INTRODUCTION

In these first few pages I intend to write a working introduction to the thesis that follows in the next five chapters. As the title suggests, I have chosen to examine the writings of three Third-World intellectuals who have worked or are working in the First World. I would like to qualify this first half of my title. In the period that we term post-colonial, the Third World has had a crucial role to play in terms of not only political alignments and/or economic balance of power, but also in terms of the development and proliferation of social and cultural theories and schools of thought. The study of social and political theory, in fact the entire spectrum of the study of the humanities, has seen the inevitable presence of the Third World and its intellectuals. As a student of literature and of the humanities I was provoked by this strong presence of the Third World in this scene of socio-cultural studies and the consequent development of newer theories of representation.

Throughout my thesis I talk about the workings of power and its links with knowledge formation and epistemic systems. The centre of power (in terms of what we mean by the phrase in social theory) is still tilted to a large extent toward the First World and its universities and political establishments. One of the primary endeavours of my thesis will be to examine the nature of this discursive formation of power, and how it operates implicitly but inevitably to sustain and
perpetuate the superiority of Western epistemic systems. On the other hand, the presence of the Third World in the socio-academic scene has consistently attempted to undercut this discursive superiority through myriad disruptive projects and strategies of counter-discourse that have met with moderate success in the past few years. The three intellectuals from the Third World, a selection of whose works I have taken up for study, have perhaps been the most influential presence in the academic scene in terms of this politics of deliberate disruption. More importantly, all of them have worked from within the First-World academy, and used their (the First World’s) tools to counter their superiority. This I have found most interesting, and I have tried to point out how each one of them has been uniquely (even if moderately) successful in their project of intervention and counter-politics.

By the term ‘intellectual’ I have generally meant academics who work in the field of the humanities and the social sciences. My area of expertise is confined to a moderate knowledge in the field of the humanities, and I could not venture beyond its confines into the sciences and other forms of intellectual pursuit, like the fields of technology, or commerce, or management for example. I am sure, each one of these fields has also its own mechanism of representative politics, and its own ways of dealing with the workings of power and hegemony. Little doubt the same equations about the division between the First World and the Third, and the consequent power struggle is also intrinsic to these fields of
knowledge. I shall now briefly talk about the chapters in which I elaborate my project.

**Chapter One: The Intellectual and His Location**

Towards the beginning of the first chapter I shall try to put the intellectual in perspective vis-à-vis the scope of my work. I have generally spoken about those intellectuals who are directly or indirectly associated with the field of the humanities and the practice of social and political theory. But within the field of the humanities itself there are sharp divisions in the roles that the intellectuals play. In his Reith Lectures delivered on the BBC in 1993 Edward Said had comprehensively discussed what he thought the role and function of the intellectual should be. Among the many divisions that he made between groups of intellectuals, one was that between the yea-saying intellectuals and the nay-saying intellectuals. As the nomenclature suggests—one group says ‘yes’ to all the policies and decisions of the centre of power, while the other group maintains a distance from the power-centre, and consistently plays an oppositional role. Said, of course, belonged to the latter group and laid emphasis on how the nay-saying intellectual was playing the role of a society’s conscience and speaking truth to power. In this context I have discussed the role of the *parrhesiastes* and the practice of *parrhesia* as explicated by Michel Foucault in his book *Fearless Speech*. 
But these are not the only roles that the intellectual plays. There are intellectuals such as Theodore Adorno who confine themselves within a private space and engage in the pleasures of acquiring knowledge, or in the pursuit of an all-encompassing morality that would emancipate the world. These intellectuals rarely come out and address the general public, but maintain a cultured, cynical distance between themselves and the masses. This is more or less a humanist’s apolitical space that does not involve itself with the discursive dynamic of the state or its manipulations of power. Julien Benda, for example, imagines the intellectual to inhabit a universal, neutral space that exists beyond national boundaries and is not qualified by ethnic identity. He talks about such intellectuals as Jesus, Spinoza, Voltaire or Ernest Renan as examples.

