

Post-Colonial Cultures in France

Edited by
Alec G. Hargreaves
and Mark McKinney

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POST-COLONIAL CULTURES IN FRANCE

Using a diversity of critical and theoretical approaches from the disciplines of cultural studies, literary studies, migration studies, anthropology and history, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* explores the cultural implications of international migration and globalization within post-colonial France. France today is the locus of a rapidly expanding range of cultural practices by artists of African, Caribbean and Asian origin. *Post-Colonial Cultures in France*, edited by Alec G. Hargreaves and Mark McKinney, breaks new ground by offering the first systematic survey of these developments. Concentrating on the former colonial center rather than on ex-colonial territories, this volume extends the field of post-colonial studies into France itself.

With contributions from a team of specialists, *Post-Colonial Cultures in France* covers a wide range of art forms including film, television, literature, popular music and the visual arts. The contributors show how minorities of recent immigrant origin are challenging the myth of France as a culturally distinct and homogeneous nation-state. These essays examine the interaction between minority artists, Third World cultures and the majority population in France. They show how increasingly global networks of communication and exchange are generating new affiliations and ethnicities in a complex struggle between neo-colonial and post-colonial forces.

Edited by **Alec G. Hargreaves**, Professor of French and Francophone Studies, Loughborough University, England, and **Mark McKinney**, Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies, Miami University, Ohio.

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CULTURES IN FRANCE**

**EDITED BY ALEC G. HARGREAVES AND
MARK MCKINNEY**



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à Valérie Dhalenne
for Patricia Hargreaves

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Colonial Subjects: Francophone Women Writers (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) as well as recent articles in *Québec Studies*, *L'esprit créateur*, and *Présence francophone*.

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PART I
OVERVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial problematic in contemporary France

Alec G. Hargreaves and Mark McKinney

INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial studies have recently become one of the most dynamic fields of scholarly inquiry and debate in the English-speaking world.¹ In France, the post-colonial problematic is seldom encountered in political or cultural discourse (Apter 1995). Yet the phenomena embraced by this term represent a crucial dimension of contemporary French society, which offers a rich field of inquiry for students of the post-colonial condition.

Within France, the most widespread (but by no means exact) conceptual equivalent of the post-colonial field is *francophonie*. Both terms are profoundly ambiguous, above all in relation to the interface between cultural and political phenomena. In its most literal sense, *francophonie* denotes a purely cultural trait: the ability to speak French. More commonly, it denotes the global community of French speakers and more specifically still, organized efforts, particularly at the state level, to strengthen that community. Thus beneath the surface of a seemingly cultural concept, political imperatives generate much of the momentum behind the idea of *francophonie* (cf. Ager 1996). This is true not only in the sense that *francophonie* derives much of its impetus from political elites, but also because the cultural spaces to which the term is applied are defined by geopolitical boundaries. So-called francophone countries are those *outside* the boundaries of French sovereignty in which French is spoken in some significant degree (though

often by only a minority of the population). Most of those countries are former French colonies. Indeed, the term *francophonie* gained its current meaning in the immediate aftermath of decolonization, when it served to emphasize continuing cultural links between France and her former colonial possessions (cf. Miller 1990: 181–201). Many of those critical of the idea of *francophonie* view it as a form of neo-colonialism, through which France continues to assert cultural (and perhaps even political) hegemony over formerly colonized peoples.

If the notion of *francophonie* is distrusted as a conservative or reactionary project, the post-colonial is generally seen as a more politically correct concept, though it too contains many ambiguities. Unlike *francophonie*, the political dimensions of which are masked by a term which superficially appears to denote a purely cultural field of reference, the post-colonial highlights a political condition characterizing certain forms of cultural production, i.e. the legacy of colonial domination out of or against which cultural practices are seen to emerge. In its own way, the “post” in post-colonial often connotes a political assertion akin to, or rather in contradiction with, that underlying *francophonie*: to speak of a post-colonial condition is to affirm the right to political and cultural self-determination. Yet by defining cultural projects in terms of a common reference to an earlier period of colonial domination, there is a risk of ensnaring formerly colonized peoples within the very hegemony which theorists of the post-colonial are concerned to break (McClintock 1992). If cultural practitioners originating in former colonies are no longer constrained by the legacy of the past, what purpose is served by labeling their efforts as post-colonial? Fully realized, the post-colonial condition appears as a contradiction in terms.

