Chapter 2

Postcolonial Identities in the New World Order:
“Imperial Entanglements” in Power and Hegemony

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
(W. B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”)

Introduction

In the twentieth century, after the birth of nation-states territorial colonisation was not a sensible way of dominance. It became more rational for the empire(s) to patronise particular literature and discourses leading to the fulfilment of the imperial project of global capitalism and employ intellectuals who advocate this process. For this reason, the literature produced by non-native expatriates is intentionally and enthusiastically termed “postcolonial” and hailed in the West. If the West, especially the US is considered an imperial centre in the new world system, then its policy regarding imperialism as a whole and the exercise of power over the world in particular through military invasion, academic and political superiority, cultural
dominance, and control of media and information technology would respond to a
bulk of questions and clarify doubts centring on confusing terrains of postcolonial
identities.

In fact, the mode of imperialism and hegemony in the present world order is
not a new phenomenon. Several colonial writers predicted the condition long before,
such as Anthony Trollope’s picture of the future British Empire in which under
military dominance and cultural influence, the former colonies would exercise
independence only insofar as they remain close to the Empire’s ideals (Eutsey 257).
Approximately, by the first decade of the twentieth century Britain lost its
“domination of the world economy” controlled through “a global system of lower
tariffs”, and “an international currency system premised on the gold standard”
(Krishna 32). After the Second World War, the end of Britain’s political, economic
and territorial dominance marked significantly by shrinking international trade,
paved the way for the United States in particular to control and manipulate the new
liberal global trading system. Thus, the United States replaced Britain as the world’s
leading economy and emerged as a superpower in a global system of political and
economic dominance. That is why one can assume—so far as the present world
order is concerned—that the American world order mainly operates the global
project of imperialism through the execution of military power, cultural imperialism,
economic dominance, academic authority, political influence, and so on. In Super
Imperialism: The Origin and Fundamentals of U.S. World Dominance\(^\text{10}\), Michael
Hudson argues that US has achieved the present global position not just after the

\(^{10}\) The book gives an account of the rise and expansion of the U.S. Empire, the functions of the
institutions like the World Bank and other global agencies of the U.S. imperialism, the imperialism of
U.S. foreign aid, and monetary imperialism in the twenty first century.
second World War; rather the construction of the new world order was rooted in the
dynamics of US diplomacy. The US, indeed, “had a unique perception of its place
and role in the world and hence of its self interest” (Hudson 1).

This chapter demonstrates that while the British Empire was declining in
many parts of its colony, the US was preparing to dominate the world through a
massive project of neo-imperialism. In this regard, I draw upon how the ex-
colonised third world countries are enchained in a global system of dominance and
hegemony and how certain institutions or agencies through which the imperial
project functions invent the logic for legitimisation of the project. In support of my
argument I would refer to analysis of power, discourse and ideology elaborated by
Michel Foucault and also look into, along with other relevant materials and sources
available, Noam Chomsky’s political analysis of power, imperialism, the present
world order and hegemony. The chapter specially investigates the global connection
between postcolonialism and imperialism. It goes on to elaborate that without
considering the dynamics of the New World Order, any postcolonial study is
inadequate and incomplete. This is the point of departure from the present practice
of postcolonial scholarship and the beginning of many possibilities for exploring
new phases and dimensions in the vortex of postcolonial identities in the New World
Order.

Postcolonialism and the New World Order

The New World Order reduces “earlier conceptualizations of global relations” to
binarism such as East versus West, self versus other, centre versus periphery,
coloniser versus colonised etc (Dirlik 330). Dirlik states that the “new world
situation” (the New world Order) results from the emergence of “global capitalism” following the “transformations within the capitalist world economy” (330). However, the postcolonial condition and late capitalism in the New World Order are not properly interrelated in a typical postcolonial theoretical frame. In this regard, Dirlik claims that global capitalism was a condition for the emergence of postcolonialism (331). Moreover, “postcolonial criticism has been silent” about the New World Order that appeared just after the end of colonialism. The complicity of the present postcolonial tradition in “hegemony”, Dirlik declares, “lies in the diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination” in the age of global capitalism (ibid.).

Stephen Gill argues that the New World Order arose from the ashes of the Second World War after 1945 (xiv). However, George W. Bush, the former American President described the world scenario after 1991 Gulf War as “a new world order”, which, Gill says, is a later phase in the history of the New World Order (ibid.). In Power and Resistance in the New World Order he outlines the elements of geopolitical and political economy, the direct and structural power of capital, globalisation, market civilisation and disciplinary neo-liberalism, and surveillance power in global capitalism in the New World Order, highlighting the central role of American power. Ronald Wright holds that “the United States has Americanized the world” through “military might, big business, popular culture, covert operations and above all through social example and the shining promise of modernity” (9). However, he asserts, “This process was just beginning when President Woodrow Wilson idealistically called for “a new world order” after the
First World War.” (9-10). But, at that point in time the phrase had no significance in relation to the present roles and ambitions of the empire.

The New World Order is enchained to “the New World economy” (Krishna 32). Sankaran Krishna in Globalization and Postcolonialism argues that the new world economy emerged just after the Second World War under the U.S. hegemony. “The U.S. dollar replaced the British pound as the currency of choice; it offered a stable and guaranteed medium of international exchange for a world still embroiled in war.” (Krishna 32). Under the US control, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which would lubricate international trade through the provision of hard-currency credit in a post-war context where most countries had no reserves of foreign exchange, and the World Bank, which would provide loans and assistance to the devastated economies of Europe and Japan and thereafter begin lending to the developing world as well, were founded to maintain a new type of “open world economy” (ibid. 33). Until now the US has continued to exercise control over the world economy through the hegemony of financial agencies.