But people such as Edward Said have problematized the debate by opposing the almost simplistic logic laid down by Benda. He sees in the World Wars, in the advent of the Cold War, and in the emergence of the Third World the birth of a much problematized representative space where Europe or the West ceases to be the unchallenged standard-setter for the rest of the world. I discuss in my thesis how these Third-World intellectuals who I talk about have opened up the questions of representation or ontology or epistemology towards a multiplicity, generally unforeseen in earlier socio-philosophical debates. The kind of intellectual that Benda imagines, enmeshed in metaphysical speculation or in the pursuit of non-material knowledge, is almost extinct as a species today as a consequence of anti-humanist theoretical writings across the globe.
According to Said, then, the intellectual today has a defined public role. He has to address the general public on the issues of justice and freedom. He prefers the presence of such intellectuals as Jean-Paul Sartre or Bertrand Russell who have a defined political presence in their respective societies. I lay emphasis on this aspect of Said’s work. For someone who has been nurtured by the writings of such humanist scholars as Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer, his understanding of the role of the intellectual more in terms of intervention than anything else is revelatory about the kind of role he wants the Third-World intellectual to play.

**The Discipline of History**

One of the major roles that the Third-World intellectual has played is in problematizing the very discursive discipline of history and in nurturing a debate about historiographical elisions that have been symptomatic within the conception of the discipline of history. History, for them, has become a conglomeration of knowledges that are tentative, and constructed by historians under all kinds of presuppositions and pressures. The conception of ‘truth’ thus becomes contingent to the dynamics of discursive authority, and hence becomes an open-ended ‘text’ riding on the predilections of various centres of power.

In this context I shall discuss Paul Ricoeur’s conception of history in his celebrated book *History and Truth*. Ricoeur sees the search for a singular truth to
be immediately affected by a mark of violence, and by the phenomenon of authority. He moves gradually from the theological to the social and the political, and shows in these structures the imperative for the formation of a singular truth that could be discursively upheld as a mark of authority. The role of history within a political system, he says, becomes identical to the role of theology within a clerical system. Thus, as early as the sixties of the last century, historians like Ricoeur were trying to problematize the writing of history and find out the power structures implicit within its disciplinary parameters.

With the rise of such theoretical tools as deconstruction or New Historicism there have been consistent attempts at the relativization of historical thought with the sudden breakdown of Western discursivity and the creation of multiple centres of power. There was a slow but consistent movement towards postmodernism and this led to the systematic study of historiography and historicisms. All the three Third-World intellectuals I write about share alike a distrust for simple historicisms. They are, on the other hand, in favour of heterogeneous, conflicting and incommensurable histories. I shall discuss this aspect of their work in much detail in my thesis.
**Historiography**

Since the study and development of historiography shall be one aspect of my work, I shall talk about the historiography of India as a case in point. I shall discuss how the master-narrative of Indian history has generally been qualified by a pervasive Eurocentrism. The development of the discipline of history in postcolonial India, be it nationalist or Marxist, has minutely followed the set paradigms of Western modernity. Historians such as Sumit Sarkar have insisted on how the development of modern Indian history as a narrative of transition has remained incomplete due to the over-dependence on modernist paradigms. However, even as late as the 1980s Indian historiography was still unprepared to step inside the inchoate ambiguity of postmodernism, and create contingent textualities within historical formations. But with the works of such intellectuals as Ashis Nandy or Dipesh Chakrabarty or Gyanendra Pandey or Gyan Prakash, we may say that Indian historiography was stepping on to the uncertain domain of postmodernism. As I discuss the works of the three intellectuals—Said, Spivak and Bhabha—I shall bring up this question of history and its implications for the postcolonial intellectual.

**The Problematic of Location**

The location of the intellectual within such an ever-evolving dynamic of the creation or dispersal of knowledge is inevitably qualified. The intellectual
becomes automatically enmeshed in the web of representational metaphors that are trying to situate him/her within set schools of thought or modes of historicity. This is why, in spite of the perfect awareness of the differences between the respective fields of work of the three intellectuals I talk about, I shall need to club them together under the umbrella term Third-World intellectuals. But I shall also try to locate their points of departure, and the way each one of them has worked towards his/her individual representation/non-representation.

As I talk about the Third-World intellectual in the First World, there is implicit within it the trope of displacement, that is, a movement away from home. This idea of displacement is also multi-layered, as there are different forms of the displaced—the exile, the émigré, the expatriate and the refugee. I shall try to touch upon the implication of each one of these terms—as forms of movement away from ‘home’. Each one of these movements is qualified by its own set of contingencies, and hence the kind of representational anxiety is different for each one of these sets of people. However, there are times when they intertwine and overlap, making representation a more complex issue to negotiate.

