

CHAPTER ONE

FRAMING POSTCOLONIAL SUBJECT POSITIONS: FROM MIMICRY TO MUTATION

Gone are the binary oppositions dear to the nationalist and imperialist enterprise. Instead, we begin to sense that old authority cannot simply be replaced by new authority, but that new alignments across borders, types, nations and essences are rapidly come into view, and it is these alignments that now provoke and challenge the fundamentally static notion of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism. (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xxviii)

But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (Bhabha, "Third Space" 211)

The aim of this chapter is to offer a critique of theories of binarization that explain the constructed nature of social formation by (a) highlighting the ambivalence of colonial subject positions and (b) by teasing out universalist myths that go into the making of binaries in the first place. The chapter also seeks to bring to the fore the homogenizing procedures of the discourse of colonialism. It is necessary to examine the nature of such constructions as they result in positioning the occident and the orient in a timeless opposition. In postcolonial discourse, the strict polarization of binaries—between subject and object, colonizer and colonized, etc.—has been challenged by the idea of liminality, a hallmark of cultural negotiations. The idea of liminal space challenges the very basis of binary opposites and opens up possibilities of pluralized and cross-border identities. Discourses of hybridity and diaspora also open up sites of transaction between colonizer and the colonized. Interaction and interrelation between colonizer and the colonized questions essentialized notions of such identity formations. Hybridization of identity results from negotiations between different subject positions which also questions the very basis of what Bhabha characterizes as 'cultural binarism'.

The Beginning of Othering:

The history of colonialism is linked to the production, perpetuation and circulation of prejudiced and racialized Eurocentric views about non-Europeans. During colonialism, ontological and epistemological othering of the orient/native as savage/inferior/ignorant/ugly legalized the control and dominance of Europe over the non-European races and cultures. Thus, ideological imperatives preceded actual economic and political practices. At the same time, the end of colonial rule only changed the terms of reference but further perpetuated a concomitant divide by creating a new category of supposedly deprived and depraved nations calling it the “Third World” (see Ahmed, *In Theory*; Bauer *Equality*). The decision of countries like India and Egypt to stay away, at the height of the Cold War, from the Capitalist bloc and the Communist bloc—both, as it turns out, beneficiaries or architects of the great colonizing impulse—pushes them into a political and economic no-man’s land, a zone of perpetual deprivation and depravity. Naipaul’s fictional characters are in a way witnesses and participants in this putative history of depravity and deprivation. Naipaul’s narrators assume the role of interpreters of history, politics and culture in the colonial and postcolonial worlds of Africa, Asia, the Caribbeans, pushed indiscriminately to economic or narrative third-worldisms (see Ahmed; Jameson). In the given circumstances, the Saidian and post-Saidian interrogations of theories of self and other form and the core of the debate. The history of colonialism and postcolonialism gets implicated in homogenizing exercises that need to be recalled and re-framed.

It is more or less agreed that Said’s book *Orientalism* (1978), provides the most influential critique of the western representation of non-western cultures in European texts and thought (see Gandhi 16-24). It is not difficult to see why Said argues that the epistemological domination of the East through documented knowledge contributed to the creation of a binary division between Europe and its ‘others’. Said also argues that colonial ideology posits the East and West in a timeless opposition. For, there is an “ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (*Orientalism* 2). The fact that this form of knowledge production about the Orient was carried out by the colonial state apparatuses ensures that what emerged as knowledge was used to legitimize colonial control and subjugation of vast tracts of Asia and Africa. Naturally, there is merit in Said’s thesis that alongside colonial rule, the Orient became an object “suitable for study in the academy, for display in the

museum or reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial and historical theses about mankind and the universe, for instances of economic and sociological theories of development, revolution, cultural personality, national religious character” (*Orientalism* 7-8). Investing in the othering of the East is therefore a long drawn-out and complex exercise.

Said shows the West establishes an entire epistemic divide between the East and the West “by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (3). The West’s superiority and strength are established by describing the Orient in a series of negativistic terms and therefore the projection of the latter as Europe’s distorted mirror image that needs to be corrected gains ground. The question that needs to be asked is whether such knowledge production and formation remain permanently hypothecated to the colonial state and its apparatuses.

It is interesting to note that Said’s formulation regarding the East and West as timeless oppositions is trapped in its own stasis. Said foregrounds the colonial binarism—civilized/barbaric, progressive/primitive, mature/immature, strong/weak etc—that makes the management of the natives easy and profitable. For, “knowledge gives power, more power requires more knowledge, and so on in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” (*Orientalism* 36).

It is true that Said has not examined, at least here, the material and geopolitical consequences of the West’s conquest of the East. However, all purported encounters and transaction are replications of this self-other ontological divides. Any possibility of human transaction is undermined by the weight of this massive oppositional schema. This kind of static East-West divide is later questioned by Leela Gandhi in her *Affective Communities*. In any case, it is necessary to examine at some length to the consequences of colonialism in praxis.

Aijaz Ahmad’s work *In Theory* (1994), is one of the earliest and strongest critiques of Edward Said and postcolonial theory. Arguing from a Marxist position, Ahmed expresses his disagreement with Said on issues both of theory and history. He argues that Said could not sufficiently connect the colonial history with the spread of capitalism. Ahmed questions the essentializing nature of the orientalist discourse. He says that it is “remarkable how constantly and comfortably Said speaks ... of a Europe or the west, as a self-identical fixed being which has always had an essence and a project, an

imagination and a will; and of the ‘orient’ as its object – textually, militarily and so on” (183). Ahmed argues that Said “seems to posit, stable subject-object identities as well as ontological and epistemological distinction between the two” (183). Ahmed has a point when he says: “Said quite justifiably accuses the ‘orientalist’ of essentializing the orient but his own essentializing of ‘the West’ is equally remarkable” (183). Thus, the prioritization of ontological prefigurations in Said’s critique of orientalism leaves Said open to the very same allegations that he brings against the West.