These tensions are nowhere more acute than in relation to minorities originating in ex-colonies who have now settled in France. French-speaking to a very large extent, yet culturally distinct in other ways and still marked by exclusionary memories of the colonial period, these minorities defy the political logic of *francophonie* by being residents and in many cases citizens of France while appearing to many among the majority population to belong elsewhere. Cutting across the binary logic that opposes “insiders” to “outsiders,” they are creating what Homi Bhabha has described as a hybrid “third space” that allows for the emergence of new cultural forms, “new structures of authority, [and] new political initiatives” (Bhabha 1990: 211; cf. Bhabha 1994: 19–39).

Conditioned initially by the colonial intrusion overseas and more recently by migration into the former colonial metropolis, post-colonial cultures are also imbricated in wider processes of globalization (Featherstone 1990). Constraints on international communications, which formerly limited the extent to which

individuals might participate physically and/or mentally in more than one society, are being constantly eroded (cf. Anderson 1994 on “long-distance nationalism”). Rapid and relatively cheap airline service makes international travel far easier than in the past (albeit subject to rigid controls on permanent migration), and electronic media such as television facilitate the international circulation of cultural products on an unprecedented scale, pervading the homes of mass audiences on a daily basis. Within this context, as Stuart Hall (1996: 247) has observed, the post-colonial perspective

re-reads “colonisation” as part of an essentially transnational and transcultural “global” process – and it produces a decentered, diasporic or “global” rewriting of earlier, nation-centred imperial grand narratives. Its theoretical value therefore lies precisely in its refusal of this “here” and “there,” “then” and “now,” “home” and “abroad” perspective.

It would nevertheless be illusory to suggest that diasporic cultures belong in equal measure to each of the spaces in which they participate. Despite growing cooperation among European Union member-states, immigration controls, including the crucial field of residence rights, remain in many ways a bastion of national sovereignty. Residence rights – or the lack of them – facilitate or limit access to important cultural processes. While no state holds a monopoly over the means of cultural reproduction, some key cultural institutions – most obviously, formal educational systems – remain constrained in many ways by national boundaries. To a lesser extent, this is also true of the mass media, despite a clear trend towards the erosion of national controls (cf. Hargreaves, below, Chapter 5). For these and other reasons, the formative experiences of artists brought up in (ex-)colonial territories are significantly different from those of second- or third-generation members of minorities within the former colonial metropolis, which differ in turn from those of the majority population. National parameters remain therefore salient features in the analysis of cultural practices. Post-colonial cultures are indeed implicitly defined, even if only antithetically, with reference to current or former relations between (ex-)imperial nations and their overseas dominions.

To date, most studies of cultural practices grounded in French colonization and its aftermath have focused primarily on the (ex-)colonial periphery.² To paraphrase the title of a seminal study of post-colonial writing in English (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989), the emphasis has been on the empire writing back. In the essays assembled in the present volume, the focus shifts to the empire riding in, traversing the center itself. Our contributors explore the significance of the post-colonial condition in a wide variety of cultural practices in France during the

1980s and 1990s. In the analysis of these practices, it is useful to distinguish three main groups of actors: those based in the former colonial periphery, whose works are mediated to the center in a variety of ways; minorities of Third World (i.e. ex-colonial) origin now settled in France; and the majority population, associated with “mainstream” French norms. In the next section of our introductory essay, we focus in more detail on the second of these groups, through which the (former) empire has established a significant physical presence within the (ex-)colonial metropolis and who are at the heart of this volume. We then go on to outline some key features involved in transnational and transcultural exchanges and consider recent critiques of post-colonial theory before concluding with a more detailed discussion of the relevance of the post-colonial paradigm to cultural practices in contemporary France. In this way, we seek to delineate the overall context within which subsequent chapters are to be read.