Coming back to the specific question of the intellectual, the problem of representation or representability of the Third-World intellectual is also somewhere linked to the principle of honesty (I am conscious of the humanist trap in the sentence). What I mean is that this honesty lies in the extent to which the intellectual is willing to compromise his/her position of institutionalized power in
order to defend the representational metaphors of the margin (the Third World in this case) against set principles of domination of the West. Since all the three intellectuals I shall discuss in this thesis have been very powerful presences in the Western academia, such a question perhaps becomes an imperative.

**Chapter Two: Edward W. Said**

In the second chapter I shall discuss some of the works and the representational politics of Edward Said. The publication of Said’s book *Orientalism* in 1978 was a landmark in the field of postcolonial studies. Although there were others before him who had worked and written on the subject of Orientalism such as S.H. Alatas, A.L. Tibawi, Talal Asad and K.M. Panikkar, Said’s work was unique in its own way. By not limiting himself to strict disciplinary boundaries, but by exploring the various and different disciplines of politics, geography, culture or history—Saïd was opening up the debate on Orientalism toward a much wider perspective than his predecessors had possibly done. He was successful in creating a heterogeneous space where the complex mechanism of protest against Western essentialism could be laid out. The one interesting aspect of Said’s work that struck me at the very outset was how he balanced both humanist and anti-humanist influences in his work. On the one hand he was deeply influenced by the works of humanist thinkers such as Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer, while on the other he borrowed the ideas of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci. The multi-
dimensional nature of his scholarship and the diverse issues that he addressed makes it considerably difficult to fix a definitive base of influence in Said’s work.

**Amateurism and Worldliness**

In Said’s initial years as a critic the influence of Foucault was very evident—particularly Foucault’s ideas on power and knowledge. However, Said never quite agreed to the strategically impersonal nature of power that Foucault had enumerated. It can be said that he concretized Foucault’s metaphysical conception of power and applied it to the very political and necessarily instrumental nature of imperial discourse. By the mid-1970s Said had already almost abandoned Foucault for his pervasive pessimism and moved on to the likes of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci’s writings on the subaltern and his insistence on heterogeneity attracted Said. He was immediately impressed by the essentially rebellious quality of Gramsci’s writings. However, in course of time, he had to abandon Gramsci as well because Gramsci was not a consolidated theorist but essentially a note-writer.

By the time Said had grown out of Foucault and Gramsci he was trying to search for newer and more novel idioms of representation both of the Third World in general and the Third-World intellectual in particular. He was growing increasingly impatient with the very sophisticated approach of literary and cultural theory and insisted that the essentially political and emancipatory nature of theory should never be denied. He thus emphasized the need of ‘amateurism’
and ‘worldliness’ in the critic. As the amateur the intellectual needs to come out of his specialized coterie and assume an active public role. In his idea of worldliness Said expresses a need for criticism to return to the real world where the critic is politically active and becomes a voice of dissent who speaks for the people to the centre of power, all the while located at a probing, uncomfortable distance from it. This is the function of the public intellectual—a role that Said has played throughout his working life with more than moderate success. He has played the role of the *parrhesiastes*, and been more of a public intellectual than a professional. By consistently addressing the Israel-Palestine debate, and making no pretensions about his championing the cause of Palestine, Said has, in the true sense of the term, been the Third-World intellectual who has asked uncomfortable and demanding questions to the centre of power. What I would like to insist upon throughout this thesis is that Said has never been an armchair intellectual, but an active political presence. Said has thus successfully answered the question of honesty that I am going to raise about the Third-World intellectual in my first chapter.

**Orientalism: Scope and Critiques**

I also discuss in some detail the reception and criticism of Said’s *Orientalism* across both the First and the Third Worlds. The most serious charge brought against Said was about this choice of methodology. Critics such as Dennis Porter and Michael Richardson discovered a methodological confusion in Said’s
Orientalism while Aijaz Ahmad, in a longish essay, raises questions about Said’s privileged location, his veering towards postmodernism and his provocation of Third-Worldist nationalisms. But perhaps the most serious attack on Said was lodged by Bernard Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. In a long-winded argument Lewis tries to prove how Said had completely misunderstood the project of Orientalism—either because he lacked knowledge of the entire history of such a discipline, or he deliberately distorted facts in order to suit his political purpose. However, there were glaring inconsistencies in Lewis’s account as well. He looks upon Said as a historian who was trying to rewrite the history of the relationship between Europe and Islam. However, what Said was trying to do was something very different. Through his multi-disciplinary technique he was trying to reconsider the entire epistemic format of reading that was in vogue in Europe, and, by default, in the rest of the world. He was trying to re-examine the power-structures that are always operative within the discursive dynamic of disciplinary studies across the world. What he attempted was a deconstruction of the disciplinary paradigms that have, for a period of time, influenced our study of history and society as a whole. As Said himself later argues, in Orientalism he was trying to liberate intellectuals from the shackles of systems such as Orientalism.
Contrapuntal Reading: A Strategy of Resistance

