

AFRICOLOGICAL RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISES
IN POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO
THE TEMPLE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE BOARD

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
ABU NOMAN
MAY 2018

EXAMINING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

DR. MOLEFI KETE ASANTE, MAJOR ADVISOR, AFRICOLOGY & AFRICAN
AMERICAN STUDIES

DR. AMA MAZAMA, DEFENSE CHAIR, AFRICOLOGY & AFRICAN AMERICAN
STUDIES

DR. NILGUN ANADOLU-OKUR, AFRICOLOGY & AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

DR. C. AMARI JOHNSON, AFRICOLOGY & AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

DR. BENJAMIN TALTON, EXTERNAL EXAMINER, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ABSTRACT

“Africological Reconceptualization of the Epistemological Crises in Postcolonial Studies” aims at investigating the epistemological problems and theoretical inconsistencies in contemporary post-colonial studies. Capitalizing the Afrocentric theories of location, agency, and identity developed by Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama, this research takes Afrocentricity beyond the Africological analysis of African phenomenon and demonstrates its applicability in resolving issues that concern human liberation irrespective of race, class, gender, and nationality. To do so, this project juxtaposes the theories of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak with the Afrocentric theories of Molefi Asante and Ama Mazama, and demonstrates that the application of Afrocentric methods can help answering severe allegations against postcolonialism raised by a number of critics from within the school itself. Issues concerning spatial and temporal location of the term post-colonial, commodity status of post-colonialism, and crises in the post-colonial pedagogy can be addressed from an Afrocentric perspective based on a new historiography. To support the proposed arguments, the paper provides an Afrocentric analysis of some postcolonial works and shows how the very radical stance of postcoloniality has been neutralized by the Western academy. Simultaneously, the research also shows, despite being ridiculously disparaged as essentialist and racist, Afrocentricity is fundamentally radical and quintessentially emancipatory in its relentless fight against misrepresentation, pseudoscience, and injustice in the name of objective scholarship perpetrated by Eurocentric intellectuals—particularly from Asia and Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am profoundly indebted to my mentor and advisor Professor Dr. Molefi Kete Asante for opening new avenues of critical theory for us to navigate the academic world dominated by hegemonic European discourses. I keep bursting with pride, simply thinking that Dr. Asante continues to remain my teacher, one who exemplarily combines his staggeringly wide-ranging scholarship with his amazing eloquence, one who both influences and inspires. I am endlessly grateful to you for what you have done for me. Anyone who gets Dr. Asante as her or his teacher is undoubtedly fortunate, to say the least.

I would like to thank my esteemed committee members Dr. Ama Mazama, Dr. Nilgun Anadolu-Okur, Dr. C. Amari Johnson, and Dr. Benjamin Talton for the immense support and guidance in the process of writing this dissertation. I am really thankful to Professor Dr. Abu Abarry and Professor Dr. Sonja Peterson-Lewis for their contributions to my project. I feel lucky for the guidance and support I got from Dr. Kimani Nehusi and Dr. Iyelli Ichile in shaping my paper.

I am deeply grateful to Matthew Simmons, Christopher Roberts, Dr. Drew Brown, Dr. Aaron Smith and to Dr. Jennifer Williams, Dr. Doñela C. Wright, Dr. Maria Ifetayo Flannery, Mikana Scott, and Alice Nicholas for all the things you have done for me in way more ways than you actually know. I would also like to thank the entire African American Studies family here at Temple, especially Ms. Tammey Abner, for being so supportive.

My wife Nazla Fatmi and I are infinitely indebted and grateful to Ms. Ana Yenenga Asante for being by our side when we needed you the most. Because of you, we never felt alone and forsaken.

My words wouldn't be enough in expressing my gratitude to my parents and in-laws for the constant support and encouragement. I really cannot express my gratitude for the immense love and support I got from my cousin Mamun Ur Rashid and my sister-in-law Ms.Taniya Nabi, and my friend Samiul Islam.

Finally, this work would not have been possible without the unconditional love and support of my beloved wife Nazla Fatmi: I am because you and Ayaan are!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM.....	9
RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH.....	21
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	24
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	26
METHODOLOGY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.....	39
IMPLICATION OF STUDY.....	41
CHAPTER 2: MOLEFI ASANTE AND EDWARD SAID: AFROCENTRIC RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE "ORIENTAL SUBJECT".....	43
CHAPTER 3: HOMI BHABHA AND AMA MAZAMA: AFROCENTRIC ANALYSIS OF HYBRIDITY.....	63
CHAPTER 4: GAYATRI SPIVAK: AFROCENTRIC RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE SUBALTERN.....	88
CHAPTER 5: "DIVIDED TO THE VEIN?": TWO FACES OF POSTCOLONIALISM IN NAIPAUL, WALCOTT, AND NGUGI.....	97
CHAPTER 6: AFRICOLOGICAL RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE POSTCOLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISES.....	115
WORKS CITED.....	131

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

There are no post-modern gray lines here; you either stand with the oppressed and against the oppressor, or you stand with the oppressor against liberation.

Molefi Kete Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 2007

“I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?
I who have cursed
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?”

Derek Walcott “A Far Cry from Africa,” 1986

But I, too, have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose.

Salman Rushdie, *East, West*, 1994

This seemingly impossible task of choosing one’s identity, as it is poetically dramatized by Walcott and Rushdie, traces its roots in the Du Boisean “double-consciousness”,¹ a term readily used by academic scholars both from the West and the East, to theorize the cultural disorientations of people from Asia and Africa. Numerous literary works by Asian and African writers as well as thousands of journal entries on them are now collectively known as “Postcolonial Studies²” which, in Ann duCille’s³ words, has been embraced by the Western academia as a “discourse” whereas the Africological study of this cultural dislocation using Afrocentricity⁴ as the theoretical framework has been “academically disparaged” as a “Dat Course”. duCille’s statement is absolutely right when we see the institutionalization of

¹ See JanMohamed 19-39.

² On the validity of the term “postcolonial” and what it signifies, see Shohat 99; McClintock 86; Ponzanesi 3-4; Lee 89-117; Viswanathan 57-58.

³ See Ann duCille 30.

⁴ See Asante 2007a

postcolonial studies as an wing of English studies and the celebration of controversial concepts like of hybridity, ambiguity, mimicry, appropriation and so on. Ann duCille, like many other postcolonial enthusiasts, celebrates the success of postcolonialism without further investigating the politics behind Western academia's acceptance of this discourse that was initially regarded as radical because of its emancipatory thrusts.

English as a discipline in the Indian subcontinent came into existence long before it did in the United Kingdom, and its mission was to manufacture bureaucrats in perpetuating the colonial regime through the cultural transformations of the colonized people. This mission was a part of the British education policy in India proposed by Thomas Babington Macaulay in his "Minutes on Indian Education"⁵. Macaulay's plan was to "form . . . a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Ashcroft 430). The major factor contributing to the development of education systems and policies in the colonized countries had been the imposition of the colonizers' language, here English, through education system. The intention of that imposition was not only to establish English as a dominant medium of discourse but also to inject and perpetuate hegemonic ideologies and Western system of values, reducing indigenous people and culture into the OTHER—inferior, exotic, uncultured. Gauri Vishwanathan in her groundbreaking study of the institution and ideology of English studies in India under British Raj—*Masks of Conquest*—rightly notes that long before English literature as an academic subject was institutionalized in England, English as the study of literature and the study of culture "appeared as a subject in the curriculum of the colonies" as early as the 1820s (3). Manipulating the education system of the colonized people through systematic inclusion of European authors and texts had been the most effective

⁵ See Macaulay 237-251.

strategy to strengthen and maintain colonial control: deployment of the military works best for invasion, and it does not guarantee colonialism's complete success. The application of external force thus brings temporary success in controlling the mass: rebellion and resistance are the immediate effects of such efforts. But, if a change in temperament and attitude, a transformation in the subject's world-view and his sense of agency comes from within the subject himself in favor of his oppressor, nothing more is needed to perpetuate the domination. He and his successors will then willingly conscript themselves as the obliged followers of the dominant oppressors⁶ values as his own, because they are taught and made to believe these values as the only legitimate ones that could enrich them. This is the core of British colonial policy that Macaulay⁷ proposed to the British Parliament long time ago, and this is what the colonial administrators in India successfully implemented through the changes in the education system. Indians were made to discard their pride in their age-old culture and rich heritage that dates back to antiquity, and develop a gradual love for the "modern" European ones: Michael Madhusudan Dutt⁸ is the exemplary representative of the Indians who rejected their ties to India only to embrace it later.

However, very few could relocate themselves as Michael Madhusudan Dutt did. Of course, colonialism's ultimate purpose had been economic exploitation through the manipulation of the colonized peoples' resources, but only political control was not adequate enough to ensure that. Thus, cultural domination became inevitable in assisting the colonizers in their pursuits: hence, the civilizing missions in the form of dispersing enlightenment,

⁶ See Mazama 4.

⁷ See Macaulay 237-251.

⁸ A Bengali poet who changed his name to Michael for his uncompromising love for European culture, and started writing in English.

humanism, and ethics—which are associated with education, especially literature—strategically maneuvered the education system and instilled Western system of values by replacing the Indian ones.

No doubt that the objective of the colonial education system was to Europeanize the non-Europeans by inculcating Eurocentric values in them: the uncritical and spontaneous devouring of Romantic poets strolling in the Lake District and singing the beauty of the daffodils not only furthers the native's gap with his own culture but also dislocates him from the very soil that nourishes his creative potentials. In the process, he suffers from a kind artificial sensibility that has nothing to do with creativity: as the Caribbean poet Roger Mais states, OUR minds “stopped growing with school syllabus”—reading Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton among other stuff⁹—leaving us “stagnant” or mimic, which has hampered the growth of the creation of vibrant and immediate local literature. The effects of such education are humorously reflected by the Caribbean poet The Mighty Sparrow (Slinger Francisco) in his pidgin-poem “Dan is the Man”:

According to the education you get when you small
You'll grow up with true ambition and respect from one and all
But in days in school they teach me like a fool
The things they teach me I should be a block-headed mule.

(Donnell 161)

Ironically, from the contexts of the ex-colonies the task of the English departments is nothing but to produce “block-headed mule.” Despite the inclusion of some “native” writers

⁹ This is not to say that these writers are not worth reading, but to raise the question whether they should be prioritized over writers from the reader's own language and culture.

in the syllabus first under the title “Commonwealth Literature” and then “Third World Literature in English,” the departments failed to exorcise them from the ghosts of Shakespeare, Forster, or Conrad¹⁰. As has been asked by the “imperial” poet Rudyard Kipling, the department humbly shouldered “The White Man’s Burden” to educate and civilize the “sullen peoples,/ Half-devil and half-child” through the “canonized” texts. As a former student and current faculty, it was and is still now, truly “more than a cruel joke” for me to withstand the tortures of the “canonized” ghosts!

Amidst the daily Shakespearean tragedies and Conradian horrors, post-colonial literature truly represents a fresh change, a renewed hope, and a sense of identity for Asian and African students. Reading writers like N’gugi Wa Thiong’o, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri, Derek Walcott, Salman Rushdie, and many others was celebratory: doing Post-colonial literature was thus a way out of the colonial bondage that the English department has been perpetuating since its inception during the old colonial times. Unfortunately, the recipes to make the authors’ messages palatable to the students are mostly borrowed from Europe and America, and this is where Afrocentric intervention becomes an inevitable theoretical alternative.

However, the concept of “Afrocentricity” is referred to as a side-note in discussion on the formation of counter-discourse: reference to “Afrocentricity” is made in the course of explaining ethnocentrism and Eurocentrism. Afrocentricity never goes beyond the typical essentialist flavor Eurocentric scholars ascribe it to: its potential in effectively addressing most

¹⁰ Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s 1972 essay “On the Abolition of the English Department” brilliantly captures this neocolonial status of English as a discipline.

of the pressing postcolonial issues like identity, location, agency, and history is never discussed. We understood Afrocentricity just as the opposite of Eurocentrism.