Ahmed is particularly unhappy with the “homogenizing sweep” at the centre of the East/West binarism. Clearly, in his exercise there is a shift from material conditions to the constitution of the episteme, from “humanism as history [to] humanism as ideality” (164). The binary division of European as the victor and oriental native other as the victim is not always absolute. For, there were Europeans, too, who were victims of colonization. In the orientalist discourse the sweeping generalizations and essentializing procedure erase the presence of various ‘others’ (the *sudras*, and *dalits* in the Indian context), within the all-consuming category of the colonized ‘other’. On the other hand, the homogenizing sweep also effaces the hardships and dilemmas faced by Europeans due to their temporary or permanent mobility or dislocation under colonialism. Ahmed argues that in all human societies, there are complex historical categories and processes—movements of gender, religion, class, etc., for example—at work that cannot be subsumed under the broad category given by Said.

A point that Said accepts but does not fully articulate until *Culture and Imperialism* is the relationship of colonialism and capitalism. So the issue of race and racialized historiography should take into account the mobility of capital, not just of human beings:

What gave European forms of these prejudices their special force in history, with devastating consequences for the actual lives of countless millions and expressed ideologically in full blown Eurocentric racism was not some transhistorical process of ontological obsession and falsity—some gathering of unique force in domains of discourse—but, quite specifically, the power of colonial capitalism, which then gave rise to other sorts of power. (184)

Following Ahmed’s contention, it can be argued that the categorization of colonizer/colonized, oppressor/oppressed, on the basis of an absolute ontological and epistemological divide is unsound in terms not of method but also of truth.

Ania Loomba is one of the earliest Said enthusiasts to recognize that while “the status of knowledge is demystified” in Saidian analyses, “the lines between the ideological and the objective [get] blurred” (*Colonialism/Postcolonialism* 43). Loomba argues, for example, that the focus should shift to interaction and intersection of the “epistemic” and the “material” and “to uncover interrelation between the ideological and the material rather than to collapse them into each other” (51). So to look only at orientalist knowledge production at the expense of materiality is fraught with danger.

As argued by McLeod and others, the prioritization of ideology over the materiality results in “a broad, generalizing sweep of history but attends little to *individual* historical moments, their anomalies and specifics” (McLeod 47). In other words, there is a way out of the dilemma created by Said’s grand narrative of colonial othering. Loomba says—concurring with Catherine Belsey’s *Critical Practice*—that a way out is discourse analysis. Here discourse is “not simply another word for representation” (Loomba, *Colonialism* 84). The exercise involves the scrutiny of “the social and historical conditions within which specific representations are generated” (84-85). Given that dominant ideologies are never “total or monolithic, never totally successful in incorporating all individuals or subjects into their structures” (60), the overlapping is crucial to interrogations of categories. Said, it would appear, has not paid enough attention to the process of interpellation. In Naipaul’s fiction victim and victor are both marked out for interpellation.

Victims and Collaborators:

As a result of constant circulation and perpetuation of colonial othering, both by way of truth and method, to use the Gadamerian phrase, the natives begin to look at themselves through the eyes of the colonizer. They begin to see themselves as racialized others and accept the racialized epistemes presented by the colonizer as true. This process helps the colonizer to attain and retain a firm if troubled control over the native. Thus, the empire can be said to have been kept not through coercion only but also through consent of the native. This consent is achieved through discourse and made available only when we check the nature of the discourse, both in theory and praxis.

In *Colonizer and the Colonized* (1974), Albert Memmi provides a more layered analysis of the process of colonization by looking at both the colonizer and the colonized as victims: “all the oppressed are alike in some ways” (5). His thesis on the colonizer-

colonized relationship anticipates the basic utility of what Said says but also sees its limits. He looks at the relationship in terms of role and resistance by examining colonialism both as consequence and condition:

[E]very ideology of combat includes as an integral part of itself a conception of the adversary. By agreeing to this ideology, the dominated classes practically confirm the role assigned to them. This explains, inter alia, the relative stability of societies ; oppression is tolerated willy-nilly by the oppressed themselves. (132)

This invocation of what is possibly the consent of the native to participate in the colonizer's power play is an important point often missed by Saidian examinations of colonialism.

So the key to the problem lies in analyzing "the real complexities in the lives of the colonizer and the colonized" (9). It makes sense to look at Memmi's thesis that the impact of colonialism was equally devastating for both the colonizer and the colonized: "The colonial situation manufactures the colonialists, just as it manufactures the colonized" (100). Interestingly, Memmi is unhappy with both marxist and psychoanalytic analysis of historical conflicts. For both seek to cover "all experience, all feeling, all suffering, all the by-ways of human behavior, and call them profit motive or Oedipus complex" (9). The overarching theorizing of 'latent' or 'manifest' 'lack' or 'excess' in postcolonialism is inadequate to explain all forms of conflict and resistance. He says:

Isn't the motivating force of colonization economic? The answer is may be –not certainly. We don't actually know what man is, or just what is essential to him; whether it is money or sex or pride.... Does psychoanalysis win out over Marxism? Does all depend on the individual or on society ? (8-9)

It is this attention to the complex layering of historical and social conflict that enables Memmi to distinguish between the *colonial*, the *colonizer* and the *colonialist*. He argues that the economic aspect is not the only motivating force of the colonial process as "the poorest colonizer thought himself to be—and actually was—superior to the colonized" (8). Memmi points out that the small colonizer, by securing his own limited advantages,

protects the larger interests of the bigger colonizers. In the colonial process, the small colonizer, the defender of the colonial system, is exploited by the bigger colonizers.

If the small colonizer defends the colonial system so vigorously, it is because he benefits from it to some extent. His gullibility lies in the fact that to protect his very limited interests, he protects other infinitely more important ones, of which he is, incidentally, the victim. But, though dupe and victim, he also gets his share. (55)

In this sense, to homogenize all Europeans as the 'privileged' ones is contrary to facts and figures in the process. There are many Europeans who emerge as victims of the colonial process. Memmi argues:

Naturally not all Europeans in the colonies are potentates or possess thousands of acres or run the government. Many of them are victims of the masters of colonization, exploited by these masters in order to protect interests which do not often coincide with their own. In addition, social relationships are almost never balanced. Contrary to everything which we like to think, the small colonizer is actually, in most cases, a supporter of colonialists and an obstinate defender of colonial privileges. (54-55)

The best example of this process is the access to land and property, typically presented in postcolonial theory in terms of appropriation and denial. But once we look at the distribution of assets amongst the white Europeans, the details that emerge challenge homogenizing theories of postcolonial social formation.