Ultimately, as I discuss in this chapter, Said was trying to articulate a new strategy of reading. He called it contrapuntal reading, something that would not directly oppose the discursive practice of reading already in vogue. What it would do, on the contrary, was resist attitudes of hegemony inherent within the politics of reading. The whole idea behind such a contrapuntal reading was to establish the quintessential hybridity of cultural forms and initiate a fluidity that would surpass a simplistic rhetoric of blame. This he adapts and continues in his next book *Culture and Imperialism* where he delineates a history of resistance against empire and its hegemonic forms of discursive socio-cultural practice.

On the whole, I shall try to show in this chapter how Said’s enterprise as a Third-World intellectual was to address the politics of space, and use the metaphors of imperialism and culture as correlatives that would place the problem of representation within a cultural continuum.

Chapter Three: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

In this chapter I deal with the writings and the locational dynamic of Gayatri Spivak. The fundamental difficulty that most readers face in approaching her works is methodological. At times it becomes almost impossible to locate Spivak within any specific school of critical or philosophical thought as she refuses to be
assimilated within the set boundaries of any particular discipline. Although her readers have consistently tried to locate her at different times as Marxist, or feminist or deconstructionist, she has consciously eluded all such labels to maintain an ambiguity about her disciplinary location. What I discovered in the course of my study of Spivak’s works was the fact that this was a well-founded strategy to frustrate the essentialist agency of the First World. The fact that she was comfortably located within the First-World academy and opposing its agenda of essentialism was a tradition that she was continuing from Edward Said. Only, one must admit, her strategies were much more indirect, elusive and complex and most definitely veered towards the uncertainty of postmodernism.

Gayatri Spivak was, of course, an admirer of Edward Said and termed Orientalism as the source book of the discipline of postcolonial studies. However, there were some major differences in the basic agenda of Said and Spivak, which I discuss in some detail at the beginning of the chapter. The primary difference, of course, lay in their respective functions as intellectuals. While Said preferred a well-defined political role as a public intellectual, Spivak has always preferred an obtuse and ambiguous presence, so that she has been all the more difficult to essentialize by the strategies of the West.

The strategies of counter-discourse that Spivak assumes are interventionist in nature. She discovers aporetic gaps within the texts or deliberate catachrestic misreadings which she uses as sites to found her interventionist critique. There is
always a certain fragmentary and disruptive quality of immediacy and an element of surprise in her work. Like Said, Spivak also has very diverse interests that go beyond her immediate academic engagement. She has consistently written on subaltern historiography, the international division of labour, and the question of the gendered subaltern, and there is an implicit quality of heterogeneity in her work. Thus her role as the Third-World intellectual in the First World is defined by a contingent and arbitrary quality. What she attempts to do is to administer a deconstructive rupture within the apparent or imposed homogeneity of Western discursive constructs.

I shall also be commenting on the politics of pedagogy in the Western academia, an area on which Spivak has thought and written extensively. Spivak’s attempts at the problematization of aspects of Western pedagogy primarily focuses on the location and representation of the Third-World woman. She talks about the woman question from multiple perspectives, and multiple locational anxieties—the woman trapped in localized or globalized or sexual identities, each of which is nurtured by certain essentialist politics. One of the chief aims of Spivak’s work, I feel, has been to unshackle the identity of the woman (herself included) from various homogeneous essentializations, and open up the woman question towards heterogeneous formations.

