The Post-colonial Experience in India

1858: Beginning of the Raj (the British rule in India)
- before, India was controlled by the East India Company
  (British Company, consisting of rich merchants, who received a charter for all trade with Asia from the monarch)
- Governor-General became the viceroy of India
- India was then placed under direct British control; struggle needed to gain control is called the „First War of Indian Independence“ / „Great Rebellion“
- local rules were allowed to stay in power as long as they cooperated with the British
- the British influence in India and it being a blessing or a curse is (like almost everything about imperialism) very controversial: a benefit of the Raj was for example the building up of an infrastructure, a curse the divide and rule policy

Divide and rule policy:
- strategy of treating different groups of the population differently in order to create instability or enmity between them to ensure the own authority
- applied to the Hindus and Muslims living in India
=> can be seen as a long-term reason for Partition

Partition
- Indian Independence in 1947 (Indian Independence Act)
reasons for Partition:
- 1906: Muslim League was founded; leader: Jinnah; against the growing influence of the Hindus in the Indian National Congress (national party, main fighter for independence)
- Muslim League claimed a separate state for the Muslim population
- the hatred and conflicts between the Hindus and Muslims in India can be considered as reinforced by the British divide- and- rule policy
- Indian Independence Act passed by the British Parliament in 1947 finally decided for two separate states: India and Pakistan

consequences:
- millions of Muslims still living in India
- disagreements about borders, e.g. the Princely State of Kashmir which both countries claim -> violence, conflicts, riots (Indo-Pakistan wars in 1948/1965/1971/1999)
- large migration wave (about 20 million people left or had to leave their homes)

Bangladesh:
1971: Sheikh Mujib (forefront of the struggle for independence from Pakistan) arrested and taken to West Pakistan
=> in exile, Awami League leaders proclaim the independence of the province of East Pakistan on 26th March: new country called Bangladesh
- up to 10 million Bangladeshis flee to India as troops from West Pakistan are defeated with Indian assistance
Post-colonialism

India today:
- „Republic of India“, capital: New Delhi
- 1.18 million inhabitants
- Hinduism as most widespread religion (80.5%)
- Languages: 17 official languages and 844 dialects
- with China, India has one of the fastest growing economies in the world

_Caste system in India_
- one of the oldest surviving forms of social stratification
- each Hindu is born into the caste system
- four main castes (varnas) form a hierarchy, each of these contains over 100 subcastes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>caste</th>
<th>traditional description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhramins</td>
<td>academics, priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kshatriyas</td>
<td>warriors, kings, nobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaishyas</td>
<td>merchants, landowners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shudras</td>
<td>commoners, peasants, servants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- below these four case, there still exist the Harijans -> do not belong to any caste
  => suffered under discrimination, segregation and poverty
- to these Harijans also belong the Untouchables, „parias“ (today also called „Dalits“)
- Non-Hindus are excluded from this social order

Today:
- caste system was officially abolished in 1949; life of the Harijans improved remarkably
- nonetheless, this system still influences social life today, even though it theoretically does not exist any more
- 1997: a Dalit, K. R. Narayanan, became president of India („reservation policy“ = affirmative action, e.g. quotas introduced for Dalits)

_Burning of widows (Sati practice)_
- Hindu custom: widow burns herself on the funeral pyre of the dead husband
  => woman remains pure, demonstrates devotion, brings good fortune to her family, will be honoured
- widows had a very low social status and were not allowed to remarry
- committing Sati prevented becoming widow for the woman
- British first ignored the practice, then tried to regulate it: first abolished in 1829/30
- controversial incident of Roop Kanwar, an 18-year-old widow, who burned herself in 1987 after the death of her husband: prohibition was tightened as it was not clear whether she did it under pressure or not
  => said to be voluntary, but often forced/encouraged by pressure
Arranged marriage in India

- arranged marriage is still common, also widely accepted among the population, even among young people
- especially widespread in the North of India
- survey: 70% of Indian youth prefer an arranged marriage
- Course: family chooses the partner, potential bride and groom decide whether they want to be married
- difference between arranged and forced marriage: forced marriage only if there is pressure e.g. by the family
- dowry has to be paid by the bride’s family (officially forbidden since 1961)

dowry: The dowry is the money/gift given by the parents of the bride to the groom’s family, often a condition for marriage. This often results in financial problems for families with many daughters. This problem, even though asking for a dowry is forbidden nowadays, is linked to the issue of female foeticide, which still takes place in India.