“From what base did the African peoples look at the world? Eurocentrism or Afrocentrism?” (*Moving the Center* 4) was the question that challenged and changed my understanding of the concepts of agency and location. Being so much enamored with the tenacity of Okonkwo’s resistance against the colonial intruders in Igboland (*Things Fall Apart* 1959) or genuinely shocked by the horrors that came under the guise of independence to the people of Ilmorog (*Petals of Blood*), we discovered with awe what writers from our own territory have got to say: the first shock came with Naipaul who refers to the people of Port of Spain as “monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be better than the other, Indians and Negroes appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise each other” (*The Middle Passage* 84). Our ideas on post-colonial identity and agency arrived at a critical venture when we encountered Salman Rushdie preaching “the consequences of embracing those [Western] ideas and practices and turning away from [the Indian] ones that came with us” (“The Indian Writer in England” 81) and justifying his so-called double-consciousness through his confession that “we are Muslims who eat pork [and that] our identity is at once plural and partial (*Imaginary Homelands* 15). The initial hope that post-colonialism brought with the African writers, ends up in utter frustration with Rushdie who, “Having been borne across the world, [he is now] a translated man [and believes that, though] something always gets lost in translation ... something can also be gained (*Imaginary Homeland* 17). Hope turns into utter frustration when we discover in Edward Said the “oriental subject” forever silenced and in Gayatri Spivak “the subaltern” eternally speechless. Frustration finds a rather comic relief in Homi Bhabha who prescribes that our only way to redefine our identity

is to mimic our oppressor and hybridize ourselves. The question arises, who do these Indian post-colonial writers speak for? From what stand-point? To whom? Why?

I found answers to these questions in the Afrocentric school of thought. The Afrocentric propositions, namely a new historiography, an authentic subject position with a clear sense of location, and a bold rejection of anything biased or false said by others that concerns the subject, made me rethink the postcolonial concepts of mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity. The Afrocentric location theory does not only expose the bankruptcy of post-colonialism, but also the ideological corruptions of its theorists primarily based in the Western universities. African American Studies, because of its solidified radical stance against oppression, both symbolic and material, does not enjoy the benefits of institutionalization which postcolonialism receives from the English departments. Postcolonialism's reactionary and revisionist projects are already reduced to typical textual interpretations: subversive post-colonialism has been contained by the West.

In the following chapters I will discuss the problems of post-colonialism in terms of its epistemological discrepancies and theoretical inconsistencies. Chapter 1 will trace the emergence of postcolonialism in Edward Said's much acclaimed book *Orientalism* and compare Said's "orientalism project" with Molefi Kete Asante's "Afrocentricity" to demonstrate that "orientalism," despite its objective of representing the "oriental subjects," reproduces the same pattern of misrepresentations it questions. Chapter 2 will focus on the development of postcolonialism from a reactionary position to a cultural theory influenced by French postmodernism in the hands of Homi Bhabha, and my objective here will be to compare Bhabha's hybridity with the Afrocentric Locational Theory and demonstrate that postcolonial approach to identity formation disregards the agency of the African people as it aspires to see

the so-called identity crises from a European perspective. Chapter 3 will be aimed at critically exploring Gayatri Spivak's voiceless subaltern, and through an Afrocentric analysis of Queen Nanny of the Jamaican maroons it will show that the subaltern does speak through actions, if not through words. Chapter 4 will compare the two faces of postcolonialism manifested in the works by V.S. Naipaul and N'gugi wa Thiong'o and demonstrate that the controversial and condescending views on African and Asian people by writers like Naipaul is often considered as true postcolonialism. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide an Africological reconceptualization of the postcolonial epistemological crises that I will point out in the preceding chapters, and the objective here will be to solidify my position that postcolonialism as a school of thought is incapable of addressing the problems related to identity and agency of the formerly colonized African and Asian people as well as to show with evidence that the Afrocentric approach grounded in Africology is more suitable both as an academic framework and a philosophy for resisting against oppression as well as to reconstructing and reasserting one's identity.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There is nothing really wrong about the European canon; it is what it is, the European canon. I think that often African and to a lesser degree Asian scholars are asking Europeans to do what others have not done. We privilege Europe and European people as the ones who should set the canon, but just allow us inside with one or two books of our own.¹¹

--Molefi Asante

Thinking of African and Asian people — our cultures and worldviews, and our resistance to European imperialism, and our quest for remapping our contributions to mankind — under the term “Postcolonialism” is highly problematic as it first places European colonialism as the ultimate marker of our history and then homogenizes our unique historical experiences as if Nigerians from Africa, Indians from Asia, and Aborigines from Australia shared the same experiences under colonialism. Using postcolonial theories in interpreting the complex dynamics of power relations and cultural representations in seminal texts is misleading, because key figures in this school of thought often contradict the very philosophy they advocate. Postcolonialism ushered as a body of creative works and critical insights into issues related to identity, agency, and cultural representations of nations or groups of people who have been misrepresented by European imperialism. The ultimate objective of this movement was, as Simon During claims, “to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images.”¹² One vital difference between works produced before and after formal decolonization is that the former primarily focused on resistance against colonial exploitations whereas the latter prioritized cultural representations and dilemmas of life in a neocolonial world. In most cases, literature from the colonial period is the embodiment of

¹¹See Asante, “Why Afrocentricity?” *The New York Times*, May 7, 2015.

¹² See During 11.

resistance against the colonial political oppression: cultural representation of the colonized people often was not the sole purpose of the writers. Edward Said's *Orientalism*, although published in 1978, represents this aspect. Later on, writers from Asia and Africa took a serious vow in challenging the colonial myths in the representations of the colonized people and their cultures: literature from this period incorporates the notions of challenge with that of resistance. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977) and *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) are examples of such writings. However, from this understanding of the development of literature by the writers from the ex/colonies, it could be said that post-colonialism is primarily concerned with resistance against colonial oppression, and then with challenging and changing the misrepresentations of the colonized by the colonizers, and finally with relocating and reconstructing an identity that has been lost in the layers of colonial lies.

In the process of doing so, one could safely argue that the postcolonial writers tend to empathize with the (ex-)colonized people they represent. Yes, they do, and they do it with a clear understanding of the roles they play in healing the wounds inflicted by colonization. Literature for them is not a luxury as it was for those in Europe who advocated the philosophy of "Art for Art's Sake;" for them art is primarily for the purpose of life. Post-colonial writers, thus, hardly find anything artistic in the grotesque portrayal of the African landscape in the Conradian prose or the baseless philosophical assertions of Hume and Hegel. European writers have been overtly racist while writing about the non-European worlds, but post-colonial writers, though they can answer that racism with equal, if not more, loathing, often do not take the route that their European counterparts did: their intention is not to answer racism with counter-racism. As true writers with a clear agenda of emancipation of the oppressed people, post-colonialists shoulder the responsibility of relocating the pre-colonial pasts, pasts in which

our ancestors operated with stable and ordered social structures, with rich and glorious cultures, with world-views philosophically grounded to their roots. Post-colonial writers do not hesitate to describe the hideous crimes that European colonizers did in destroying these societies with rich cultures and civilizations. Post-colonial writers find it as their sacred duty in voicing the traumas that the ex/colonized people have to undergo, the predicament that they are to face living in a post-colonial world.

Unfortunately, there are post-colonial writers who are ashamed of their past, writers who are the products of Macaulay's civilizing mission. There are writers who are hailed as authentic voice from the ex-colonies by the West: authentic because they propagate anything endorsed by the West. The postcolonial commitment in Ngugi and in Naipaul is the not the same, as it is not the same in Bhabha and Lemming. Despite their different socio-cultural backgrounds and unique historical consciousness, authors from the ex-colonies are hailed as "Post-colonial," only because at one time or another they were the victims of European colonization. The term, in fact, "closes as many epistemological possibilities as it opens," because the moment one is named post-colonial, one's cultural and racial identity is lost: s/he is an ex-colonized (Ashcroft 250). Thus, identifying people of any particular geo-political locations with distinctive culture and history as "post-colonial" or "third world" is basically nothing but the continuation of the old colonial strategy of robbing those people of their very identity: cultural, racial, and historical. Obviously post-colonialism avoids anything that came before the colonial period by terming them as "pre-colonial" and focuses its attention only in the works in which there are evidence of confrontations between the colonizer and the colonized. Theorizing with such terms is hopeless; in McClintock's words "ultimately it becomes a strategy for avoiding the intricacies of political and economic realities that defy

simple assertions based on a reified three worlds system. The term confers on colonialism the prestige of history proper; colonialism is the determining marker of history. Other cultures share only a chronological, prepositional relation to a Euro-centered epoch that is over (post-), or not yet begun (pre-). In other words, the world's multitudinous cultures are marked, not positively by what distinguishes them, but by a subordinate, retrospective relation to linear, European time” (McClintock 86). Automatically the question arises: Is post-colonialism capable of containing and adequately explaining the diverse and heterogeneous “Third World” people who had been colonized by different colonizers at different times? These are some of the many complex issues that post-colonial theorists seem not to properly address. In her brilliant study on the paradoxes of post-colonialism, Sandra Ponzanesi states:

The serious yet productive dispute surrounding the historical ground, the theoretical breadth, and the cultural implications of post-colonialism’s hyphenated formula has not generated any precise theory or method. Postcolonialism implies the reversion of the role of the postcolonial from an object that is scrutinized and spoken for into a subjective role in which the postcolonial represents him/herself and speaks back. However, there is no consensus as to when this postcolonial consciousness historically started, before or after independence, or whether this is an accurate term to describe the condition of so many Third World people who did not share the same colonizer. ... Due to its heterogeneous and defused character, Post-colonialism is therefore not devoid of internal contradictions. (*Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture* 3-4)

Despite the terminological problems and theoretical inconsistencies as discussed above, post-colonialism is said to have “a common denominator: the critical rereading of texts in the Western canon that have been thought of as embodying universal and trans-historical values” (Lee 92). As Lee continues, the post-colonial tendency of re-reading the Western canon lies in its understanding of colonialism not only as a politico-economic enterprise of the West. Lee

echoes Michel Foucault in describing colonialism as a discourse combining with every branches of Western knowledge aimed at representing the non-Western world as uncivilized, and justifying its civilizing mission. This particular trend of describing the East in terms of fixed binaries with the West always in the superior position is what we encounter in Edward Said's "orientalism" project. Molefi Asante in his *Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity and Africology* brilliantly exposes the futility of European critical theories like structuralism and post-structuralism that Said uses in representing Africa and Asia. Said's "orientalist" project has been reconfigured by Homi Bhabha through his post-modernist interpretation of "third-world" migration to the west seen through the Lacanian psychoanalytic and Derridian deconstructionist lenses. Bhabha, through his typical theoretical jargons, locates the postcolonial political crisis in the realm of psychology fashioned with terms like mimicry, ambivalence, liminality, and the third place. As in "'Of Mimicry and Man" Bhabha states:

“. . . colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence" (122).

Bhabha locates the colonized "Other" in a hybrid position: he is neither colonizer nor colonized, but someone in between who aspires to copy¹³ the colonizer to have access to the power which dominates him. Bhabha himself and the colonized subjects he theorizes clearly follow the plan Macaulay¹⁴ set forth in 1835. "The Other" that Edward Said represents as silent and subdued becomes a clown in Bhabha's narrative. Do the colonized Asian and African

¹³ See Mazama 7.

¹⁴ See Macaulay 237-251.

