Chapter 1

Identities in Postcolonial Thinking: Contesting

Binaries and Negotiating Spaces

The postcolonial is a field in which everything is contested, everything is contestable, from one’s reading of a text to one’s personal, cultural, racial, national standpoint, perspective and history. . . . that contestation will nevertheless remain sterile unless it begins and continues on the basis of a certain openness, a . . . thirsty openness . . .

(David Punter, Postcolonial Imaginings 10)

Introduction

The question of identity is crucial in a postcolonial society. Postcolonial society has inherited a diversity of cultural, social and political hierarchies owing to colonial rule. Colonialism as a dominant discourse, on the other hand, has developed through the logic of modernism which substantiates the process of legitimisation of oppression. The colonial masters tried to make their subjects confused and hybridised with regard to their cultural and national identity. Sometimes a blueprint was undertaken to form a hybrid nation that would be, for example, “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (qtd. in
O'Reilly 17). The colonial system contributed to creating a special class of educated Indians in British India. They were derogatorily referred to as “the Babu” and they themselves also enjoyed being identified with the term. But the British writers (such as Dickens) never used the term approvingly; rather, they made much fun of it. The discourses centring on the identity of the Babu determine the coercion of colonial discourse. Serajul Islam Choudhury points out, “That he should be created and then ridiculed is of a piece with the ideology of the cultural subjugation of colonial rule.” (86). Thus, subject of identity is culturally and historically situated; sometimes, the individual does not have a choice to assume an identity independently since identity is imposed as well. In a postcolonial society identity crisis is considered one of the dominant phenomena. It is not only because a postcolonial subject fails to identify himself/herself either with the colonial burden or with the subsequent postcolonial existence, but s/he is in the present context enchained to the dynamics of the New World Order. Nevertheless, postcolonial identities are never static; rather, as a vortex they are ever spinning in a violent motion.

The chapter first discusses “identity” in general and makes a link between identity studies and postcolonial theories. It then argues that a typical postcolonial theoretical frame of locating “postcolonial identity” ignores a number of valid issues prevalent in a postcolonial context. The growing issues of globalisation, multinational capitalism, multiculturalism and “new internationalism” have changed the structure of the present world to a large extent, making it very difficult to define the nature of postcolonial identities. From global perspectives, postcolonial studies cannot be confined to a flux of binary oppositions or a critique of colonial burden

1 “Dickens once said that he could not write the word lest he should make it baboon.” (qtd. in Choudhury 86)
and discourses. Similarly, any territorial studies under the banner of postcolonial theory might prove in many cases inadequate as well. Therefore, if something really challenging is allowed to emerge out of postcolonial studies, the area should be kept open to multiple interpretations and applications. In fact, the possibility of spaces and options leaves a conscious choice of position in determining the predicament of the postcolonial condition. At the end of this chapter, while discussing postcolonial spaces, I attempt to explain the flow of postcolonial thinking, which is, to some extent, helpful in debating different dimensions of postcolonial identities.

The Vortex of Identities: An Overview

In current literature, “identity” is studied and explored at numerous levels and from various perspectives and approaches. In earlier studies, sociologists mainly focused on the formation of “me” and explored the ways and parameters which would mould “an individual’s sense of self” (Cerulo 385). In recent sociological studies, however, the focus has been shifted from the analysis of the individual to the collective. Some researchers regard identity as “a source of mobilization rather than a product of it; . . .” Besides, the prevalence of virtual identities draws attention from researchers (ibid. 385). Poststructuralists and cultural theorists emphasise the fluid nature of identity. The later Foucault moved away from his previous concept of fixed identity and pointed out that there is no such thing as a fixed self. One’s identity can undergo changes in relation to discursive formations and surroundings he comes across (Discipline and Punishment, History of Sexuality 1). Given a particular condition,

\[2\] For a detailed discussion see Urbanski, “The Identity Game: Michel Foucault’s Discourse-Mediated Identity as an Effective Tool for Achieving a Narrative-Based Ethic”, The Open Ethics Journal 5 (2011) 3-9.
say colonial condition, identity can be fragmented as Diana Fuss shows in her article on the vulnerable nature of identity and existence of the black or brown man who is "forever in combat with his own image" and "begins and ends violently fragmented" (22).

The subject of identity is necessarily complex as it takes in the totality of social experience, much of which is inextricably influenced by shared history and culture of a community. The concept of identity is assumed to convey a picture of social uniformity. It is also supposed to be linked to social, cultural or national inheritance and association. What constitutes the identity of a group is not always easy to determine. Bourdieu notes that "the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships." (qtd. in Norton 350). Every time we speak, we are negotiating and renegotiating our sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganising that relationship across time and space. Our gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, among other characteristics, are all implicated in this negotiation of identity (Norton 350). According to Yusuf Bangura, some issues like how individuals are socialised during the course of their lives—as members of different races, families, neighbourhoods, villages, professions, social groups or transnational and trans-cultural organisations—should be taken into consideration when one attempts a discussion on search for identity in general.

In postcolonial theories, the term "postcolonial identity" prevails. Theories of "identity politics" are exploited to explain the nature of postcolonial identities. An essentialist philosopher and a nationalist caught in a binary construction would argue for "postcolonial identity", which positively represents a distinct racial
essence, as opposed to the colonial identity. On the other hand, constructionists opine that “social, psychical, and linguistic structures determine identity” (Hawley 240). Besides, other studies are available that analyse identity in a theoretical frame. Thus, it is highly problematic to depend on a particular theoretical structure to discuss and determine an individual’s postcolonial identity in a literary work. Let us outline first the relevant literature on the theories of identity.

Karen A. Cerulo in “Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions” discusses sociological discourses concerning constructions of identity. The essay gives a historical background to identity study from the 1970s onward. With regard to collective identity Cerulo explores the relation between identity and “imagined communities”, and identity and resistance. At the end, the paper focuses on poststructuralist/postmodern perspective on the study of identity, exploring possible spaces as to the shifting nature of identity. The parameters of virtual identity and the inevitability of its existence on the prevalence of information technology are also investigated in the paper. Jennifer Todd in “Social transformation, collective categories, and identity change” theorises that “changes in collective categories of identity are at the core of social transformation. The causal linkages among identity change, institutional change, and change in modes of practice are, however, complex.” (429). The shift or change of identity is subject to factors of “socio-political change”, “wider social processes”, and “resource distribution.” However, it is a complex process depending on the individual’s experience and moments of intentionality when s/he faces choices as to the direction of change.