After the Second World War the US “assumed, out of self interest, responsibility for the welfare of the world capitalist system” (Chomsky, Rogue States 188). Therefore it developed a structure of capitalist corporate sectors, which is nothing but corporatisation, a return to feudal structures. Chomsky observes that corporate sectors were becoming rivals to the government itself, apart from their power and control over the wealth and business opportunities in the country (ibid. 189). Corporations were actively involved in politics in a bid to control national and foreign policies. The productions and information systems are ruled by private/corporate tyrannies. The public pays the cost and assumes the risks, and
profit and power are privatised (ibid.194). The US financial assistance to third-world countries in the form of debt, aids etc. has profound significance. Debt crisis, Chomsky insists, is not a simple economic fact, by any means; rather, it is, to a large extent, an ideological construct. Debt is a powerful weapon of controlling third-world nations, and its role cannot be ignored (ibid. 204). The US follows or is bound to follow, in the era of multinational capitalism, what is called TINA—there is no alternative but corporatisation, globalisation, and free trade (ibid. 208).

The evolution of the New World Order is culturally linked to US cultural hegemony. In the US, David Palumbo-Liu argues, during the period of the Second World War “the modern attempt to understand national identity took hold.” (127). Anthropologists came forward to inquire into grounds on which national identity can be explored and founded. As early as 1939, Margaret Mead\footnote{During the war Mead wrote a classic text probing the American national character entitled \textit{And Keep Your Powder Dry}.} and Ruth Benedict, founded the Committee for National Morale. During the war they were assigned to work on American national identity, which “required particular attention to the notion of ‘culture.’ ‘Culture’ would serve to explain and define what was then called ‘national character.’” (Palumbo-Liu 127). Palumbo-Liu states that this was the birth of American studies of identity in the branch of cultural anthropology (127). National character and identity were scientifically studied as a form of applied science to “provide some kind of prediction of the probable behavior of the members of a given national group.”(ibid.). Through the application of national character it is said to every American, “Here is a tool you can use, to feel strong, not weak, to feel certain and proud and secure of the future.” (qtd. in Palumbo-Liu 127).
For immigrants it was necessary after the war to maintain an ethos in good faith and in so doing they could become Americans.

In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the discourse of civilizational conflicts was produced in the making of the New World Order. The world was seen as “a confrontation between the new transnational capitalism and the resurgence of nativist, local, tribal fundamental identities, and people were asked to make a choice between these two (bad) alternatives.” (Palumbo-Liu 131). In this period several books such as Joel Kotkin’s *Tribes: How Race, Religion, and Identity Determine Success in the New Global Economy* (1993), Robert Kaplan’s *The Ends of the Earth* (1996), Benjamin Barber’s *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (1995), and Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking of World Order* (1996) were published. Palumbo-Liu argues, “all these books share the sense that the world was now to be read postnationally and postideologically, and in terms of either large ‘civilizational’ or ‘tribal’ tendencies.” (132). Under this discursive and cultural formula the events of September 11, 2001 were immediately read in the light of Huntington’s “clash of civilizations” theory. Robert Kagan argues that Americans generally see the world as divided between good and evil, between friends and enemies, while Europeans see a more complex picture. Americans tend to seek finality in international affairs: They want problems solved, threats eliminated (5).

To Bhabha the New World Order means “new internationalism”. In a different fashion he speaks of the concept of “new internationalism” in postcolonial contexts. His new internationalism addresses the “dissident stories and voices” of “women, the colonized”, the marginalised, “minority groups” and so forth (6).
Moreover, it indicates a “history of postcolonial migration, the narratives of cultural and political diaspora, social displacement of peasants and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, and the grim prose of political and economic refugees” (6-7). Furthermore, the “new internationalism” implies dwelling “in the beyond” in order to be a “part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity, to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side” (Bhabha 10).

The New World Order is enchained to several networks of power and hegemony and based mainly on political and economic institutions across the world. The networks are connected through governments to governments—big, small, powerful, submissive, imperial, neo-imperial, colonial, neo-colonial etc. Anne-Marry Slaughter describes the horizontal and vertical dimensions of power networks in the present world order (see 135- 51). In this regard, Gill’s discussion of the roles of global elites in the era of political economy and global capitalism sheds light on the interconnection between particular classes and coercion in the New World Order no matter where they dwell (183-93). Chomsky in World Orders, Old and New illustrates the political-economic basis of the New World Order, underscoring the tensions and turmoil from the Cold War to the Middle East crisis.

Power or force is not only directed from the centre, but also moves back to the centre. Power functions in a network both at vertical and horizontal orders. At regional levels power is enacted by emerging superpowers and allies of the empire. In this regard one can refer to India’s collaboration with the Sri Lankan Government, which carried out the ethnic cleansing of its Tamil population. The power-play between India, China and Pakistan ascertains stability or instability in
the South Asian region. The forms and functions of hegemony in South Asia have economic, political and cultural dimensions, which are subject to imperial ambitions. But in many cases, the impulse of economic interest determines the politics of polarisation. This is why the superpowers, central or regional, work together to accomplish capitalist agendas. In this regard, one can note that the US was China’s top trade partner (385.3 billions) in 2010, and in 2011 the US exported products worth 103.9 billions to China and imported goods amounting to 399.3 billions from it (“US-China Trade Statistics” unnumbered).

