

The image features two large, thick, black L-shaped brackets. One is positioned in the top-left corner, and the other is in the bottom-right corner. They are oriented towards each other, framing the central text.

# NEW HISTORICISM

# New Historicism

## What is New Historicism?

- New Historicism is a literary theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic.

## STEPHEN GREENBLATT

- Introduced term "New Historicism"
- *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980)
  - Self as construction
  - Identity = desired self-representation + power relations
  - Power relations as most (?) important context



# New Historicism

- ▶ The historical criticism practiced in the 1980s, however, was not the same as the historical criticism of the 1930s and 1940s.
- ▶ New Historicists believe that criticism should incorporate diverse discourses; new historicism is informed by poststructuralist theory, as well as feminist, cultural, and Marxist criticism.

# NEW HISTORICISM

- New historicism- American critic Stephan Greenblatt- Renaissance of self-fashioning : From More to Shakespeare.
- Parallel reading of literary & non-literary texts- same historical period.
- Literary & non-literary texts – given ‘equal weighting’.
- American critic- Louis Montrose ‘ the textuality of history, the historicity of the texts’
- ‘Contexts’ – ‘co-texts’
- ‘archival continuum’- a historical rather than a historical movement.
- Derrida’s view ‘there is nothing outside the text’- thrice –processed 1. ideology or outlook or discursive practices 2.ours 3.web of language itself

# New Historicism and Cultural Materialism

- New Historicism and Cultural Materialism
- A term coined by Raymond Williams and popularised by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (in their collection of essays *Political Shakespeare*), Cultural Materialism refers to a Marxist orientation of New Historicism, characterised by the analysis of any historical material within a politicized framework, in a radical and subversive manner. Cultural Materialism emphasizes studying the historical context, looking at those historical aspects that have been discarded or silenced in other narratives of history, through an eclectic theoretical approach, backed by the political commitment arising from the influence of Marxist and Feminist perspective and thus executing a textual analysis—close reading that critiques traditional approaches, especially on canonical texts.

- Like the New Historicists, Cultural Materialists also believe in the textuality of history and the historicity of texts; they are aware of the political agendas of the text and hence are alert to the ways in which power exerts itself through implicit workings of ideology within the text. While they believe that New Historicists generate a political readings, in which there is no question of agency on the part of the marginalised, Cultural Materialists are consciously political, and aim at transforming the social order; as they seek readings that focus on the marginalised and the exploited, and also look at the possibilities of subversion and resistance in both the text and the interpretive act. They are conscious of the subversive potential of literature for subcultural resistance and hence propose ‘dissident reading’, which interrogates the hidden political agenda and power struggles within a text

# Michel Foucault

was a French philosopher, historian of ideas, writer, political activist, and literary critic, post-structuralist and postmodernist. communication studies, anthropology, psychology, sociology, criminology, cultural studies, literary theory, feminism, Marxism and critical theory.

Michel Foucault's *oeuvre*- 'Foucauldian discourse analysis' now constitutes an academic field in its own right.

*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality*, a multivolume history of Western sexuality.