Marilynn B. Brewer in “The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology” discusses social identity as a concept that has been invented
and reinvented across the social and behavioural science disciplines to provide a critical link between the psychology of the individual and the structure and function of social groups. It reflects the constructivist approach to the study of identity construction in which identity is perpetually developed in relation to the surroundings. This paper further reviews the various definitions of social identity as used in different theoretical frameworks, drawing distinctions among person-based identities, relational (role-based) identities, group-based identities, and collective identities.

Identity may have a psychotic dimension as well when a person happens to experience alienation and dislocation. Franz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* points out that the subaltern black people deny their own identity in adopting the values of white colonial power, and are thus led into a psychotic condition since they remain alienated from their culture and roots (Hawley 119). He states—"In the first case the alienation is of an almost intellectual character. Insofar as he conceives of European culture as a means of stripping himself of his race, he becomes alienated." (174). The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white. . . . and all his efforts are aimed at achieving a white existence (178). If colonialism is considered psychopathological, then it distorts human relations and renders everyone sick (Loomba 143). Aime Cesaire in *Discourse on Colonialism*, however, shows the double-edged effects of colonisation by terming it "a disease". If European colonial civilisation, according to Cesaire, amounts to a sick civilisation—"decadent, stricken and dying", then whoever comes close to it will turn sick and psychotic. This violent process of distorting identity will only result in the emergence of insanity.
Asish Nandy in *The Intimate Enemy* discusses the nature of "modern Western colonialism and its various psychological offshoots in India." He argues that "the first differentia of colonialism is a state of mind in the colonizers and the colonized." (1). He describes this state as "colonial consciousness", which is a psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness. (Post)colonial self is constructed as split personality in a perpetual conflict between one's colonial consciousness and commitment to native culture. This type of identity crisis can also be found among group identities within themselves.

In colonial and postcolonial discourses, identity crisis occupies a significant place. In *Identity and Violence* Amartya Sen, terming it "reactive identity", discusses how this type of identity is constructed and what the impulses or repulses behind this type of identity are. "Reactive identity" comes out of the confusion and inferiority complex that a colonised person undergoes. In other words, it is the direct result of colonial hangover experienced by the colonised.

Language and culture influence the making of an individual or collective identity in a given context. Lee S. Kim's essay "Exploring the Relationship between Language, Culture and Identity" investigates the interconnectedness of language and culture, and how language and culture impact one's identity. Stuart Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" suggests that identity could be linked to national or cultural inheritance and association. It can be defined in terms of shared culture, "shared history and ancestry hold in common" (222, 223). Generally language based identity with a strong sense of culture leads to a rigid identity. An extreme form of nationalism on a collective scale is born out of this type of identity-consciousness, and elements of resistance are prevalent. The Bengali Language Movement of 1952
that took place in the then East Pakistan united the Bengalis in terms of linguistic nationalism driven by a strong sense of Bengali culture and inspired in them the need to protest on a large scale as a unified group. However, the act of protesting and resisting on the basis of language identity could succeed, given that the group concerned enjoys a certain amount of power. As Deborah Schiffrin in “Narrative as Self-Portrait: Sociolinguistic Constructions of Identity” states, “the ability of narrative to verbalize and situate experience as text (both locally and globally) provides a resource for the display of self and identity.” This aspect of identity is about the agency of a group where identity is in a position of articulation.

However, in a colonial situation, where the natives are forcefully colonised and any attempt to resist is suppressed violently, dominant language and culture can rigorously reshape one’s identity. In a colonial context, while making the relation between language and identity, Fanon in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks explores the violent role of a dominant language in shaping the identity of a colonised subject. By applying poststructuralist theories of language as discourse and by exploring the location of power in relationships between individuals, communities, and nations, the relationship between language and identity can be clearly understood as Bonny Norton suggests in “Language and Identity”. Edward Said in Culture and Imperialism speaks of the cultural resistance to imperialistic hangover in terms of assertion of nationalistic identities. Culture is a source of identity as it is constructed out of codes that are thought and known to be the best. How identity is constructed in Said’s opinion is to “return to tradition and culture”. But there is a problem in this type of identity construction; since resistance takes place in the form of return, varieties of religious and nationalistic fundamentalisms
emerge. Said prefers the commitment and permissiveness of fluid multicultural spaces of hybridity (pluralistic identity) to rigorous cultural constructs (xiii).

In addition, one group's radical cultural identity or national identity can pose a threat to other group(s). Adib Khan in his essay “In Janus' Footsteps” (2001) warns of the threat and danger of radical nationalism, especially in Western states as they experience increased immigration from the East:

Discourse on gender, ethnic and class identity appears to have subsided for the moment and we are caught in a mesh of aggressive nationalism that encourages a somewhat naïve and illusory view of a heroic identity. Guilt and alienation are frequently evoked to lash individuals into an acceptance of an advanced tribal mentality, and these are often achieved by clearly defined characteristics of unacceptable non-conformity. Probably this is a communal reaction to fear, a backlash against globalisation that is perceived to be a threat to national identity. (qtd. in Alam 197).

In this context, one can refer to Anders Breivik's brutal killings of about seventy seven innocent people. He later admitted that he committed the heinous crime because he was inspired by a sense of radical nationalism formed through his strong commitment to Christian fundamentalism that produced tremendous hatred in his heart towards the Muslim immigrants. In this regard we can quote Sen as well—

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"The world is frequently taken to be a collection of religions (or of "civilizations" or "cultures"), ignoring the other identities that people have and value involving class, gender, profession, language, science, morals, and politics." (xvi).

Judith A. Howard in "Social Psychology of Identities", discussing postmodernist conceptions of identities, notes "identity" as fluid, multidimensional, personalized . . . ." Hall suggests that "we should think, instead, of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside . . . '.'(222). He further observes, "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, . . ." (225). Thus, identity is not predetermined, nor is it constituted on the basis of homogeneity. Though identity tends to be fluid in nature, certain issues like social or political groups, cultural practices, personal experiences, ontological concerns etc. contribute to constructing particular identities.

Peter Adler in "Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism" suggests a transcendental identity for a human being who is committed to a larger vision of the global community, transcending the boundaries of nationalism. The article argues for "an international person" who may now be on the threshold of a new kind of being who is socially and psychologically a product of the interweaving of cultures of the present time. Nation, culture, and society influence individuals, make up their values, and give insights into the world. Human beings cannot hold themselves apart from some form of cultural influence⁴. The conditions of the contemporary world tend to produce cosmopolitan identities for global citizens.

