

**“The Rude Work of Harvesting Hymns”:
Christian Campbell and Post-Independence Aesthetics**

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What is Post-postcolonialism?

- First referenced by Campbell in June 2010 [interview](#) in the *Caribbean Review of Books*.
- Homi Bhabha defines the uses of “post-” in *The Location of Culture*.

Bhabha on the critical uses of the prefix “post-”

If the jargon of our times—postmodernity, postcoloniality, postfeminism—has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the ‘post’ to indicate sequentiality—*after-feminism; or polarity—anti-modernism*. *These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond only embody this restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment.*

—Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

What attitudinal shifts in Caribbean cultural reinterpretation have occurred in the past half century?

Re-framing *Attitude* Toward Cultural Change

The hour when the street lamps are lit in the city, and which children try to drag out so that they can go on playing, though their eyes, suddenly active, are closing in spite of themselves. *The hour in which—and it’s a **space** rather than a time—every being becomes his own shadow, and thus something other than himself.* The hour of metamorphoses, when people half hope, half fear that a dog will become a wolf.

—Jean Genet, “Prisoner of Love”

Re-framing *Attitude* Toward Cultural Change (cont' d)

En tu remota tierra ha caído esta luz difícil...

All this **difficult light** has fallen on your lonely land...

—Pablo Neruda, “Hymno y Regreso”

Re-framing *Attitude* Toward Cultural Change (cont' d)

By writers even as refreshing as Graham Greene, the Caribbean is looked at with elegiac pathos, a prolonged sadness to which Lévi-Strauss has supplied an epigraph: *Tristes Tropiques*. Their *tristesse* derives from an attitude to the Caribbean dusk, to rain, to uncontrollable vegetation, to the provincial ambition of Caribbean cities where brutal replicas of modern architecture dwarf the small houses and streets. *The mood is understandable, the melancholy as contagious as the fever of a sunset, like the gold fronds of diseased coconut palms, but there is something alien and ultimately wrong in the way such a sadness, even a morbidity is described by English, French, or some of our exiled writers. It relates to a misunderstanding of the light and the people on whom the light falls.*

—Derek Walcott, “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory”

Post-postcolonialism vs. Postcolonialism:

Caveats

- Problematic discontinuity in post-postcolonial construction.
- Clumsiness of the critical construction. Experience of “colonialism” still framed as analytical locus.
- Context of the interview between Campbell and Allen-Agostini.
- But a term like post-postcolonialism attempts to provide framework to think about real cultural shifts, especially given 50 years of Jamaican and Trinidadian Independence.

Temporal Considerations

- “Post-Independence and Post-Civil Rights.” Post-postcolonialism attempts to articulate how traits have evolved over the past generation.
- Psychologically what does it mean for Generation X and Y both home and in the Diaspora to have grown up in Independent Caribbean spaces?
- Part I “Goodman’s Bay”: Criticism of mimicry.
- Part II “Masquerade”: Self-consciously comfortable with experimentation, improvisation, and play. See “At Buckingham Palace” (34)

Influence of American Culture

- Poetry: Gwendolyn Brooks, Sonia Sanchez (56, 58).
- Film: *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* (66).
- Music: Donny Hathaway (72).
- Education: Movement of Caribbean students to Caribbean, American, and Canadian universities.

My Space: Facebooks, Timelines, Blog Spots

- Social networking makes traditional boundaries more porous and permeable.
- “Friending,” “Pokes,” and destabilizing hierarchies.
See “Groove” (66).
- “Internet Explorer” and simultaneity.
See “Iguana” (39).
- “Profiles” and self-conscious complexity.
See “Lightskinned Id” (43).
- “Likes,” “Comments,” “Retweets” and broadening of access.
See “Curry Powder” (36).

Semantic Problems: Post-postcolonial/Post-Independence Theory

“The term post-colonialism—according to a too-rigid etymology—is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept...[Postcolonial theory is] not a naïve teleological sequence, which supersedes colonialism, post-colonialism is, rather, an engagement with, and contestation of colonialism’s discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies.”

—Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Postcolonial Drama*

Post-postcolonialism acknowledges temporal dimensions to Gilbert’s and Thompson’s “contestation.” Contemporary engagement with theory is affected by interrogative platforms—cultural, political, technological—that have developed in post-Windrush, post-9/11, post-Internet spaces. Campbell’s breed of post-postcolonialism in *Running the Dusk* constructs a bridge between the meaning of inherited postcolonial constructs and the reality of these existing (and emerging) political spaces.