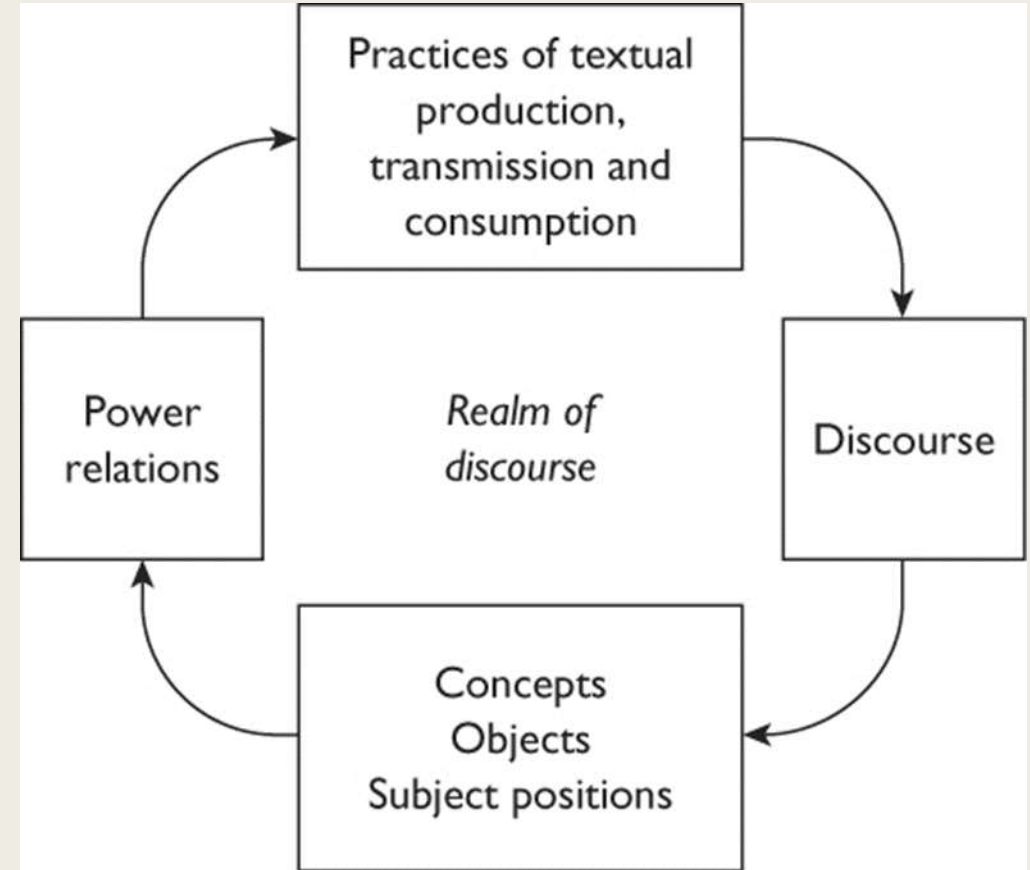
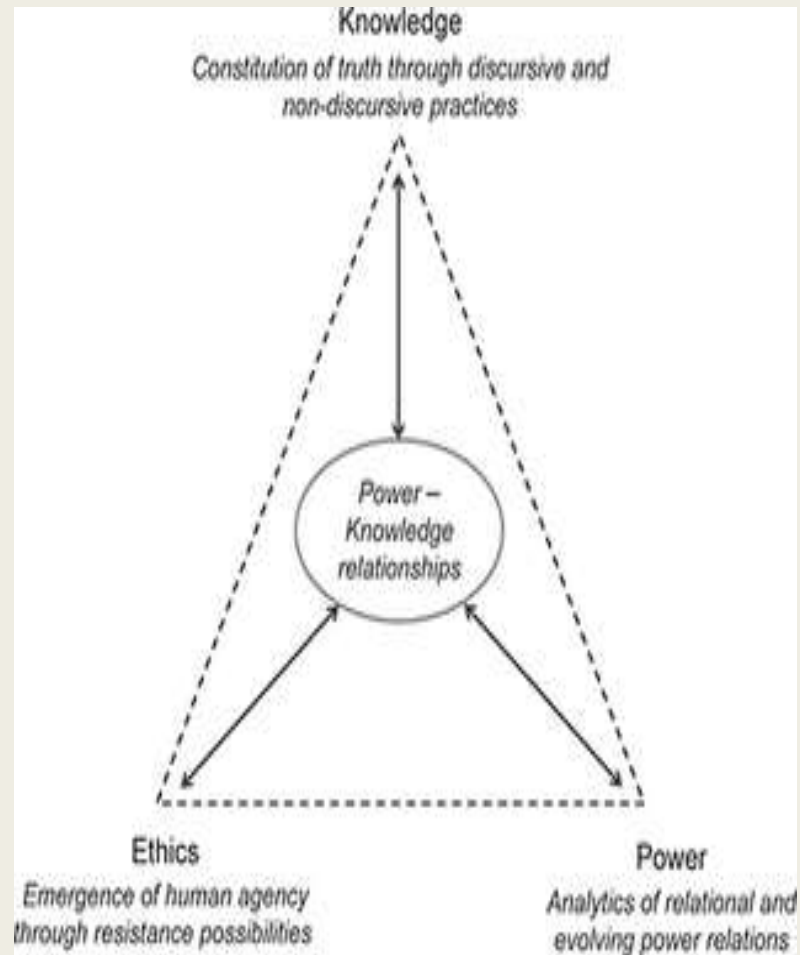
# DISCOURSE