⁴ For a detailed textual discussion see chapter six of this dissertation.
Nick Stevenson also argues for cultural or global citizenship with respect to the media of mass communication and globalisation processes ("Globalisation, National Cultures and Cultural Citizenship"). Culture in its various forms now serves as primary carrier of globalisation and modern values, and constitutes an important arena of contestation for national, religious, and ethnic identity, argue Robert J. Lieber and Ruth E. Weisberg in "Globalization, Culture, and Identities in Crisis." They further contend that the threat of global culture to certain identities, for example, Muslim identities in conservative Muslim societies is not so much a clash between civilisations, but a clash within civilisations.

However, globalisation might have a different effect on some individuals and their identity shifts. In particular contexts, globalisation can drive them to take up positions in order to retain a collective identity. Catarina Kinnvall views globalisation as a decisive force of imperialism that drives certain individuals/communities to seek refuge in religion and nationalism that eventually polarise identity, terming religion and nationalism "identity signifier." In this context, self identity being threatened could eventually become existential identity leading to the polarisation of identity and the formation of collective identity-groups ("Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security").

Stephen Reicher in "The Context of Social Identity: Domination, Resistance, and Change" through the theories of social psychology explains the flexibility of human beings in creating and relating to social worlds. The paper, arguing that identity is not fixed, but flexible, states that social identity and self-categorisation

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5 For textual discussions see chapter six of this dissertation.
theories provide an "interactionist framework" instead of "reductionist approach" to theories of identity construction. Identity cannot be explained by giving reference to psychological processes; rather the relation between the processes and the cultural and structural settings should be examined. In the "reductionist approach" to identifying an individual or a group, according to Sen, the relations between different persons are seen as "relations between the respective civilizations to which they allegedly belong." (41). Sen, who is more concerned with the fluid nature of an individual's identity than with the fixed nature of collective, community or group identity, elaborates upon the civilisational conflicts by focusing on Huntington's theory "clash of civilisations" and shows how identity is assumed, ascribed, manipulated, and reduced to a subject of politics and business of civilisational conflicts. Identity is forced to take refuge mainly at the bottom of binary constructions such as Western civilisation versus Islamic civilisation. He, however, proposes to come out of this narrow binarism and offers a broader understanding of identity, dealing with different dimensions and demeanours of individual identity. He states—

"[T]o see any person pre-eminently as a member of a civilization (for example, in Huntington's categorization, as a member of "the Western world", "the Islamic world, "the Hindu world", or "the Buddhist world") is already to reduce people to this one dimension" (41).

Identity can be of two dimensions in a nation-state like India and sometimes it is essential to maintain a two-tier identity. Sudipto Kaviraj states—
Accordingly, although in many respects India established a typical nation-state, its constitution sanctioned a distinctive two-tier nationalism which encouraged its citizens to be both Tamils/Bengalis/Gujaratis and Indians. Indeed, it was believed that there was no way of being an Indian pure and simple, without going through one of these identities (4).

Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* explores identity in diasporic contexts. He has come up with terms like “in-between-ness”, interstitial space, ambivalent identity etc. to talk about “cultural hybridity” in metropolitan contexts. The hybrid identity, according to Bhabha, dwells in an interstitial passage, in a space of in-between-ness. He observes—

“This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.” (5).

However, Bapsi Sidhwa’s elucidation on the hybrid or fluid nature of identity seems more sensible and cosmopolitan. She replies in an interview—

I have been, at various times, a citizen of Pakistan and India, and now I am an American. As one for whom national borders are becoming blurred and matter of citizenship disconcertingly fluid, I feel I belong to these countries simultaneously rather than sequentially: and whatever happens in them resonates for me as a writer. (qtd. in Alam 361)

Sen is prolific in exploring the many facets and facades of one’s identity. Recollecting the traumas and losses that took place in the recent history of India’s
partition in 1947 because of collective identities, religious, ethnic and political, he comments:

In our normal lives, we can see ourselves as members of a variety of groups—we belong to all of them. The same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theatre lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a Jazz musician, and someone who is deeply committed to the view that there are intelligent beings in outer space with whom it is extremely urgent to talk (preferably in English). (Sen xiii)

Putting too much importance on religious based, national or regional identity has proved to be detrimental to a society like South Asia where people of different religions and faiths have coexisted from time immemorial. In the waves of history, new civilisations emerged in the land, merged into the existing ones, and thus enriched and advanced them. But when the practice of confirming identity on the basis of religious affiliations or community affiliations prevails, people become less human, and irreversible gaps emerge that create deep wounds hard to be healed. People in the same country become enemies to each other and put all efforts to annul the defined “other”. For instance, Sen claims, “civilizational classifiers have often pigeonholed India as a “Hindu civilization”—a description that, among other things, pays little attention . . . to India’s more than 145 million Muslims (not to mention

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6 See Thapar 990-1014.
Indian Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Parsees, and others), and also ignores the extensive interconnections among the people of the country that do not work through religion at all, but through involvements in political, social, economic, commercial, artistic, musical, or other cultural activities.” (Identity and Violence 177).

Thus, we could posit that issues of “identity” in a postcolonial society are intertwined with a number of contemporary literary theories. Now we attempt to get a comprehensive understanding of the existing theories as well as limitations of postcolonialism in relation to the current world order.

Approaching Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism as an umbrella term has attracted the attention of scholars all over the world. The “post” in “postcolonialism” denotes a period after colonialism as well as referring to “a critical aftermath—cultures, discourses and critiques that lie beyond, but remain closely influenced by, colonialism.”(Blunt and McEwan 3). Although overused and sometimes misused in the contexts of the variety of nations and their discourses, the term offers historical, political and cultural discourses to analyse, to some extent, the present world order. However, terming the literature and discourse of a particular territory such as India or Canada “the postcolonial” is not beyond question. I would argue that postcolonialism emerging from well-established theories like poststructuralism is a production of Eurocentrism. Postcolonial discourses, on some occasions, obscure historical facts, focus mainly on particular periods and are not able to draw a comprehensive link between modernism, colonialism and postcolonialism in the post-imperial era. It fails to address the present context of multinational capitalism. Furthermore, it is not able to address the
problems of class struggle and the ways of resistance in the changing scenario of the present world order. The reference to space, in-betweenness and hybridity in postcolonial studies cannot be determined in a structured theoretical frame. These ideas borrowed from postmodernism are naively developed in postcolonial studies.

Postcolonialism as a counter discourse to colonialism hardly points to the interrelation between globalisation and postcolonialism. The discourses and theories of globalisation substantiate different forms of economic and cultural imperialism all over the world. Though postcolonial study addresses issues such as multiculturalism, trans-culturalism and hybridity in its own fashion, it remarkably overlooks the role they play in accelerating the global project of imperialism. Therefore, I intend to explore a relationship between globalisation and postcolonialism in formulating a backdrop to the history of colonialism. I also go on to locate the gap between discourses of postcolonialism and imperialism and show that postcolonial discourses are inadequate when it comes to explaining global projects of imperialism. Besides, the relation between capitalism and imperialism reinforced by the cultural logic of globalisation is not evident enough in a typical frame of postcolonial theory.