A colonial is a European living in a colony, but may do so with or without any special privileges. As Memmi points out, it is the "factual position" that turns a colonial into a colonizer (61). In the home country, he could be a different person, playing a different role. The game in most cases is played by the master missing from the scene, but that does not stop the colonial agent from playing God. In other words, in the colony, he has to legitimize his position as a colonizer. He must have to believe in the legitimacy of colonialism: "Whether he expressly wishes it or not, he is received as a privileged person by the institutions, customs and people" (61). Slowly, the European accepts his role, supports colonialism and agrees to be a colonizer. In Naipaul, there are several instances of this kind of transformation of one kind of man into another. The England novels, for

instance, examine the colonial, whereas the Trinidad novels often show the colonial, the colonialist and the colonizer rolling into one. As Leela Gandhi puts it:

Here, in summary, we have it: the wishful fabrication of England as the uncontaminated place of literature comes unstuck. Instead of delivering the political, cultural and historical amnesia that Naipaul devoutly seeks, England brings on the reverse: an acute consciousness of the damaged postcolonial world he has left behind; a world damaged, furthermore, by empire. (“Made” 133)

In this sense, the transformative power of colonization comes together with its destructive and disabling character.

Colonizer by Birth and Interpellation:

It is this process of internalization and legitimization that turns a European into a colonizer.

This man, perhaps a warm friend and affectionate father, who in his native country (by his social condition, his family environment, his natural friendships) could have been a democrat, will surely be transformed into a conservative, reactionary, or even a colonial fascist. (99)

Memmi points out that for a colonialist, a monument of his home country has to be “sculptured” as the “living reality” of the homeland “appears to have been forgotten” (104). Clearly, in opposition to the unrefined and indecorous colony, the colonialist has to create an image of his motherland which is associated with “only positive values, good climate, harmonious landscape, social discipline and exquisite liberty, beauty, morality and logic” (104). Thus, the “overvaluation of the mother country” is justified through a “simultaneous systematic devaluation of the colonized” (110). This conflict between the living reality and the sculpted country is ignored in the English novel, where the colonial is presented as an enabler or provider who, on closer scrutiny, emerges as a likely oppressor abroad but enabler at home.

At least in this regard, characters in the novels of Jane Austen and Dickens—the Crawfords in *Mansfield Park* and Magwitch in *Great Expectations* are good examples—come in for sharp scrutiny in Said’s *Culture and Imperialism*. The Crawfords owe their present status not to the supposedly hoary tradition of English nobility but to exploitative

use of labour and capital in Antigua. The case is pertinent to Naipaul as it is not some ideological fiction but the materiality of slave labour, and then indentured labour, that creates the wealth of the Crawfords and destabilizes the indigenous and diasporic communities in the Caribbeans.

The impact of colonization at home is even more striking. Memmi says that “just as the colonial situation corrupts the European in the colonies, the colonialist is the seed of corruption in the mother country” (107-108). To legitimize his position as a supporter of exploitative and oppressive system, the colonialist directs his attention to “that aspect of his native country which tolerates his colonialist existence” (106). He “tends toward that which will maintain the current status of his homeland, or rather that which will more positively assure the framework of oppression” (107). Interestingly, the venom of colonial fascism spreads from the colony to the home country of the colonialist, often transforming the horror of colonial oppression in the former into political and financial crimes in the latter. Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* (1868), and many of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories deal with this interchangeability aspect of colonial and domestic crime.

The most important aspect of this process is the colonialist’s dilemma, given that the transformation of the political system of his homeland into a democratic one would promote “equality of rights even in the colonies” and may “risk abandoning its colonial undertakings” (106). Such an alteration would create obstacle in “his way of life and thus become a matter of life or death” (106). The colonialist—the powerful European in the colony—knows that “although he is everything in the colony, [in his home country] he would be nothing; he would go back to being a mediocre man” (104-105). It is interesting to note that in this process, the colonized express their allegiance to the consequence of colonization, not its condition, the “result of colonization and not its cause” (132). They have to accept the role of the oppressed. On the other hand, the colonizer also has to accept his right to be the oppressor. Just as the colonized accepts their role, the colonizer also has to “internalize his superiority and to accept the legitimacy of colonization” (133). This calls for role playing as a necessary ground for colonialism to work. In fact, once the colonial agent returns home there is a role reversal that reminds him of his social position.

The colonizer's homecoming not only erodes his colonial power but results in his mutation into an outcaste, his wealth seen as a challenge to the English social order. The efforts of the ex-colonials to buy social ascendancy are at once ironical and indicative of the turmoil at home after the turmoil abroad (see Tharoor *Era* 12-13). To this extent, the colonizer and the colonized would appear to be locked in a figurative Gordian knot or embrace that needs closer examination both in the colonial set-up and at home.

The Interlocking of the Colonizer and the Colonized:

The internalization and inculcation of inferiority and superiority is a process that leads to an interlocking of the colonizer and the colonized in a destructive/creative process. This is Memmi:

The bond between colonizer and colonized is thus destructive and creative. It destroys and re-creates the two partners of colonization into colonizer and colonized. One is disfigured into an oppressor, a partial, unpatriotic and treacherous being, worrying only about his privileges and their defense; the other, into an oppressed creature, whose development is broken and who compromises by his defeat. Just as the colonizer is tempted to accept his part, the colonized is forced to accept being colonized. (133)

This interlocking is important to Naipaul in that at crucial moments his characters show a resilience that is not in keeping with their early histories. Victim and victor swap roles and emerge almost as specular images of each other. Though such occasions are laced with irony, one cannot miss the point. It is interesting to see that in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon analyzes the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. Fanon draws from the Hegelian argument that the European Self develops through a relation and negotiation with the Other (the native). However, Fanon critiques the mythical, both on the psychoanalytical and philosophical planes, portrait of the black man as pagan, primitive, illiterate. It is therefore important to note the tendencies and motivations behind a "double narcissism" in black/white relationship. In Fanon's words: "The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man. The black man wants to be white. The white man is desperately trying to achieve the rank of man.... The white man is locked in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness" (xiii-xiv). The representation of the black as non-human and evil leads to the internalization of

inferiority that destroys the black man's sense of self and identity. Moreover, the term 'man' begins to mean only 'white man' and the black man is viewed as the 'missing link in the slow evolution from ape to man...' (1). Historically this is the beginning of a revolutionary analysis of white-black relationship that would challenge the Saidian frame of postcolonial victimhood. Instead of seeing black as the erased opposite of white Fanon frames blackness as a mythic and inseparable double of white in the history of slavery and colonialism.