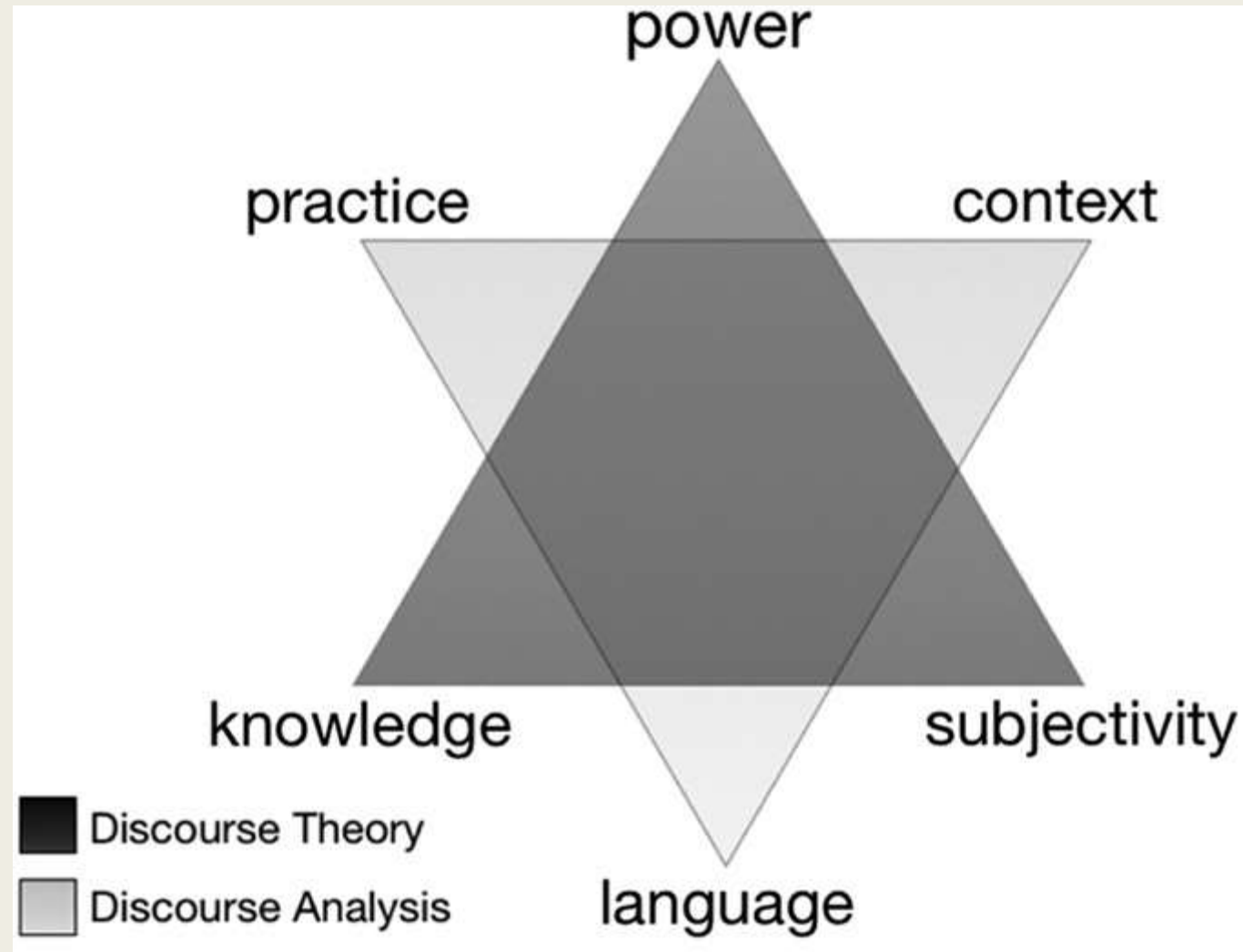
Discourse, as defined by Foucault refers to:

*ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which in here in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987, p. 108*



# KNOWLEDGE/POWER





# Michel Foucault'S

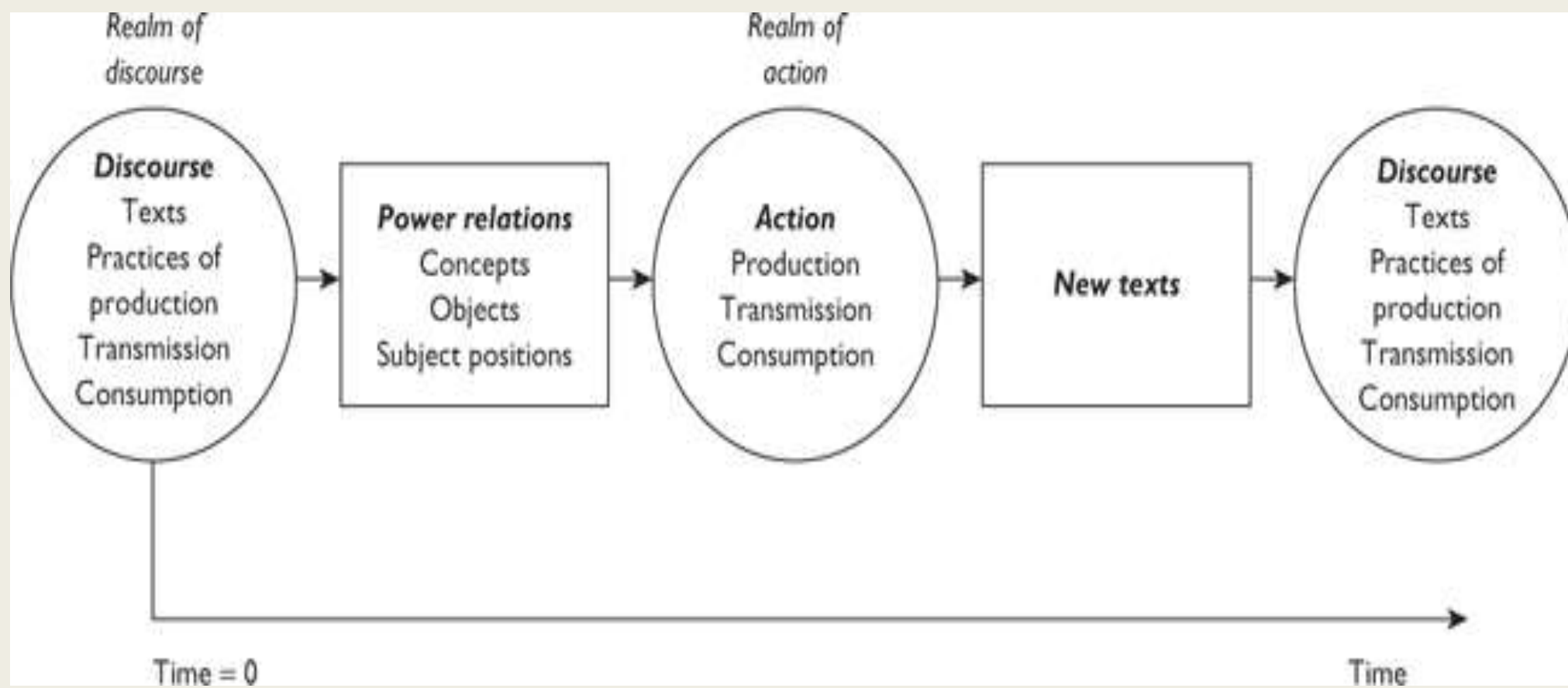
- the 'archaeology' or 'genealogy' of knowledge production.
- he looks at the continuities and discontinuities between 'epistemes'
- knowledge is inextricably connected to power, power/knowledge.
- a major shift in (western) cultural practices, from 'sovereign power' to 'disciplinary power', in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979),
- charts the transition from a top-down form of social control in the form of physical coercion meted out by the sovereign to a more diffuse and insidious form of social surveillance and process of 'normalisation'. The latter, says Foucault, is encapsulated by Bentham's Panopticon; a nineteenth century prison system in which prison cells were arranged around a central watchtower.
- The Panopticon has become the metaphor for the processes whereby disciplinary 'technologies', together with the emergence of a normative social science, 'police' both the mind and body of the modern individual (see Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982, p. 143-67)

