

*Bart Moore-Gilbert*

Goldsmiths College, University of London

***'THE POLITICS OF GENRE CRITICISM:  
THE CASE OF POSTCOLONIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY'***

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**Abstract:** *Postcolonial Studies has often been accused of ignoring the material histories of colonialism and its legacies by virtue of its focus on textual relations and representations. Paradoxically, however, the 'Holy Trinity' of postcolonial theorists, Said, Bhabha and Spivak, are not noted either for the detail or the subtlety of their engagements with literary texts. Nor have they evinced much interest in poetics, especially the poetics of genre. This paper proposes that political criticism and traditional forms of literary-critical analysis may be complementary rather than opposed forms of engagement with aesthetic texts. This argument is advanced by analysing aspects of postcolonial engagements with the genre of autobiography. By exploring how postcolonial autobiography challenges and adapts some of the established poetics of autobiography as it is conceived in the West, the paper will suggest that the sub-genre establishes its distinctiveness in terms which are at one and the same time formal and ideological in nature.*