“Others” have any history, did they always submit to colonization without a fight, do they always try to “copy” and be like the colonizers are some of the questions that the postcolonial theories of Bhabha and Said completely evade. In contemporary postcolonial theories, the postcolonial subject is the dispossessed and dislocated other: truncated from his precolonial pasts, he is a conscript of European civilization. In contrast, an Afrocentric reading of the so-called “Other” presents us with a completely different reality, a reality that is rooted in vibrant Kemetic and Nubian civilizations, a reality that inspires the “other” to take constructive measures to reclaim and relocate himself, a reality that empowers him to reassert his identity representative of his ancestral cultural and philosophical worldviews.

Literature as a subtle representation of these worldviews, despite its so-called apolitical and universal appeal, has been directly functional in the colonization process. The task of the post-colonial writers and theorists, according to Lee and many others, is to “investigate how the seemingly apolitical literatures of the West have contributed to the naturalization of colonialist myths or ideologies” (89) However, despite the inherent definitional and terminological problems of post-colonialism, it has been widely accepted by the West and institutionalized as a critical school of thought operating primarily from the English departments. Authors from the ex-colonies are now included in the departments’ curricula, and some are even canonized as best English Novelists. We need to understand the subtle politics behind this inclusion of the “Other” that has once been termed as “savage” and forcibly sent through the civilizing process. Gauri Viswanathan, best known for her exemplary work *Masks of Conquest*, captures this politics in the following lines:

Of course, the easiest way of diluting the radical force of a text is to co-opt it into the mainstream curriculum, and to some extent the steady inclusion of so-called minority

literatures in the mainstream English literature curriculum has reduced their oppositional force. But I see no reason to be negative about the inclusion of multicultural literature if it has forced the field of “English” to rethink its accepted parameters. “English literature” is increasingly being rewritten as “Literature in English,” and the change is a healthy one. It deterritorializes the national implications of English literature, and it refocuses attention on language rather than the nation as the creative principle of literature. I’m wary of having “postcolonial literature” in English departments without defining what postcolonial literature is in the first place. “Literature in English” is a much more satisfactory term for me, at least if such literature is studied across cultures and territorial boundaries. (“Pedagogical Alternatives” 57-58)

In the same line of thought, Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer in “Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament” discuss how post-colonialism indirectly functions in the “growing awareness of the role of academic disciplines in the reproduction of patterns of domination”. The reason behind their statement is that post-colonialism now seems to be working very much like the way English studies did during the colonial period. With the incorporation of highly criticized authors into the British canon and simultaneously endorsing the views of theorists based in the metropolitan universities, post-colonialism has now become a wing of neo-colonialism. Despite its initial ethnocentric declarations of challenging and changing the colonial myths about the alleged inferiority of the colonized people, it is now a platform from which the West sees and talks about the former “Others.”

When did this happen to post-colonialism? The answer is given by Arif Dirlik, who brilliantly explains the very capitalist and market-oriented framework behind post-colonialism in his essay “The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism”—he sarcastically states that post-colonialism began “When Third World intellectuals have

arrived in First World academe” (328). Dirlik’s statement is correct when we consider the long list of post-colonial theorists who are mostly based in the Euro-American universities.

Hence, the location from which post-colonialism operates is not beyond criticism. Being taught as a part of the English department curriculum, post-colonial literature ironically assimilates with the British canon and indirectly enriches the English language. In the first place, post-colonialism deprives the long tradition of resistance manifested in the works in ‘other’ languages the moment it endorses English over them. Asante’s critical interpretation of European domination of African languages¹⁵ as vehicles of history and culture reinforces the importance of language that postcolonialism reserves only for English. Moreover, the allegation that postcolonialism is parochial in its intellectual pursuits is justified, because it does not only make European history its primary site of investigation but also gets itself circumscribed around the British canon. Doing so, postcolonialism has shut the doors of possibilities of incorporating the “Subalterns” and their histories into its paradigm: now it would not be wrong to say that it is nothing but an "academic neocolonialism" that bypasses central public discourses of resistance in the post-colony¹⁶. The inwardness of this academic discourse, then, precisely removes the critical potential that it could have exercised as a public discourse of resistance and representation.

Another fundamental problem of post-colonialism is its incorporation as an (in)significant part of the English department in the academy. In fact, often a single course is designed to accommodate diverse authors from hundreds of countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Australia, and this one course covers wide-ranging issues like class, race,

¹⁵ See Asante, *Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity and Africology* 201.

¹⁶ See Ghosh 4.

gender, nationality, history, culture, and the like. A cursory reading of a particular text as representative of an entire colony without any concrete references to the history and culture of the people under discussion, often motivates students to jump to naïve generalizations. Dangerously, these generalizations are based on the mandatory readings of European history and philosophy. Moreover, teaching key concepts like hybridity, alterity, and mimicry as defined by European scholars and their non-European agents often hinders the students from going beyond the prescribed interpretations of a text or coming up with an alternative reading. This particular pedagogical problem triggered one of the major questions this research aims to explore.

Without resolving these fundamental epistemological problems and theoretical discrepancies, post-colonialism is obsessed with issues—hybridity, alterity, ethnicity, indigeneity, and race—which, according to the theorists of the school are usually to be encountered in a given post-colonial work. However, in the course of its alleged repudiations of Eurocentric representations of the decolonized people in the canonical European literary texts, post-colonialism often becomes the victim to its own allegations when it bypasses the agency and geopolitical locations of its very practitioners. Often both the post-colonial writers’ and theorists’ inadequate knowledge on the colonized people’s history, in some cases their utter disregard to delve into the rich socio-cultural past of the people they write about/for or theorize on, leads post-colonialism to be an extension of Eurocentric hegemony in disguise.

We have to remember that one of the functions of imperialism was to endorse Eurocentrism “with innate qualities of excellence in intelligence, beauty and the right to rule other races. Its reverse effect on the African was to degrade his color and the physical subordination that had been imposed by force came to be associated with the (African's) innate

qualities” (Magubane 33). As Linus Hoskins states, “This goal was achieved through the miseducation of the African and the falsification of his history. A people without a sense of history are ill-equipped to visualize and plan a future because of an unclear and distorted picture of their past” (249). The importance of knowing and understanding one’s history properly is very significant to Linus Hoskins, because he is an Afrocentrist, and as an Afrocentrist he knows how to assert one’s agency in any discussion that concerns him. An Afrocentrist is bold enough to challenge the authorized European history of the non-European world, as we find it the words of the wise Afrocentric historian, John Henrik Clarke:

Civilization did not start in European countries and the rest of the world did not wait in darkness for the Europeans to bring the light ... most of the history books in the last five hundred years have been written to glorify Europeans at the expense of other peoples. ... Most Western historians have not been willing to admit that there is an African history to be written about and that this history predates the emergence of Europe by thousands of years. It is not possible for the world to have waited in darkness for the Europeans to bring the light because, for most of the early history of man, the Europeans themselves were in darkness. When the light of culture came for the first time to the people who would later call themselves Europeans, it came from Africa and Middle Eastern Asia.... It is too often forgotten that, when the Europeans emerged and began to extend themselves into the broader world of Africa and Asia during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they went on to colonize most of mankind. Later, they would colonize world scholarship, mainly to show or imply that Europeans were the only creators of what could be called a civilization. In order to accomplish this, the Europeans had to forget, or pretend to forget, all they previously knew about Africa. (1970, 3-4)

Instead of taking the challenging course that Afrocentric scholars like Clarke and Asante took, post-colonial theorists are happy to know their history as it is written by their colonial masters. This is why these theorists do not have any problem with the term post-colonialism, a term that

defines itself with reference to colonization. As the founder of Afrocentricity, Molefi Kete Asante realized the urgent necessity to reject the European concept of time with signifiers like “Modern,” “Renaissance,” “Enlightenment,” and the like. And he did reject this chronology and developed his own in his widely-read book *History of Africa*.

Now, the post-colonial critics’ uncritical acceptance of European standard of measuring time actually makes them accept the European world-view, a world-view that sees the rest of the world as inferior to them. Being unconsciously indoctrinated to this world-view, most post-colonial theorists suffer from what Bhabha calls ambivalence. From an Afrocentric standpoint, I would like to call this “dislocation,” not ambivalence. Inability of recognizing one’s ancestors and their culture is not a trivial matter: it signifies that the person who fails to do so is either insane or s/he has some ulterior motifs. Of course, there are people who are ashamed of their past, culture, and heritage, and to be accepted by other cultures they often do not hesitate to desecrate their own culture (Ontological Reduction¹⁷). V. S. Naipaul is one of those people who willingly rejects all his ties to his ancestral land as he believes precolonial history of Africa and Asia is replete with barbarism. Why then Naipaul is taught as “one of the best post-colonial” novelists? Definitely because he is said to be great by the West. Europe forms the canon, and to be included in the canon some Asian and African writers shamelessly uphold Eurocentric views on Asian and African people in their texts. Unfortunately, after more than fifty years of decolonization, we are unable to have our own standard of judging who and what is great. Eurocentrism is successful in accomplishing our dislocation: we hardly have any sense of agency. Pointing at the politics of Eurocentrism, Hoskins asserts:

¹⁷ See Mazama 7.

[it] pontificates that Africans must always judge themselves using the European as their standard, model, or norm. It is here that Afrocentricity and the Africa-entered curriculum must be a potent, ubiquitous, countervailing force not only so that African peoples must see themselves through the lens of the dawn of human/world history, but also more importantly, so that they extricate themselves from this vicious, divisive, and deleterious Eurocentric psychological dependency complex. This is precisely why some prominent Eurocentric historians and educators are rebelling against Afrocentricity, the Africa-centered curriculum, and the curriculum of inclusion. Afrocentricity is the plaintiff in an intellectual class action suit filed against Eurocentrism, the Euro-American power structure, the Eurocentric world view and the curriculum of exclusion, just at the "new world order" represents a declaration of war against African peoples. The defendants, Eurocentric historians and educators, stand accused of 500 years of distortion, falsification, and misrepresentation of the historical truth, with the sole purpose to ossify, defend, and perpetuate the Big Lie of European supremacy, invincibility, and originality co-terminous with the Big Lie of African inferiority and nothingness (251).

Post-colonial theorists hardly ever think this way, and this is why they undertake the revisionist projects alone: of course, it is necessary to understand how the West has defiled the East. But, is it more necessary than to establish what we think of us, what our forefathers thought of themselves? This is where post-colonialism can learn from the Afrocentric approach to one's history, culture, and everything that concerns him. The post-colonialists have got to learn much from a single line by Kwame Ture as he warns those who are dislocated: "If you don't know who you are, you would not know what your interests are" (qtd in Hoskins, 1992).

RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

Afrocentricity and postcolonialism as two dominant discourses aim at representing the marginalized and liberating the oppressed from Eurocentric cultural dominance. Despite sharing similar oppositional agendas against white supremacy as it is manifested in the epistemology of Eurocentric knowledge, postcolonialism is praised and institutionalized as a valid discourse of difference whereas Afrocentricity is often attacked and readily rejected on grounds of being essentialist or therapeutic. This research intends to investigate the subtle politics behind the academic celebration of postcolonialism as well as the reasons behind the deep-seated fear and hostility against Afrocentricity.