Drawing on a wide range of materials and methodologies, the various contributors seek to illuminate in ways pertinent to their specialist areas a range of shared concerns. How far are the cultural practices of Third World minorities marked by the legacy of the colonial period? What specific features of current cultural practices are derived from pre-migratory traditions, and how have these been modified through settlement in France? How do gender and class impact upon those practices? In what ways and to what extent may one speak of neo-colonialism as a significant force in majority French culture and society, and how does this affect the creative processes of post-colonial minorities? How does the presence of those minorities impact on the majority population in France and the redefinition of its self-image after the end of empire? Do minority cultures function essentially as part of or apart from the “national” culture of France? How do established immigrant minorities relate to exiled or expatriate artists from former colonial territories? In what ways do external diasporic networks and/or inter-ethnic contacts between minorities affect processes of cultural production and consumption? What kinds of audience (majority, minority, crossover, local or global) are addressed by minority cultural practitioners? How far may one speak of a minority public sphere? What means of production and diffusion, and what sources of private or public support are available to minorities, and how have these affected their cultural output? These are the key questions which the contributors seek to explore.

THE POST-COLONIAL PRESENCE IN FRANCE

France has long been a place of temporary or permanent residence for people originating in (ex-)colonies, among whom five partially overlapping groups may be distinguished. Although the distinctions between these categories are useful for analytical purposes, it should be noted that the borderlines are sometimes blurred. Not uncommonly, particular individuals have a foot in more than one camp.

Small but influential elites originating among colonized peoples have often spent time in the (former) colonial metropolis. In many cases, they arrived as students and then extended their stay for varying periods. During the colonial epoch, they often enjoyed greater freedom on French soil than in the overseas empire. In addition, the centralized nature of the colonial system had the effect of concentrating within France educated elites from many different parts of the empire, helping to generate a collective awareness of their shared history of colonial oppression. Experiences of this kind played a major role in shaping the political and cultural elites who were to lead the struggle for independence. The *négritude* movement, for example, which developed in Paris during the 1930s, brought together black intellectuals from French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean as well as influential African-American mentors (Dewitte 1985). In parallel with artistic works, the political dimensions of the anti-colonial struggle were voiced in newspapers and magazines published in France by activists originating in almost every corner of the overseas empire (Génériques 1990; cf. El Yazami, below, Chapter 7).

While not without influence in France, most of those involved in these movements were primarily concerned with the political and cultural destinies of overseas territories. This was also true, initially at least, of a second, overlapping category of intellectual migrants, who may be broadly classified as post-colonial exiles. In many former colonies, the regimes that replaced French rule soon became corrupt and/or authoritarian, pushing dissenters to flee elsewhere, often to France. Other intellectuals have come to France because it offers better professional prospects, for example in the university and publishing sectors, than can be found in their home countries (cf. Potts 1990: 160–2 on the “brain drain”).

Despite the importance of career opportunities in leading many of them to France, expatriate intellectuals are seldom associated with a third type of post-colonial presence, that arising from economic migration. This is in part because

the vast majority of economic migrants from (ex-)colonial territories are located much further down the socio-professional ladder. In France, the classic image of an immigrant is that of an illiterate manual worker of Third World (i.e. ex-colonial) origin executing menial tasks in industrial and other sectors which are unattractive to the majority population. Although there are, of course, exceptions, this stereotype is grounded in the sociological fact that most immigrants from (former) colonies are indeed from poorly educated, often rural backgrounds, and the jobs they have found in France have generally been unskilled and badly paid. Unlike the first two, this third category is composed mainly of people who lack the formal education and skills which are necessary to function effectively in elite cultural spheres. Their cultural practices, primarily oral in character, are badly documented and little studied.

Small numbers of economic migrants came to France during the colonial period. During the First World War, on top of almost 600,000 colonial troops France recruited more than 200,000 civilian workers, mainly in the Maghreb and Indochina, to assist in the war effort of metropolitan France. Most were repatriated when hostilities ended (Amar and Milza 1990: 155–7). Throughout the twentieth century, France was to draw heavily on migrant labor, but until after the Second World War most of this came from Europe. It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that mass migration from the colonial empire, then in dissolution, began to supplant European sources of labor, and not until the 1980s that non-Europeans (mainly from Third World countries) came to outnumber Europeans among the migrant population in France.