Ethnic Communities in 21st-century Britain (Multiculturalism)

Overview:
After World War II: need for workers and encouraging of immigration (especially Caribbean, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh)
1962: Commonwealth Immigrants Act -> restriction of the number of immigrants; since then, immigration is strictly controlled
Today: acceptance of about 50,000 immigrants a year
- today (data from 2011), the number of non-white population in Great Britain reaches up to 9.1 million (1951: about 30,000; 2001: 4.6 million)

"Rivers of Blood"-Speech (by Enoch Powell), 1968
- Enoch Powell: British conservative politician
- speech harshly criticized Commonwealth immigration and the legislation in Great Britain introduced in order to prevent discrimination
- one of the most controversial political speeches of these years

Arranged marriage in Great Britain
- predominantly present in the Asian community
- people’s attitude mostly ambivalent: many see it as a close step to forced marriage, nonetheless there was even a show in Britain about it (BBC „Arrange me a marriage“) by Asian matchmakers

„Many Asians do not feel British“ (Newspaper Article)
- BBC poll about life in Britain and identity in 2007
- 59% of British Asians felt British, rather low percentage
- aspect of needing to be a „coconut“ to fit in to society => „brown on the outside but white one the inside“, fully adapting and integrating without being able to keep parts of their traditions and cultural heritage
- many don’t feel treated „British“ by white people, they want to fit into society but are at the same time excluded by others
- nonetheless: it is also about knowing who you are and finding your own identity in order to use the opportunities offered to everybody
Post-colonialism

Post-colonial literature

Postcolonial theory
- in colonial policy, knowledge and power were very important => people should know that they were subordinate to the colonists who incorporated the power
- in this process, European culture was brought to them in order to “civilize” them: the colonists were on a civilizing mission
- when the dismantling of the Empire and its power in the two World Wars began, the Imperial Culture did not came into existence immediately but it developed from counter-colonial-resistance projects => the merged cultures and indigenous cultures wanted to be self-determined and resisted
- Post-colonial literature as a result of this process
  - topics:
    - the mixture of cultures (imperial culture and indigenous cultural practices) and reflection on the existing tensions
    - unequal economic and cultural relations
    - migration, slavery, suppression

Important terms:
- feeling of displacement and rootlessness
- hybridity (mix of cultures and identity)
- otherness (stressing of differences)
- ambivalence (concerning the feelings of the colonized when it comes to colonial dominance)
- mimicry (adaption of the culture of the colonizer)
- subaltern (colonized have little possibly to express themselves / dependency of colonizer’s language)
- question of identity

Texts and films dealt with in Class

Black Madonna - Muriel Spark (1958)

Topic: Hidden racism and hypocrisy
Place: Whitney Clay (fictional place in Great Britain)
Characters:
- Lou and Raymond Parker (wealthy British couple)
- Elizabeth (Lou’s sister, living in poor conditions with many children)
- Henry Pierce and Oxford St John (two Jamaicans working with Raymond)

Content:
The British, catholic couple Lou and Raymond is living in a small town where the statue of a Black Madonna is installed in a Church. Meanwhile, Lou and Raymond befriend two Jamaicans with whom Raymond is working and present them to all of their friends. In order to have their wishes fulfilled (e.g. concerning Henry’s health or Lou’s wish for a child), they keep praying to the Black Madonna in order to have their wishes fulfilled. When Lou finally gets pregnant and gives birth to her child, it turns out to be black, even though the paternity test evidences Raymond as the child’s father.
Post-colonialism

Issues:
- prejudices, hypocrisy and hidden racism by a seemingly tolerant and modern Christian couple: Lou presents herself as tolerant (e.g. introducing their Jamaican friends to everybody) and keeps correcting her friends when they use politically incorrect terms, nonetheless shows a lot of hidden racism:
  - social classes are important to her
  - Henry is, in her opinion, not allowed to talk “like a snob” about Elizabeth as she “at least” is white
  - Lou cannot stand Oxford talking about his colour of skin, thinks he is low-class and common, but despises snobbery at the same time (wishes for him receiving a job offer far away)
- hidden racism is finally openly shown when Lou rejects the baby; additionally, neither Lou nor Raymond don’t want to be the one with black relatives in the family

aspects of post-colonial literature:
- the mixture of cultures and its ambiguity and complexity; racism
=> shown in the way Lou and Raymond treat Oxford and Henry as if they were inferior/ as if Lou and Raymond were generous by befriending them

A pair of Jeans- Qaisra Sharhraz

Topic: arranged marriage
Time/Place: 1990s/ English Midlands, town near Bradford
Characters:
- Miriam (student at university, young, beautiful, lives in two worlds)
- Fatima (Miriam’s mother, accepts western way of living)
- Farook (arranged marriage with Miriam, her future husband)
- Ayub (Farook’s father, dominates the relationship, traditional role)
- Begum (Farook’s mother, strict, traditions are very important)