In fact, it is surprising that postcolonialism enjoys the great support and sustenance from an entity which it aspires to criticize, and invites repeated attacks from those who are its very practitioners. This debatable view of post-colonialism as “a relatively small, Western-style, Western-trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery” (Appia, “Is the Post” 348) is frequently quoted by scholars and critics to highlight the failure of post-colonialism in establishing itself as a valid discourse for human liberation. While discussing the role of postcolonial critics in the western academia, Deepika Bahri shares Appiah’s view but claims in a refined tone that “the post-colonial critic and the text are given the voice and the authority to create a manageable, systematized, and consumable discourse of difference that, precisely through its production rather than despite it, leaves the normative intact” (Bahri 278). She further tells that the “commodity status of post-colonialism” is no longer “a secret” and quotes Spivak in saying “postcolonial academics are engaged not merely in the analysis and teaching of difference but

in its production as well” (279). Like Appiah and Bahri, Arif Dirlik also accuses post-colonialism for its “diversion of attention from contemporary problems of social, political, and cultural domination, and in its obfuscation of its own relationship to what is but a condition of its emergence, that is, to global capitalism” (“The Postcolonial Aura” 331). Most non-western/ex-colonized intellectuals teaching post-colonialism in capitalist Euro-American institutions are often caught up, as Stephen Slemon contends, in “a theatre for naked careerism and professional self-emplacement” (154) and in the process, “the outsider is absorbed within” (Bahri, 281).

This dislocation of the post-colonial intellectuals and commoditization of post-colonial products are, as Anne McClintock opines, originate from the lack of spatial and temporal location of the term “post-colonial.” Her view is shared by Ella Shohat who proposes “to begin an interrogation of the term ‘post-colonial,’ raising questions about its ahistorical and universalizing deployments, and its potentially depoliticizing implications” (99). As the postcolonial critics cited above unanimously agree that the epistemological problems in post-colonial studies often obfuscate its agenda of emancipation and reproduce the pattern of cultural hegemony through the works of many contemporary post-colonial theorists who consciously or unconsciously operate under its neo-colonial and capitalist premises. Despite its ethnocentric declaration of rescuing the past of the ex-colonized people from the grip of Eurocentric misrepresentations, post-colonialism is dwarfed when faced with the hegemonic European history. Theorists from this school often bypass the issues of identity and agency of anyone who talks about the post-colonial world. Their sole objective, as it seems, is to limit their investigation on the fixed pages of the texts under scrutiny: the contexts from which the texts spring forth are often lost in the technical analysis. In this manner, post-colonial

interpretation of a given text does not seem to lead the reader in reaching a concrete conclusion regarding the author's attitude to Eurocentrism, effects of colonization, and European exploitations of Asia and Africa. Moreover, the West selects controversial post-colonial authors and promotes them with different literary prizes only to maintain its misrepresentation of the African and Indian people: those who truly resist European hegemony are often left out of the canon.

However, the critics of post-colonialism cited so far demonstrate the epistemological and pedagogical problems of the discourse. Most of the critics start with the hope of solving these problems using terms and definitions which are inseparable part of the problem itself. This is why all of their efforts end with the detection of the problems alone: there is hardly any solutions. The rationale behind this research is to reinvestigate this theoretical quagmire that postcolonial studies is presently in, and to suggest effective solutions based on Afrocentric reconceptualization of the issues related to identity, agency, and location of the author and the critic.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is aimed at demonstrating the applicability of Afrocentricity as a critical theory in addressing the epistemological and pedagogical discrepancies in postcolonial studies. This research is not aimed at defending Afrocentricity as Afrocentricity does not need any defense: a theoretical approach challenging the so-called universality of Eurocentric knowledge and questioning the fake objectivity of traditional disciplinary research is bound to be disparaged as unscientific, essentialist, and racist. Afrocentricity maintains its radical stance amidst all this academic parochialism and reinforces its core philosophy of liberation through scholarly advancements. Afrocentricity as a critical theory has the potential to address cross-disciplinary issues related to oppression and suggest viable ways of emancipation. To demonstrate the wide applicability of Afrocentricity, this research intends to focus the following broad question: **How does postcolonial theorization rebrand previous patterns of epistemological oppression and pedagogically reproduce the idea of European superiority through the works of Europeanized Asians and Africans?** In the course of answering this question, prominent contemporary postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak will be discussed with reference to pioneer figures like Frantz Fanon, Aime Cesaire, and Amilcar Cabral. The research will trace the development of postcolonialism as radical movement and its subsequent neutralization through its institutionalization in the Western academia. This part of the research will be guided by the following question: **Does postcolonialism—as it is theorized with terms like mimicry, hybridity, and subaltern—inform and influence the student in reading postcolonial texts from a perspective that helps him or her in interpreting his or her postcolonial identity, agency, and historical location?** Canonized postcolonial writers like V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott,

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Chinua Achebe will be analyzed both from Afrocentric and postcolonial perspectives to demonstrate that postcolonialism is incapable of helping a learner to emancipate himself from the age-old continuation of Eurocentric epistemology. To address this epistemological crisis, the research will focus on the last question which is: **How Afrocentricity, both as a worldview and a theoretical perspective, can effectively resolve the postcolonial crises and help the learners reclaim their agency in the production of knowledge on their culture and history, reconstruct their identity from European misrepresentations, and reassert their contributions to the development of human civilization?** In answering this question, my research will explain why postcolonial theories of ambivalence, hybridity, mimicry, and appropriation are bound to mislead a scholar or learner conducting research on Asian and African phenomenon, and in contrast, simultaneously demonstrate that Afrocentric theories of identity, agency, and location can lead a researcher in the production of meaningful knowledge that will certainly empower the struggle for emancipation and encourage the plight for self-actualization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although Molefi Kete Asante is the founder of Afrocentricity as a systematic theoretical platform based on Africological frames of references, contributions of Maulana Karenga, Ama Mazama, Marcus Garvey, Cheikh Anta Diop, John Henrik Clarke, Theophile Obenga, Robert Bauval, Thomas Brophy, and many other prominent Afrocentric scholars have transformed it as a rich school of philosophical thought. *The publication of Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* in 1980 laid the foundation of Afrocentricity as a theory which was further expanded through these four seminal texts: *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987), *Afrocentricity* (1988), *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (1990), and *An Afrocentric Manifesto* (2007). The Afrocentric school of thought has been enriched with *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity and Africology* published in 2015.

Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change initiated the beginning of a radical movement both in the ivory towers of the academia and the society at large: through a penetrating analysis of the production of knowledge by the traditional disciplines within the Academy, Asante substantiated the position of African American Studies as a discipline that stands unique because of its Afrocentric approach to African phenomenon. Through a genealogical representation of prominent Black intellectuals and their philosophies, Asante locates himself in the long tradition of Black resistance against White oppression in the United States and the world, and defines the philosophical position from which he would soon establish his name as a scholar and shake up the White world. Although born in the 1960s, African American Studies as a discipline started its journey without a clear ideological position until

Asante developed the concept of “Afrology” and the theory of Afrocentricity (*Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* 2003, p. 75).

The Afrocentric Idea is not necessarily an extension of the previous book: divided into three large sections (The Situation, The Resistance, and the Liberation), this text establishes Afrocentricity as valid research method to be applied in Africological approach to knowledge. In the third section of the book (The Liberation), Asante defines “Afrocentric Discourse” (p. 184) which, according to Asante, must demonstrate four important aspects:

1. Objective: an Afrocentric discourse must successfully present its principle themes which can be:
 - a. Resistance to oppression
 - b. Liberation from stereotypes
 - c. Action in anticipation of reaction
2. Relevance: it must conform to certain elementary materials of our corpus of culture
3. Audience: it should be directed towards a black, a non-black, or mixed audience
4. Scope for adjustments: it should be open to adjustments so that it can effectively address different types of audiences.

For an Afrocentric Discourse to operate, Asante develops the “Afrocentric Paradigm” (192) as an inevitable part of African American Studies. According to Asante, the Afrocentric Paradigm provides “the grammar, or notational system, that gives a concise base to principal concepts and ideas,” equips an Afrocentrist to “trace the logical development of argument because they derive from clear components of the paradigm,” allows an Afrocentrist to add to the existing body of works, and finally it “promotes analysis and synthesis rather than mere description.”

Moreover, unlike his contemporary theorists from other schools of thoughts, Asante sees “criticism” as an “ethical act to pass judgment” that does not necessarily devalue the aesthetic quality of what is being criticized. Asante’s explanation of Afrocentric criticism as it “essentially combines ethics and aesthetics” is directed towards “determin[ing] to what degree the writer or speaker contributed to the unity of the symbols, the elimination of chaos, the making of peace among disparate views, and the creation of an opportunity for harmony and hence balance” (193).

In *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, Asante establishes the intellectual platform for Afrocentric epistemology rooted in the Kemetic contribution to the formation and development of human civilization. Using the Diopian historiography based on scientific and archaeological discoveries, Asante provides a brilliant Afrocentric interpretation of the Kemetic influence on all the branches of knowledge—be it philosophy or cosmology, geography or theology, all had its roots in the Nile Valley Civilizations. As a true Afrocentrist, Asante reclaims the Black ownership of this great civilization which was hitherto believed to be White.

However, within a decade Afrocentricity evolved as a rich school of thought that invited baseless criticism and faced violent attacks both from Eurocentric white and black scholars. In *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, we find Asante refutes some of these attacks through his reaffirmation of Afrocentricity as a paradigmatic intellectual platform for human liberation from hegemonic oppression. As Asante boldly states, “Afrocentricity, if anything, is a shout out for rationality in the midst of confusion, order in the presence of chaos, and respect for cultures in a world that tramples on both the rights and the definitions of the rights of humans” (7).

The latest book on the Afrocentric series by Asante is *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Africology*. Published in 2015, this text portrays the contemporary intellectual view of Africa from an Afrocentric standpoint. In Chapter 3, Asante contends, to develop an Afrocentric view, one must desire unity and understand the Ma'atic concepts of peace, balance, and harmony. Asante then precedes to delve into the historic relationship between African culture and European perceptions. Asante asserts that all culture originated in Africa. For example, stone masonry began in Africa, Greece borrowed from Africa; African “symbolism” is seen in Pacific and Central America. Freemasonry uses African symbols as well. Growing “racism and chauvinism”, after the sixteenth century, writes Asante, is what initiated the promotion of white superiority; previously African skin tones were appreciated. With European culture being advanced and African culture demoted, African culture lost its place of importance in the world, making it the place of Afrocentric “thinkers” to restore it to where it belongs. One of the obstacles to this objective was the denigration of Africa for primarily having an oral instead of a written tradition. Since the early history of Africa is not written down, it is relegated to prehistory and not respected.

Moreover, Asante’s reading of Edward Said places him under the Afrocentric scrutiny and demonstrates that, in the name of resisting Eurocentric hegemony, Said was actually misrepresenting Africa by taking Egypt out of it. Asante’s criticism on Orientalism is particularly important in addressing much of the confusions created by postcolonialism. In Chapter 4, Asante posits that language can be used as a foundation for moving from a Eurocentric to an Afrocentric view. According to Asante, there are 2000 different languages in Africa. A citizen living in the fifty-four countries within the African continent, speak two to six languages (201). Each is representative of a culture; for example, there are eight languages

created to enable business associates to understand each other. Governmental cultures utilize “colonial languages” such as Arabic, English or Portuguese. When African languages were first categorized by European linguists, the languages studied were approached from an attitude of superiority. If languages represent cultures, African cultures were disparaged as well (202). It is more advantageous to have African languages investigated from an Afrocentric view (206). Westerners impose value judgments by comparing their culture to “others” looking for what is lacking. The purpose, Asante writes, is to first unfairly judge the culture and then “force” the culture to adopt Western ways (219).

"Location theory" as Asante explains it in *The African Aesthetic* edited by Kariamu Welsh-Asante, “is a branch of centric theory and reflects the same interest as centric theory on the question of place. It is essentially a process of explaining how human beings come to make decisions about the external world which takes into consideration all of the attitudes and behaviors which constitute psychological and cultural place." Location theory, which is further explained by Asante in *The Afrocentric Paradigm* edited by Ama Mazama, examines a text by locating it historically, investigates its meaning by carefully analyzing the language, and deduces its message by inspecting the ideological attitude of its author (240). As a significant part of the Afrocentric paradigm, location theory helps one to situate a text in its larger context and simultaneously determine the agency of the writer. Although it shares some similarities with Marxist interpretation of text, Location theory goes beyond the typical Marxist views on class and ideological struggles and incorporates a “new historiography” as Asante explains it in “Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory.”