# Foucault's concepts

- developed the concept of the 'discursive field' as part of his attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power. Discursive fields, such as the law or the family, contain a number of competing and contradictory discourses with varying degrees of power to give meaning to and organize social institutions and processes.
- argues though, in *The Order of Discourse*, that the 'will to truth' is the major system of exclusion that forges discourse and which 'tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint on other discourses', and goes on further to ask the question 'what is at stake in the will to truth, in the will to utter this 'true' discourse, if not desire and power?'

## Foucault's view upon history:

- ⊙ Foucault's work is **imbued** with an **attention to history**.
- ⊙ Not in the traditional sense of the word but in attending to what he has variously termed the 'archaeology'( studying human history) or '**genealogy**' (studying family history) of knowledge production.
- ⊙ That is, he looks at **the continuities and discontinuities** between “**epistemes**” (taken by Foucault to mean the knowledge systems which primarily informed the thinking during certain periods of history: a different one being said to dominate each epistemological age), and the social context in which certain knowledges and practices emerged as permissible and desirable or changed.
- ⊙ **In his view knowledge is inextricably**( can't untie or separate) **connected to power, such that they are often written as power/knowledge.**





# CULTURAL MATERIALISM

- Graham Holderness- a politicised form of historiography.
- In 1985- Jonathan Dollimore & Alan Sinfield – Political Shakespeare
- 1. historical context- transcendent- timeless eg. Shakespeare's plays-
- 2.theoretical method- break with liberal humanism , absorbs structuralism & post-structuralism
- 3.Political commitment-Marxist & feminist perspectives& break from conservative-Christian framework.
- 4.textual analysis- canonical texts – academic & professional attention
- Culture- include all forms of culture( television, popular music, & fiction)
- Materialism- opposite of idealism
- Involves using the past to read the present, revealing the politics of our own society.

# Differences between CM & NH

- CM- American counterpart.
- Contrast between political optimism & political pessimism.
- Post-structuralism problematizes knowledge, language, truth- absorbed in new historicism.
- NH – Co-texts- documents contemporary with Shakespeare
- CM- programme notes for a current royal Shakespeare company.
- New historicist situates the literary text in the political situation; cultural materialist- within that of ours.
- NH- much influenced by Foucault- discursive practices.
- CM- Raymond Williams- structures of feeling
- **CM- cultural materialism: NH- New historicism**