White and Black: Swapping Bodies

The black man is expected to accept and internalize the values of the white world and to reject his black identity. The more the black man "rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become" (2-3). So Fanon further says: "The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man, there is but one destiny. And it is white. A long time ago the black man acknowledged the undeniable superiority of the white man, and all his endeavors aim at achieving a white existence" (202). The idea is to deny the perpetuation of such prejudiced and racialized views that fixes the black man in a fossilized state.

Fanon critiques the construction of one-dimensional binary oppositions (colonizer/colonized, black/white) whose roots exist in ontological and epistemological interpretations. Fanon contends that there is 'impurity' in ontological explanation of the colonized. So the black man "must be black in relation to the white man" (90). In what is perhaps the most radical consequence of this interchange, Fanon sees the black man representing sex, the biological. It is his "sexual power that impresses the white man" (147). In effect, in the colonial encounter, the black man "demoralizes" himself and the white man becomes both "mystifier and mystified" (200).

As for white women, reasoning by induction, they invariably see the black man at the intangible gate leading to the realm of the mystic rites and orgies, bacchanals and hallucinating sexual sensations... There are men...who go to brothels to be whipped by black man; there are passive homosexuals who insist on black partners. (154-155)

The colonizer-colonized relationship enters a dramatic Freudian framework of compensation and sublimation where the white colonizer and the black colonized

exchange roles and positions. It is as if the white man sexually compensates the black man for the social-economic-political exploitation of the entire black race.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha argues that “it is difficult to agree entirely with Fanon that the psychic choice is to ‘turn white or disappear’” (120). There is the more ambivalent, third choice: camouflage, mimicry, black skins/white masks (120). In Bhabha’s analysis, mimicry is sought through western education, religion where the native people are “trained in a disciplined way to imitate the white man and his culture” (86). The Anglicized native, who is trained to behave like a white man, turns into a mimic man as he is never fully and truly white. This mimic man is “the effect of a flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English” (87). Thus, mimicry indicates a position of lack, of instability. It is the position where disruption of colonial authority and the articulation of anti-colonial resistance.

Mutations of Mimicry:

Clearly, the term ‘mimicry’ has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. Bhabha comments:

[T]he discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. The authority of that mode of colonial discourse that I have called mimicry is therefore stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. (*Location* 86)

Colonial discourse encourages disciplined imitation of the white man by the colonized subject. The native has been trained to ‘mimic’ the white man and his culture. Mimicry is sought through the adoption of colonizer’s cultural habits, religion, values. However, Bhabha sees this as a site which discloses ambivalence of colonial discourse. Bhabha comments that the “effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is profound and disturbing” (86). He further explains colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (86). Mimicry produces a subject that reflects a distorted image of the colonial master. Thus, “mimicry is at once resemblance and menace” (86). This confirms the earlier argument regarding the colonizer-master checking out the attractiveness of the

colonized subject. So the need and anxiety of repetition is valid as much for the master as for the servant. So fixed role assignments fail the test. Besides, the identity of the white master is dependent upon relationships with the oppositional other which imply the unstable and fractured nature of the identity of the colonizer. It is relational and oppositional. This also goes on to prove that mimicry is not a process of adoption, uncritical or otherwise, of the colonizer's norms but an ambiguous de-structuring of colonial ideology.

Vagaries of Nationalism:

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1952), Fanon raises the issues of neo-colonialism and draws parallels between the former colonial masters and the native elites in postcolonial nations. Political independence implies the end of power struggles between the white master and the native subject. Ironically, in the politically independent nation, the native bourgeoisie begin to occupy the spaces once occupied by the colonial masters.

Using the example of African nations, Fanon argues that African unity is a "vague formula" that "crumbles into regionalism inside the hollow shell of nationality itself" (128). To the middle classes, nationalization means "the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period" (122). In the postcolonial societies, the power struggles between former colonial masters and the native re-emerges in a different form of oppression. This unjust, exploitative system is not dissimilar to the oppressive colonial system. This has strong implications not just for Africa but for all nations seeking new identities for themselves after independence. For Naipaul this spectre of nationalism is not only dangerous but also destructive. The national middle class, for its own financial benefit "turns its back more and more on the interior and on the real facts of its undeveloped country, and tends to look toward the former mother country and the foreign capitalists" (133).

The educated middle class, no longer accountable to anyone but itself, would monopolize authority. In Fanon's words:

In an underdeveloped country an authentic national middle class ... disappears with its soul set at peace into the shocking ways--shocking because anti-national--of a traditional bourgeoisie, of a bourgeoisie which is stupidly, contemptibly, cynically bourgeois. (120-21)

In the postcolonial situation, only the national middle class will have “nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe” (123). Considering Fanon’s analysis, it can be argued that political independence does not necessarily imply better conditions in the new decolonized nation. Following independence, upsurge of racial tension and tribal conflicts also tend to destabilize the very foundation of newly emergent nations. Naipaul is interested in this divisive and violent aspect of independent nations where resources created by foreigners under colonialism are taken away from them, disaffiliating their history, role, and existence in the one-time colonies. In this sense, it is important to note that Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* looks like a fictional twin of Fanon’s essay on the pitfalls of national consciousness.