After the incidents of 9/11, the challenges and threats from both the marginalised others and dominant superpowers give a new insight into postcolonial theoretical practice. We have witnessed the recent turmoil in the Arab world popularly termed “Arab spring” though ironically, the spring is yet to be seen. People have not been empowered in the true sense in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, or Syria. The situation is worsening and we are in doubt whether it is all about “oil spring” enacted by America’s imperial policy. More than a million people along with children and women were killed in Iraq war (“Iraq war in Figures” unnumbered), tens of thousands of Iraqi women were raped, described as “phenomenal violence against women” (Beaumont unnumbered), and ordinary people are still falling victims to car bombs, suicide bombing and other forms of terror. Recently BBC Panorama Documentary revealed that Iraq was attacked by the US-led occupation force on a false accusation that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (Whitehead unnumbered). In Afghanistan, war, terror and death have become widespread and a part of daily affairs. In South Asia described as postcolonial by many, people get up every morning with news of terrible blasts and
bloodshed in Pakistan; the plight of minorities and severe human rights violation in several regions in India; garment workers burnt alive in factories or buried alive in building collapse and protesters shot dead by police on the streets of Bangladesh; and Tamil children shot dead in broad day light in Sri Lanka. The entire world has become chaotic; anarchy prevails and poses a threat to the preservation of human civilisation. What is assumed as the New World Order is nothing but a world of mayhem in which human existence and their identities swirl and shift into a whirling vortex.

A Wall Street Journal article “The New World Disorder” reviews, from the US perspective, the recent role of the US in Middle East and Asia and remarks, “In the Persian Gulf, across the Arab Spring and into the Western Pacific, the U.S. is perceived as a declining power. As that perception spreads, the world’s bad actors [emphasis added] are asserting themselves to fill the vacuum, . . .” (“The New World Disorder” unnumbered). It is no surprise that if the US recoils from its imperial ambition, the “bad actors” will come forward to replace it. The US polity and intelligentsia have already divided the world into good and bad, divine and diabolic. The divide only intensifies the ultimate disorders engulfing the entire world along with the US and continues to reshape and redefine the nature and function of power across the globe.

The Nature and Functions of “Power” in the New World Order

We have already noticed in the first chapter that postcolonial theory in itself is not adequate to explain certain power structures of imperialism functioning within postcolonial countries. The plight and struggle of minorities, subalterns, and
indigenous groups in postcolonial countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are not adequately addressed in postcolonial discourses. Therefore, I argue that to understand the nature of imperialism in the New World Order, the formation, function and foundation of power should be underscored. The understanding of mechanisms and apparatuses of power structure at the social or global level would help determine the complex nature of imperialism in the present world order. However, the discussion of “power” is tinged with “misunderstandings with respect to its nature, its form, and its unity” (Foucault, History of Sexuality-I 92). When the conception regarding power is made abstract, it is rather difficult to locate the space and position of power. But if we consider what and how Foucault talks about power in his books, interviews, and talks, we stand enlightened through an understanding of the concrete nature of power. To Foucault, “power” does not denote “a group of institutions and mechanisms that ensure the subservience of the citizens of a given state. . . . [nor] a mode of subjugation which, in contrast to violence, has the form of the rule. . . [nor] a general system of domination exerted by one group over another . . . .” (ibid.). In fact, Foucault’s study of power is concerned with the “how of power” and not the “what” of power (Power/Knowledge 92).

Power is all pervasive, which “is the moving substrate of force relations which . . . are always local and unstable” (Foucault, History of Sexuality-I 93). According to Foucault, the omnipresence of power implies that “power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.” (ibid.). He further stresses that “power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society.” (ibid. 92-93).
Foucault offers a number of propositions with respect to the characteristics of power—

"Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations." (ibid. 94-95)

That is, power is submerged in social structures, functioning through a web of social, political or state apparatuses. To understand the mechanism and exercise of power at all levels ("even in its more 'peripheral' effects") in the social order, power "must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate;" (Foucault, History of Sexuality-l 92-3). By subverting binarism Foucault further claims "Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix." (ibid. 94).

The question is now which of our approaches should analyse the structure and nature of power in a given society. Should we take a “top-down analysis” or a “bottom-up analysis” of power? Foucault answers—

"No such duality [is] extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body."

(History of Sexuality-l 94).

Regarding the social body as a whole he elaborates on various relationships of force which function through the machinery of production in families, limited groups and
institutions, and are "the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole." (ibid.). Power is not circulated from any headquarter, nor is it exercised by the upper castes only in a social system, nor only by the elite classes who control the state apparatus, nor by corporate bigwigs. Though power functions in a society and makes it function, "the rationality of power is characterized by tactics that are often quite explicit at the restricted level where they are inscribed (the local cynicism of power), tactics which, becoming connected to one another, attracting and propagating one another, but finding their base of support and their condition elsewhere, end by forming comprehensive systems:" (ibid. 95)

By defining the nature and exercise of power Foucault observes—

"Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation." (Power/Knowledge 98).

Multinational capitalism or corporatism spreads its network of power all over the world, however, without emerging from a single centre. A "net-like organisation" implies the chain of globalisation and the global dominance through which the circulation, manifestation, and exercise of power are engineered. However, we must be aware that power is not always imposed from the top; rather, it also emerges from local and regional territories and engulfs the whole system, making it a complex web of mechanisms/apparatuses. Power is not a force; rather it is "force relations immanent in the sphere" which form a chain or a system (Foucault, History of Sexuality-1 92). Therefore, without the chain of local agencies, that is, local
branches of global power houses, the system cannot be constituted and exercise power. Besides, power evolves through ceaseless struggles and confrontations in a system where at least the object (the other) on which power is employed is recognised and has the capacity to resist. Power can exist as a scattered form, or a composite entity; it has double edged functions because of its winding and unwinding nature. Foucault regards the functions of power—

as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; . . . (*History of Sexuality* I 92)

The Foucauldian analysis of power confirms that power does not function necessarily at a central level, but is pervasive as "capillary" in local and regional institutions. In Foucault's words:

"[I]t should be concerned with power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations, with those points where it becomes capillary, that is, in its more regional and local forms and institutions."