Former French colonies in the Maghreb – Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia³ – have been the single most important region of origin. More recently, former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa have also become significant sending countries. In addition, the last remnants of the overseas empire still administered by France, known as the DOM-TOM (*Départements et Territoires d'Outre-Mer* [Overseas Departments and Territories]), often look to France for employment opportunities. A quarter of the population born in two of the Overseas Departments, the Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, now live in metropolitan France (Marie 1993).

Asylum-seekers and refugees fall into a fourth analytical category. Often thought of as the preserve of ideologically committed intellectual elites (of the kind referred to in category two), political exile is a condition experienced by people from diverse social strata, and the scale of their exodus sometimes amounts to a form of mass migration. Thus at the end of the Algerian war of independence in 1962, tens of thousands of Muslim auxiliary soldiers known as *harkis*, who had

fought under French orders, fled to the former colonial metropolis in order to escape reprisals from triumphant Algerian nationalists. Most *harkis* were poorly educated and possessed few marketable skills with which to ascend the social ladder in France. In this respect they resembled those among their fellow-countrymen who came to France as economic migrants.

A new wave of asylum-seekers, originating in former French Indochina, entered France following the 1975 Communist victory in the Viet Nam war, a conflict which, stoked by the neo-colonial involvement of the US, had raged for over twenty years after formal decolonization in 1954. This latest influx has strengthened the Vietnamese community in France and yielded a new generation of writers, such as Linda Lê, whose works are analyzed by Jack A. Yeager (Chapter 15, below). Compared with the *harkis*, those who fled Indochina tended to come from more middle-class backgrounds. In some cases, fears of political persecution were less important than the desire to maximize economic opportunities, which it was felt would be stifled by the Communist regime in Viet Nam. Today, the blurring of political and economic motives is cited as a prime factor in France's high rejection rate of asylum-seekers from many Third World countries (Wihtol de Wenden 1994).

A fifth component of the post-colonial presence in France consists, not of migrants, but of their descendants. With the permanent settlement of migrants, the birth of their children and grandchildren marks the emergence of minority ethnic groups for whom France is in a very real sense home, rather than a country of adoption. Unlike the majority of economic migrants, whose formal cultural skills were limited, second- and third-generation members of minority groups have all been educated in France, and they are better equipped to make active use of cultural forms ranging from print and film to electronic media and the fine arts, as the essays contained in this volume amply show.

The different categories in this five-fold typology should be understood as typological abstractions, rather than as watertight compartments into which the (post-)colonial presence in France can be neatly divided. The different groups often overlap and engage in collaborative cultural practices, as Driss El Yazami, for example, shows in his study of France's minority ethnic press (below, Chapter 7). The blurring of categorical distinctions has been heightened since the end of decolonization by a steadily accelerating trend towards the globalization of economic, cultural, and political relationships. In these circumstances, the distinction between migrant intellectuals, engaged in cultural practices focused primarily around their countries of origin, and minority ethnic groups settled within France, for whom the ex-colonial metropolis is the main locus of cultural

production, is at best rough and ready, and at worst misleading.

Where, for example, would one classify an author such as Tahar Ben Jelloun? Born in Morocco, Ben Jelloun took up residence in France as a student and now divides his time more or less equally between the two countries. In 1987, when he won the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary prize, a number of bookstores moved his works from their "Maghrebi Literature" shelves to "French Literature." He is the holder of a French passport and a member the French *Légion d'honneur* [Legion of Honor], and has written extensively about the migrant experience in France, but acknowledges that in the eyes of second-generation Maghrebis born in France his voice is more that of "le pays de leurs parents que le pays d'adoption" [their parents' country rather than their country of adoption] (Spear 1993: 32).⁴ A regular commentator on current affairs in the French media, he told an American interviewer:

Je ne me sens absolument pas déraciné ici [Paris]! Je suis bien ici *et* au Maroc. J'ai mon pays, c'est le Maroc. Je me sens totalement marocain. Mais en France je me sens aussi concerné par la France et par ce qui lui arrive.