Critical Geography:

In his *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an “imagined political community” (6). Nation is imagined as “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). In other words, people within a contiguous geographical territory will in course of time connect with the rest of their fellow members by imagining them. Anderson says that the nation is

...imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (7)

This shows how nations are created around narrations. As Fanon sees it, national unity of postcolonial countries is a myth. Postcolonial theory foregrounds the constructed nature of nation and national identity and critiques it in the light of various cultural and economic differences that exist among the people. The question of the nation assumes greater significance once we examine the issue in the light of globalization, as along with colonialism this movement facilitates and forces the merger of cultures and people. Global mobility creates conditions for multiculturalism and transnationalism that instrument the rejection of ‘pure’ cultural forms and a preference for multiple identities.

Massive increase in migrations, both within and between continents, produces new cultural transactions that facilitate new identities and cultural practices, affecting and using a vast imperial network of displaced or mobile colonial subjects who double up as workers, exiles and émigrés. It is therefore increasingly problematic to tell the original from the mimic man.

Hybridity and Intercultural Mimicry:

Essentialist notions of identity are constructed without taking into account the individual, the particular, the local, the Other. On the other hand, postcolonial and postnational accents on plurality, heterogeneity and indeterminacy stand as a challenge to the unity and fixity of culture. It can be argued that culture is not something unitary, static, and monolithic. All cultures are hybrid, heterogenous, impure. One culture constantly interacts and negotiates with other cultural elements. This is Said, for instance, in *Culture and Imperialism*:

Who in India or Algeria today can confidently separate out the British or French component of the past from present actualities, and who in Britain or France can draw a clear circle around British London or French Paris that would exclude the impact of India and Algeria upon those two imperial cities? (15)

New cultural alignments challenge the notions of a stable, rooted and fixed identity. In the postcolonial world, we are encountered with hybrid and border-crossing identities as a result of new approaches to culture and identity. As Said puts it: “No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind” (*Culture* 407). This is more so in postcolonial situations and societies.

It would be instructive to bring in Stuart Hall here. In his iconic essay titled “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” (2006), Hall argues that cultural identity is a matter of “becoming” not just of “being,” the latter suggesting a certain fixity. Dismissing the diasporic nostalgia of a fertile past, he says the diasporic and colonized people cannot simply return to a past “which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity...” (435). What this essentially means is that one cannot look at identity as something that already “exists, transcending place, time,

history and culture” (435). To this end, postcolonial theory conceives of identity as a process of negotiation, articulation and exchange.

It is in this sense that one sees the unstable and hybrid nature of all identity constructions. As Hall puts it: “Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past... identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (435). As he puts it elsewhere, the stability, unity and homogeneity which the term identity considers “foundational is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure” (“Identity” 18). The transactional nature of self/other binary destabilizes ideas of ‘original’ identity. Identity is best viewed as caught in a constant process of change, fluctuating between differences. This fluctuation positions identity in an indeterminate, *in-between* space.

Intercultures and In-between Spaces:

The presence of multiple subject positions and articulation of cultural differences constantly questions fixed identifications. As Bhabha puts it:

What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular and communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation. (*Location* 1-2)

Bhabha positions identity as a liminal or *in-between* space. It is the indeterminate spaces and in-between subject positions that disrupt and displace established patterns and hegemonic cultural practices. It is important to cite Bhabha’s the definition of hybridity to understand what it means to postcolonial subject positions:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the ‘pure’ and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all

sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. (*Location* 112)

It is important to recognize that hybridity is “not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures” (113). Rather, it is positioned as an antidote to essentialism. It challenges the validity of any essentialist cultural identity. From the interweaving of elements of the colonizer and colonized, a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges. First, liminality implies a constant process of interaction, contestation and appropriation between different states. The liminal space becomes a space of “symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white” (*Location* 4). It questions the validity of polarized identities: colonizer/colonized, white/black.

In other words, the liminal is an interstitial, in-between space, a space of interchange and contestation between different subject positions. This space is marked by a “discursive temporality,” a negotiation of contradictory positions that opens up “hybrid sites and objectives of struggle, and destroy those negative polarities between knowledge and its objects” (25). It is important to note that this interstitial passage between fixed identifications entertains differences without any assumed or imposed hierarchies of identity.

The ‘Third’ Space:

Colonialism creates interculturalities—in effect, a third space—that can be said to challenge the homogenizing force of any historical identity. For Bhabha, the “Third Space constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity and fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricised and read anew” (37). This space may open the way to conceptualise “an *international* culture” based on “the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*” (38). Besides, as Bhabha puts it, by examining hybridity—or the

Third Space for that matter—“we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves” (39).

It is necessary to note that “each [subject] position is always a process of translation and transference of meaning. Each objective is constructed on the trace of that perspective that it puts under erasure; each political object is determined in relation to the other, and displaced in the critical act” (26). Following this contention, it can be said that meaning is produced through interconnection of opposites. This interrelation and intimacy between polarities challenge fixities:

Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of life are linked through an ‘in-between temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history.
(*Location* 13)

It is interesting to note that Loomba criticizes Bhabha for reducing “colonial dynamics to a linguistic interchange” (150), almost the same way as she critiques Said’s so-called universalist position on East-West oppositionality. She contends that in Bhabha’s work there is a “universalizing tendency” and it “theorizes colonial identities and colonial power relations in entirely semiotic or psychoanalytic terms ... not always sensitive to the ways in which subjectivities are shaped by questions of gender, class and context” (150). Loomba also contends that “there are important differences between different kinds of diasporic experiences and exiles” (151). The demand for materialist studies in postcolonialism coincides with the appearance of critics and writers who are keen to include historical evidence while discussing representations.

In this backdrop, Benita Parry’s *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique* (2004), offers ways to get out of representations of colonial encounter in terms of discursive negotiations and transactions. She offers correctives to Bhabha’s emphasis on liminality, and turns the focus away from what she calls the semiotic terrain. She argues that, “rather than conceiving language as signifying reality,” Bhabha’s theoretical mode “allots ontological priority to the semiotic process” (59). In Bhabha’s work, meaning is located in the enunciatory struggle, and “not in the substance of the narrated event” (59). More importantly, however, she seeks and finds historical and materialist tropes

that simultaneously carry the load of ideological analysis and substance. Her emphasis shifts from semiotics to the operative devices of capitalism and colonialism working in tandem.

