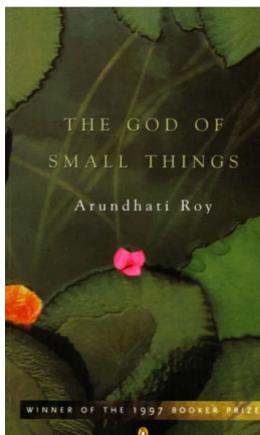


# Planning a post colonial English curriculum for Key Stage 3

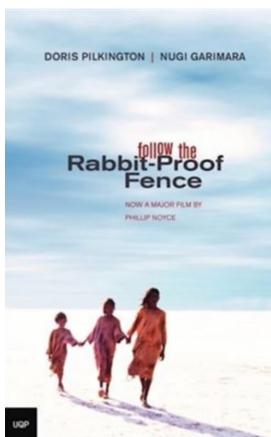
by Rachel Ram, BGU teacher trainee

Despite the political reality of living in a 'post colonial' world, the task of creating a post colonial curriculum for Key Stage 3 is challenging for UK educators because of the mixed legacies of former colonial rule that affect the people's day-to-day lives today. Various countries, that are part of the Commonwealth, still rely on the health care, education and government systems of the European powers that originally invaded them. Australia, for example, was taken over by the British about 230 years ago. However, there is still no treaty with the country's Indigenous people. Therefore to talk about 'post colonial' literature in this context, as well as for many other countries, is misleading, because it is still technically colonised.



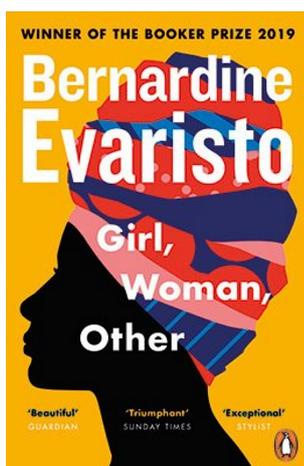
Many of the students we teach at Key Stage 3 will - within the decade - go on to do holidays and gap years in places like Australia, New Zealand, India, and countries in Africa (well known ones including Zambia, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda and Kenya). Therefore, it is important that we provide them with books and information to better understand that many countries in the world that were part of the British Empire and are often still governed by largely unchanged systems.

Racism lives on within our education system in subtle and perverse ways, therefore the more texts we have to introduce children to the complex and unique stories of people from a variety of races, ethnicities and cultures, the better they can gain understanding of the true reality of the world from the BIPOC - Black Indigenous and People of Colour- perspective. With this in mind, the texts I suggest are focussed on racism that is both obvious and systemic.



For an insight into the experiences of cultures still living under systems within the post colonial world of modern Australia, there are a number of texts that come to mind: *Rabbit-proof Fence*, by Doris Pilkington Garimara, tells the true story of three Aboriginal girls in 1931 taken from their families and land and their journey to get back home; *Sister Heart* by Sally Morgan also follows a child's perspective of being stolen from her culture, land and family; *Njunjun the Sun*, by Meme

McDonald and Boori Monty Pryor, follows a young Aboriginal boy's account entering the contemporary urban Australia from his traditional heritage. For more advanced readers, *Thicker Than Water*, by Cal Flynn, follows the journey of a white Scottish woman to Australia to uncover the truth of her family's involvement in genocide of Aboriginal people.



I would also recommend: *God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy, about two twins' imagination from chaos in the context of Kerala India; *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Houssini, about the story of two boys growing up under Taliban ruled Afghanistan; and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, about a child born on the very moment of India's independence from Britain.

To further explore more writers of colour, I recommend: *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman a dystopian story bringing to light the concept of racial privilege; *On the Come Up*, about an aspiring teenage rapper, and *The Hate U Give*, inspired by recent police shooting events— both written by Angie Thomas. *Slay* by Brittney Morris, explores black identity and *How High the Moon* by Karyn Parson, both contextualise racism in 1940s US. *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo, is a collection of short stories of mainly Black British characters, and *Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race*, by Reni Eddo-Lodge is non fiction book but with personal accounts of her experiences of racism.

Books are powerful. By encouraging our students to read literature that is truly representative of diverse experiences and histories, we promote empathy and understanding, and this knowledge can hopefully have positive impact on our global society.



This article has been published TILII, an interest group at Bishop Grosseteste University engage in discussion, debate, and sharing of useful education resources that address the corrosive effects of inequality in our contemporary society. <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/student/research/telling-it-like-it-is-teaching-resource-group-tilii>