Postcolonialism or the postcolonial condition is not studied here as a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies, but as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism (Dirlik 331-32). I would argue that the postcolonial condition posed as “postcolonial predicament” (Breckenridge and Veer 2) reflects the twofold aspects of literary criticism. The critique of colonial discourses in the frame of time, place and spatial formulations of postcolonial condition renders a sense of awareness to underscore the relation between power, discourse and ideology of former colonialism. On the other hand, through the study
of the present world order we could come up with theoretical approaches to the
analysis of power in discourse and in a system of global domination, devising
critical and alternative theories and methods.

Postcolonialism as Counter-discourse to Colonialism

Postcolonial “theories are in general reactions to the cultural legacy of colonialism.
Postcolonial literature and criticisms study the processes and effects of cultural
displacement and aggression, expose the internal doubts of postcolonial subjects,
question the colonial legacy of language, critique the absurdity of colonial
discourses, and deconstruct discourses on politics in a postcolonial society” (Hasan
38-9). The literature of postcolonial countries, for example, India, Africa, and Latin
America reflects in general the traumas of colonial subjects in terms of a binary
encounter between the colonised and the coloniser. What is found in a typical
postcolonial study is an analysis of the representation of the “other” in colonial
discourses and a dismantling of the stereotypes centring on colonial conscience.
Moreover, the process of literary decolonisation is seen as a “radical dis/mantling of
European codes and a post-colonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant
European discourses” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 95).

Fanonian discourses of anti-colonialism or postcolonialism underscore,
among others, the psychiatric disorders experienced by individuals under the
violence of colonial domination (Fuss 20). Fanon in the chapter “Colonial War and
Mental Disorders” of his book The Wretched of the Earth speaks of the traumatic
experiences of colonialism. Putting forth several case studies, he expands upon the
effects of colonial rule in terms of territorial displacement, mental distortion,
psychic disorder, and existential crisis. In fact, Fanon’s discourse of anti-colonialism centres round confrontations of colonial discourses in relation to appropriations of radical nationalism which evolved through Eurocentrism. Besides, presenting nationalism against the backdrop of colonialism to propound a modern theory, that is, a binary opposition, is an oft-practised phenomenon in Western academia. Fanon’s study of colonialism is generally termed anti-colonial resistance to colonial atrocities.

Furthermore, Fanon in *Black Skin* concentrates on the dominance of a colonial language, having documented fairly well the entire situation of French colonialism in Algeria. In the first chapter he encapsulates the violent role of a dominant language in reshaping the identity of a colonial subject. He puts it this way—“The negro of the Antilles [who represents every colonised man⁷] will be proportionately whiter—that is, he will come closer to being a real human being—in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language” (8). A colonised nation, torn between a sense of its cultural originality and that of an inferiority complex, finds itself face to face with the language and culture of a colonising nation. The colonised assume that they will become whiter and more civilised if they renounce their blackness and heritage. Fanon says, “The black man who has lived in France for a length of time returns radically changed”⁸ as a “new man” (ibid. 12). Fanon continues— “The newcomer”, who has just landed on his native country after having spent some years in the civilised nation, “reveals himself at once; he answers only in French and often he no longer understands Creole” (ibid. 13), for colonialism depersonalizes the individual it has colonized (*Wretched* 293).

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⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin* 9
⁸ *Black Skin* 10
Another postcolonial discursive practice is to relate colonialism to psychological disorders of both the colonised and the coloniser. Jacqueline Leckie in “Modernity and the Management of Madness in Colonial Fiji” observes that physical, cultural and psychical dislocation renders colonial subjects abnormal and neurotic (267). Cesaire states that colonialism is a disease that has infected European civilisation. He claims that “a poison has been distilled into the veins of Europe and, slowly but surely, the continent proceeds toward savagery” (35-6). Ania Loomba observes that colonialism intensifies a process of deculturation that is the cause of rising insanity (139). Leckie attempts to link modernity and madness in a twofold way. In the context of Fiji the colonial projects were carried out to colonise the mind that in turn led to insanity among the colonised, and modern structures, apparatuses and treatments were applied to treat that madness. She states—“madness in Fiji reflected colonial hierarchies and ethnic boundaries”, arguing that “the colonial state restructured the ethnic map of Fiji” and thus split the identity of the natives (251). She further points out that “the expansion of a seemingly ‘superior’ society wrought physical, cultural and mental dislocation on millions of colonized people, not only through brute conquest and disease, but also through modernization.” (267).

The End of Postcolonial Binarism

In order to explain the theory of binary opposition the reference to Said’s Orientalism, which is considered by many to be a very simple assumption of binary opposition of Self versus Other or East versus West, is frequently drawn upon. However, I here argue that the “Other” here or elsewhere is created and imagined. Furthermore, Said seems to be denouncing the theory of binary opposition when he
says— "no dialectic is either desired or allowed" (Orientalism 308). He states that an Arab cannot exist on his own because his history is distorted and even discarded by the Orientalists, so are his identity and subject-hood. Whereas the Orientalist writes about an "Oriental", gives a fixed position to him, passivity is his presumed role (ibid. 308). In fact, an Orientalist scholar holding an assumed authority writes, makes up, shapes, reshapes and subverts the Oriental; the subject is exploited and given a particular shape.

According to Achille Mbembe, racism is the wild beast in the discourse of colonial binarism. He refers to Castoriadis’s terms on racism: “I alone possess value. But I can only be of value, as myself, if others, as themselves, are without value.” (unnumbered). The issue of race, in European colonial humanism, evokes a sort of "unconscious self-hatred." Racism in general, and colonial racism in particular, represents the transference of this self-hatred to the other. That is, the other is always invented to legitimise repulsive acts of colonisation. The binary enacted in colonial/postcolonial discourses is not a natural characteristic of difference, but an imposing epistemology of colonial/imperial project.

Fanon is thought to be a strong supporter of binary opposition as his anti-colonial discourses and resistance theories testify to this. However, in his essay “The Fact of Blackness” Fanon subverts the binary structure of power and identity in the following quote: “It is not because he is black that he is less intelligent than we are” (qtd. in Bhabha 340). Besides, one can question Fanon’s binary notion of “negating activity” leading to create fixed and fetish identities with regard to the memory of colonial past while retaining homogeneous cultural traditions of the present. Therefore, in the Western world of diaspora and migration, a migrant from a former
colony can hardly retain his identity as he dwells in an interstice of multicultural illusions and multinational capitalism. The fleeting space of in-between-ness always drives him into a sense of rootlessness amounting to the grim reality of unhomeliness (see Bhabha 13-27)⁹.