I don't feel uprooted in the least here [Paris]! I feel at ease here *and* in Morocco. My country is Morocco. I feel completely Moroccan. But in France I feel just as concerned by France and by what happens in it.

(Spear 1993: 33)

An expatriate in the sense that she was born in the West African state of Cameroon and now resides in Paris, Calixthe Beyala owes her literary reputation primarily to novels depicting West Africans in France, where they are published and read by a large audience. In many ways, Beyala has now been incorporated into "French" literature, despite her distant origins and the "exotic" dimension which her works bring to the former colonial metropolis (cf. Hitchcott, below, Chapter 12). Similarly, the seemingly insatiable appetite of multinational recording companies for "world music" – "new" styles and performers imported from "exotic" locations to which they must still in some sense be felt to belong (even when no longer residing there) if they are to fit their commercial niche – is steadily transforming the contours of popular culture within France and other First World countries (cf. Warne, below, Chapter 8).

CULTURAL SPACES

How far do post-colonial cultures stand as part of, or apart from, the dominant elements in the cultural space bounded by the territorial limits of France? Beneath this deceptively simple question, which the contributors to this volume seek to address in a variety of ways, lie a multiplicity of issues which revolve in varying degrees around the theorization of culture(s). If culture (in the singular) may be defined generically as the human construction of meaning, cultures (in the plural) consist of distinctive types of signifying practice shared by particular groups. At their core, cultures are built on circuits of communication linking together producers, transmitters, and receivers of particular patterns of signification, by which those concerned are in some degree bound together. The more such a circuit is tightly knit and isolated from others, the more distinctive and coherent is the culture which it sustains. Colonization and, more recently, post-colonial migration are obvious examples of forces cutting across established cultural, as well as political, boundaries. There is also a broader sense in which globalization, characterized by the constant widening of processes of human exchange, further undermines the pretensions of nation-states as politically bounded territories marking the limits of discrete and at the same time homogenous cultural communities.

Few, if any, individuals are entirely mono-cultural. Although they may not always realize it, most people participate – whether as producers, consumers or intermediaries – in a variety of cultural communities. To the extent that a sense of identity is derived from such communities, multiple identities are the norm, rather than exceptional features of personal experience. The proliferation of ever more sophisticated communication networks implies, moreover, a constant challenge to simplistic notions of neat demarcation lines between “national” cultures. To a greater or lesser degree, all cultures are engaged in a constant process of renewal, which is driven in part by borrowings from elsewhere. In these circumstances, physical contiguity is no guarantee of cultural affiliation. Minorities within a given topographical space may seek to deterritorialize its dominant paradigms by working within cultural circuits that cut across its boundaries (Deleuze and Guattari 1975). Conversely, the material conditions of certain types of cultural practice may force minority producers and receivers to pass through intermediaries – publishers, broadcasting organizations, journalists, etc. – implicated in and dominated by other cultural circuits. Chris Warne’s discussion of the “world music” industry (below, Chapter 8), Nicki Hitchcott’s

analysis of the critical reception of Calixthe Beyala's novels (below, Chapter 12), and Dalila Mahdjoub's comments on the vicissitudes of institutional support for Maghrebi artists in France (below, Chapter 11) illustrate these processes well.

At a first level of analysis, at least three different types of cultural space are open to France's post-colonial minorities: the dominant norms of the majority population, diasporic spaces associated with the country of origin and with other minority groups in France and elsewhere, and separatist enclaves detached from both of those fields. In practice, each of these seemingly distinct and internally unified spaces – the potential or actual coexistence of which is itself a challenge to the traditional concept of the nation-state – is far less clearly bounded than it may appear at first sight.

Diasporic spaces, often associated with nostalgic notions of pre-colonial cultures, are indelibly marked by the European intrusion, carrying irreversible changes into the (ex-)empire and back to the center. Such transitions are exemplified by figures such as Ben Jelloun and the doyen of black African writers, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Born in French West Africa, where he was educated in Catholic mission schools, Senghor helped to found the *négritude* movement while a student in Paris before leading Senegal to independence, becoming the country's first President in 1960. When he retired from politics twenty years later, he settled with his French wife in Normandy, and was elected shortly afterwards to the *Académie française*, one of France's most elite (and conservative) cultural institutions. To mark his ninetieth birthday in 1996, he was jointly feted by French President Jacques Chirac and his Senegalese counterpart, Abdou Diouf, at a UNESCO reception in Paris (*The Times* 1996b).