(*Power/Knowledge* 96)

The force of imperialism does not always function in a top-down model; it can function instead through a bottom-up model. As power pervades throughout all strata of society like a capillary and it starts emerging and functioning from regional to local levels, the existing practice of locating empire as a top-down formation of power relations is contested. Zygmunt Bauman argues that the social network has disintegrated and agencies of collective action have fallen apart owing to "the
unanticipated ‘side effect’ of the new lightness and fluidity of the increasingly mobile, slippery, shifty, evasive and fugitive power.” (Liquid Modernity 14). He stresses that “the world must be free of fences, barriers, fortified borders and checkpoints”, if power is let to be “free to flow” (ibid.).

The perspectives on power differ from states to states or agencies to agencies. Kagan argues that with regard to the question of power—“the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power”—the US and European perspectives and foreign policies are diverging (3). While Europe is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation, the United States keeps on exercising power in an anarchic Hobbesian world where international laws and rules are unreliable, and where true security and the defence and promotion of a liberal order still depend on possession and use of military might (Kagan 3). The United States, in fact, resorts to force more quickly and, compared to Europe, is less patient with diplomacy.

Thus, understanding the nature of power and hegemony in the context of imperialism unveils the structure of the world and helps construct theoretical frames to deal with issues prevalent in the New World Order in an effective way.

The Legitimisation of Power or Violence through Discourse and Knowledge

One of the most notable aspects of Foucault’s research on and analysis of power relations is how he relates power to discourse, knowledge, and ultimately truth. When he talks about “a triangle: power, right, truth” (Power/ Knowledge 92-93) in relation to the mechanisms of production and transmission of power, we get a clear
concept of discursive formations of different systems of hegemony and domination. Power cannot be established without formulation of a discourse since, as Foucault points out, “. . . basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse.” (ibid. 93). He goes on to state—

There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (ibid.)

By producing a vast number of literary texts such as novels, poems, travelogues and essays, and archiving thousands of documents, reports, and maps, the Europeans created a strong colonial culture and aesthetics during their expedition across the globe. Promod K Nayar in Colonial Aesthetics conducted a substantiate research “on the aesthetics of colonial discourse, with specific reference to English writings on India”, including fiction and “non-fictional genres as diverse as official reports, travel accounts, memoirs and letters from the early moments of England’s ‘encounter’ with India in the seventeenth century to the 1920s.”(1). India was always imagined by the European as “the other” or “new worlds”. Rudyard Kipling and Max Muller imagined a notion of India in their creative and historical writings. James Mill wrote a book on Indian history even without paying a single
visit to India and knowing any Indian language. Nayar notes, "[t]he English 'encounter' with India starting from the last decades of the sixteenth century generated a massive imperial archive: Richmond Barbour (2003: 8) informs us that in the British Library's India Office, East India Company material occupies nine miles of shelving (see also Richards 1993)."

Culture is something that develops and evolves in line with history and accumulation of discourses. Richard Fox states that "culture in the making" is always historically conceptualised and concrete (qtd. in Embree 4). Fakrul Alam in Imperial Entanglements and Literature in English traces the legacy of colonial writing and the making of colonial culture to Francis Bacon, Daniel Defoe, Edmond Burke, Rudyard Kipling, and other colonialist writers who played a crucial part in making and shaping colonial discourses and culture. Notably, Edward Said put great effort to systemise the construction of Oriental (imperial) discourse in his book Culture and Imperialism. Culture, according to Said, means "all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms" (Culture and Imperialism xii). He observes that canonical novels written by British and French imperialists were able to construct a strong cultural background for the colonisers to dwell upon (ibid.). As "nations themselves are narrations," the power to narrate or to block "other" narratives from forming and emerging is crucial to discursive formation of culture and imperialism. Secondly, "culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought" (Arnold, qtd. in Said, ibid.).

12 See Mill, "Preface" 5
13 Anderson, qtd. in Said, Culture and Imperialism xiii
Imperialism is deeply rooted in power and dominance of art and culture. Said elaborates upon the relation between culture and imperialism. He relates culture and imperialism, regarding culture as a form of imperialism. How imperialism works within the frame of power and knowledge is evident in Said’s discussion (see Culture and Imperialism, “Introduction”). Two themes are dominant in Culture and Imperialism: a study of the “general worldwide pattern of imperial culture”, and “the historical experience of resistance against empire” as a sort of counterbalance (qtd. in Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 89). Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia comment on the operation of imperialism within European culture and the operation of resistance in colonised societies (89). Imperialism’s investment in culture makes it a force that exists far beyond a geographical empire. It refers to contemporary practices of domination, that is, neo-colonialism (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 91).

However, the production or mechanism of power is not merely an ideological construct or theoretical formation, more than that— it is a concrete formation of knowledge. “It is the production of effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge-methods of observation, techniques of registration, procedures for investigation and research, apparatuses of control.” (Foucault, Power/Knowledge 102). When power is exercised through a network of “subtle mechanisms”, it evolves, constitutes and circulates certain machineries of discourse and knowledge, which are more concrete than ideological (ibid.). Therefore, while we take up issues of power in conducting a research, we should be aware of “the techniques and tactics of domination” during an analysis of power (ibid.). The research should not be directed towards “the juridical edifice of sovereignty, the State apparatuses and the ideologies which accompany them, but
towards domination and the material operators of power, towards forms of
subjection and the inflections and utilisations of their localised systems, and towards
strategic apparatuses.” (ibid.)