From Enunciatory Struggle to Material Resistance:

Arguing from a materialist perspective, Parry redirects our attention toward resistance and conflict as social and historical reality, one not to be confined as a privileged study of discursive negotiations. She contends that the projection of colonialism as an epistemological and discursive event separates culture from its material realities. She argues:

Because a negotiatory cultural politics deduced from partial (in both senses of the term) readings of colonialism's texts displaced the record of repressive political processes, the contradictory, volatile but all the same structurally conflictual positions occupied by the heterogeneous categories of colonizer and colonized were muted, and the incommensurable interests and aspirations immanent in colonial situations conjured into mutuality. (4)

Perry argues that the connection of colonialism to Capitalism is not incidental and should form the basis of cultural semiology and postcolonial studies:

At stake is whether the imperial project is historicized within the determining instance of capitalism's global trajectory, or uprooted from its material ground and resituated as a cultural phenomenon whose intelligibility and functioning can be recuperated from tendentious readings of texts. For where 'the politics of the symbolic order' displaces the more demanding politics operating in real-world situations, and a theoretical commitment to rejecting fixed subject-positions as ontologically faulty and dyadic polarities as epistemologically unsound acts to erase structural conflict, there is no space for anti-colonialist discourses which inscribe irreconcilable contest, or for anti-colonialist practices that were manifestly confrontational. (8)

It is now clear that postcolonial studies moved from textual to material 'hybridity' due to the intervention of critics like Aijaz Ahmed, Benita Parry, etc. On the one hand, they argue that the emphasis of 'hybridity' on the interdependence and cross-cultural negotiations between colonizer and colonized negates historical inequality of power

relations. On the other, they plead for the inclusion of verifiable trajectories in any discussion of power and interrelationship that creates the scope for new identities to emerge, and for old identities to mutate.

Leela Gandhi, while articulating the shortcomings the discourse of hybridity, suggest that there is room for tweaking the model to make it more inclusive. Gandhi argues: “Despite postcolonial attempts to foreground the mutual transculturation of colonizer and colonized, celebrations of hybridity generally refer to the destabilizing of colonized culture.... Moreover, within the metropolis, multicultural celebrations of ‘cultural diversity’ conveniently disguise rather more serious economic and political disparities” (*Postcolonial* 136). She looks to postcolonial criticism to deflect attention from the West, which still remains the privileged ‘centre’ of multicultural mixing of migrants. It is interesting to note that Gandhi’s essay on Naipaul titled “Made in England: VS Naipaul and English Fictions” (2001), showcases some of the critical possibilities for this kind of negotiation with historical materialism (see Blake *et al*, 128-42).

Hybrids, Half-Breeds and the Burden of Miscegenation:

The interaction between colonizers (Spanish, Portuguese, English), and the local population is never identical. Racial distinctions are blurred and a mixed social order is produced. Interracial marriages led to racial pollution. As Loomba puts it: “Class was...an important factor in interracial marriages, with poorer *casados* marrying locally and the elite keeping mistresses, but also maintaining their marriages in Portugal. Similar fine-tuning is evident in Latin America where the hybrid population resulting from Spanish and Indian sexual contact encoded a complex hierarchy of colour, class and gender” (Loomba 96-97).

Colonialism is also viewed as an interactive process of transaction and negotiation between polarities. Colonial encounters result in “mutual contagion and subtle intimacies between coloniser and the colonized” (Gandhi, *Postcolonial* 129). The interaction between colonizing and colonized people questions the notion of essential cultural binarism. It also points out subtle inconsistencies in the old division between the European and the native. In the postcolonial discourse, heterogeneity and hybridity question the construction of ‘pure’ identities of ‘colonizer’ and the ‘colonized’. It indicates inter-cultural negotiation, the meeting of disparate cultures in the social spaces.

Hybridity opens up possibility of alternative thought, dissident ideas. Instead of single and unified identity, hybridity prefers multiple identities and cultural locations. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said argues that imperialism has to be described “as pertaining to Indians and Britishers, Algerians and French, Westerners and Africans, Asians, Latin Americans and Australians despite the horrors, the bloodshed and the vengeful bitterness” (xxiv). Loomba argues that any “simple binary opposition between ‘colonizers’ and ‘colonized’ or between races is undercut by the fact that there are enormous cultural and racial differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs between them” (91). The admission of materiality into hybridity would involve the coming into being of creoles, mulattoes and other interracial people. Once we look at the world of intercultural negotiations, we see how marriages between men and women from different communities transform lives and create new lives. There are children who carry a new sense of self, initially seen as inadequate or incomplete. There are parents who find themselves looking at ‘strangers’ at home. Willie [Somerset] Chandran in Naipaul’s *Half a Life* and *Magic Seeds* foregrounds how new identities emerge from unlikely marriages, relationships, businesses, etc.

Diaspora, Dislocation and New Cartographies:

The complex webbing of the colonizer and the colonized binary is further borne out by mobility, migration and diasporic shifts of vast section of people across the globe. Diasporic populations perpetuate binaries through constant circulation over a period of time. Binaries, however, help societies homogenize diverse groups and elide differences, inconsistencies and contradictions. In the process binaries assume a trans-historical status. In the words of Avtar Brah:

Binaries can all too readily be assumed to represent ahistorical, universal constructs. This may help to conceal the workings of historically specific socioeconomic, political and cultural circumstances that mark the terrain on which a given binary comes to assume its particular significance. That is, what are actually the effects of institutions, discourses and practices may come to be represented as immutable, trans-historical divisions. As a consequence, a binary that should properly be an object of deconstruction may gain acceptance as an unproblematic given. (*Cartographies* 181).