However, one need not misunderstand these claims of rupturing the politics of Western pedagogy as ways of trying to negate or cancel out the cultural
or theoretical tools of the West. On the contrary, very much like Said, Spivak is also attempting a negotiation between cultural paradigms in a way that is symptomatic of postmodern cultural productions. She definitively argues against a sanitized cultural space inhabited by the Third-World postcolonial critic by virtue of his/her firsthand experience or cultural origin. She prefers instead a participation in the same techniques of Western cultural hegemony that have been used for dominance and subjection, and subverting or fracturing them from inside. She adopts a unique technique of disruptive intervention. Spivak chooses a text from the Third World—Mahasweta Devi’s Stanadayini—that tells us the story of a woman called Jashoda, who has gone through multiple formations of marginality—and opens up the text to multiple elite readings. This was an excellent strategy of disrupting the supposed pedagogic superiority of the elite academic from the First World. I shall try to note in my discussion on Spivak’s analysis of Stanadayini how, through such a reading of a Third-World text in the light of metropolitan culture theory Spivak was keeping the question of representation alive in the academy. The multiple and ever-evolving possibilities of representation are explored through this one brilliant attempt at reading a Third-World text.

**Spivak’s Use of Deconstruction**

Spivak has used deconstruction as a very effective tactical tool in most of her works. She uses it as a way of multiplying possibilities of interpretations to show
the pluralistic nature of experience. She examines radical critical schools in the West and shows how even they sometimes fail to locate aporetic discontinuities within a text and hence fall prey to the essentialist agenda. In this context, I shall look at her unique conceptions of ‘reconstellation’ and ‘catachresis’.

What I found most enlightening about Spivak’s technique was her use of a strategy of affirmative deconstruction. She warns us that a mere reversal or subversion of dominance would only initiate another supplementary or parallel move towards appropriation. Spivak, therefore, insists on a reversal that also engenders a displacement of sorts so that the intended agenda is not cancelled out by a more powerful opponent. Her technique of affirmative deconstruction is a kind of ideology-critique that enables this kind of displacement through the appreciation of an intrinsic heterogeneity that is ever-present within a class, or a group, or a collective. I shall attempt to show how, through the intense consciousness about this heterogeneity, Spivak founds her technique of affirmative deconstruction.

**Spivak and Feminism**

For many years now, and in spite of Spivak’s consistent shirking of labels, she has been known as a feminist in the larger part of the academic world. In the thesis I shall discuss the various aspects of Spivak’s engagements with the question of the woman. What I have noticed is how Spivak completely abandons the kind of
feminism that critics such as Julia Kristeva practise. She sees Kristeva’s critique as embedded within Western cultural practice. Spivak sees Kristeva as a representative of the First World, whose solutions against male essentialist practise cannot be offered to the nameless, faceless, marginal woman of the Third World. Spivak much prefers the works of such off-beat and radical feminists such as Helene Cixous and Marie-Aimee Helie Lucas. I attempt an analysis of the similarities between the techniques of Spivak and Cixous, and tried to find out the reason behind Spivak’s preference for Cixous. Cixous attempts to locate the woman out of the trope of binary oppositions laid down by patriarchy. Her belief in poetry incites her to search for a metaphorical kind of motherhood that connects two women beyond the reaches of patriarchal hegemony. Spivak appropriates this technique to try and establish a relationship between the metropolitan woman (Third World or otherwise) and the gendered subalternt. She continuously emphasizes the dispersed and differential identity that Cixous gives to the woman. Taking cue from such a model of differentiality Spivak intends to raise issues of pluralism and heterogeneity through her technique of affirmative deconstruction.

I also cursorily refer to the way in which Spivak has dabbled with the issue of the woman and the writing of history. Spivak frequently talks about the woman who demands a well-defined subject-position in history that has all the necessary implications of pluralism as well as individuality. This also involves a subsuming of multiple agenda into the woman question—that of class struggle,
that of the subaltern Third-World subjecthood, that of the international division of labour et cetera. Spivak like Cixous is attempting to write a history of the woman that is a blend of the personal, the national and the international—something that is indeed ambitious and arbitrary, and in a sense poetic. This, I have felt, is one way of trying to consolidate the position of the Third-World or subaltern or marginal woman on the one hand, and her own position as the Third-World intellectual in the First World on the other.

In another section I discuss Spivak’s use of deconstructive feminism. Indeed, although a student of Paul de Man and a student who has worked within the school of American deconstruction—Spivak is somebody who has, in later years come out of the tradition of American deconstruction and practised deconstructive criticism in a unique and singular way. While discussing the woman and the risk of assimilation in terms of representation, Spivak throws in the idea of the non-assumption of positionality. She takes the postmodern dynamic of representation to an extreme point of sophistication where even the assumption of a momentary positionality is looked at with scepticism and as running the risk of assimilation. In this context it seems that the focus on non-representation, the emphasis on reaching beyond the ontological is the moot point of her politics. This use of deconstruction is almost unique to Spivak. Deconstruction at its differential limit makes it possible to talk about the woman from without the politics of essentialism. I try to show in this discussion how, in
her re-reading of Derrida into the question of the woman, Spivak has seen both
the theories of deconstruction and feminism in a new light.