# POST COLONIALISM



# Post Colonial Reading/Post Colonial Approach


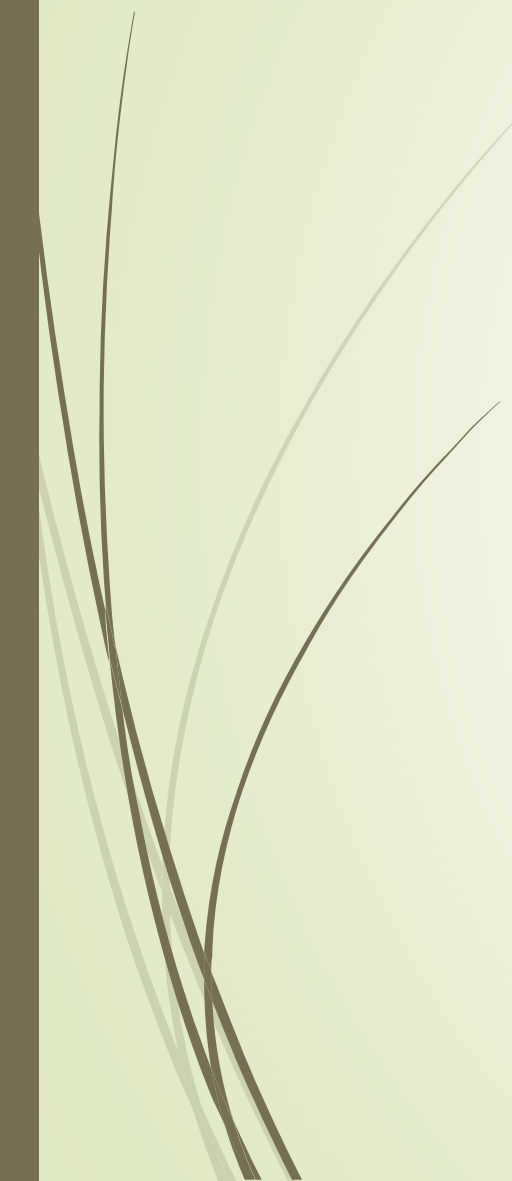
- 1. linguistic furniture – involves a crucial acquiescence in colonial structures
- 2. double identity- Chinua Achebe – Things Fall Apart
- 3. doubled, or hybrid, or unstable
- **Three phases of colonial literature**
- 1. Adopt- humble apprentice
- 2. Adapt – a mere licensee
- 3. Adept - cross- cultural interactions
- Polyvalent

# COLONIALISM/POST COLONIALISM

- **Postcolonialism** is the critical academic study of the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism focusing on the human consequences of the control and exploitation of colonized people and their lands. More specifically, it is a critical theory analysis of the history, culture, literature, and discourse of (usually European) imperial power.
- Postcolonial literary study is in two categories:
  1. the study of postcolonial nations; and
  2. the study of the nations who continue forging a postcolonial national identity.
- **"Post-colonial" or "postcolonial"?**

# Concepts Used in Postcolonial Theory



- Terms and concepts used in postcolonial theory and literature are enlisted in here, in brief.
- 1) Discourse: discourse means any thought communicated by speech; but according to Foucault, discourse is the material manifestation of a thought that is preserved, transmitted and still affects our present day thinking.
- 2) Eurocentric: Eurocentric means Europe is the source of all knowledge. Postcolonial theory used this term to denote the marginality of 'Other' literature.
- 3) Foregrounding: It means considering significant. Postcolonial theory foregrounds the 'Other' literature.
- 4) Hegemony: hegemony refers to power and control (indirect) in Marxist criticism.
- 5) Hybridity: The term stands for mixture, intermingling of different cultures. It is syncretism and multiculturalism.


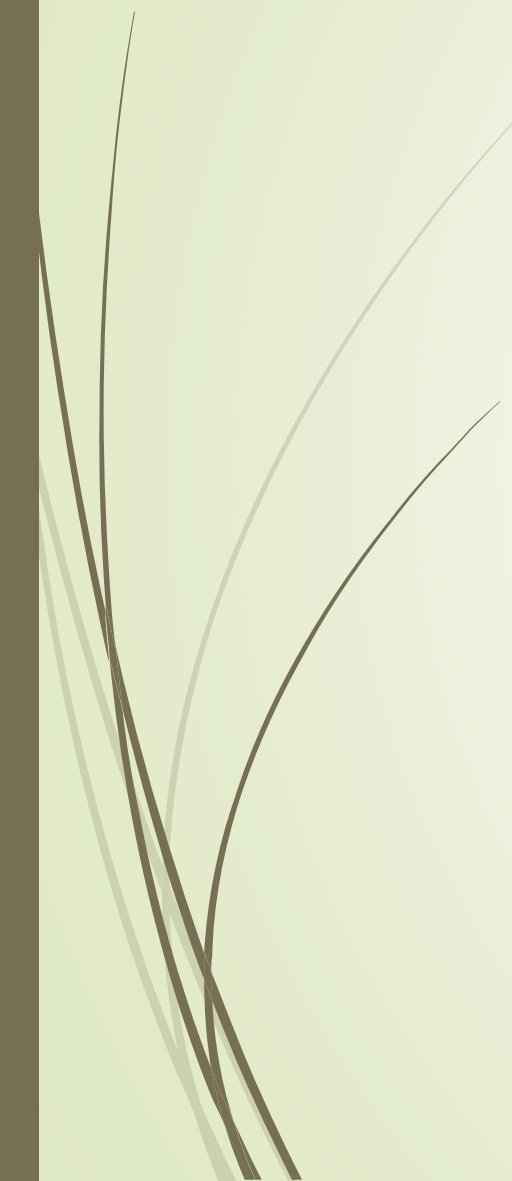
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- 6) Representation of prominence of 'Other' cultures in literature.
  - 7) Strong belief in hybridity, multiculturalism, multi-ethnicity, and cultural polyvalency.
  - 8) Use of 'otherness' and 'marginality' as the power, source of energy and potential change for the natives.
  - 9) Foregrounding of marginality is the chief task of native literature.
  - Postcolonial theory revolves around these issues and they are found in postcolonial literature.