In and across migrant communities, the mutant identities of ethnic groups pushes them into new social cartographies. For example, Indians in colonial Port of Spain or Cape Town were seen as ‘Indians’ or ‘coolies’. In this process, when seen from outside, their identities as members of caste or religious groups—Hindus, Muslims, Brahmins, Bhumihars, Reddys, etc—was not only undermined but eventually erased. Within the group, Indians coming from south of the Vindhyas were called madrasis, and all Hindi-speaking migrants of lower caste groups were called Biharis, thus eliding the micro-level markers. As communities get older, their caste-, community- and language affiliations mutate, making them members of new cultural, linguistic and social cartographies.

Exiles and Émigrés:

Diasporic and exilic conditions deal with the loss of home at material and imaginary levels. Diasporic writing deals with the idea of an original homeland as now lost due to migration. The original home remains only as an idea. It becomes a mythic place of desire. It is more imagined than real. It is a place of no return. In a large number of diasporic writing, ‘home’ is less a reality than an idea. Such writings demonstrate the nostalgia and longing for the mythic and distant homeland. They focus on spatial location, moving between the two polarities: ‘exile’ and ‘homeland’, fluctuating/interrogating reality and fantasy, fact and fiction. On the other hand, the diasporic people also constantly try to create a sense of belonging in the alien land.

It is important to note that diasporic communities deal not with one single home or a nostalgically exclusive location, but with multiplicity of ‘homes’. In effect, diasporic and colonial movements create dilemmas of oppression and opportunity in the wake of loss and alienation. The loss of identity gradually morphs into shifts in identity. Home therefore changes its line of reference. In the words of Robin Cohen:

‘home’ became more and more generously interpreted to mean the place of origin, or the place of settlement, or a local, national or transnational place, or an imagined virtual community...or a matrix of known experiences and intimate social relations... (*Global Diasporas*, 10)

The power of the diasporic imagination is not be seen only in terms of nostalgia and loss. It is true that diasporic communities live in one country but acknowledge some cultural and racial link with their ‘old country’. It is important to note that as only the first

generation diasporas have direct experience of 'past migration'; the sense of alienation they encounter is more intense than their inheritors. The later generations of diasporas *may* not feel the same emotional and spiritual attachment with the homeland of their ancestors. Therefore it makes sense to recognize 'diasporic identities,' and 'migrant identities' as part of 'contesting identities'. In *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (2005), Brah argues that all diasporic communities are "differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces, even as they are implicated in the construction of a common 'we'" (180-1). For, the construction of the common 'we' is 'political' meant to give power to a resistance group only if its members are ready to ignore micro-level differences that may be important elsewhere. Differences of race, gender, religion make diasporic spaces hybrid, shifting and contested. Brah, therefore, develops the notion of 'diaspora space' as a convergence of borders where diversity of subject positions is explored and contested.

Diaspora space is the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes. It is where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed; where the permitted and the prohibited perpetually interrogate; and where the accepted and the transgressive imperceptibly mingle even while these syncretic forms may be disclaimed in the name of purity and tradition. (205)

In other words, instead of looking at the diasporic space as disabling, one could see it as enabling and transforming. As Hall puts it:

The diaspora experience... is defined, not by essence and purity but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (438)

It is clear that identities and spaces vacated and created by colonialism and diasporic movements are neither static nor uniform. Rather, they are mutant and transformative. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* is one of the more famous illustrations of this drama of transformation.

Imaginary Homelands, Imagined Losses:

The idea of 'home' and belonging is integral to the diasporic condition. The uprooting, the loss of home has a disintegrating effect on the mind and spirit. Home stands for security, shelter and comfort. Home is not simply a material reality. It is one's identity – national, cultural, spiritual. The concept of 'home' encompasses one's joys and miseries, all the sights, smells and sounds that envelop one's childhood and form part of one's consciousness. It is "the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust... all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations" (Brah 188-9). That being so, the settlers and their following generations try to recreate this sense of home in the new location.

On the one hand, there is the desire for home, and, on the other hand, there is the anguish of exile. To come out of their psychic chaos and sense of dispossession brought out by the loss of ancestral landscapes, diasporas construct imaginary homelands. In his *Imaginary Homelands*, Salman Rushdie reflects on his position as a writer in exile and comments on that sense of loss that creates 'profound uncertainties':

[O]ur physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities and villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (10)

In the words of Avtar Brah "home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is "a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of "origin" (188). Diasporic migrants may express a desire to go back to their homelands. But they can never be at home again in the homelands they dream of. In this fast changing world, they cannot regain their homeland in an unchanging state. And, were they to return to their homelands, they would discover themselves as aliens in their former homelands. This aspect of diasporic experience is the primary thrust of Naipaul's India trilogy, but novels like *Finding the Centre* recontextualize this in a slightly modified form.

A Lyrical Space:

The link between diasporic populations and the original homeland is usually marked with ambivalence, loss and anxieties. On the one hand, there is the loss of a sense of

belonging; and on the other hand, there are constant attempts to create a sense of belonging in the alien land. Diasporic writings do not always deal with 'home' as a nostalgically exclusive location. Such writings are marked by notable shift of focus from the material reality of a lost homeland to the loss of a sense of belonging, where, home exists only as an 'idea' and homeland becomes a land of imagination. Thus, the notion of diaspora represents a constructed nature of homeland that questions notions of fixity and originality that is traditionally assigned to the word 'home'. As Cohen puts it, in the discourse of diaspora, home is transformed into "an essentially placeless, though admittedly lyrical, space" (*Global* 9). Such dealings with space move between the 'old' country and the new alien territory, familiar and the strange, real and the imaginary. Interestingly, one of Naipaul's England novels, *Mr Stone and the Knight's Companion*, offers a critique of this lyrical space called home. So home also is subject to mutations and revisions, depending on who is looking at and for home, and at what point of his or her life. Age and infirmity change the entire lyricism attached to the idea of home and homelands.

From Cultural Dislocation to Contact Zones:

Leela Gandhi looks at the situation from the perspective of cultural dislocation: "Diasporic thought finds its apotheosis in the ambivalent, transitory, culturally contaminated and borderline *figure* of the exile, caught in a historical limbo between home and the world" (132). She also points out that the happy conjunction of diasporic thought and the discourse of hybridity assists postcolonialism to look at "mutual transformation of colonizer and the colonized" and also to consider "the reconfiguration and unsettling of western/colonial identity" (132). The unsettling of identities is an indication of cultural dislocation and yet it enables the migrant to introspect on his/her situation. So instead of looking at loss and transition only in terms of disenchantment, one looks at a new form of knowledge.