**The Subaltern Historians**

On and off Spivak has been associated with the school of Subaltern
historiography. At one point of time, Spivak was all praise for these historians, as
they have tried to show the deliberate cognitive failure of elite historiography in
terms of textual representations of marginal history. Like Spivak, this group has
also been a consistent practitioner of affirmative deconstruction, in its continuous
vacillation between the use of sophisticated theoretical tools on the one hand, and
a direct participation in the heterogeneous identity of the subaltern, on the other.
However, Spivak is unhappy with the way these historians have approached the
question of the woman. Spivak feels that here they have been unable to strike the
deconstructive mode, and revolve within the same discursive paradigms of
bourgeois humanism. This could perhaps be the reason why she has gradually
distanced herself from the work of this group, although there is still a degree of
sympathy for their mode of methodological approach.

What I have felt in the course of my reading of Spivak is that perhaps she
is more interested in the question of the representation of the woman, than about
the location of her origin—the Third World. I shall speak of how she has
gradually and carefully come out of her position of ethnic minority, the Third-
World intellectual, and taken up the resistant reader’s subject-position, as she insists in her writings on feminism and the question of the woman.

**Chapter Four: Homi Bhabha**

Homi K. Bhabha is perhaps the most esoteric of the three intellectuals from the Third World I have intended to examine in my thesis. In this chapter I talk about his works and how his writings have taken postcolonial theory toward an extreme sophistication. Bhabha is the kind of Third-World intellectual who arrived in the First World academic scene equipped already with postmodern theoretical tools. He deconstructs and re-constructs with ease, thereby playing the game of representation and non-representation, situated on the same plane with his Western counterparts.

What Bhabha does is to lift the problem of representation out of the political on to the psychological plane and allow a free-play of meanings, which are not enmeshed in the discursive paradigms of colonial anxiety. What I attempt to discuss is the difference between the approaches of Said and Bhabha. Bhabha qualifies Said’s protests concerning the problematic of representation and looks to reconstellate it out of its binary logic of opposition or resistance, into a postmodern one of ambivalence, hybridity and homogeneity.
Ambivalence and Mimicry

I shall discuss Bhabha’s idea of colonial mimicry in some detail in the thesis. This is because I feel that the idea of mimicry was a revolutionary one in terms of the politics of colonial representation. However effective Bhabha’s theory might have been when applied to the colonial situation, there is little doubt that it has had a massive influence on the contemporary situation relating to discursive political games in the West. Through his conception of mimicry Bhabha charts a slippage from the legitimate pattern of the colonizer-colonized binary—something that he discovers from his postmodern location. Bhabha talks about the creation of the ‘white but not quite’ colonial subject who would mimic the colonial master, and help in the administrative logic of the empire. What Bhabha enumerates in his writings is the failure of this project, as the mimic-man strategically uses his ambivalent location and functions contrary to the imperial logic. The desire for mimicry, which is the desire of the colonizer, is eventually transformed into a strategic desire of the colonized, who subverts his location from one of disadvantage to one of advantage.

To elaborate this concept with an example, I then discuss the case of Aurobindo Ghose, the Bengali nationalist-turned-Godman, who used his interdictory location to its fullest advantage. Born to an Anglicized father, Aurobindo was sent off to England at an early age, and protected from contamination by all things Indian. Ghose came back to India and became first a
militant, and later, a religious nationalist. There were also other examples of the native babu using his interdictory location to subvert the imperial logic. Some names that immediately come to mind are those of Raja Rammohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Fakirmohon Senapati, and such others. I examine how Bhabha noticed the advantages of this interdictory, ambivalent location while analysing the effects of colonial discourse. His contrivance of the strategies of mimicry and ambivalence emerged out of an analysis of such a location, and he means to use this strategy in the changed scenario of contemporary neo-imperialism. As a Third-world intellectual in the First World, he sensed the advantages of such interdiction, and through his writings he fruitfully consolidated a theorization of such a plan.