Furthermore, one can question the binary structure of First World versus Third World propounded mainly by first-world intellectuals such as Fredric Jameson through his “Three World Theory”. Aijaz Ahmad deconstructs this theory in In Theory, citing several examples of bourgeois democratic governance, multinational corporations, global capitalism, working class people, institutionalised politics, and power of communism in the so-called first, second and third world countries. He argues that in a first-world country, features of a third or second world countries can be located in terms of labour exploitation and a capitalist economic system. He further argues that a “third world” country like India today has all the characteristics of a capitalist first-world country with regard to generalised commodity production and technical personnel which are more numerous than those of France and Germany combined (100). The way Orientalists create and recreate, and shape and reshape the history of the Orient, the imperialists divide the world between the first-world intellectuals who make history and the marginalised others who are mere subjects of it. With questions of how Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, Singapore or South Korea can be labelled, Ahmad thus points out that “the binary opposition which Jameson constructs between a capitalist First World and a presumable pre- or non-capitalist Third World is empirically ungrounded in any facts” (101).

⁹ See chapter six of this dissertation
Besides, if we take up postcolonial theories simply as an encounter between self versus other, East versus West, we ultimately acknowledge class systems in society. From the timeless history of colonialism one can learn that there are no victims in history; rather, the victims become perpetrators once given power and opportunity. This reverse process can be mapped out in the colonial history of America, Australia, India, Japan, China etc. In the view of the establishment (state) and other power agency such as media, postcolonial violence can also be traced out in acts of insurgency and terrorism carried out by the oppressed and the marginalised. Fanon’s assumption is worth noting here: Today’s victims can become tomorrow’s perpetrators (qtd. in Mamdani 10).

**Spaces in the Postcolonial Condition**

Postcolonialists often talk about resistance to cultural invasion in the aftermath of colonial rule in order to recover certain cultural purity. However, as “such pre-colonial cultural purity can never be fully recovered” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 95), a space of postcolonial predicament emerges in the ongoing postcolonial condition. Nandy puts it this way—“the colonised Indians did not always try to correct or extend the Orientalists; in their own diffused way, they tried to create an alternative language of discourse” (xvii). According to Fanon, the space lies “in the consciousness and in the lives of men and women who are colonized” (*Wretched* 27). In order to discuss spaces of the postcolonial condition, world system theory, globalisation, urbanisation and capitalisation should be taken into consideration.

Capitalism, which was an integral part of colonialism, has been institutionalised and legitimised by the deployment of the imperial project.
Globalisation theory is exploited to further and substantiate the process of capitalism (Jacobs 19-20). In the process of postcolonial urbanisation a certain power exercise can be noted through the “fine-grained spatial technologies of power” assisting to create spaces in a postcolonial city (ibid. 21). However, it is alarming that the theories of spaces are primarily formulated, developed and naturalised in terms of Eurocentric notions. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam state, “Endemic in present day thought and education, Eurocentrism is naturalised as ‘common sense’.” (1). The legitimisation and appropriation of postcolonial discourses and practices, in many cases, are done in the name of the notion that the “best . . . is thought and written” by the Europeans and the neo-Europeans of the Americas, Australia, and elsewhere. (1). Which is why, colonisation ended, decolonisation fulfilled its project and the former colonies gained independence only to be enchained to the new empire in the name of imperialism (Jacobs 22).

So far as the term “postcolonialism” is closely linked to writings of “first generation diasporic intellectuals” in the first world academia, its authenticity can be questioned in the context of the global project of Western academia (qtd. in Jacobs 25). Besides, the execution of the theory of binary opposition always works for or against the core. Therefore, the representation of the “other” in Western discourses is likely to be assumed and manoeuvred by the so-called postcolonial scholars. Ihab Hassan points out, some third-world writers “surrender to idioms generated in Paris, London, Frankfurt, Moscow, and New Haven.” (288). Gyan Prakash, analysing the power and position of Eurocentric discourses in a metropolitan academy, which is constantly constructed as a “radiating centre” discursively, finds the affinity between the postcolonial criticism and a deconstructive critique of the west. (10).
In a global context the interstices of cultural accumulation; for instance, the cultural fusion in American society or the loss of cultural authenticity and originality in an African society, are of great importance in determining the nature of the postcolonial condition (see Jacobs 25-26). In this regard, it is worth referring to Adiche’s thought-provoking speech where she elaborates on how an African’s identity is assumed in an American or European mind. The stereotypes the West formulates virtually erase the representing agency of the “other”. The American promotion of multiculturalism also denies the cultural agency of the hyphenated Americans and only intensifies the pain of dwelling in the void of cultural accumulation. The Bengali movie *Obosheshe* (2011) presents a young Indian-American who has been detached from his mother, his motherland and above all the roots of his existence since he was a child. He has become an American to such an extent that after hearing the news of his mother’s death, he lingers for two years to come back to his birthplace in order to sell out her property, which, in fact, is a lifetime collection of her memories and souvenirs associated with him. Later through coming across his mother’s friends and going through her diary he discovers at last that it is very tough to ascertain whether he is more Indian or more American though he once said that America is his home. But in the end he seems to be nowhere. This is what John Akomfrah says—“When you valorise and overcelebrate the in between, the interstices, you have to realise that it has dark sides and the implications are not always necessarily productive ones for people who have to inhabit that space on a daily basis . . . (qtd. in Berghahn and Sternberg 134).

In the “Introduction” to *The Location of Culture* Bhabha discusses the fluid nature of postcolonial identity constructions—identity, past and present—everything seems to be lost in an elusive or fleeting space. While discussing cultural difference
and identity, like postmodernists, Bhabha argues that the “terms of cultural engagement... are produced performatively” (3). Therefore, the process of identity construction in terms of cultural difference and engagement can be expounded through multiple interpretations. Thus emerge “the interstices [spaces]— the overlap and displacement of domains of difference”— that negotiate “the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest or cultural value” (2).

However, to Bhabha, the “social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, ongoing negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities” (3). Besides, the split in minority identity produces cultural difference. Cultural differences or “social differences” are not simply legitimised “through an already authenticated cultural tradition; they are the signs of the emergence” as a project in which one goes through a process of vision and revision, construction and reconstruction in order to return “to the political conditions of the present” (ibid.).

Bhabha often talks about “space”, “in-between-ness” and “going beyond” though the spatial distance of going beyond—exceeding the barrier or boundary is always “unknowable, unrepresentable without a return to the ‘present’, which in the process of repetition becomes disjunct and displaced” (6). The concept of going beyond cannot take place without coming into contact with the present, but rather living “somehow beyond the border of our times” (Bhabha 6).