Imperial discourses are institutionalised in academia to establish the relations
of power as J. G Merquior points out that a new type of power—disciplinary
domination—has become “one of the great inventions of bourgeois society” (113).
Power is exercised through discourse in academic institutions, economic enterprises,
political hierarchies or state apparatuses as “it [power] institutionalises,
professionalises and rewards its pursuit.” (Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge* 93). An
existential question is raised of whether we are enchained to the circle of power-
discourse-truth/ideology. Foucault notes:

In another way, we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it
is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at
least partially, decides, transmits and itself extends upon the effects
of power. . . . In the end, we are judged, condemned, classified,
determined in our undertakings, destined to a certain mode of living
or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of
the specific effects of power. (ibid. 93-4)

One could raise a question on whether in a colonial/anti-colonial or the
colonised/coloniser context, power is exercised, or violence. To define the
differences between a relationship of power and a relationship of violence, Foucault
states that power is “a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on
others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on possible or
actual future or present actions.” (*Power: Essential Works of Michel Foucault* 340).
On the other hand, “a relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon a thing; it forces, it bends, it breaks, it destroys, or it closes off all possibilities.” (ibid. 340-41). Its target is to make sure that the other can only have a passive role. If the other comes up with any form of resistance, the relationship of violence “has no other option but to try to break it down”. On the contrary, power relationships can only be understood on the basis of two indispensable elements: the subject and the other where “the other” (the one over whom power is exercised) is recognised and maintained to the very end as another subject (or object) who acts, reacts, and responds in a form of resistance. (ibid. 340-41)

We could argue that what is exercised in a colonised/coloniser binary is plainly violence if the differences between power and violence made in the above discussion are taken into consideration. The colonial power imposed on the other is an embodiment of colonial violence as their subject-hood or the object-hood of the victim over whom the supposed power is enacted is not recognised, but denied. The same colonial violence continues to haunt individuals in the postcolonial era. The state agencies and establishments as well as social institutions and hierarchies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka in the name of law, order and power consider oppositional voices “threats” to the state or the hierarchical order and attempt to eliminate them violently. Instances of violence organised by the governments can be located in Kashmir and North East regions of India, in the tribal areas of Pakistan, in police action on the streets, Chittagong Hill Tracts, and prison cells of Bangladesh, and in Tamil-populated areas of Sri Lanka.
The "Imperial Ambitions" in the New World Order

In order to expand upon the relation between power and imperialism, determine the web of power, and define the nature of imperialism in the New World Order, Chomsky’s political analysis of power, imperialism and the new world system can be drawn upon. Chomsky is critical of America’s foreign policy, its hypocrisy and double-standards in treating third-world countries, its arbitrary launching of global war on terror without giving a unanimous definition of "terror" or "terrorism", and above all its imperial ambitions to be the only empire in the New World Order. To expose the hypocritical nature of the US foreign policy he claims that inside America it is polyarchy, not democracy (*Hegemony and Survival* 5-6) though it is extremely concerned with the practice of democracy all over the world, especially in those countries that show their backs to its hegemony. Chomsky delves deep into the history of American imperialism and points out that its imperial policy is not new at all. President Woodrow Wilson introduced it a long ago; that is why it is called "Wilsonian idealism" (ibid. 5-7).

As the imperialistic ambition of America was deeply rooted since its inception (Wright, *What is America*), the current US invasions are the continuation of American dreams (Chomsky, *Imperial Ambitions* 186-7). In the name of security, the US operates a global war on terror and invasion of weaker nations. However, as a country the US is not solely responsible for enacting imperial policy; rather, the strong corporate sector in fact enchains the state and in most cases forces it to carry on wars and invasions overseas. The new policy/norm of ruling the world by force appeared in the New World Order mainly after the collapse of Soviet Union or communism. The US devised the “National Security Strategy of the USA” after the
9/11 attacks and concurrently media propaganda was carried on to frighten people (Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival* 13). According to the new US policy, “no legal issue arises if the US responds to any challenge to its power, position and prestige” (ibid. 14). However, the basic principles of Security Strategy of September 2002 go back to early days of the Second World War (ibid. 15). Moreover, the goal of the imperial strategy—“to prevent any challenge to power, position and prestige of the US.”—was first declared in 1963 (ibid. 14). Thus, it is all about power, as in colonial history, we also notice, what power Britain or Germany exercised, the US is exercising today to terrorise the entire world in order to maintain the projects of imperialism. Therefore, a proper understanding of the nature and functions of power in the frame of US imperialism would help investigate the nature of global terrorism, insurgency and domination.

Capitalism is worn out as a tool to exercise power in the new world system. It is all about corporatism where power is surpassing, pervasive and all engulfing. Power is not merely clotted in a centre and exercised throughout the world or directed to silence the peripheral regions. Rather, it could evolve and spread to any part of the world where it has apparatuses. The process of globalisation with regard to its boomerang effects in the present world can be understood in this way.

Chomsky in *Understanding Power* comes up with a sort of secular concept of imperial power. He argues that America is attacking Muslims all over the world, not because of their religious identity as Muslims, but because they are not obedient. For example, the US is assisting Arab rulers in certain Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, but are not attacked or invaded; rather, they are protected by the US because of oil business (154-55). Chomsky states, “There is a racist element to US
policy, of course, but the basic motivation is not that, . . . the real goal is just maintaining obedience—as in Cuba, as in Panama, and so on.” (Understanding Power 155). The arbitrariness of America’s imperial policy and stand regarding democracy is discussed and documented elaborately through question-answer formats in Understanding Power (42). Chomsky, however, claims, “The US is powerful, but not all powerful. . . . There are other power centres.” (Rogue States 188). This statement helps us understand the decentralised nature of power.