# Key Areas

- It is necessary to note down some of the issues often discussed in post colonial theory.
- 1) Cultural difference in literary texts. e.g. gender (feminist criticism), class (Marxist criticism), and sexual orientation (LGBT criticism).
- 2) Double identity and identity crisis in different cultures and their texts.
- 3) Rejection of Western literature and their norms, and establishment of native literature creating their own norms.
- 4) Western literature has not the ability to speak over the matters like colonialism and imperialism.
- 5) Support to the notion that western literature is not the universal literature.



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- 6) Intertextuality: Every work contains the bits or some factors of other work
  - can be called intertextuality.
  - 7) Marginality: Marginal means of secondary, sub important. In postcolonial
  - theory Europe is the center and colonies are margins.
  - 8) Mimicry: Bhabha uses this term to mean that blind imitation of western
  - ideology, literature and lifestyle.
  - 9) Orientalism: According to Said, it is a Western style of dominating and
  - having authority over East. It is a huge body of texts establishing their
  - superiority over 'Other' texts.
  - 10) Other: Feeling of considering a person, subject, text out of focus. For
  - coloniser, colonised is the 'Other'.
  - 11) Subaltern: Subaltern means of lower rank, but Spivak has widened its scope
  - and attributed the term to the literature of marginality and suppressed groups
  - of society.

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- 12) Expatriate: The term expatriate means the native who goes to the West and works there but keeps the option open to come back home.
  - 13) Immigrant: It refers to that person who leaves his/ her country for a foreign land for good.
  - 14) Multiculturalism: It is referred to writing of those writers whose origin lies in another country and they work in third country.
  - 15) Periphery: periphery is the similar term to margin. Europe is the center and 'Other' is periphery.
  - Thus, the ultimate goal of postcolonial theory is combating



# PHASES OF POST COLONIAL CRITICISM

- ▶ **I PHASE:** - representation of Africa in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*, India in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*
- ▶ representation of women by male novelists- D. H. Lawrence
- ▶ Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*
- ▶ The celebration and exploration of diversity, hybridity and difference become central
- ▶ **II PHASE :** 'gynotext' phase of feminist criticism ; the exploration of female experience and identities in books by women.

# POST COLONIAL READING

- Edward Said - *Orientalism*, 1978; *Culture and Imperialism*, 1994
- Kamau Brathwaite - *The History of the Voice*, 1979
- Gayatri Spivak - *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 1987
- Dominick LaCapra - *The Bounds of Race: Perspectives on Hegemony and Resistance*, 1991
- Homi Bhabha - *The Location of Culture*, 1994

## ► **CONCEPTS:**

- Frantz Fanon and subjugation
- Edward Said and orientalism
- Gayatri Spivak and the subaltern
- Homi K. Bhabha and hybridity

# DISCUSSION

- ▶ W. B. Yeats's Byzantium poems- Sailing to Byzantium, 1927, & Byzantium.
- ▶ James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
- ▶ Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart
- ▶ Joseph Conrad's The Heart of Darkness
- ▶ E. M. Forster's A Passage to India
- ▶ Albert Camus's The Outsider