Bhabha argues that the “post” in the terms “postcoloniality”, “postmodernity” and “postfeminism” does not denote any timeframe like after colonialism, after modernity or after feminism as depicted in popular practices of literary criticism (6). In fact, the implication of these terms lies in the beyond of the present time where they retain the “restless and revisionary energy”, transforming “the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment”
(ibid.). According to Bhabha, “the experience of colonialism is the problem of living in the ‘midst of the incomprehensible’” (304). This incomprehensibility lies in the space between the silent truth of colonialism and the salient lie given to the metropolitan citizens. Thus, the “discourse of a daemonic doubling emerges at the very centre of metropolitan life” marked by a sense of “postcolonial provenance” (305). Through borrowing a term “overdramatized image”, Bhabha articulates, “such ‘overdramatized’ images are precisely my concern as I attempt to negotiate narratives where double lives are led in the postcolonial world, with its journey of migration and its dwelling of the diasporic” (306).

However, Bhabha’s references to space, in-betweenness and hybridity in postcolonial studies appear illusive as they do not conform to what they might imply. Struggling amidst the illusions of postmodernism and the experiences of expatriates or migrants and their community developed as a result of the postcolonial condition, Bhabha appears more flexible while talking about “space” frequently. However, the question raised is whether his idea of “space” is compatible with the clarification of debates on postcolonialism. His space is too ambivalent to explain the ever changing formation of the New World Order. Moreover, his notion of ambivalence may not work in a more radical exposition of imperial dominance in terms of race, religion and ethnicity. What remains in multiculturalism, spaces, and “in-betweenness” in Bhabha’s intuition seems to be an imbalanced pastiche of cultural hybridities. Besides, overemphasising the in-between and the interstices brings about complexities and confusion. In fact, it seems simplistic to leave the questions of divergence or dispute in an ambivalent vacuum since there might be many possibilities inside the space. Moreover, as the nature of spaces in the postcolonial situation is not inclusive, I would like to
explicate the possibilities of postcolonial spaces in relation to the theories of multiculturalism, hybridity and diaspora.

**Postcolonial Spaces and Theories of Multiculturalism, Hybridity and Diaspora**

In the 1980s multiculturalism became one of the buzzwords to further the debates on racism, feminism, anti-Semitism, and sexism (Stam 268-69). The word "multiculturalism" has no essence; it simply points to a debate. It is not simply an accumulation of cultural codes; nor is it "ideological substitute for roots, for homes". "Nor is multiculturalism itself uniform: it takes different forms in Australia, America, Singapore, Lebanon." (Hassan 292) It is a confusing phenomenon that "does not reflect the complexity of the situation" (qtd. in Bhabha 4). If multiculturalism does not call for "a profound restructuring and reconceptualisation of the power relations between cultural communities", it simply remains an ambiguous term substantiating the cultural imperialism of Eurocentrism (Starn 270). In other words, multiculturalism promotes only elitist culture as part of cultural imperialism. It is, in fact, a cultural composition of transnational capitalism, which is fluid and flexible in nature and challenges the uniqueness of third-world cultural varieties. In the name of cultural fusion the elitist culture dominates the subaltern and indigenous culture as the exchange between the imperial culture and native culture does not take place on an equal basis. But if postcolonial theories and practices, what Jane Jacobs reflects on, include, among other articulations, the various articulations of those who are themselves speaking from the margins", we must consider an egalitarian space where the voices of the other marginalised can find spontaneous expressions (26).
Hassan notes that “societies have been multicultural from the dawn of history. But this does not always mean that they have been multiculturalists” (292), since cultural sharing and tolerance always do not take place at the same level in all societies. If cultural hybridity or multiculturalism manufactured in developed countries is infiltrated into the under-developed or developing nations in the name of cultural globalisation, one cannot help thinking of the rise of cultural hegemony that ultimately leads to cultural imperialism. Thus, there is no reason to think that the relevance of multiculturalism confirms theoretical claims of certain intellectuals and there is no parameter by which one can define the dynamics of multiculturalism and free, rather constrain the practice of it.

Therefore, one can eventually argue that when we talk about hybridity or multiculturalism in the name of postcolonialism, there should be dialogical equality; that is, there should be an equal space for mutual dialogue. To confirm this, first and foremost, the function of power and how it works in discourses must be located. No discussion can be held until and unless we have an equal space of interaction and interchange between ideas, knowledge and theories. The imperial project intends to retain the practice of so-called/typical postcolonial scholarship to dominate the labelled “other”. It is a farce that people from the margin who are the actual victims are not able to speak up for themselves, but the agents or the privileged class of capitalism working at metropolitan universities speak for them, create, and recreate theories and knowledge. They propagate the concepts of multiculturalism, diaspora and hybridity without offering an equal space. It is surely an attempt to divert the attention from the scheme of global capitalism and imperialism. As the present globalised world cannot go without cultural interaction and exchange, there must be dialogical equality, a space where cultural sharing or exchange can take place on the
basis of equality. In this regard, Adib Khan, a Bangladeshi diaspora writer based in Australia, propounds the possibility of adopting shared cultures on the basis of a give and take principle. He is fortunate enough not to encounter any racial hatred and discrimination in his writing career in Australia and seems to be optimistic about dwelling in the space of in-betweenness or interstice while explaining the contributions of the dual cultures of East and West. In his words:

On the one side there were Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton. On the other there were the influences of *The Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, the Moghul poets, Iqbal and Tagore. The two sides met, not in combat, but in a synthesis of ideas out of which I emerged considerably enriched in thought and feeling but without any clearly defined sense of belonging to a mono-cultural society. (qtd. in Alam 197).

**Postcolonialism and Global Capitalism**

Jacobs conceptualises postcolonialism as “an historically dispersed set of formations which negotiate the ideological, social and material structures of power established under colonialism” (25). “Frankenberg and Mani suggest that the term postcolonialism necessarily and problematically has globalising tendencies” (qtd. in Jacobs 25). As a product of Eurocentrism in the metropolitan academia through the affiliation of migrated postcolonial intellectuals from the former colonised countries, postcolonialism originated from Western theories such as poststructuralism and postmodernism. Using the same language and vocabulary as poststructuralists and postmodernists, the postcolonialists are less critical of global capitalism; rather, to
some extent, representatives of multinational capitalism. The so-called third world academics serving in first world countries discuss diaspora, multiculturalism, and other topics which are complicit with postmodernism regarded as “the cultural logic of late capitalism” (Jameson, “Postmodernism”).