**Power, War, and Terror in the Era of Political Economy**

Foucault in *Power/Knowledge* makes a relation between power, politics and war. He raises a question on whether we shouldanalyse power primarily in terms of struggle, conflict and war. His hypothesis allows him to say that power is war, a war continued by other means. He also points out that “war is politics continued by other means”. He goes on to say that “the relations of power that function in a society . . . rest upon a definite relation of forces that is established at a determinate, historically specifiable moment, in war and by war.” (Power/Knowledge 90). He speaks of the unspoken or embedded war in society—

“The role of political power, on this hypothesis, is perpetually to reinscribe this relation through a form of unspoken warfare; to reinscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and everyone of us.” (ibid.)

This is an indication of how the US became a superpower after fighting two world wars and continued to extend domination over the whole world by different means.
Besides, the politics of silent or unspoken wars in the form of political turmoil or violence evident in most postcolonial societies also lets us analyse certain structures and functions of power in a postcolonial context.

In *Hegemony or Survival* Chomsky points out certain truisms in connection with US imperial projects and “terrorist” activities throughout the globe (187). Chomsky says, “terror is primarily a weapon of the powerful” thus subverting the popular notion of terrorism that terror is a weapon of the weak. He proposes that a universal definition should be devised concerning the term “terrorism”, and the same principle should be applied to everyone with regard to that definition (188-9). By citing the definitions of terrorism given by the US Army manual and British Government, Chomsky shows that “War on Terror” is not a new phenomenon since the Reagan administration declared in 1981 that “a war on terror would be a centerpiece of its [America’s] foreign policy” (188). A significant point Chomsky has made in this regard is that to the US and its allies, the definition of terror is virtually the same as the definition of counterterror and counterinsurgency (189). In fact, in the name of counterterrorism, the erstwhile empires are practising terrorism though they must not admit that officially. The doctrine of counterinsurgency of the US military manual goes back to Nazi manuals on counterinsurgency (Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival* 189). Thus, what is noticed in official documents of the dominating forces is how discourses are manufactured and circulated to exercise power or violence. This is obviously done in the name of search for “truth” implying ideology to legitimise state terror.
Power and Postcolonialism: Repression or Resistance?

Foucault’s notion of resistance is significant when he says, “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (*History of Sexuality* 195). That is, even resistance functions through a network of power. Said in *Culture and Imperialism* extensively talks about cultural resistance to imperialistic hangover in terms of assertion of nationalist identities. He argues that resistance is evident in every case of imperial intrusion, “and in the overwhelming majority of cases, the resistance finally won out” (xii).

The traumas of colonial/postcolonial violence, Mamdani argues, turn today’s victims into tomorrow’s killers (9) as the act of resistance takes a violent shape. Foucault’s conceptions on resistance are intertwined with power. As there is no difference between individuals or institutions who hold power and who are dominated by it, resistance works through a network of power relations. The existence of power relationships “depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network.” (*History of Sexuality* 195).

By subverting the homogeneous nature of resistance, Foucault argues, “there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; . . .” (*History of Sexuality* 196). By determining the nature of resistance, he compares the process and function of resistance with that of power. For instance, the accomplishment of resistance rests on a similar network and
execution of power relations (ibid. 97). Gill in *Power and Resistance* discusses how power and resistance have multiple forms and moments in the making of the New World Order. Various forms of power and resistance include hegemonic leadership, supremacy, counter-hegemonic resistance and what he calls “transformative resistance”.

Chomsky brings out some facts regarding the empire(s)’s notions of resistance. According to the Charter of the United Nations, resistance (“the legitimacy of actions”) is “the right to the self-determination, freedom and independence . . . of people forcibly deprived of that right . . . particularly peoples under colonial and racist regimes and foreign occupation.” (qtd. in *Hegemony or Survival* 190). Here, Chomsky raises a question on whether such actions fall under terror or resistance. When the Charter was tabled in the UN, the vote was 153-2 (with a single abstention Honduras). As usual the US and Israel voted against this Charter (ibid.). In fact, these two phrases “colonial and racist regime” and “foreign occupation” were the reasons for their opposition, and it was all about the empires’ whimsical ideology of considering someone or some groups “terrorists”. For instance, it is not like Hezbollah or Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organisation because of its terrorist acts at the global level. It is simply because ideologically Israel and the US do not believe in the right of the oppressed to defend their freedom or rights. It should be noted that Hezbollah was formed to resist Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon. Similarly, Iraqis and the Vietnamese would be considered terrorists if they resist US occupation and invasion. Chomsky argues that the actions depend on the agent; in that case truisms seem irrelevant and unwanted (ibid. 193). The act of
terrorism can be a so-called noble act to save democracy and people’s rights, if that is done by the US in Vietnam, Iraq or Afghanistan.

In the South Asian context, interestingly, what was independence after the division of British India in 1947 was that India’s first governor was Lord Mountbatten. V P Menon wrote a book *Transfer of Power* on the request of Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister, in which he presents relevant legal and constitutional documents showing how the British transferred state power to the Indian administrators. He maintains the tone of the transfer of power, not independence throughout the book, thus indicating the absence of any decolonising process in the Indian context. Ironically, Pakistan and India retained the colonial face remarkably though the two nations celebrated their independence on 14th and 15th August 1947 respectively. In India’s case the state power was not even transferred or handed over, but it remained in the hands of the same colonial ruler (Mountbatten). Therefore, one could argue that there was no real decolonisation after India’s partition; what followed after partition was simply re-colonisation. Furthermore, India’s and Pakistan’s definitions of terror, resistance, and attempts, as neo-colonial or neo-imperial countries, to silence alternative voices and revolutions in many of their states can be brought under the same rubric of imperial arbitrariness. In this regard, one has to consider multifarious cultural constructs, indigenous identity formations of many states, and deep-rooted problems of caste, religion, minority and others in South Asia. The tribal and indigenous encounters, insurgency and militancy operated by extremists, Jihadists, Maoists, Gurkhas, and other regional resistances, protests, agitations, and violence can be examined in the light of
Foucauldian and Chomskyan analysis of the functions of power and imperialism in the New World Order.

