

Difference Between Colonial and Post Colonial Literature

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Key Difference - Colonial vs Post Colonial Literature

Literature is the art of using language to express human sentiments. Literature differs according to social, cultural and psychological aspects of the writer. Literature can be classified into different types. Among them, Colonial and post-Colonial Literature focus on expressing the social and cultural aspects related to the colonial era and the decolonization era. **Colonial Literature deals with the aspects within the period of colonization whereas postcolonial literature depicts the aspects or the consequences of colonization and the issues related to the period after the independence of the once colonized countries.** This is the **key difference** between colonial and postcolonial literature.

What is Colonial Literature?

Colonial Literature basically means the literature woven around the themes concerned with the Colonial period. Colonial period is the era when the Western colonizers subjugated many other countries in their quest for natural resources and territories with the objective of spreading their hegemony over the other parts of the world. As a consequence, many Eastern countries along with western countries became colonies of these Western conquerors.

Along with spreading their political and cultural hegemony they also spread their religion, which was Christianity and Catholicism to their colonies. Thus, this period created complete reversals in the socio-cultural aspects of these colonies.

Similarly, the literature composed during this period were mostly by these western colonizers as well. They emphasize mainly on patronizing these colonial activities of the colonizers and expressing their experiences as colonizers in these newly discovered territories of the world. Thus, many explorers and adventurers wrote literature based on their discoveries which enabled them to get political support from the rulers of their countries since, during this period, royal patronage and support was highly given for these explorers and voyagers who discovered new lands for them to colonize and thus, spread their hegemony.

Most of the literary works belonging to this period are composed of letters, journals, biographies, and memories. Through these works, they rather criticise the indigenous people's cultural customs and values as 'primitive' while emphasizing on the fact that colonization under the guise of 'civilisation' is a necessity to them by the

colonizers. Puritans also wrote an immense amount of literature which falls into this category. They wrote [poetry](#) and sermons in the service of Gods.

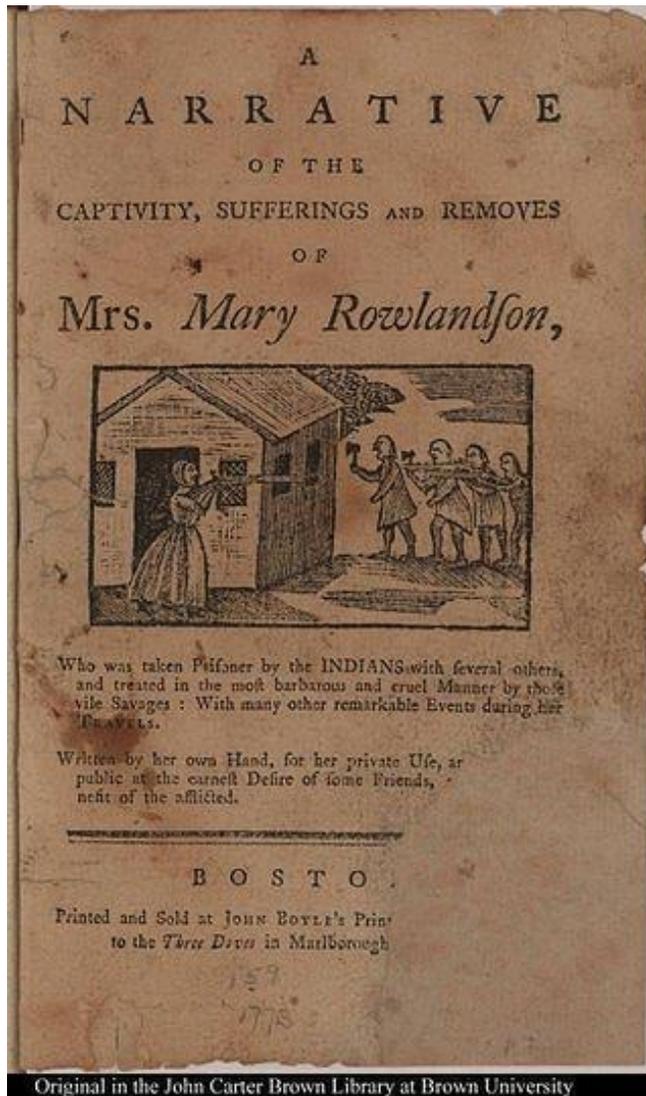


Fig 01: Mary Rowlandson's Narrative Accounts

Some examples of American Colonial Literature include the poetry of Anne Bradstreet like 'Bay Psalm Book', Pastor Edward Taylor's 'Preparatory Mediations' and, the jeremiads produced by preachers like Increase Mather and Jonathan Edwards are good examples of religious texts belonging to this literature which also laid the foundation to the Puritanism. Mary Rowlandson's [narrative](#) accounts of her experience as a captive by the native Red Indians in America and the popular Indian captivity narratives depict the personal memoirs belonging to this literature. The adventure series of Allan Quatermain by H.Rider Haggard is another famous example of Colonial literature.

What is Post Colonial Literature?