Globalisation and postcolonial studies are intertwined in many ways. The histories and legacies of colonisation, decolonisation, and postcolonialism are part of the long history of globalisation (see Jay, “Globalization and the Postcolonial Condition”). Yang, Zhang, and Wang claim that the age of globalisation is simply the age of postcolonialism (281). The process of globalisation, which thrives mainly on economic and cultural basis, is in tune with that of colonialism and imperialism. In fact, globalisation as one of the dominant legacies of colonisation serves as a European project of imperialism and colonialism that undermines some of the “concepts of postcolonial studies, such as place, identity, the nation and the modes of resistance” (Hawley 210). In the name of world literature, global village and “world-systems theory”, globalisation, in fact, accelerates the process of capitalism that requires for its development and growth the incessant supply of cheap labour, raw materials from the peripheral areas which were once literally colonised and are now dominated by imperialists (ibid. 211).

In recent time, globalised individuals have learned to imagine communities that transcend the bonds of land, blood and soil and invented new forms of mobilisation and transnational solidarities (Mbembe unnumbered). But the cultural globalisation enacted in the name of “cultural exchange” and “cultural assistance” does not leave them in peace, for the manner of exchange is complicit with cultural colonialism. The developed countries exploit all the agencies of power, political,
economic, technological, and military to carry on a stronger form of cultural imperialism (Yang et al 289). However, Mbembe argues that colonialism itself was a global experience which contributed to universalisation of representations, techniques and institutions in the case of the nation state, even of merchandise of the modern kind. It shows that this process of universalisation, far from being a one-way street, was basically a paradox, fraught with all sorts of ambiguities (unnumbered).

Bhabha redefines “postcoloniality” as “a salutary reminder of the persistent neo-colonial relations within the ‘new’ world order and the multinational division of labour” (9). He then articulates that “such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance” (ibid.). Keeping the concept of new internationalism in mind, Bhabha is in favour of “a hybrid cultural space that forms contingently, disjunctively in the inscription of signs of cultural memory and sites of political agency” (11). Besides, “global trade” and “transnational exchange” of cultural codes construct “economic and political diaspora” of the New World Order (11-12). “Transnational capitalism and the impoverishment of the Third World” accelerate the process of “cultural displacement” and fuel “social discrimination” and exploitation (ibid.). Bhabha argues that these conditions of cultural displacement and social discrimination “are the grounds on which” politics of recognition “locates an agency of empowerment” (12). However, the manner of representation largely accounts for the rationale of recognition.

Arif Dirlik in “The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism” points out, “[p]ostcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism” (356). Like postmodernism, it celebrates and mystifies the
workings of global capitalism (Loomba 247). Postcolonialism, “a child of postmodernism” (Dirlik 348) is born not out of new perspectives on history and culture, but of “the increased visibility of academic intellectuals of Third World origin as pacesetters in cultural criticism” (ibid. 329). They are patronised by the West in the name of multiculturalism. In this sense postcolonialism like postmodernism serves as an agent of global capitalism.

Now I would like to explore the link between global capitalism and postcoloniality. The “relationship between postmodernism and a new phase in the development of capitalism has been described variously as late capitalism” or global capitalism (qtd. in Dirlik 348). Dirlik argues that “with the emergence of global capitalism” the postcolonial begins (352). Like postmodernism, postcolonialism is also concerned with the effects of this phase of capitalism on third world terrains (Dirlik 348). “New global capitalism” is “a new international division of labour” that functions through “the contemporary global capitalist network”, establishing transnational or multinational corporations in the former colonised countries (ibid. 348-49). The neo-colonialists of the former colonies that later became nation-states accelerate the process of exploiting and exporting cheap labour to the metropole and promoting capitalist products in their countries within the scheme of global capitalism.

The project of the empire to tame third-world nations whether through economic assistance or military force goes hand in hand with the goals of global capitalism. In this regard, postcoloniality simply “resonates with the problems thrown up by global capitalism” (Dirlik 353). Creating corporate classes as an alliance to global capital, the empire controls the economy of third-world countries.
In addition, the cultural composition of transnational capitalism which assists to control third-world nations is fluid and flexible in nature, attempting to heterogenise the values of third world cultural components (ibid. 354). Therefore, the spread of the concepts of multiculturalism in the academic institutions and the corporate sector is another instrument to control the cognition of the third-world intellectuality. So far as some agents of transnational capitalism are required to obscure the problems centring on postcoloniality, the Third World intellectuals are favoured to be trained in the West. Their notable presence in Western academia is patronised so that they can offer a theoretical obfuscation with regard to the condition of postcoloniality in conceptualising the New World Order of global capitalism. This position of the so-called postcolonial intellectuals simply “disguises the power relations that shape a seemingly shapeless world and contributes to a conceptualisation of the world that both consolidates and subverts possibilities of resistance” (ibid. 355-56).

Dirlik’s analysis of postcoloniality in relation to the conditions of global capitalism presents a different perspective on postcolonial studies. While he seems critical of certain pitfalls of postcolonial studies, he acknowledges several conditions of postcoloniality, since in global capitalism, postcoloniality rephrases and addresses issues such as “post-Third World situation; the place of the nation in development; the relationship between the global and the local; the place of borders and boundaries in a world where capital, production, and peoples are in constant motion; the status of structures in a world that more than ever seems to be without recognizable structure; interpretations and reversals between the different worlds; borderlands subjectivities and epistemologies (hybridity); homogeneity versus heterogeneity; and so forth” (355). In the conclusion of the article, Dirlik’s conceptualisation of postcoloniality as “the condition of the intelligentsia of global
capitalism” and his question whether this global intelligentsia “in recognition of its own class-position in global capitalism” “can generate a thoroughgoing criticism of its own ideology and formulate practices of resistance against the system of which it is a product” open up new horizons of theorisation with regard to postcolonial studies and criticism (ibid.).

**Pitfalls of Postcolonialism**

Since the space and in-betweenness is specifically reserved for the privileged postcolonial, the subalterns are unable to stand on the threshold of postcolonial space or liminality. Besides, within the discursive and coercive space of postcolonialism, various degrees of the postcolonial can be located such as less-privileged, under-privileged, highly-privileged, beyond-privileged, and so on. Until the privileged postcolonial dwell in the space of liminality and fill up the last inch, the less privileged have no way to enter that space.