Mrinal Talukdar et al in their documentary book *Secret Killings of Assam*, which is “based entirely on the inquiry commission reports tabled by Assam Government on the floor of the Assam Assembly” (xii), bring about “the darkest period of Assam’s political history, when hundreds lost their lives as the State launched a counter insurgency operation through extra judicial killings” (Back cover). Power and violence were exercised at multiple levels and many accounts of secret killings remain murky. The inquiry commission report says “‘secret killings’ mean the extra judicial killings conducted by the state government using SULFA members and security forces in the name of counter-insurgency operations. The victims of these killings were relatives, friends and colleagues of ULFA militants.” (ibid. 4). The whole exercise of violence was legitimised through arguments that “it was a tit-for-tat response to the ULFA-sponsored terrorism, . . .” (ibid.). The terror embedded in the minds of common people of Assam haunts them:

“Even today, the mere mention of these two words (secret killings) sends shivers down the spines of many, who were witness to many kidnappings and killings.” (ibid. 1)

How discourse-system is institutionalised, creating ideology to exercise power, is evident in the entire discourse of caste/casteism in India. According to Louis Dumont, the caste system can be understood in terms of its essential religious ideology, which pervades the immense variety it displays. It is based on the arrangements of hierarchical ranks which are determined by purity or pollution. The highest rank belongs to the Brahmanas “who are the ‘purest’ and command much of
its ritual.” (162). He argues that if caste exists, it only exists as a dominant form of social organisation (ibid.). Dumont in *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* discusses various theories of the construction and history of caste. The social theory derives from post-Vedic Indian social and cultural constructs institutionalised by Indo-European invaders who created closed groups among themselves (28). He presumes that the development of caste might historically have been accompanied by “the development of Brahmanic prescriptions relating to impurities of organic life, whether personal or of the family.” (53). Whatever its origin, the system exists as demographically isolated units on the ideological and religious basis of pure and impure and other religious notions of hygiene (Dumont 28, 47). The laws of Manu (V, 85) say, “When he has touched a *Chandala*, a menstruating woman, *an outcaste* [emphasis mine], a woman who has just given birth, . . . he purifies himself by bathing.” (qtd. in Dumont 52). Though discourses like “Harijan” were created to give the untouchables a respectful identity in order to include them in pre-partition politics to attain substantial support, they are still forced to live outside the main village, in separate quarters, not allowed to use the same well meant for the Brahmins (Dumont 47).

On the other hand, US military involvement and movement in South Asia are described as “episodic” in a Rand report (2006) prepared for the United States Air Force (Peters 14). The US naval forces were involved directly or indirectly in major crises in the region (in the Indian Ocean) during Sino-India war in 1962, Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, the Liberation War in 1971 that gave birth to Bangladesh, internal unrest in Afghanistan in 1978, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980s, and the aftermath of the cyclone that inflicted major damage on Bangladesh in 1991.
The report reveals that the US supported the Mujahideen in Afghanistan with “arms and military hardware” in their resistance to the Soviet Union (ibid. 15). During the Afghan civil war in 1980s, the United States had strong influence over Pakistan. But after the collapse of the Soviet Union and at the end of the Cold War, the US lost interest in Pakistan. Besides, in the context of Pakistan’s continuous focus on the perceived threats from India, an interest the United States did not share, it disengaged from Pakistan, “leaving it with few resources to deal with the militarization of the Pakistan-Afghanistan frontier.” (ibid. 16). After 1989, many Pakistanis felt abandoned by Washington and gradually the new generation Pakistanis were becoming hostile to the US and its interests.

Though Jinnah’s motto for Pakistan was “unity, faith and discipline”, Akbar Ahmed in his book *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity* examines how Pakistan has deviated from that motto and become a state inflicted with political chaos and identity crisis. In his thorough analysis, myriad issues—from the birth of Pakistan to the rise of military regimes, to its fraction into two sovereign countries: Pakistan and Bangladesh, to the growth of radical Islamism, to the toll of terror and deaths, and to the present state of complete anarchy—are explored. The contributors to The *Middle East Institute Viewpoints*’ special issue “The Islamization of Pakistan, 1979-2009” published in 2009 trace out possible parameters liable to the present state of violence and disorder in Pakistan (see Hussain *et al*). In order to control the ongoing “terrorism”, Pakistan has revised anti-terrorism acts and continues to work closely for the interests of the US imperialism in the region (see “Anti-terrorism Manual”, and “Anti-Terrorism (Second Amendment) Bill 2013”).
It is a historical fact that the seed of terrorism was sown by the US in South Asia since the growing number of jihadis and militants were prepared by direct US military and financial aids. But the South Asian countries willingly or unwillingly become involved with US mission of counterterrorism, working hand in hand for US interests. In another Rand report (2004) prepared for the US Air Force, C. Christine Fair accounts for the roles of India and Pakistan in US counterterrorist operations in South Asia. While India is considered in the report “a long-term partner in counterterrorism”, Pakistan is judged as “an uncertain partner in the fight against terrorism”. According to testimony offered by the then Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca, counterterrorism policy has become a top priority in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks on the United States. In South Asia, US policy of counterterrorism is as follows—

Across the region we are involved in training military or police to better combat terrorists, and providing military and law enforcement personnel with the necessary resources to do the job. Our Anti-Terrorism Assistance to South Asia totaled over $37 million in FY 03. We continue to share information with these allies, building a security network, to counter the terrorist network that we are working to bring down. (qtd. in Peters 5).