The majority of France's post-colonial minorities are to be found in more humble milieux, foremost among which are the *banlieues* (literally, "suburbs"), which in the 1990s have become a byword for socially disadvantaged peripheral areas of French cities containing relatively dense concentrations of minority ethnic groups (Hargreaves 1996; cf. Rosello, below, Chapter 14). Often referred to by journalists as ghettos,⁵ the *banlieues* are the structural equivalents of British and American inner-city areas, and as such would appear to offer a natural space in which to develop a separatist cultural agenda. Yet the markers – graffiti, music, dancing, dress codes, etc. – through which young *banlieusards* (literally, "suburb-dwellers") seek to reterritorialize the anonymous public housing projects in which they are corralled are saturated with references to global networks of multiethnic youth culture in which they participate daily through the mass media (Roy 1991 and 1993; cf. Hargreaves, below, Chapter 5 and Cannon, below, Chapter 9).

No less importantly, despite all attempts to ignore or disguise the fact, "French"

culture is itself shot through with influences and affiliations stretching far beyond the “hexagon,” a popular term for the topographic configuration of metropolitan France. A few weeks before celebrating Senghor’s ninetieth birthday, President Chirac had welcomed to France the Polish primate of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope had come to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of an event widely regarded as the founding act of the French nation-state, the conversion of the Frankish King, Clovis, to Christianity – a global religion founded in the Middle East, the main Western arm of which is administered from Vatican City in Rome.⁶ Chirac’s administration was at the same time fighting a hopeless rearguard action against the ever-widening inroads made by the English language and American popular culture into the everyday cultural practices of the French. The latest innovation in this unequal struggle consisted of revised quotas, introduced at the beginning of 1996, requiring radio stations to prioritize “French” songs over those in other languages. One of the ironies of these and earlier quotas has been to facilitate the emergence of rap as a major force on the contemporary music scene in France. Short of new songs meeting the official quota criteria, broadcasters have filled their vacant air time with rap recordings by minority ethnic *banlieusards* featuring French-language vocals adapted from black American models (*Le Monde* 1996a; cf. Cannon, below, Chapter 9).

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the openly racist leader of the extreme right-wing Front National,⁷ draws much of his electoral support from sections of the majority population who are vulnerable to economic and other forms of insecurity arising from globalization (Jenkins 1996). They like to believe that by ridding the country of Third World immigrants and reasserting the racial and cultural “purity” of the nation, they can restore France to a golden age of unity and prosperity. The (unacknowledged) Middle Eastern origins of the Catholic faith, championed by Le Pen as a key constituent of French nationhood, have already been commented on. Warne (below, p. 148, n. 2) draws attention to a similar irony in the case of *oi*, a form of rock cultivated by far-right skinheads whose assertions of white supremacy and cultural purity are implicitly undercut by the (again unacknowledged) role of the African diaspora in the foundations of white rock and roll. Today, classic “French” rock and roll, naturalized as an integral part of French popular culture, is regularly celebrated in the nostalgic concerts of its founding icon, “Johnny Halliday”: a Belgian who in the 1950s abandoned his real name, Jean-Philippe Smet, in favor of a new one deliberately chosen for its American resonance. The heterogeneity inherent in “French” popular culture is explored in more detail with particular reference to the Arab world by David A. McMurray (below, Chapter 2).

