

Culture générale du
Commonwealth
CM - civilisation

PART IV.

FIGHTING BACK

5.2. The Post-colonial era

- Reminder: last year = multicultural Britain (p.19-20 in handbook)

 - **The legacy of Empire**
 - mutation from former colony to newly independent nation
 - declaration of independence in itself not sufficient

 - Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children*
 - title: moment when India became an independent country
 - character born with telepathic powers > jealousy and dissension
 - political allegory
- LINK** movie adaptation :
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6T35sFH_as
- for the newly independent nations, and for the old dominions, central question = cementing of a composite identity

➤ **The term “postcolonialism”**

- the transition period during which it became necessary to critically address the legacy of imperialism and the challenges of the future
- two spellings :
 - post-colonial = clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period
 - postcolonial = emphasis on the condition of the colonial subject striving to escape from his/her political, cultural and economic subjection
- recurring issues > characteristic of postcolonialism
 - identity questions
 - reconciliation and redress
 - land rights
 - multiculturalism

A. Identity questions

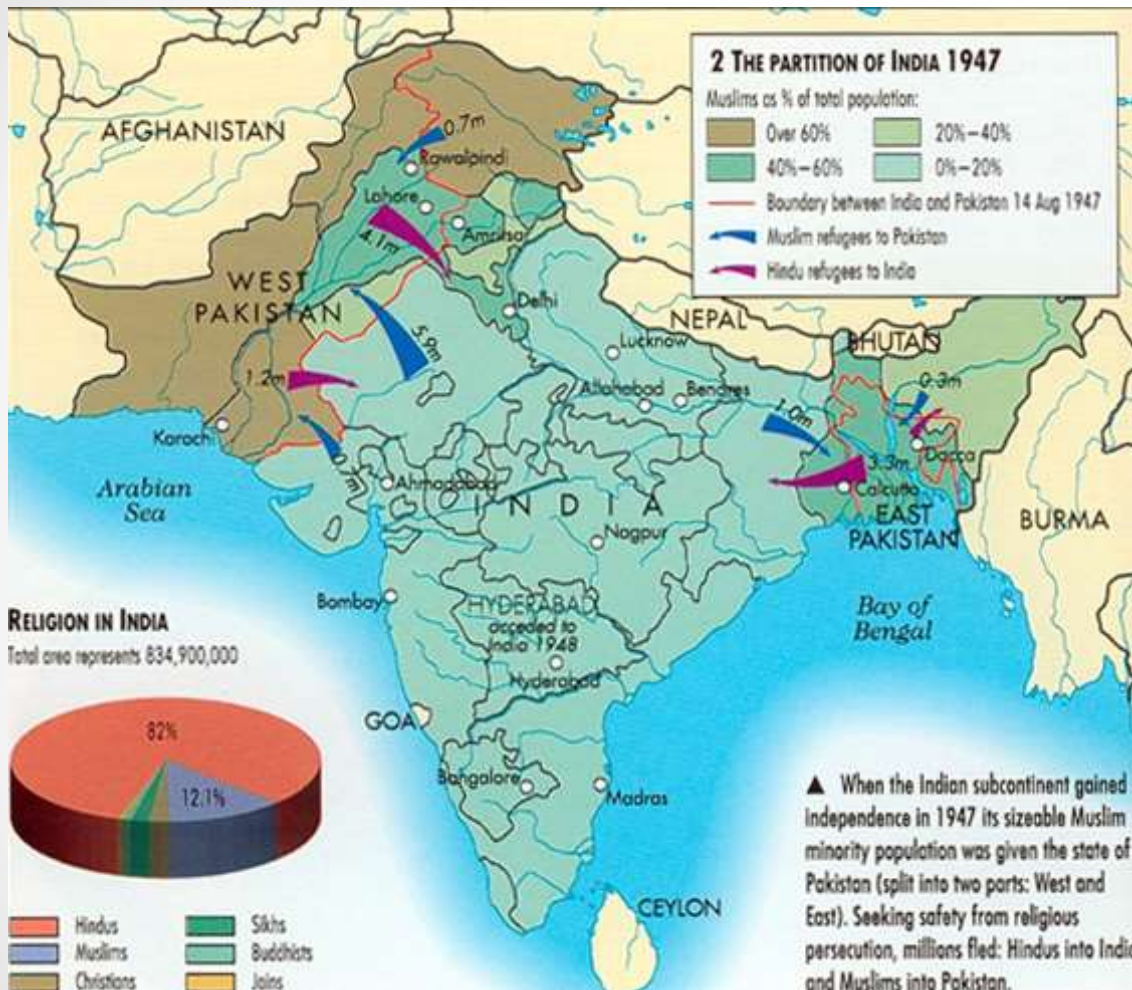
- postcolonial societies ≠ 19th century definition of nation
- newly independent countries: clearly delineated territories, heterogeneous societies