Paul Brians argues that despite the apparent triumph of postcolonial theory over other literary theories, it is “a troubled concept in English literary studies” (2). The rise of terminologies like “centre/periphery”, “hybridity” and “multiculturalism” in postcolonial studies reinforces the project of Eurocentrism, “for such terms depend upon the concept of a European self as a starting point” (Brians 3). Furthermore, the term “the postcolonial condition”, according to Brians, is an absurdly simplistic essentialising term. Citing the works of Aijaz Ahmad, Epifanio San Juan, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak etc., he attempts to point out contradictions and incoherencies in postcolonial theory. He states, “although much
postcolonialism is Marxist-inspired, other Marxist critics continue to assail it on the grounds that it is insufficiently grounded in political economy” (3).

Although as a progeny of postmodernism, postcolonialism’s criticism of the predicament of colonialism under the guise of modernism may seem appealing in terms of subverting the kernel of colonialism as a production of modernism, it remains strikingly a “self-privileging project of a privileged modernity” (Appiah 343) so far as its roots, origin and development are concerned. Postcolonialism with an intention to homogenise its theoretical uniqueness in order to retain authority and authenticity has become a condition of privileging class formations and abating class struggles. In this regard, Kwame Appiah’s articulation is worth quoting at length:

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a *comprador* intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa (348).

Ahmad in *In Theory* examines almost all existing theories and discourses centring on colonial discourse analysis, postcolonial scholarship and “three world theory”. As a rigorous Marxist critic he takes up a Marxist stand in critiquing the established theories and authors of postcolonial writings. He exposes “the genealogy of the term ‘Third World’” and its role in constructing “the conditions under which so-called ‘colonial discourse theory’ emerged in metropolitan intellectual circles”
Ahmad back cover). He questions the entire system of postcolonial discourse formations that leads to a monolithic conceptualisation with regard to the legitimisation of postcolonial metanarratives to carry out the discursive and political project of Western hegemony.

For instance, in the third chapter “Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the ‘National Allegory’”, he denounces the totalising formulations of “third world” discourses in Western academia, contesting Jameson’s claim that “all third-world texts are necessarily . . . allegorical . . . : they are to be read as . . . national allegories” (Jameson, “Third World Literature” 69). Ahmad is quite disturbed with Jameson for such categorisation of first-world texts versus third-world texts. First, the binarism of First World/ Third World theorised by a Marxist scholar like Jameson not only diminishes his position as a proponent of post-structural difference and heterogeneity, but it also reshapes the position and existence of another Marxist (Ahmad) who was born in a third-world country. Secondly, the labelling of “all third-world texts” as “national allegories” without considering the fact that numerous texts exist in the Third World that can in no way be tagged as “national allegories” confirms the hegemonic position of a Western subject in a binary circle of subject versus other.

The objective of such labelling is to create a homogeneous cultural hegemony in metropolitan institutions and fix “the other” in a classified category. “The cultural logic of late capitalism” accelerates the circulation of imperialist cultural products among “the other” and affirms the boundaries of class distinctions. The experiences and numerous cultural products of speech acts, habitats, conflicts and desires, politics, socialities and sexualities in third-world literary texts are in fact
ignored in the name of the descriptions of national allegories (Ahmad 99). Therefore, "Jameson's absolute insistence upon Difference and the relation of Otherness between the First World and the Third" (ibid. 105) determines the authority to define the nature of the third-world narratives and demand what should be proposed as a structure of a standard third-world text. If any third-world text does not display the demography of the fixed category, it will be discarded as a substandard third-world or postcolonial text. Thus, it is now clear how the third-world or postcolonial fiction writers or novelists and diasporic writers are directed and guided by the condition of intelligentsia in global capitalism.

Ahmad thus deconstructs Jameson's claim—"all third-world texts are necessarily . . . allegorical . . . : they are to be read as . . . national allegories"—stating that actually he (Jameson) wants to mean that not that "all third world texts to be read . . . as national allegories" but that only those texts which give us national allegories can be admitted as authentic texts of third-world literature. Thus, it is assumed that Jameson's theory of third-world literature as "national allegories" implies that a third-world writer should write what he/she is expected to write if he/she is to be admitted into the supposed space of metropolitan academia.

Postcolonial stereotypes implicate undeniably other forms of theoretical imbalance when the texts published by the diasporic writers of South Asian or African origin are labelled as "postcolonial texts". Besides, postcolonial studies pay little attention to certain developments within capitalism which are also directly or indirectly pertinent to understanding the spaces of the postcolonial condition. In addition, the postcolonial critics have failed to focus on the relation between postcolonialism and global capitalism though this relation is "arguably less abstract
and more direct than the relationship between global capitalism and postmodernism (Dirlik 352).

**Postcolonial Thinking: A New Beginning**

We have seen that the typical frame of postcolonial theories developed in the Western academia is inadequate to delineate the power, politics and hegemony of the contemporary world. Nevertheless, the term has become so heterogeneous that there are possibilities to move away from the Western directed definitions of postcolonialism and develop alternative discourses. José David Saldivar develops an idea of “border thinking” in the context of “minoritized studies” and “realist interpretations.” He envisages—

“border thinking is the name for a new geopolitically located thinking or epistemology from both the internal and external borders of the modern (colonial) world-system.” (152).

The Peruvian historical social scientist Aníbal Quijano calls border thinking the “coloniality of power”, which is a necessary tool for studying identity “at the intersections of our local histories and global designs.” (qtd. in Saldivar 152). Quijano’s coloniality of power, Saldivar argues, can help us begin to account for the entangled relations of power between the global division of labour, racial and ethnic hierarchy, identity formation, and Eurocentric epistemologies. (ibid.).

Mbembe, when asked in an interview about the nature of current postcolonial theory, suggests that it is an exaggeration to call postcolonialism a theory. “In truth”, he elaborates, “it’s a way of thinking that derives from a number of sources and that
is far from constituting a system because it is in large part being constructed as it moves forward.” (unnumbered). In his view, postcolonial thinking is “a fragmented way of thinking”, but in the broad area of postcolonialism, “there are some forms of reasoning, and some arguments, which distinguish this current of thought and which have made a major contribution to alternative ways of reading our modernity.” (ibid.).

Since the identity of the postcolonial is in a paradoxical terrain, postcolonial thinking attempts to analyse this vast area of ambivalence and the aesthetic reasons behind the confusion and its paradoxical effects. Being the product of the circulation of knowledge between different continents and across different anti-imperial traditions, the postcolonial current is an intellectual constellation; it is like a river with multiple tributaries (Mbembe unnumbered). This approach has obviously a strong concern for humanism, however, not European humanism on its face value. The approach does not imply that anything Western should be discarded, nor is it confined to any binary structure. It attempts to establish dialogical equality, an equal space, provoking a kind of responsibility in a globalised world to promote humanity. In the next chapter, we will elaborate on the concept of postcolonial thinking in relation to power, hegemony and imperialism.
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