The post-colonial period is the period after the decolonization of the colonies. This period falls in between 1950 s to 1990s. This is the period when the independence struggles of the colonized people started to rise. There were patriotic movements among the people of these colonies and a new era of [nationalist](#) ideologies started to inculcate among the people. Thus, in order to regain the lost [identity](#) and the [national pride](#) and to compose narratives as a response to the colonizer by the colonized this literature emerged.

Post Colonial Literature is the literature that highlights the social, cultural aspects after the period of decolonization. These literature serve as a response to the impact of the colonial period and the discourse of colonizers in the before colonized societies. These literature draw an empathetic image of the colonized people, their liberation struggle towards independence while highlighting the impact of the colonization in their livelihoods, their culture and on the socio-cultural and political aspects of the particular country.

However, many postcolonial pieces of literature began taking shape in the late 1970s – 1980 with the end of World War 2 and the decline of the [imperial](#) order in the world. These writings reflect the conscience of the oppressed and their means of writing back to the ‘empire’ using English which is the language of the colonizer. These literary works deal with the postcolonial theory basically initiated by literary figures like Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak etc.

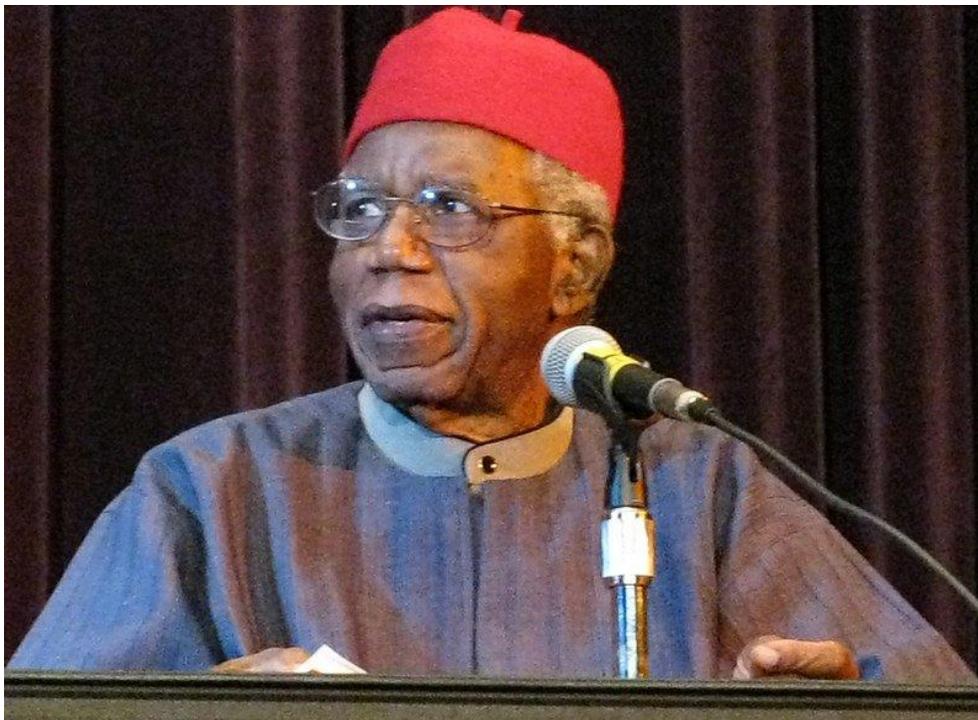


Fig 02: Chinua Achebe

Most of the well-known postcolonial writers are from the Africa, Asia, and South America, Caribbean etc. Some of the postcolonial writers are Chinua Achebe, Derek Walcott, Maya Angelou, Salman Rushdie, Jean Rhys, Gabriel Garcia Marquez etc.

What are the Similarities Between Colonial and Post Colonial Literature?

- Both belong to literature types.
- Both deal with aspects related to colonization.

What is the Difference Between Colonial and Post Colonial Literature?

Colonial Literature vs Post Colonial Literature	
Colonial Literature is the literature that deals with the aspects of the colonial period.	Post Colonial Literature is the literature that emphasizes the consequences of Colonisation.
Period	
These literary works are within the period of colonization.	These literary works span from the colonization period to the decolonization period.
Themes	
Deals with the themes of personal adventures and discoveries, religious evangelism.	Deals with the themes of independence, racialism, patriotism, as a response to the colonizers, criticising the colonizer's activities
Writers	
Mostly the writers were the colonizers themselves	Both the colonizers and the colonized people who wrote as a response to the colonizers.

Summary - Colonial vs Post Colonial Literature

Literature is a perfect conduit for the human to express their emotions and issues related to life in a creative manner. Colonial and Post Colonial literature are two such types of literature that focus on the issues concerning the colonial period in the world. Colonial literature is woven around the colonial period thus the issues with regard to colonialism while postcolonial literature emphasizes on the consequences of colonization by those who are undergoing decolonization. This can be highlighted as the difference between colonial and postcolonial literature.

Image Courtesy:

1.'1773 MaryRowlandson Boyle04264010'By John Boyle - Brown University (Public Domain) via [Commons](#) [Wikimedia](#)

2.'Chinua Achebe - Buffalo 25Sep2008 crop'By Stuart C. Shapiro, ([CC BY-SA 3.0](#)) via [Commons](#) [Wikimedia](#)

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