Cheikh Anta Diop is acknowledged by Asante as one of the earliest pioneers of Afrocentricity, and Asante’s enlightened borrowings from Diop have enriched the Afrocentric

movement in many significant ways. Two important books by Diop—*The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* and *Civilization or Barbarism*—redefined the course of modern Historiography by exposing the European misrepresentation of Egypt as White. Through the scientific examinations of the mummified ancient Kemetic kings, as well as linguistic and anthropological analyses of cultural and other artefacts, Diop established the fact that Egyptian civilizations belong to Black Africa, and that all the Kemetic rulers were Black.

African scholars doing research in western type studies on African civilization and/or on African people will always face tremendous problems until they can take control of the paradigms of study for specific objectives to satisfy the fundamental needs of black people. Western scholars as a whole would find themselves unable to intricate their research from the intellectual interest of the west in order to serve the social and cultural aims of knowledge for Africans. This is why in *African Origin of Civilization* Diop boldly asserts, “Our investigations have convinced us that the west has not been calm enough and objective enough to teach our history correctly, without crude falsifications...after indirectly expressing that Volney’s book is found in all libraries, Champollion-Figeac advances, as a decisive argument to refute the thesis of that scholar and all his predecessors, that black skin and woolly hair ‘do not suffice to characterize the Negro race.’ It is at the price of such alterations in basic definitions that it has been possible to whiten the Egyptian race,” (xiv, 50).

Diop’s argument that Europe, despite its self-proclaimed superiority, borrowed many of its ideas from Africa. Moreover, Diop’s *Precolonial Africa* (1987) is a scholarly response to the colonial myths on Africa as continent without history: this text is a critical insight into African history, social and political organizations, and cultural transformations prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Diop summarizes the difference between Africa and Europe in the following

way, ““The Aryans have developed patriarchal systems characterized by the suppression of women, and a propensity for war. Also associated with such societies are materialist religion, sin and guilt, xenophobia, the tragic drama, the city-state, individualism, and pessimism. Southerners, on the other hand, are matriarchal. The women are free and the people peaceful; there is a Dionysian approach of life, religious idealism, and no concept of sin. With a matriarchal society come xenophilia, the tale as a literary form, the territorial state, social collectivism, and optimism,” (x).

Although Asante boldly rejects the Du Boisian concept of “double consciousness” as it is uncritically quoted by misguided scholars, W. E. B. Du Bois is considered as one of the earliest precursors of Afrocentricity. Through his prioritization of African experience and his scholastic interpretation of race as a social construct, Du Bois consolidated the position of African agency in questioning the validity of western epistemology. However, the Du Boisian approach did not formulate a methodological framework of investigation which was a dire necessity for African scholars to base their research on. This necessity remained unfulfilled even when Black Studies as a discipline emerged during the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1960s. Asante, through his groundbreaking texts on Afrocentricity as a theory and a worldview, filled this gap.

Maulana Karenga’s contribution to Afrocentricity through his philosophical teachings on ethical and moral social behavior, through his development of Kawaïda as a cultural festival rooted in the Ma’atic concepts of balance, harmony, and unity, Karenga initiated a Black cultural renaissance. One fundamental aspect of enslavement is the cultural death of African people: plantation owners forced the enslaved Africans to get rid of their cultural past. A person not allowed to speak his language and practice his religion is soon

bound to forget his culture as language and religion are the two prominent sites where culture is manifested. Enslaved Africans in the US were not allowed to speak their language or worship their Gods. Two hundred and forty years of slavery totally erased what we understand as collective consciousness the African psyche. Kwaito, very much like Afrocentricity, is an intellectual effort to recover and reconstruct the cultural past of the African people.

Ama Mazama's definition of Afrocentricity as a "paradigm" and her critical explanation of the colonial process through the concept of "ontological reduction"¹⁸ is particularly effective in addressing the postcolonial epistemological crisis. Mazama in *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (2003) contends that "...our struggles for emancipation from colonial domination [have been co-opted] by controlling our conceptual/cultural space through the imposition of the European cultural mode as universal" (4). Postcolonialism is instrumental in this ontological reduction which, according to Mazama, as "a necessary part of colonialism" systematically denigrate colonized culture and valorize colonial culture. As Mazama further explains, "... only through a careful imitation of Europeans can colonized people hope to improve their lot, and move out of animality and childhood into full humanity and adulthood". Postcolonial writers like Rushdie and Naipaul frequently demonstrate this peculiar tendency to reach the European version of humanity by subtly defending Eurocentric worldviews.

Afrocentricity, as it is defined and developed by Asante and Mazama, has been applied by numerous scholars and activists both in criticizing oppressive Eurocentric misrepresentations of Africa as well as constructing new knowledge across disciplines. Journal entries like Afrocentric philosophy, Afrocentric psychology, Afrocentric history, Afrocentric sociology, Afrocentric pedagogy, Afrocentric education and the like are numerous. It is beyond

¹⁸ See Mazama 4.

the scope of this research to provide annotations to all the Afrocentric resources I am going to use in dissertation. Books and articles by Yousef Ben-Jochannan, Linda James Meyers, Asa Grant Hillard, Melville Jean Herskovits, John Henrik Clark, Harold Cruse, Martin Bernal, George G.M. James, Theophile Obenga, Kariamuwelsh-Asante, N’gugi Wa Thiong’o, and Marimba Ani will be frequently cited.

Although Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) is considered by many as the key text in postcolonial studies, it is primarily focused in describing how Europe defined and controlled “the non-European” world. Said devotes the entire book in describing how Europe viewed Africa and Asia. Despite having good intentions, Said fails to go beyond his Eurocentric worldview, and as a result, the misrepresented “Other” he intends to represent is further misrepresented. In *Culture and Imperialism*, we encounter a different Said as he is highly critical of prominent postcolonial writers like V. S. Naipaul who, according to Said, “sees that the wounds caused by European domination were instead self-inflicted, and thus there is no need to go on about the legacy of colonialism” (20). Said is equally critical of Homi Bhabha as he contends that Bhabha’s increasingly convoluted descriptions of colonialism and its aftermaths has rendered the radical philosophies of prominent anti-imperialist pioneers like Frantz Fanon and Aime Cesaire irrelevant. According to Said, the post-1960s intellectuals like Naipaul and Bhabha paint imperialism, in the words of Youssef Yacoubi, “[as] a mere psychological irregularity that can be fixed by the power of theoretical cleverness. Bhabha in particular depends on the magic of specialized jargons, assuming that somehow the abuses of slavery, racism, and oppression of non-Western peoples may be eased and made bearable” (210). In the same line of thought, Alif Dirlik challenges Bhabha’s authority as “spokesperson for the ‘Third World’ peoples in Western academy” as he “constantly reduces the experience

of colonialism into relativist and universalizing categories” (The Postcolonial Aura, 333) Bhabha deploys a postmodern approach to the postcolonial crises that depoliticizes imperialism and dismisses the agency of the colonized. His theorizations on hybridity, ambivalence, and mimicry, places colonialism as a thing of past and attempts to focus on the formation of the subject. According to Bhabha, the way out of the foundationalist and divisive ideology of colonial discourse is to examine the "processes of subjectification” (*Location of Culture* 67). Terming the nature of the relationship between the Orientalist and the Orientalized as “paradoxical,” Bhabha rejects Said’s version of “Orientalism” that defines this relation through binaries. Bhabha demonstrates how the “colonized” and “inferior” other is not always inferior as he “mimics” his master and learn the concepts of justice and rule of law and eventually demands these to equally apply to Indians and Britons. Bhabha’s close associate Partha Chatterjee demonstrates how Mohandas K. Gandhi fused ideas of socialism and civil disobedience with that of Indian asceticism to organize the oppressed millions against the British. Bhabha’s thesis is that mimicry often empowers the colonized subject: although he does not explicitly define his position as a “third-world” subject using “first-world” theories to describe “third-world” migration, it becomes evident that “mimicry,” “ambivalence” and “hybridity” equally apply to him. This conscious choice of not locating himself as well as replacing the political crisis of the colonized subject with that of the psychological ones, empowers Bhabha to free-play with the meanings of colonized/colonizer, inferior/superior, oppressed/oppressor: the colonized for Bhabha is someone in-between, he is hybrid. As he cleverly puts it:

Despite the play of power within colonial discourse and the shifting positionalities of its subjects (for example, effects of class, gender, ideology, different social formations,

varied systems of colonization and so on), I am referring to a form of governmentality that in marking out a 'subject nation', appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity. Therefore, despite the 'play' in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible (Bhaba, "The Other Question"101).

This "colonial production of the colonized" subjects often make him unconditionally dependent on the information he receives from Europe for the very formation of his subjectivity. This is the reason for Anthony Appiah, as he claims in *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (1992), Africa as the very name of the continent did not exist before colonization and that "Pan-Africanism" as a movement is dependent on the European concept of "Negro" (62). African people for Appiah, who certainly rejects Nubian and Kemetic civilizations to be Black, has very "less in common in than is usually assumed" (17). V. N. Mudimbe in *The Invention of Africa* reinforces the same idea as he states:

Let us note that the very name of the continent is itself a major problem. The Greeks named and used to call any black person an Aithiops. The confusion begins with the Romans. They province in their empire known as Africa, and their intellectuals used the same word for orbis terrari pars' . . . , that is, the continent as we know it, being third, after Europe and Asia. European 'discovery' of the continent in the fifteenth century, the confusion becomes (1994, xi).

Achille Mbembe, who is considered as one of the leading postcolonial critics, borrows post-modern terms from Jean Baudrillard¹⁹ and defines Africa in “On the Postcolony” as “an absent object, an absence that those who try to decipher it only accentuate” (201). For Mbembe, Africa represents something which is not there, or something is out there which is not African or Africa.

Much of what Homi Bhabha, Anthony Appiah, Achille Mbembe and, to some extent, Edward Said explain as postcolonial are fundamentally postmodern and Eurocentric. Bhabha’s ambivalence does not help the ex-colonized subjects to reclaim his lost position in history: they are simply extending his colonized version. Anthony Appiah’s inability of looking at Africa going beyond the beginning of colonization does not help Africans to locate their historical past: they are just tribesmen living a life for thousands of generations without any significant improvement. And, Mbembe’s effort to look at Africa from Baudrillardian postmodern theories left Africa and Africans as big question mark: we can try, but we cannot define Africa.

If one replaces these theorists with Cheikh Anta Diop and Molefi Kete Asante, one gets the concrete idea of Africa in all its dimensions: political, social, religious, archaeological, historical and so on, an Africa that was the root of world civilizations. If one replaces the fancy postmodernist ideas of these theorists with the philosophical thoughts of Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, and Amilcar Cabral, one starts understanding what damage colonialism and postcolonialism has done to our very way of thinking. Asante is critical of both postcolonialism and postmodernism, but his criticism does not end in itself as he proposes through his Afrocentricity a new historiography as the basis of location which influences the

¹⁹ Mbembe uses *Simulacra and Simulation*, two of Baudrillard’s concepts, in defining Africa.

most elementary discussions of a text by bringing the gift of new information that the Western world had denied for more than five centuries. With “an extensive survey of African history,” Asante aims at providing “a framework for a civil society based on the simple idea of us viewing ourselves as agents of history, not marginal to Europe or Arabia, but central to our own historical experiences” (2009).