EXAMPLE: the partition of India, 1947

- by the end of 1942, British > leaving a united India
- growing dissension between Muslim nationalists and the National Congress
- already in 1940, the Muslim League > creation of a separate nation for India's large Muslim communities
- lines of the new borders hurriedly drawn up
- 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent = creation of the sovereign state of Pakistan, intended as a Muslim homeland

Partition of India in August 1947





- transfer of populations from Pakistan to India and vice versa
- 15 million migrants, between 500,000 and 1 million killed

→ today, relations between Pakistan and India still tense (3 Indo-Pakistani wars: 1965, 1972, 1999)

Source:
<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00maplinks/modern/maps1947/maps1947.html>

The image is a screenshot of the BBC website's article page for 'Partition of India'. At the top, the BBC logo is on the left, followed by a 'Sign in' button. A navigation menu includes 'News', 'Sport', 'Weather', 'Shop', 'Earth', 'Travel', and 'More'. A search bar is on the right. The main content area has a large 'BBC' logo on the left, followed by the title 'Partition of India' in a large, bold, black font. Below the title is a sub-headline: 'The partition of India and the birth of Pakistan shaped the lives of generations of families.' This is followed by a paragraph: 'In the era of the Raj, India was the jewel in Britain's imperial crown, but in 1947 everything changed.' At the bottom left of the article area, there is a prompt: 'Scroll down to take a journey through the key events of the last 70 years and beyond' next to a scroll-down icon.

BBC

Partition of India

The partition of India and the birth of Pakistan shaped the lives of generations of families.

In the era of the Raj, India was the jewel in Britain's imperial crown, but in 1947 everything changed.

Scroll down to take a journey through the key events of the last 70 years and beyond

To go further
(summary of the events)

LINK

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-d88680d1-26f2-4863-be95-83298fd01e02>

B. Redress and reconciliation

- confrontation between ethnic groups

EXAMPLE: South Africa and the Apartheid

- o legally abolished 1994
- o how to achieve peace without aggravating the conflict between communities
- o trial like the Nuremberg trial at the end of WW2 > a civil war
- o Archbishop Desmond Tutu: one of the main architects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- o not a court of justice (no prosecution power)
- o emphasis on uncovering the truth about human rights violations, on gathering evidence and uncovering information
- o both victims and perpetrators
- o collecting testimonies from perpetrators to avoid any future attempt to deny the violence of the Apartheid (historical negationism or revisionism)
- o helping the country heal (cathartic dimension)

To go further
(testimonies)

LINK:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/stories-42993999/the-truth-and-reconciliation-challenge>



The Truth and Reconciliation challenge

When the apartheid regime was overthrown in South Africa, the problem of how to deal with the past remained.

After so many years of brutality, would punishing historic crimes against humanity threaten the future peace of the new Rainbow Nation?

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission aimed to help South Africans bear the burden of their racist history. Judge Sisi Khampepe shares her memories of serving on it.

Witness: *The stories of our times told by the people who were there.*

Witness can be seen on BBC World News at varying times between Friday 9 March and Sunday 11 March 2018.

