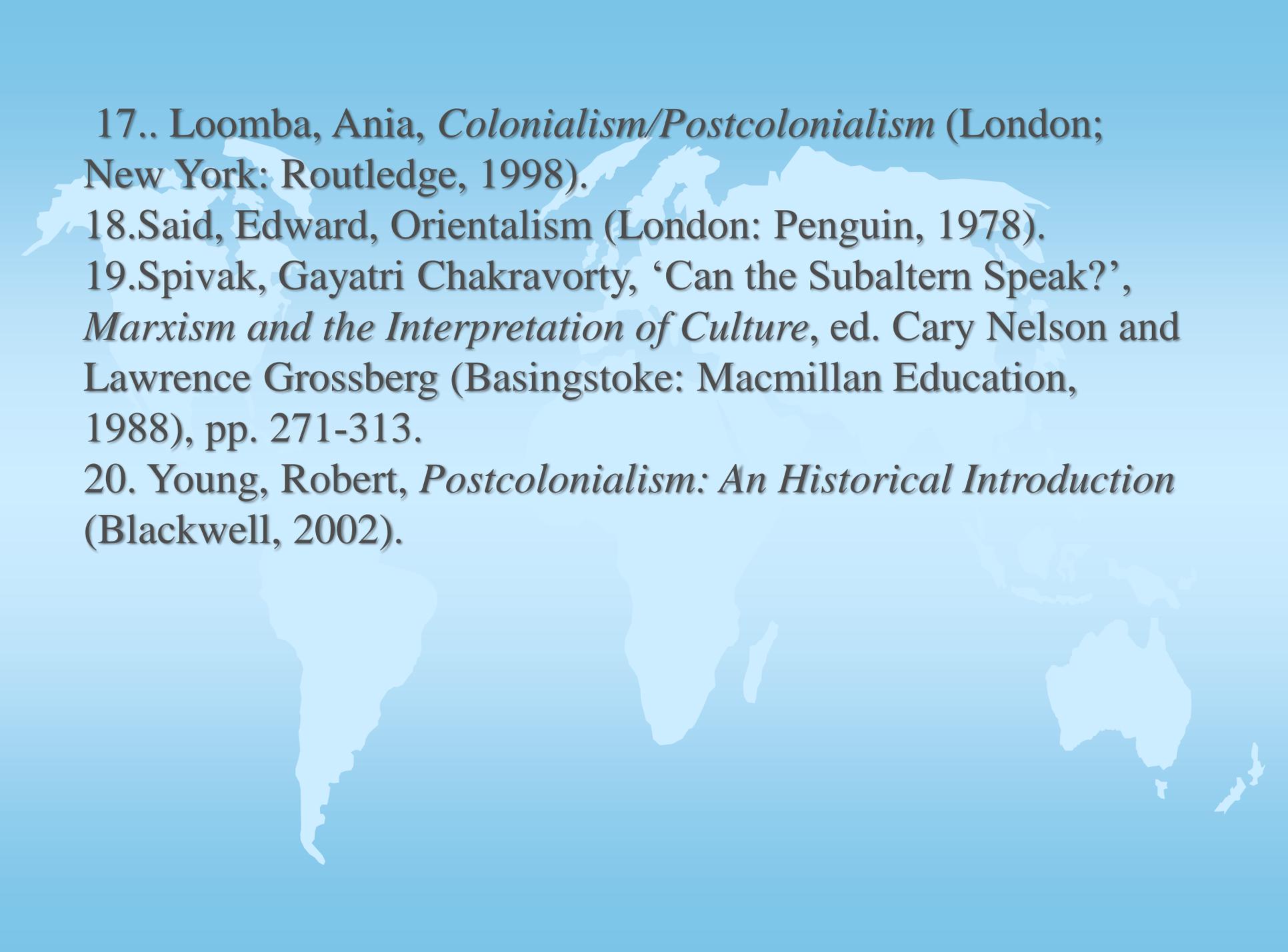
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