CRITIQUES OF POST-COLONIAL THEORY

Before looking more closely at specifically post-colonial aspects of cultural practices in France, it may be helpful to consider some of the main critiques which have been formulated in the wider debate over the post-colonial paradigm. These may be broadly summarized as follows: (1) epistemological shortcomings of the term “post-colonial” and the field which it denotes: not only does the concept have severe limitations; much post-colonial theory replicates what it purportedly critiques; (2) failure to resolve a widespread crisis in theory: post-colonialism is one of the many other “posts” (post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-Marxism, post-feminism, etc.) which are the symptoms of a crisis of critical theory that these new tendencies fail to overcome; (3) politics of location: the creation of post-colonial studies as a field of academic inquiry is closely linked to and dependent on the rise to prominent positions in Western universities of Third World scholars; (4) political and methodological mystification: post-colonial theory arises out of and tends to obfuscate global structural adjustments of power and mutations of capitalism. Let us consider each of these critiques in turn.

(1) Various critics have objected that the “post” in post-colonial reinserts the teleology of Eurocentric history that much post-colonial theory purportedly attempts to debunk: everything is referenced with respect to the – too vaguely defined – era of European colonialism (Shohat 1992: 103–8; McClintock 1992; Dirlik 1994: 344). Moreover critical distinctions between different chronologies of (de-)colonization are elided by the post-colonial, which conceptually works to suppress the critique of colonialism, neo-colonialism, (neo-)imperialism and other forms of oppression at work in the present: since the world is “post-colonial” we can all celebrate that fact. Critics have suggested that this is part of the reason for the current acceptance of the term in the Western academy, in place of earlier, more oppositional terms such as “Third World” or “anti-colonialism” (Shohat 1992: 99; McClintock 1992: 86, 93; Dirlik 1994: 344). On the other hand, the attempt by one analyst (Jameson 1986) to broadly conceptualize “Third World literature” without taking into account the problems with three worlds theory left him open to the criticism that he had thereby reproduced the binary thought of Eurocentrism (Ahmad 1987, 1992). In place of such reductionism and essentialism, critics have proposed more complex typologies and narratives of (neo-) colonialism, (neo-)imperialism and (de-)colonization. McClintock (1992: 88–9), for example, distinguishes between colonization (internal and imperial), partial

decolonization, imperialism with or without colonies, break-away settler colonies, and deep settler colonization: "Different forms of colonization have, moreover, given rise to different forms of de-colonization. Where deep settler colonization prevailed, as in Algeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Viet Nam, colonial powers clung on with particular brutality."

Others have critiqued a new international division of intellectual labor between the producers of post-nativist and anti-Eurocentric literary works and the Western university theoretical establishment that generally appropriates these texts as paradigmatic examples of post-modern and/or post-colonial writing (Jeyifo 1989; Spivak 1990: 223; Appiah 1991). In this manner, critics charge that not only temporal but also geopolitical perspectives on the object of study are rendered hazy by the post-colonial lense:

Does the "post" indicate the perspective and location of the ex-colonized (Algerian), the ex-colonizer (French), the ex-colonial-settler (*Pied Noir*), or the displaced hybrid in First World metropoli[s] (Algerian in France)? Since the experience of colonialism and imperialism is shared, albeit asymmetrically, by (ex)colonizer and (ex)colonized, it becomes an easy move to apply the "post" also to First World European countries. Since most of the world is now living after the period of colonialism, the "post-colonial" can easily become a universalizing category which neutralizes significant geopolitical differences between France and Algeria . . .

(Shohat 1992: 103)

Post-colonial theorizations that lump these different perspectives together under one term (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989) are criticized for the homogenizing amalgamation that they produce (Shohat 1992: 102–3; McClintock 1992: 86–7; Dirlik 1994: 336).

It has also been objected that a post-colonial fetishization of cultural difference (Dirlik 1994: 346) can give rise to a new orientalism:

It is as if, in a certain way, we are becoming complicitous in the perpetration of a "new orientalism." . . . The "new orientalism" views "the world as immigrant." It is meretricious to suggest that this reminder undervalues the struggle of the marginal in metropolitan space. It is to remember that that struggle cannot be made the unexamined referent for all postcoloniality without serious problems.

(Spivak 1990: 222–8)

Against the tendency to indiscriminately celebrate the post-modern play of hybrid difference, it has also been argued that critics must be sensitive to the continuing need of oppressed peoples to conceive identity in terms better adapted to survival and liberatory struggle (Yúdice 1989; Gilroy 1993: 99–103).

(2) Most critics of post-colonial theory have argued that, like post-modernism