METHODOLOGY: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This research is aimed at demonstrating the effective application of Afrocentricity in resolving interdisciplinary epistemological problems. In *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Africology* Asante states:

“[T]he Afrocentric study of phenomena, events, ideas, and personalities related to Africa...Africology is sustained by a commitment to studying the life narratives, cultures, values, and possibilities of the African people trans-nationally and trans-continently...it opens the door for interpretations of a reality base in evidence and data secured by reference to the African world voice.” (*African Pyramids of Knowledge* 15)

According to Asante, an Africological research can be conducted by using one or more of “the three paradigmatic approaches [functional, categorical, and etymological]” to human knowledge, as “Africology is not history, political science, [or] sociology.” This study will use a combination of functional and categorical paradigms to construct an Afrocentric approach to the formation of knowledge, or failure thereof, in postcolonial studies.

The functional paradigm will demonstrate the necessity of conducting this research and suggest Afrocentric actions based on findings from the research objects. As has already been discussed above, postcolonial studies consist of creative works like novels and of critical theories on those novels or other relevant issues. The research will critically analyze works from both sections and demonstrate the epistemological problems of postcolonial theories and their pedagogical applications. To do so, the research will investigate V. S. Naipaul’s *The Middle Passage*, N’gugi Wa Thiong’o’s *Petals of Blood*, Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, Homi

Bhabha's *Location of Culture*. To provide Afrocentric solutions to the problems of postcolonialism that will be detected during the investigation, a solution based on the Afrocentric theories of agency, identity, location, ontological reduction and discourse as these are developed by Molefi Asante, Ama Mazama, and Maulana Karenga in their numerous works listed in the review of literature will be suggested in the last chapter.

IMPLICATION OF STUDY

The founder of Afrocentricity makes it clear by stating that "...it is not an ethnocentric valorization to the degradation of other perspectives" (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 16). Afrocentricity is fundamentally emancipatory in its approach to knowledge, and hence it can be effectively used as a critical tool of investigation on issues related to oppression against humanity. The objective of this study is not only to demonstrate this applicability of Afrocentricity but also to rescue the human subjects who are misrepresented in some postcolonial works. This aspect of the research fulfils Serie McDougal's conditions of any research in Africana Studies to be acceptable. As he states:

Research in Africana Studies is not meant to be a self-serving act. It is not just about you as a researcher; you are writing for others, too. You should be using your knowledge and skill to conduct research that will provide the information necessary to improve a social condition or bring greater understanding to a critical issue. We are not just trying to produce research that is terribly interesting. We want to make sure it is relevant as well...Purely speculative scholarship is outside of the mission of Africana Studies (108).

This research will significantly contribute to the existing body of literature on postcolonialism and Afrocentricity as no work on Afrocentric approach to the problems and politics of postcolonialism has yet been done. Through an informed Afrocentric reading of some of the major postcolonial texts, this research will demonstrate the fundamental differences between African American Studies and English as liberal arts disciplines: both

these disciplines teach same literary texts but provide entirely different interpretations of them. As an Africologist trained in the liberatory philosophy of Afrocentricity, I believe, I have the required training and expertise to expose the hypocrisy of a discipline that offers terminal degrees with curriculums focusing authors from a tiny island, but compress the writers from two vast continents under a mere three-credit course often titled as “Post-colonial Literature.”

CHAPTER 2

MOLEFI ASANTE AND EDWARD SAID: AFROCENTRIC RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE “ORIENTAL SUBJECT”

Molefi Kete Asante’s Afrocentric theory is an effective tool in emancipating the disadvantaged and disempowered “oriental subject” that Edward Said traces in hegemonic European discourses. Said’s formidable scholarship in locating African and Asian people as voiceless objects in their history written from European perspective does not necessarily help them rescue and reconstruct their agency. Asante’s systematic methodology grounded in African worldview, compared to that of Said’s highly criticized one based on postmodern idea of anti-humanism that he borrowed from Michel Foucault, provides a strong platform to the victims of oppression to emerge with a victorious consciousness from their subjugated positions. Through an Afrocentric analysis of Saidian “orientalism”, this chapter is aimed at exposing the inconsistencies of Said’s so-called radical opposition to western epistemology, the very radicalism that inspired early contributors to postcolonial studies in developing the field as valid discourse of difference. As it will be shown, Afrocentric reading of “orientalism” constitutes a valuable and necessary intervention into postcolonial studies as no interaction between scholarship on Edward Said and scholarship on Molefi Kete Asante has taken place, despite Said’s contradictory views on Afrocentricity. Said’s claim that “Afrocentrism is as flawed as Eurocentrism” (Always on Top 3) contradicts his earlier recognition of its potential in “provoke[ing] and challeng[ing] the fundamentally static notion of identity that has been the core of cultural thought during the era of imperialism” (*Culture and Imperialism* xxv). Said’s

interchanging deployment of Afrocentrism and Afrocentricity results in a complete misunderstanding of the “centric” ideology behind Asante’s theory of Afrocentricity which is “not the reverse of Eurocentrism; neither it is counter Eurocentrism” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 7). Said’s reference to Afrocentricity, as it will be exposed shortly, is his postmodern technique of responding to the bitter criticism he invited through his version of orientalism. Moreover, this analysis will also demonstrate that the epistemological crises in postcolonial studies, which is the primary focus of this research, originate from some postcolonial theorists’ re-appropriation of Saidian ambivalence through sophisticated poststructuralist jargons. Through an Afrocentric analysis of Said’s ideological affiliation and cultural location as he grows from a reactionary scholar in *Orientalism* to a more complicit critic in *Culture and Imperialism*, this chapter will demonstrate that ambivalence as a typical postcolonial issue has its root in Said.

Edward Said’s contribution to postcolonial studies is so influential that Gayatri Spivak²⁰ and San Juan²¹ rightly identified his *Orientalism* as the sourcebook of the field. *Orientalism* exposed the long tradition of misrepresentation of Asian and African people and falsification of their history and culture by European discourses. Following the footsteps of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, Said in *Orientalism* traces the “racism, cultural stereotypes, political imperialism, dehumanizing ideology” that resulted in “[t]he nexus of knowledge and power creating the oriental” (*Orientalism* 27). “Written with several audiences in mind,” *Orientalism* was Said’s scholarly effort to “criticize the often-unquestioned assumptions on which” European misrepresentations of Asian and African people depend, as well as to remind the “readers in the so-called Third World of the strength of Western cultural discourse”

²⁰ See in Spivak “Race before Racism: The Disappearance of the American,” pp. 35-53

²¹ See in Juan “The Limits of Postcolonial Criticism: The Discourse of Edward Said” in *Solidarity* <<https://www.solidarity-us.org/node/1781>>

(*Orientalism* 25). Said's "deconstruction of Western representation of the non-Western world," as he states in *Culture and Imperialism*, was triggered by the "alleged universalism of fields such as historiography, anthropology, and sociology" which he found to be "Eurocentric in the extreme, as if other literatures and societies had either an inferior or a transcended value (*Culture and Imperialism* 44). Said's apparently oppositional stance against the textual misrepresentation of Asian and African people can easily convince the victims of European imperialism to recognize in him the continuation of the emancipatory spirit one finds in the anti-colonial struggles initiated by Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*. Said's self-representation as "the oriental subject" (*Orientalism* 25) on the one hand, and his self-identification as a philologist²² inspired by the ideas of Giambattista Vico, Goethe, Humboldt, Dilthey, Nietzsche, Gadamer, and Erich Auerbach on the other, put him in a precarious position which is evidently ironic and ambivalent. The Western-educated oriental subject that Said detects in himself embraces a Western cultural apparatus in *Orientalism* to investigate how the West "orientalized" the East. This investigation, which he claims to accomplish through a "contrapuntal reading" that "must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and of resistance to it" (*Culture and Imperialism* 66), surprisingly focus mostly on European representations of Asia and Africa: Said reproduces the same orientalist discourse that he sets out to dismantle.

Even before the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, Molefi Kete Asante has been speaking of the necessity of "an Afrocentric orientation to data," that is the systematic reevaluation of the production and dissemination of knowledge that concern exploited humanity in general, and African people in particular. With the publication of *Afrocentricity*:

²² See in "A Window on the World." *The Guardian Review*. August 1, 2003.

The Theory of Social Change in 1980, Asante developed that systematic framework to carry out such reevaluations, a framework that has been instrumental in challenging and significantly changing the racist pedagogical practices in the United States. Jerome Schiele's critical analysis of the Afrocentric intervention in integrating "Afrocentric content in primary and secondary schools" with the objective of improving African American children's academic performance by exposing them to "the past accomplishments of their ancestors" can help one compare Afrocentricity with Said's Orientalism (156). The purpose of such comparison is not to compel one to disregard Said's formidable scholarship over his topic, but to explain why Said's effort actually ends up in further deterioration of the wounds he wants to heal. Unlike Said, Asante does not invest his scholarship in exploring the misrepresentation of the orientalized Other in European discourses as he is already aware of the hypocrisies of European imperialism in its naked form, that is the enslavement of his ancestors here in the US, as well as of the shameless state-endorsed discriminations against African Americans and other minority groups after emancipation. Asante targets the victims of imperialism as his readers and sets out not to inform them about the strength of their oppressor but to rescue and reconstruct the glorious past of their ancestors, a past rich with contributions to mankind, a past remarkable for artistic, philosophical, and scientific achievements. Whereas Said locates the oriental self at the beginning of imperialism, as if the oriental Other did not exist prior to its contact with the occident, Asante begins with the civilizations in Kemet and Nubia, the two ancient Egyptian cities ruled by Black kings and queens. Asante locates himself in the genealogy of scholars like Cheik Anta Diop, Theophile Obenga, Yosef Ben-Jochannan, Marcus Garvey, Melville Herskovits, and Du Bois, and goes beyond them in formulating the first theoretical and philosophical platform that reinstates the oppressed as agents in the

reconstruction of their history and culture. The necessity behind developing another theoretical framework amidst so many in the liberal arts and humanities is justified when we hear Edward Said claim:

Frankfurt School critical theory, despite its seminal insights into the relationships between domination, modern society, and the opportunities for redemption through art as critique, is stunningly silent on racist theory, anti-imperialist resistance, and oppositional practice in the empire. Much the same thing can be said of most Anglo-Saxon cultural theory ... European theory and Western Marxism as cultural coefficients of liberation haven't in the main proved themselves to be reliable allies in the resistance to imperialism—on the contrary, one may suspect that they are part of the same invidious "universalism" that connected culture with imperialism for centuries—how has the liberationist anti-imperialism tried to break this shackling unity? (*Culture and Imperialism* 278-279)

“Contrapuntal orientation in history,” “emancipatory theory,” and “investment in nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy” are the ways, as Said claims, anti-imperialist scholars fought European hegemony. Asante’s approach to history might not be called contrapuntal as it completely negates the European version of history, but it is exclusively emancipatory in the sense that it prioritizes the position of Africans as subjects/agents in their own history. The emancipatory philosophy of Afrocentricity is manifested in the victorious consciousness that Asante identifies as one of the foremost of requirements to be an Afrocentrist who is well aware of the textual anarchy that s/he has to encounter the moment s/he reclaims her/his position in the production of knowledge that directly or indirectly relates to her/him. In fact, Said’s concern related to the politicized nature of critical theories has already been voiced by

professor Wade Nobles who uses the phrase “conceptually incarcerated” to describe scholars operating from an alien theoretical framework. As Nobles states:

The worldview, normative assumptions, and referential frame upon which the paradigm is based, must, like the science they serve, be consistent with the culture and cultural substance of the people. When the paradigm is inconsistent with the cultural definition of the phenomena, the people who use it to assess and/or evaluate that phenomena become essentially conceptually incarcerated (qtd. in Na’Im Akbar, 396).