Similarly, in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), Mary Louise Pratt also points out the 'copresence' and interaction of colonizer and the colonized. She aims "to foreground the interactive improvisational dimension of colonial encounters" in an attempt to invoke "the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures..." (Pratt 7). She uses the term 'transculturation' as "a phenomenon of the contact zone that refers to mutual influences of diverse cultural practices in colonies and metropolises" (6). She notes that 'contact

zones' are "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today" (4). In both cases we get to see how identities are not only threatened but also realigned when people and communities operate in contact zones, getting 'translated' even as they 'translate'.

Literature and Nostalgia:

Aijaj Ahmed offers a critique of the tendency to generalize the vast and complex experiences of exile, diaspora, immigration. Exile is over-romanticised and it becomes a "condition of the soul, unrelated to facts of material life" (86). Representing metaphorically, the exilic condition bears the risk of masking diverse political and social inequalities among the displaced people. Ahmed argues that, for some postcolonial writers, the words exile and diaspora designate "only personal convenience" (85). Ahmed points out that a large and complex phenomenon like immigration cannot be homogenized as "it has had its own contradictions: many have been propelled by need, others motivated by ambition, yet others driven away by persecution" (86). In the hands of some postcolonial intellectuals, the word 'exile' has come to be used "first as a metaphor and then as a fully appropriated descriptive label for the existential condition of the immigrant as such" (86). Following Ahmed's argument, one can ask whether the 'privileged' exilic space addressed by some postcolonial diasporic writers can accommodate fully the diverse material realities and vast experiences of pain and dispossession inscribed in exile and diaspora.

Construction of Space as a Socially Symbolic Act:

All human subjects oscillate between various spaces of belonging. Space may be real as well as imagined. In *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989), Edward Soja points out the distinction between "space as a contextual given, and socially based spatiality" (79). He shows a distinction between physical space and the socially produced space. He shows the possibility of a 'socio-spatial dialectic' when the essential physical space is "conceptually incorporated into the materialist analysis of history and society" (79). Soja contends that the physical space

has been a misleading epistemological foundation upon which to analyse the concrete and subjective meaning of human spatiality. Space in itself may be primordially given, but the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience. (79-80)

Soja develops the notion of spatiality as a social product. It incorporates both “the physical space of material nature and the mental space of cognition and representation” (120). Spatiality - the socially produced space - challenges rigid separation between spaces. Soja also questions the ‘unquestionable autonomy’ of the three spaces – physical, mental, social – as ‘they interrelate and overlap’ (120). Soja further argues:

This social incorporation-transformation sets important limits to the independent theorizations of physical and mental space, especially with regard to their potential applicability to concrete social analysis and interpretation. In their appropriate interpretive contexts, both the material space of physical nature and the ideational space of human nature have to be seen as being socially produced and reproduced. (120)

Elsewhere, in his “Foreword” to *Postcolonial Spaces: The Politics of Space in Contemporary Culture* (2011), Soja comments that postcolonial studies in general and postcolonial spatial studies in particular have continued to be divided into two worlds: “One world thrives on spatial metaphors like mapping, location, cartography and landscape, works primarily with fictional literature..” and the other world “strives for solid materialist exposition of real politics and oppression” (x). Soja further argues that there is overlapping of the two discursive worlds and the cultures they represent; but they also retain their distinctiveness in certain core areas.

Contractual Space(s):

Bhabha’s ‘third space’ is an alternative space that blurs the limitation of boundaries and opens up new possibilities. Bhabha holds that “The fragmentation of identity is often celebrated as a kind of pure anarchic liberalism or voluntarism, but I prefer to see it as a recognition of the importance of the alienation of the self in the construction of forms of solidarity” (“Third Space” 213). On the one hand, the fragmentation of identity is influenced by manifold considerations including race, class, generation, geographical locale etc. Promoting the priority of the ideological may run the risk masking social and

material practices. It is the ‘temporality of negotiation’ that challenges essentialist opposition between the ideological and the material. But, it does not lead to the creation of any “heterogenous political object” (Bhabha, *Location* 26). The temporal, contractual space intervenes in polarities and challenges essentialist notion of identity. It is not the promise of resolution of conflicts and tensions among cultures, but it is the intervention, ‘discursive temporality’, and negotiation of contradictory subject positions that characterize the space. This space is marked by a temporality of transaction between binary opposites. Both ideological positions and the material reality situate postcolonial subjects in the contractual space. This intimacy of polarities has to be viewed not as a ‘political’ defence, but an existence.

It would be appropriate to end the chapter with a reference to the five ‘scapes’ proposed by Appadurai for exploring disjunctures. The key, he says, is to look at the relationship among five “dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed (a) ethnoscapas; (b) mediascapas; (c) technoscapas; (d) financescapas; and (e) ideoscapas” (see *Modernity* 33). As Appadurai says:

The suffix -scape allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes! shapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing. These terms with the common suffix -scape also indicate that these are not objectively relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political, or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods, and families. (33)

The coming together of people and ethnic groups from different parts of the globe is enabled in today’s world by international capital. In the nineteenth- and the twentieth centuries colonialism created conditions for such movements and possibilities. The key here looking at possibilities of perpetual renewal and mutation where the past is continually redefined by the present. Hence

the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations, in part from their own sense of what these

landscapes offer. These landscapes thus are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict Anderson) I would like to call imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe. (33-34)

The world we live in today is one of global transformation, a landscape brought about by inter- or multinational capital, which, in turn, is a subtle reminder of colonial capital. In this world, a recurring feature is the self-conscious adoption and disavowal “imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities)” whereby people are “able to contest and sometimes even subvert the imagined worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surround them” (34). The emergence of contested and contractual spaces is not something unusual or unexpected, but a result of mutation. Naipaul’s work forays into the creation and interrogation of such spaces.