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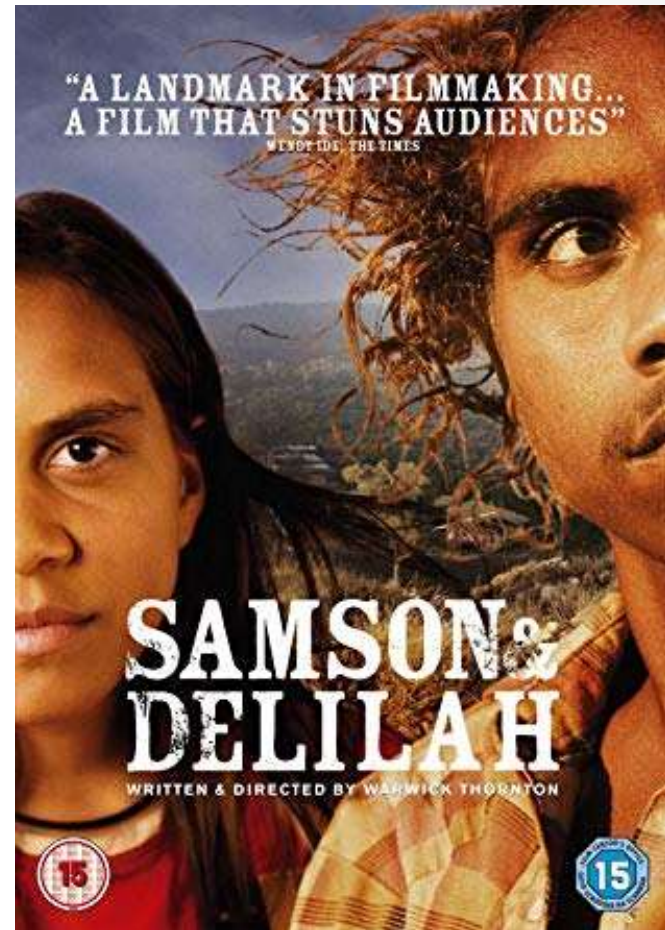
- similar initiatives in Canada: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2007-2015) = the Residential Schools system
- process still on going today: violence against First Nation women (the missing and murdered indigenous women)

LINK: <https://www.amnesty.ca/blog/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-and-girls-understanding-the-numbers>

→ role of art in giving back their voices to the oppressed and the silenced, and in addressing the legacy of colonialism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v6GTIEc0cw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lbnk8wSVMaM>



Kent Monkman's *Shame and Prejudice*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxQ4c7mluOM>



Elisapie Issac

<https://www.elisapie.com/> (song:
Arnak)



C. Land Rights

EXAMPLE: CANADA

- early 1980s, Canada's official recognition
- November 1996, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples's report on historical and contemporary relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples
- Aboriginal peoples' underclass status (poverty, the damages caused by forced acculturation > high rate of suicides, alcoholism, domestic violence etc.)
- new orientation : recognition of the inherent right to Aboriginal self-determination
- 1999 formation of Nunavut (« Our Land » in Inuktituk)
- court cases regarding land claims > re-assessment of treaties (a variety of terms such as money, land, forms of self-government, rights to wildlife, and provisions for the joint management of lands and resources)

EXAMPLE: AUSTRALIA

- end of the residential school system in the 1980s
 - Land Rights for Australian Aboriginals finally secured with the Mabo Case (1982-92).
 - Eddie (Koiki) Mabo > legal challenge to the notion of terra nullius.
 - legal proceedings against the Queensland government to secure ownership of their ancestral island
 - the High Court of Australia ruled in their favour
- established the principle of native title

Aborigines rejoice as High Court ends terra nullius



By DAVID SOLOMON, DEANE CARBON and FIONA KENNEDY

ABORIGINES feasted and celebrated last night as the High Court wrote the law to recognise Aboriginal land rights.

The decision has finally quashed the notion of terra nullius, which had long justified the dispossession of Aborigines by asserting the land was desert and unoccupied.

By a 6-1 judgment, the High Court decided that Torres Strait islanders were entitled, "as against the whole world, to possession, occupation, use and enjoyment of the lands of the Murray Islands" on which they lived.

The legal theories that the court overturned were that the common law did not recognise native land title in Australia and that any interest in land had to be in terms of "property rights" recognised according to English common law.

David Solomon — Page 2

Two of the High Court judges yesterday described in creative terms the way in which the law had been used to justify the dispossession of Aboriginal people.

Justices Deane and Gaudron described these acts as "the darkest aspect of the history of this nation".

They said: "The nation as a whole must remain diminished unless and until there is

and any real observance of traditional customs, the foundations of native title has disappeared. A native title which has ceased with the abandonment of laws and customs based on tradition cannot be revived for contemporary recognition."

Justice Brennan said there might be other areas where native title had not been extinguished and where Aborigines maintaining their society and customs, could enjoy their native title.