Bhabha had also realized early in his career in the First World that there was a concerted and alarming movement towards nationalism in the policy decisions of the Anglo-American world. This has led not only to economic and political domination, but also to forms of cultural imperialism in terms of the control and dissemination of information, the popular media, and creation of specialized institutions and academics who maintain a hegemonic influence over the rest of the world. Bhabha’s getting enmeshed in theory is, I feel, an attempt to understand how this tool of theory has only become another power-ploy of the culturally elite West to produce a discourse of the ‘other’ that would reinforce the power-knowledge equation. And he strategically tries to extricate the ‘other’ from this discursive knot.
Enunciation and the Moment of Politics

Another interesting aspect of Bhabha’s work is his scepticism about making clear-cut distinctions between theoretical practice and direct activism. He insists that the more there are such distinctions it will be easier to appropriate and consequently essentialize these paradigms. He looks at both of them as political applications of a rhetoric of protest. While theory attacks discursive political ideas and principles, activism is temporally bound to a specific and immediate event. I refer to a debate among Bhabha’s critics that was incited by the assumption of such a position. They considered Bhabha to be merely an arm-chair intellectual who was trying to shun responsibility by clever theorizing.

This has led to a discussion on Bhabha’s ideas of ‘enunciation’ and ‘moment of politics’. He has seen the political as a hybrid and multipolar space that qualifies meaning, thereby making ‘truth’ contingent, if not relative. He conceives of political positions as ever-evolving, always in a state of flux that allows for the fullest play of all the possibilities of representation.

The Third Space

I end the chapter on Bhabha with a discussion of his concept of the Third Space, where we see a definitive movement towards a postmodern stance. Bhabha
dislikes the use of the term ‘cultural diversity’ and insists instead on the use of the term ‘cultural difference’. Through the use of a deconstructive politics Bhabha locates each subject in a position of differentiality, where meaning is established in neither the discursive space of the one, nor in the (counter)discursive space of the other—but rather in a Third Space. This Third Space of enunciation allows a free-play of meanings and cultural identities, which could lead to the realization that cultures are neither unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistically enmeshed in hierarchical relations of the self and the other. I have discovered much similarity in the techniques Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha. It is only that Bhabha is sometimes even more esoteric and more arbitrary in his locating or non-locating of a postmodern dynamic.

**Chapter Five: Conclusion**

In the final chapter of this thesis I propose to examine the kind of influence that I feel these three intellectuals from the Third World have had on the debate on location and representation. One of the most relevant points about the presence of Edward Said in the intellectual scene is how, with a mixture of humanism and anti-humanism in his work, he has laid open a space which other intellectuals from the Third World could claim. The kind of arbitrary subjectivity that we sometimes discover in the works of Spivak and Bhabha is perhaps a continuation of the humanist spirit that can be traced back to Said. However, one must also
note that despite the abiding influence of Said, the adoption of anti-humanist modes of theorizing was a conscious choice for both Spivak and Bhabha. This was because of the fact that the scope of anti-humanism threw up many possibilities of representation that could not have been imagined by Said when he had begun to write.

I also comment on the possible complications in the use of the term ‘postcolonial’. Critics such as Arif Dirlik have commented on the use and abuse of the label ‘postcolonial’, and many of these critics feel that some Third-World intellectuals in the First World have misused it for their personal agenda, that is to say, in terms of consolidating their respective positions within the First-World academy. What critics such as Dirlik do not realize, however, is that theorists such as Spivak or Bhabha would not remain confined within the developmental pattern of postmodernism either. They would gradually move towards a counter-essentialist strategy where they would refuse all labels and all possible presumptions of positionality. They would attempt to move beyond all attempts at authentication by the Western academy, and ultimately move into a hybrid, heterogeneous political space that goes through multiple space-shifts and quantum leaps, and refuses all definition or nominalism.

Ultimately, what such critics have done is undercut the assumptions of all disciplinary formations. Be it the generation of systems of thought, formation of paradigms of development, or formulating a syllabus for academic pursuit—they
are likely to consider all of these to be nothing but essentialist traps. Spivak’s continuous vacillations, for instance, are ways of evading these disciplinary agencies, and, in a way, even move beyond the problem of representation or representability.