The “conceptually incarcerated” scholar, because of his training in that alien framework and methodology, often fails to understand his trapped condition which Asante describes as dislocation²³. Disorientation, which is the logical consequence of dislocation, can be readily noticed in someone who is dislocated. In the disoriented state, the “conceptually incarcerated” scholar consistently changes his ideological positions and reinterprets his own statements only to provide a different meaning from the one he initially intended to convey. Said demonstrates all the classic symptoms of disorientation through his numerous efforts in explaining orientalism, his realignment with the agents of imperialism he so passionately criticizes²⁴, and his reluctance to disclose his cultural and ideological location. A self-identified “oriental subject” misrepresented by hegemonic European imperialism, a displaced Arab living in exile, an Arab American under surveillance of Zionist influenced Pentagon, a third world intellectual living in the first world, and finally a humanist trained in the European philological tradition, Said is the perfect example of someone who defies homogeneity. Perhaps this is why he claims that

²³ See in Mazama 236-244.

²⁴ Said rediscovers in Conrad and Kipling the great artists who narrated the colonial scene through their “majestic prose”

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. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or Black, or Western, or Oriental (*Culture and Imperialism* 336).

Yes, Said is absolutely right in articulating the heterogeneity of human identity, and that imperialism dissolves these diversified identities and essentializes the East and the West. As Benita Parry points out, Said himself creates another homogeneity in *Orientalism* in which, exactly as in the European discourses, the orient is stripped off of its agency. Said's view of the oriental subject premises on the European notions that the orient is mute, that there had never been any resistances to imperialism, that the misrepresentations of the orient always go unchallenged. This was possible for Said mostly because he belonged to two "worlds, without being completely of either one or the other" (*Culture and Imperialism*, xxvi). Said talks about this predicament in "Between Worlds," a predicament best expressed by Joseph Conrad. In Said's words "No one could represent the fate of lostness and disorientation better than Conrad did, and no one was more ironic about the effort of trying to replace that condition with arrangements and accommodations" ("Between Worlds" 3). Said's lifelong effort to understand this predicament through the eyes of his oppressors started with his first book *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* published in 1966.

An Afrocentric reading of Said's latter works like "Orientalism Reconsidered" and "A Window on the World," and to some extent *Culture and Imperialism* makes it clear that Said

mostly, if not completely, belong to the Western world. It is no surprise that Said rediscovers the great artist in Kipling, as he states:

What a sobering and inspiring thing it is therefore not just to read one's own side, as it were, but also to grasp how a great artist like Kipling (few more imperialist and reactionary than he) rendered India with such skill, and how in doing so his novel *Kim* not only depended on a long history of Anglo-Indian perspective." (*Culture and Imperialism* xx-xxi)

The radical Said of *Orientalism*, who drew world-wide attention for his uncompromising critique of imperialism, all of a sudden finds imperialism as a positive force that "brought the world closer together," it is a world where "the history of imperialism and its culture can now be studied as neither monolithic nor reductively compartmentalized, separate, distinct" (*Culture and Imperialism*, xx-xxi). Labeling the emergence of Afrocentricity as "a disturbing eruption of separatist and chauvinist discourse", Said ambivalently claims that "far from invalidating the struggle to be free from empire, these reductions of cultural discourse actually prove the validity of a fundamental liberationist energy that animates the wish to be independent, to speak freely and without the burden of unfair domination" (*Culture and Imperialism*, xxi). Said identifies an energy in this emergence which, in his view, needs to be understood historically. Said fears that this emancipatory zeal will make the world a chaotic place, because:

"... if everyone were to insist on the radical purity or priority of one's own voice, all we would have would be the awful din of unending strife, and a bloody political mess, the true horror of which is beginning to be perceptible here and there in the reemergence

of racist politics in Europe, the cacophony of debates over political correctness and identity politics in the United States.” (*Culture and Imperialism*, xx-xxi)

Said here directly reverberates Foucault’s idea of resistance which receives relatively less importance compared to the theory of power and knowledge that Said so generously used in developing his method. Foucault’s theories on the formation of subjects and the production of knowledge through the deployment of power often bypass the fact that such knowledge or power do not actually go uncontested. This gap in Foucault’s discourse on power and systems of domination reappears in Said’s discourse on orientalism and the domination of the oriental subjects, a gap that Said confesses in the sequel to *Orientalism*:

“What I left out of *Orientalism* was the response to Western dominance which culminated in the great movements of decolonization all across the Third World Never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance, and in the overwhelming majority of cases the resistance finally won out” (*Culture and Imperialism* xii).

Had Said developed a methodology prioritizing the oriental subjects as agents in critiquing their misrepresentations by Europe, he certainly would have incorporated the rich tradition of resistance to colonization that he understood later. Said’s failure to see imperialism from the perspectives of the orientalized is the direct result of his dependence on the Foucauldian notion of resistance as integral part of power: Foucault sees resistance as a required condition for power to operate, not as a reaction or consequence to it. For Foucault:

there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because [resistances] *are formed right at the point where relations of power*

are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. *It exists all the more by being in the same place as power*; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies (“Power and Strategies” 142). (emphasis mine)

Foucault’s theory of resistance negates the concept of revolution as he claims that “there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary” (*History of Sexuality* 95-96). Only if strategic manipulations of resistances are directed towards a unified attack on a dominant order, not the dispersed local acts of resistance, a revolution can occur. Then again Foucault totally ignores the objectives of resistance as he further claims that resistance with the hope of introducing “another system is to extend our participation in the present system” (*Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* 86). As Foucault’s idea on resistance is significantly influenced by the failed revolutions of 1848 and the events in 1968 in France, it fails to conceive the existential crises felt by the victims of imperialism who view resistance not only as a way to improve their material condition but also as the means by which they are able to regain their lost humanity. Foucault is certainly right in his opinion that “there is no guarantee that the state of affairs brought about by resistance will be better than the present, as any social arrangement or definition of community may become oppressive even if it is instituted by acts of resistance against a previous regime” (*Power and Strategies*, 142). But, Foucault is wrong in his presentation of change and revolution as isolated historical events: change is a process that requires constant modifications of plans and strategies. Foucault’s idea of resistance makes the concept of freedom utopian. It took twenty years for Said to understand the inadequacy of Foucault’s theory of resistance, and Said himself makes it clear in *Power, Politics, and Culture*:

one of the things that I think Foucault is wrong about is that he always writes from the point of view of power. It's strange, most people think of him as a rebel, but he had this side to him which James Miller writes about in his book on Foucault, suggesting that all of Foucault's work is really an exemplification of his peculiar form of homosexuality and his interest in sado-masochism. So you could say that Foucault is always talking about power from the point of view, on the one hand, of the way power always wins; and then, succumbing to that power, he talks about the victims of power with a certain amount of pleasure. And I think that that always struck me as wrong, and my attitude to power, in *Orientalism* and elsewhere, has always been deeply suspicious and hostile. It took me another ten years to actually make that more explicit in *Culture and Imperialism*, where I was very interested not only talking about the formation of imperialism, but also of resistances to it, and the fact that imperialism could be overthrown and was—as a result of resistance and decolonization and nationalism (268).

It is ironic that Said, borrowing Foucault's concept of the "Other"²⁵ within European society constructed and represented linguistically through first "the leper" and then "the mad", developed his methodology in investigating orientalism as a European discourse of silencing the orient. Extending Europe's "othering" strategy explained by Foucault, Said in *Orientalism* demonstrates that the medieval other in the figure of the leper and the mad has been replaced by the 19th century figure of the "oriental subject". Moreover, Said's concepts of knowledge and power, and the way Europeans constructed knowledge that enabled them to have power over the Orient, and his subsequent objective of de-orientalizing the Orient echoes Foucault's

²⁵ See Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 7.

idea of "... re-do[ing], in opposite direction, the work of expression: to go back from statements preserved through time and dispersed in space, towards that interior secret that preceded them, left its mark in them, and (in every sense of the term) is betrayed by them"²⁶. The issue here is not to represent Foucault as unworthy of borrowing, neither to question the originality of Said's discourse on orientalism, but to clarify that, despite his effort in correcting the misrepresentations of the Orient, Said ends up in reproducing the same patterns of misrepresentation. Like Foucault, Said ignores the fact that resistance is an immediate and inseparable reaction to power, and that sooner or later all power succumbs to resistance by the oppressed.

In contrast to Foucault and Said, resistance to Asante is the primary objective of an activist scholar who shoulders the solemn responsibility of speaking for and about the marginalized. As an African American, Asante views resistance as a logical response to repression. A clear historical understanding of one's reality is the fundamental requirement for one to resist against the forces that changed the trajectory of his reality in the past and continue to do so in the present. Asante is well aware of the discursive forces of white supremacy manifested in the postmodern branding of resistance that blurs the line between the oppressed and the oppressor, and this is why he boldly claims:

There are no post-modern gray lines here; you either stand with the oppressed and against the oppressor or you stand with the oppressor against liberation. ... If the resistance has been intricately connected to African Americans, it is only that we have suffered the most from the promulgation of the doctrines of white supremacy. It is

²⁶ See Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 136.

reasonable to assume that a major part for the human liberation would be waged on the line of black people (*An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 164).

Asante's perspective on resistance differs from that of Foucault's because it is relevant to any marginalized groups. The very idea of "blackness" conjures up the notion of resistance as white Europeans have historically associated all the negative connotations with this signifier. Asante questions the very process of this signification and rejects the meanings of "black" deployed as a sign from European perspective. For Asante, black is the new face of resistance and blackness is new value that

"...possesses a political and social sensitivity directed against all forms of oppression. Therefore, a new people is created and by maintaining the critical themes of blackness they become the new blacks, new Africans, marked or typed by an identity rooted in their fierce opposition to all forms of domination: racism, sexism, classism, pedophilia, national terror, and white national supremacy. These new blacks are discovered in every nation and among all ethnic groups" (*An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 165).

For Asante, the oppressed and misrepresented is not necessarily the spurious oriental subject that Said traces in European texts, rather the oriental subject is a subject-as-agent with a history of resistance against imperialism. Asante is interested in retrieving the past of this human subject and using his critical framework through which he wants this subject to speak. While Said has "no patience with the position that 'we' should only or mainly be concerned with what is 'ours,' any more than I can condone reactions to such a view that require Arabs to read Arab books, use Arab methods, and the like" (*Culture and Imperialism*, xxv), Asante devotes his scholarship to particularly understand how Africans look at themselves and the world around them. Said's so-called liberal humanism disguised in anti-humanist tropes totally

negates the long history of epistemic violence perpetuated by European discourses which are challenged by groups like feminists and Marxists formed by marginalized Europeans. Asante is not against reading books by people of other cultures so long as those books maintain historical truths, advocate racial equality, and recognize all people's contributions to mankind. Said in *Orientalism* criticizes canonical European books for failing the basic qualities that make a text universally acceptable, but ironically in *Culture and Imperialism* he changes his tone and finds great aesthetic qualities in books which he would readily label as racist. The oppositional stance that Said takes in *Orientalism*, even though that opposition does little service in voicing the oriental self silenced by European discourses, is neutralized by the contradictory statements he makes in *Culture and Imperialism*, which is considered as corrective to *Orientalism*.