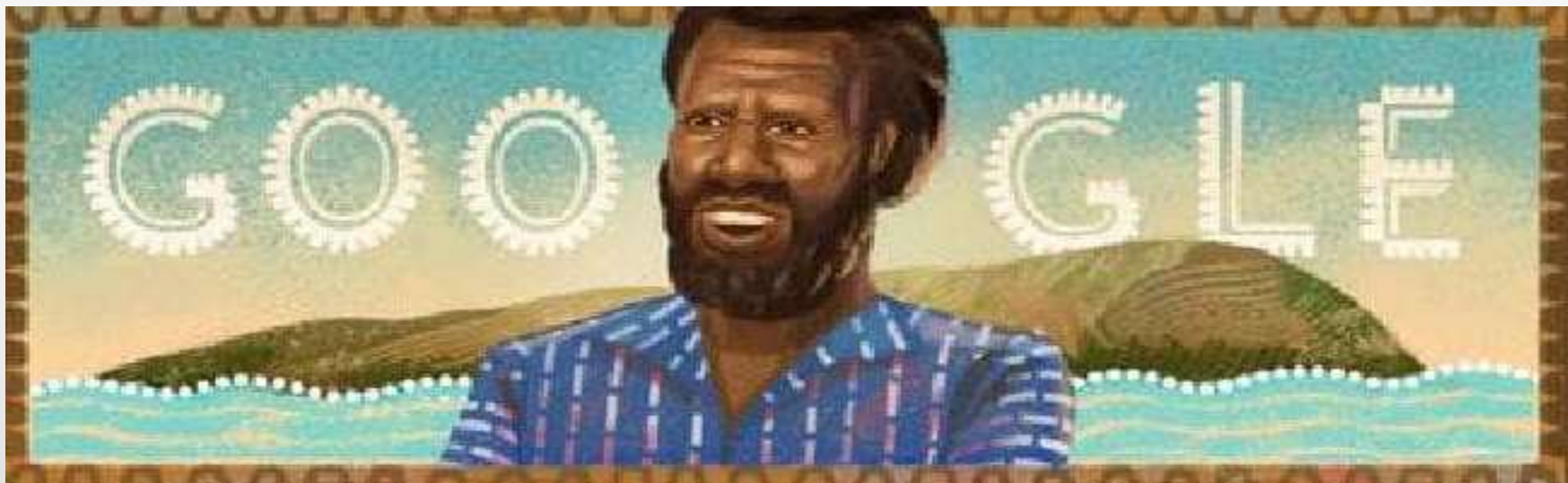
The judgments of the majority in the court indicate some of the issues that would need to be considered by courts in considering the validity of other land claims.

Justice Brennan said native land rights could be extinguished by grants of freehold or leasehold land by the government but not necessarily by the granting of prospecting rights.

It would also be extinguished where land had been used for roads or other public works but not when set aside as a national park.

The judgment yesterday followed a 16-year crusade by Torres Strait islander Eddie Mabo from Murray Island and two other plaintiffs to force the law to recognise Aboriginal claim to land.

Mabo died in January of cancer and his daughter, Ms Maleta West, said yesterday that his last thoughts were of the case.



Source: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/step-back-in-time/image-gallery/fcee5958c0de06c7cbad36d9045d7832>

Source: <https://www.news.com.au/technology/google-pays-respect-to-the-late-eddie-mabo-on-his-80th-birthday/news-story/520e2368a8792130fdce9c369a63f9c6>

D. Multiculturalism

- population flow, globalisation and globalisation of conflicts, generalisation of diasporas
- o increasing tension over national, ethnic and religious identities

example: rise to power of Hindu nationalism in India with PM Narendra Modi

LINK: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/14/the-guardian-view-on-india-at-70-democracy-in-action>

- o reinvention of hybridization

example: Bollywood movies like *Jodhaa Akbar* (2008)

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ce-rrik4kT4>

- post-colonial cultures: laboratory of multiculturalism and interculturalism]?
- DEFINING multiculturalism
 - descriptive = culturally and ethnically diverse society
 - ideal = situation in which all the different cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities
 - policy = giving equal attention or representation to the cultural needs and contribution of all the groups in a society

EXAMPLE: CANADA

- constitutional tenet (Canada)
- 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms states it “shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.”
- challenged the idea of biculturalism
- challenged the idea of the melting-pot
- a new vision of Canadian identity, which would foster a global understanding of all ethnic communities.



CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM DAY



JUNE 27