Content:
Miriam is going to marry Farook in a few months. The wedding was arranged by her parents. Nevertheless M. and F. love each other and want to marry. Miriam lives in two worlds: first when she is with her friends from the university, she is dressed usual (in jeans that show her midriff); second when she is with the family she wears traditional clothes that completely cover her body. That day when her in-laws see her wearing “normal clothes” they decide to break up the wedding.

aspects of post-colonial literature:
- Mixture of cultures and the problems resulting from this: problems of a second generation immigrant, torn between two cultures: 1. Western girl Great Britain/ 2. Indian traditional girl
- forced/arranged marriages
- suppression
- timeless societies
- detailed description of Miriam -> stereotypes

My son the fanatic- Hanif Kureishi

Topic: problems between Parvez, who is a Pakistani immigrant in England and his son Ali and their conflicting notions of modern British identity
Time/Place: (written in) 1994/ takes place in London
Post-colonialism

Characters:
- Parvez (Pakistani immigrant living in England, works hard as a taxi driver to pay the education for his son Ali, dream of doing well in England, drinks, controls his son)
- Ali (messy, but is getting tidier, changes, becomes a fundamentalist Muslim, reproachful attitude towards his father)
- Bettina (Parvez’s friend, prostitute)

Content:
Parvez is a Pakistani immigrant living in England. He works as a taxi driver and has assimilated to Western ways of life. His son, Ali, seems to have embraced the lifestyle of his British friends. Parvez, however, is growing more and more suspicious of his son as he notices apparent changes in Ali’s behavior. The taxi driver talks about his worries to his colleagues and to Bettina, a prostitute who has become Parvez's friend. All his "dreams of doing well in England" (which include a happy wedding and a safe job in accountancy for Ali) crumble when his son confesses that he is disgusted by his father's neglect for Muslim precepts about prayers and his father's disregard of the ban on alcohol and pork meat. Increasingly disturbed by his son's religious fundamentalism and contempt for assimilation, Parvez one night repeatedly hits Ali. The son reacts with only a question: "So who's the fanatic now?"

aspects of post-colonial literature:
- shows problems second- and third-generation immigrants have to struggle with (they are torn between two cultures) and especially the danger of turning towards fundamentalism

_East is East_ (1999)
directed by Damien O'Donnell
content:
- introducing a family with Pakistani background in Britain, British mother and Pakistani father
- children constantly struggling with keeping to their parents’ expectations and wishes as well as their own aims
- common issue: the collision of Indian traditions and the Western/Christian lifestyle
- topics: arranged marriage, difference in religion, circumcision

Issues:
The difficulty of finding an own identity for the children (referring to themselves as „Anglo-Indian“, „Eurasian“ or „English“), the lower status of women in the Pakistani community and the pressure that both parents and children have to endure when it comes to arranged marriage

=> The differences in culture and the problems resulting from these are presented in an humorous way, nevertheless the film also deals with serious topics such as the lower status of women or the mother’s friend whose daughter was married in Pakistan and won’t come back.

**Checklist for all tasks**

**Comprehension**
- introductory sentence
- do not quote
- use present tense
- use your own words
- pay attention to the „Operator“
Analysis
Analysis of a fictional text (e.g. short story, excerpt from a novel/drama, poem)
or
Analysis of a non-fictional text (e.g. newspaper article, speech)

- objective and neutral language
- use present tense
- use P(oint)-E(xample)-E(xplanation) technique
- use quotations (switch between direct and indirect quotations); they should serve as proof for your statements and should not dominate your text

Evaluation
- present tense
- prove your points by referring to the text (quoting & paraphrasing)
- state clearly the personal opinion
- give reason for and against & justify your opinion
- explicitly refer to your knowledge from class
- pay attention to the „Operator“

=> for all three tasks, it is important to structure your text in paragraphs and avoid contracted forms; make transitions between all three tasks

Re-creation of text
- possible tasks: letter, speech/script, newspaper article, (written) interview, continuation of a fictional text
- stick to the language of the given text
- make a connection to the text
- use your results from the analysis in Task 2

How to quote?
rules:
- quote word by word
- quotations must NEVER be put in brackets (=> brackets only used to indicate line(s) and page(s))
- if you want to omit a part of the quote, use periods in brackets: […]
- if you quote indirectly, use your own words and “cf. l. XY“
- incorporate the quotation in your sentence

direct quotation:
Parvez admits that he begins “going into his son’s bedroom.“ (p. 272, l.1).

indirect quotation:
Moreover, Parvez begins to feel fear towards his son (cf. p. 272, ll. 14ff.)

if you quote one line: l. XY
if you quote more than one line: ll. XYf. ; ll. XYff. ; ll. XY - YZ

(Quotations taken from “My son the fanatic“ by Hanif Kureishi)