**The Subaltern Historian, Again**

Spivak’s enthusiasm for the Subaltern school of historians is because of their role in bringing both colonial and national-bourgeois historiography to crisis. She is impressed with their attempts to bring the simplistic modes-of-production narrative to a crisis. It is in their attempts at abrupt interventionism that Spivak sees the success of the deconstructive approach. She sees in their deliberate validation of ‘rumour’ as history an interventionist strategy that establishes the subaltern as the subject of history—a disturbing and problematic reinscription that persistently questions disciplinary formations. I also discuss in this chapter Spivak’s critique of the Subaltern historians for locating the subaltern problematic in complete isolation from both the colonizing formation and other sectors of local society, such as the native elite, to which it is obviously linked. However, she also considers it to be a necessary theoretical fiction akin to fictional constructions used by the likes of Marx or Gramsci or Foucault or Derrida—something that they have to take recourse to in order to critique pervasive hegemonic formations. In Spivak’s interpretation of Subaltern historiography, she
finds this kind of isolationism theoretically sophisticated, a dialogic moment of
difference that unsettles the structures of academic power.

**Bhabha’s Postmodern Strategy**

In the final chapter, as in the rest of the thesis, I see Bhabha as the seasoned
postcolonial presence, well-versed in theoretical strategies, ensconced
comfortably in the First-World academy—interventionist and discursive(sic).
Bhabha’s entire project is steeped in a critique of modernity. He contends with
two versions of modernity—the Enlightenment logic of incomplete modernity and
Richard Rorty’s argument about the successful completion of modernity. Thereby
he insists on examining the conditions of agency, closure, intentionality or
totalization in terms beyond the trope of modernity. This is where perhaps he
initiates a move towards postmodernism. I shall take up at length Bhabha’s
critique of both colonialist and national-bourgeois agency as having
unconsciously fallen into the trap of modernity.

Bhabha, on the other hand, puts forward a model of contramodernity that
uses postmodernist and poststructuralist tools to show the failures of logocentric
conceptions. I shall show how such a strategy was successful in negotiating the
condition of the Third-World intellectual in the First World as well. Bhabha tries
to show in his postcolonial theorizations how the idea of an authoritarian West
and its assumptions of colonial modernity completely break down in the face of
subaltern history, and the more complicated problems of expatriation and diasporic conditions.

I shall note in this chapter how Bhabha gradually moves into the complex problematic of the moment of enunciation—where all representation is always/already contingent and differential. Bhabha’s chief purpose in trying to theorize an enunciative moment is to provide the ‘other’ with a chance for the articulation of his/her culture and politics. But this is achieved through a very complex postmodern dynamic. The moment of enunciation is a disjunctive moment, multi-accentual and heterogeneous, that initiates a movement beyond discipline or history. It is this contingency of the constitution of the self that Bhabha seizes upon to celebrate an absence of closure, and move towards an indeterministic, postmodern heterogeneity. I shall observe how this is a complex but effective strategy of representation or non-representation not only of the marginal subject, but also that of the Third-World intellectual in the First World.

I shall end my thesis with a longish discussion on the tradition of foundational historiography and its implications. I propose to show through a study of the writings of historians such as Gyan Prakash and Gyanendra Pandey how there was a failure of agential thrust and an inability to move out of the narratives of power in the practice of foundational historiography. Gyan Prakash, for example, has argued how the counter-theorizations of nationalism or Marxism or anthropology/area-studies were methods of counter-politics that could be easily
essentialized by Western protocols. Prakash charts a trajectory of the development of Indian historiography from nationalism, through area-studies, to Marxism and shows how the entire logic of writing history is foundational in nature, and cannot extricate itself from the vicious trope of essentialist colonial modernity.

Having examined the development of historiography in India (and most of the rest of the world), I shall look at the need for a re-thinking of the approach to historiography in the entire Third World. What I feel is that a post-foundational approach would perhaps be the right way of trying to negotiate the politics of identity for the Third World. This is precisely what people such as Bhabha and Spivak are doing from their First-World locations. While to negotiate their identity (and, by default, the identity of the Third World) they have adopted postmodern techniques through intricate methodological manoeuvres, their work has opened up new theoretical spaces, where even such canonical distinctions as the Third World and the First World need to be revised and re-thought. It cannot be definitively said whether their project will meet with success in the long run, in terms of the politics of representation or representability, but this movement beyond closure is a commendable methodological achievement for the Third-World intellectual in the First World. Edward Said died while I was working on this thesis. I earnestly hope that the other two, with able help from some of their colleagues will continue their run of success.