Any resistance, revolution or counterrevolution takes a heavy toll on human life. However, imperial powers conduct counterrevolutionary attempts to forestall revolution and resistance. Chomsky and Herman in The Washington’s Connection and Third World Fascism make a case that the US sponsored counterrevolutions are “far more bloody, on the average, than revolutions.” (99). The empires
institutionalise state terror through counterrevolutionary activities to allow local and regional elites to retain their power and position and continue averting revolution and resistance. It is evident in 1971 when the Bangalis of East Pakistan were forced\textsuperscript{14} to fight with modern armies and weaponry of West Pakistan. The US supported Pakistan against any norm of humanity and considered “a huge rape and slaughter” “'benign' bloodbath” (qtd. in Chomsky and Herman 106) though the entire world condemned the large scale military execution of ethnic cleansing. Regarding the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 as “purely internal” affair of Pakistan, the US collaborated with the Pakistani military junta in massacring the Bengalis for the sake of its regional politics and policies in the South Asian region. Later, the US supported several military coups in Bangladesh and Pakistan in the late 1970s and 1980s in order to control any revolution at any level there and sow the seeds of religious fundamentalism\textsuperscript{15}. When a nation tries to reform from the semi-colonial/colonial state to a sovereign state, restore democracy, secularism, and so on, the US intervenes and collaborates with the military forces to destroy democracy, sow fundamentalism, and prevent economic development as seen in Brazil in 1964, and Afghanistan and Pakistan in the 1980s. Chomsky and Herman clarify—

“Beyond the costs of repression \textit{per se} are the human costs of “success” in keeping Third World populations in the desired state of

\textsuperscript{14} A group of scholars in Vienna wrote, “The Bengalis' demand for independence had been forced upon the people of East Pakistan by the savage and atrocious action of the West Pakistani army government. What the Bengalis had really been wanting were regional autonomy and social and economic justice. Recent events have conclusively proved that there was no plan for secession and there was no armed preparation on the part of the Bengalis to achieve that. They were confidently expecting a good result from President Yahya Khan’s democratic gesture. But the West Pakistani army, through its systematic butchery of unarmed civilians, forced the Bengalis to take the ultimate decision—to become a completely independent sovereign state.” (qtd. in Santos 32)

\textsuperscript{15} See chapter seven of this dissertation for detailed discussions.
“passivity and defeatism,” such as has been achieved in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, or Guatemala”, or in East Pakistan. *(Washington's Connection* 101).

**Conclusion**

South Asia in its various phases of history is prone to violence. Violence has not spared saintly figures like Gandhi. It engulfed the first prime minister and founder of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, military rulers such as General Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan and General Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh or popular Prime Ministers like Indira Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto. “In brutality and in anarchy”, Ahmed observes, “South Asia in the last years of the century has few equals.” (275). Besides, it is not difficult to find imperial ambitions functioning at local and regional levels in South Asia. B. P. Giri, considering the term “South Asian” a coinage for the “imagined communities”16 in the region and elsewhere, discusses possible threats that the people of the region suspect in the context of imbalance of power and imperial attitudes of big countries. He observes—

[A] considerable number of South Asians who live beyond India’s borders suspect, with varying degrees of fear, that their big, bad postcolonial neighbor may be harboring a secret colonial ambition in conformity with the territorial expansionism of the nineteenth-century European nation-states. Others have suspected a more benign

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16 See Anderson.
desire for regional dominance as a prelude to claiming a big power status for the country. (142).

With regard to the central empire in the New World Order, many critiques hold that today the world is facing an execution of barbarism emanating from a single powerful country, the United States. It has adopted the doctrine of preemptive (or preventive) war and continues to destabilise the globe (Foster 156). Though the US plays “the predatory role” in the entire world to accomplish its imperial agendas, its citizens ask questions like “why do they [the victims of the US] hate us” after the nine-eleven attacks. According to Roger White, “it was the pathetic pretense of innocence rooted in willful ignorance of the bloody trail of American imperialism that made this question so contemptible to so many around the world and here at home.” (211). He argues that after the events of 9/11, Bush administration executed “an illegal war” against a country, which had nothing to do with the 9/11 attacks. America’s war against terrorism is nothing but bringing the Arab and South Asian looking Muslims in submission. He in his book Postcolonial Anarchism states—

'It didn’t matter whether America went after Osama Bin Laden or Saddam Hussein, whether we went to war with Iraq or Al-Qaeda or the Taliban or some other “new Hitler” in the Middle East. And once we started bombing it didn’t much matter whether the pretext was 9/11 or weapons of mass destruction or freedom and democracy. Americans just wanted to see Arab and South Asia looking Muslims in submission. (211)
White speaks of inhumanity and barbarism carried out after the 9/11 attacks in concentration camps at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and the notorious Abu Ghraib centre, Iraq, where “thousands of Middle Eastern nationals and some Arab American citizens . . . were stripped of all their rights under international law and U.S. law.” (212). In the context of present postcolonial anarchy in the New World Order, he argues that the Bush Administration knew a lot about marketing wars. White states, “Not only do they know when to start them (never offer up a new war during the summer months says presidential advisor Andrew Card) they also know that if you want the people to buy a war you’ve got to give them what they want to get out of it.” (212).

Thus, we could posit that the imperial project of empires has created a new world disorder across the globe. However, the imperial ambitions cannot go on smoothly without the assistance of neo-colonial or peripheral countries. The formulation, function and exercise of power are enchained to “a net like organisation”. Besides, power is exercised both from a “top-down” and a “bottom-up” positions. With the help, consent and favour of the empires, the neo-colonial force or authority exercises power inside the country by downing the revolutionary voices, inflicting torture and violence on individuals, branding resistance movements as acts of terror, and manufacturing public consent through media control. Therefore, in the South Asian context, any discussion on postcolonial identities should focus on, along with theories of postcolonialism, issues of imperial ambitions and entanglements.
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