The corrections are evident in Said's decision to include what he "left out of *Orientalism*": Said decides to provide textual space to Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Tayeb Salih, two African writers who, in Said's word, "redo *Heart of Darkness* by inducing life into Conrad's river" (*Culture and Imperialism*, 211). Said's contrapuntal reading of European and African writers places the former as the predecessors to the latter, and provides serious critical analysis and spatial allocation to the canonical European texts in *Culture and Imperialism*, whereas texts by African writers are attributed just perfunctory discussions. For instance, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Tayeb Salih are contained in one paragraph, and Chinua Achebe is made happy with just one sentence (*Culture and Imperialism*, 211). Moreover, Said accuses Achebe for not discussing Conrad's limitations in using the novel as form in dealing with the evils of colonization: "when in a celebrated essay Chinua Achebe criticizes Conrad's racism, he either says nothing about or overrides the limitations placed on Conrad by the novel as an

aesthetic form” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 76). The critical analysis that Said puts Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* (*Culture and Imperialism*, 96) through is missing from his perfunctory readings of postcolonial writers, and surprisingly defends Austen’s racist and/or pro-slavery views as shaped by her time. Said states “Austen belonged to a slave-owning society,” and asks whether for this we should “jettison her novels as so many trivial exercises in aesthetic frumpery?” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 76). Through the characters of the novel Said is interested in understanding the “connections, to deal with as much of the evidence as possible, fully and actually, to read what is there or not there” (*Culture and Imperialism*, 98). Contrary to providing similar critical importance to the postcolonial writers, Said reads them with “Conrad’s majestic prose” in the background and claims:

The post-imperial writers of the Third World therefore bear their past within them—as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a postcolonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as pan of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist (*Culture and Imperialism*, 212).

Asante, unlike Said, does not view the past consisting only of “scars of humiliating wounds,” because for him the past did not start with European colonization. Asante locates the origin of humanity in Africa and disregards the artificial concept of shame colonization inculcated in the psyche of the colonized. While Said’s thesis begins with the acceptance of the imposed inferiority of the oriental, Asante’s Afrocentricity discards all the myths of inferiority and reinstates the historical truths discovered by Cheikh Anta Diop. As Asante States:

It was on the African continent that humans originated and on the same continent that the most majestic civilizations of antiquity arose in the Nile Valley (Diop, 1991). It was also in Africa that the first flourishing of religion occurred and even the naming of the Gods was said to be an African event (Herodotus, Book II). The mighty kingdoms of the West and South developed and maintained themselves for centuries without the presence of either Arabs or Europeans²⁷.

While Said sees scars of humiliation in the past, Asante finds strengths for transformation; while Said informs his readers about the sheer strengths of imperial discourses, Asante fosters the certainty of victory; while Said uses the European methodologies he himself criticizes, Asante develops his own methodology grounded on the experiences of Africans as agents and subjects in their own history. This methodology culminates in the Africological model Asante finally develops in *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity and Africology* published in 2015. An integral part of this methodology is the “Location Theory” that can precisely locate a text in terms of the author’s ideological affiliations, political associations and aesthetic expressions manifested in the very words in the text itself. In his words, Location Theory is:

“a branch of centric theory and reflects the same interest as centric theory on the question of place. It is essentially a process of explaining how human beings come to make decisions about the external world which takes into consideration all of the attitudes and behaviors which constitute psychological and cultural place (Asante, “Location Theory and African Aesthetics, 57).

²⁷ See Asante “The Ideology of Racial Hierarchy and the Construction of the European Slave Trade” <http://www.asante.net/articles/14/>

Using “Location Theory”, an Afrocentrist can locate any text by investigating the “cultural and intellectual address of [its] author” (Asante, *Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory*, 236). Although Said’s *Orientalism* might not be strictly categorized as a “decapitated” or “lynched” text defined by Asante, it demonstrates some features of both categories. Said, to use Asante’s words, “remained fundamentally committed to a style of writing which placed him [partially] outside of his own historical experiences”(*Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory* , 237). Asante defines a decapitated text as one that fails to represent the author’s cultural self as well as the collective cultural self of the people it is about. On the other hand, a lynched text is one that reproduces ideologies of the oppressor it sets out to criticize. *Orientalism* is a partially decapitated text because it uses the framework of the oppressor and, despite honest intentions, fails to rescue the oppressed from objects to the position of subjects in their own history. Said attacked Eurocentrism with a mistaken objective, and hence his text is “lynched” one. From Edward Said’s discursive analysis of the orient, it is difficult to determine whether imperialism invented orientalism or it is orientalism that led to imperialism. Said’s position here is evidently postmodernist as he defines the orient neither as an idea nor as a reality. However, Said is of the opinion that the academic study of the orient is directly related with imperialism. He claims that academic orientalists over two centuries developed a way of thinking about the orient which is widely embraced by those outside the academy. This way of thinking always focus on the ontological and epistemological differences between East and West.

Said’s attack on Eurocentrism might sound radical, but it fails to go beyond challenging the attacker and fails to provide any strategies of resistance and reconstruction to those being attacked. Said understood these limitations of his orientalism project, and hence he envisioned

“a post-colonial intellectual project” aimed at “formulat[ing] an alternative to a politics of blame” so that it can “expand the area of overlapping community between metropolitan and formerly colonized societies (Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World,” 46).

Postcolonialism is significantly indebted to Said’s *Orientalism* as it opened up the different terrains like literary, political, and historical discourses from which the early theorists initiated counter-attacks to demythologize the “white men’s burden,” that is to expose the hegemonic agendas veiled under European humanism. Those who theorize on post-colonialism soon found Said guilty of the same crime he accuses the Europeans of: The Other has no place in the Sidian discourse other than as disempowered objects. Postcolonial thinkers like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and many others have capitalized Said’s limitations in rebranding their versions of postcolonialism. The absent and mute Other in Said’s *Orientalism* emerges and threatens to reclaim his lost place in the discourses. This “Other” becomes the “hybrid mimic man” in Bhabha and the voiceless “subaltern” in Spivak, both theorists heavily depended on their enlightened borrowings from Said. Like Said, both Bhabha and Spivak are based in the United States, and like Said, they heavily rely on French post-structural theorists in understanding the formation of subjectivity during and after colonization. And, like Said, they gained wide recognition and still now qualify as major post-colonial thinkers.

Said soon grew bitter with the trajectory postcolonialism took in the hands of theorists for whom colonization, in his words, “delivered the benefits of a national self-consciousness, liberal ideas, and technological goods ... that have turned colonialism into a much less unpleasant thing” (“Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World,” 45). Said stands guilty of the same offenses, he too made imperialism sound like a two-way traffic, a process by which the colonized nations got the gifts of invaluable European knowledge and rich cultural heritage

conveyed through the works of his ideological gurus. It is no surprise that Said's first book *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* traces this indebtedness right in his Joseph Conrad who is, as he remarks, "like a *cantus firmus*, a steady ground bass to much that I have experienced ... No one could represent the fate of lostness and disorientation better than Conrad did, and no one was more ironic about the effort of trying to replace that condition with arrangements and accommodations"²⁸. Said shares Conrad's life as an exile doomed to write in a language other than his mother tongue and the predicament of belonging to two worlds simultaneously. Postcolonial theorists are guilty as charged by Said, so is Said as charged by San Juan, Aijaz Ahmad, Arif dirlik and numerous others. The Said who rejected the Western canon is now ambivalent about his radical past: Said now provides nuanced reappraisals of controversial authors like Conrad and Kipling because he redefines his ideological position which is evident in the following statement:

"One of the legacies of Orientalism, and indeed one of its epistemological foundations, is historicism, that is, the view propounded by Vico, Hegel, Marx, Ranke, Dilthey, and others, that if humankind has a history it is produced by men and women, and can be understood historically as, at each given period, epoch, or moment, possessing a complex, but coherent unity. So far as Orientalism in particular and the European knowledge of other societies in general have been concerned, historicism meant that the one human history uniting humanity either culminated in or was observed from the vantage point of Europe, or the West. What was neither observed by Europe nor documented by it was therefore "lost" until, at some later date, it too could be

²⁸ See Said "Between Worlds," *London Review of Books* 20, no. 9 (May 7, 1998): 3.

incorporated by the new sciences of anthropology, political economics, and linguistics” (“Orientalism Reconsidered” 101).

Said is now hopeful that the gaps in Eurocentric history will be filled up by the very disciplines he was suspicious of then, but he is completely lenient about the false versions of history these disciplines constructed. Said’s radicalism is now transformed into humanism, a humanism that is fundamentally Eurocentric. Said’s solution to the very problems of “orientalism” as a discourse, as the above statement indicates, is not possible to come outside of it. This solution, or rather a suggestion, is unconditionally accepted by Homi Bhabha who, like Said, uses poststructuralist Lacanian psychoanalysis, through which he takes the “oriental subject” and his struggle to a whole new dimension, a dimension that totally disregards the brutalities of imperialism and reduces the anti-colonial struggle to a mere psycho-linguistic process devoid of any historical specificities. Bhabhaesque approach to the long and rich history of resistance to imperialism in its diverse forms makes the postcolonial pedagogy highly controversial as it aspires to promote the idea that cultural purity does not exist, and that ex-colonized people unconsciously aspire to be like their former colonial masters. To an Afrocentrist, this idea is just ridiculous.

CHAPTER 3
HOMI BHABHA AND AMA MAZAMA: AFROCENTRIC ANALYSIS OF
HYBRIDITY

Homi K. Bhabha is perhaps the first postcolonial theorist to rebrand Saidian ambivalence in the form of hybridity and dramatize the colonized Other's mimicking of the colonizer. Bhabha's theory, which is itself a mimicry of French poststructuralism and postmodernism in mystifying the concepts of hybridity, agency, and subjectivity has been widely celebrated as well as bitterly criticized by several scholars within the field. Although hybridity as a concept pertaining to the formation of identity and agency of the postcolonial migrants is highly contested, its relevance in understanding the contemporary world shaped by transnational migrations and cross-cultural exchanges has been emphasized by critics including Stuart Hall, Paul Gillroy, Roberto Farnandez Latimer, and Robert Young—their contributions to the discourse on hybridity focused on the intermingling of the local and the global, hence giving the term a certain degree of legitimacy in understanding the pains and pleasures of forced migration and life in the diaspora. On the other hand, penetrating criticism by Benita Parry, Aijaz Ahmad, Arif Dirlik, and Ziauddin Sardar focused on the inadequacies of Bhabha's conceptualization of hybridity and the third space. Those who promote hybridity tend to hold the view that the hybridization process helps the migrated subject subvert the colonial power through the formation of new agency: he is no longer the stereotyped Other, nor is he what his former colonizers want him to be, rather he is someone completely new. Conversely, those who reject it claim that hybridity as a discourse totally negates the politico-economic dimensions of identity formation and that reduces colonized people's struggle to mere textualism. Breaking away from both these views, through an Africological analysis of the

discourse on hybridity, this section questions the validity of hybridity as an anti-colonial strategy as well as the hostility it drew for being complicit with global power-structures and privileging a specific class of immigrants. As an alternative to hybridity, as the section will demonstrate, the Afrocentric Locational theory is more appropriate in understanding the ‘split’ in the displaced migrant subject now occupying the ‘third space’.

Despite all the negative criticism against it, hybridity has gained a remarkable importance in contemporary postcolonial theories as it is often presented as a self-consciously invoked anti-colonial strategy. Critics working on hybridity as a transformative and counter-hegemonic force share an interest in contemporary cultural and literary productions stemming from the contact zones between the West and the East, the colonizer and the colonized. This contact zone is described as a site of transformation where essentialist notions of identity, culture, and subjectivity are contested and modified. To demonstrate these transformations, those who theorize hybridity as a counter-hegemonic force, often ‘approach a variety of phenomena ranging from ethnic writing and theatre to contemporary cinema in a world characterized by transnational migration and the globalization of culture’ (Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman 3). As a critical term hybridity, in the words of Andrea Schwieger Hiepko, refers to ‘intercultural transfer and the forms of identity such a change generates’ (*Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* 118): and these forms are explained through a number of terms including syncretism, mestizaje, and creolization. According to Hiepko, syncretism refers to the cultural exchanges between religious and musical traditions in the Hispanic Caribbean: to point out such exchange, she demonstrates how Afro-Cubans have transformed the Catholic saints by projecting African deities onto them. Métissage, originally used by Françoise Lionnet who disregarded assimilation and proposed “a new vocabulary for describing patterns of influence

that are never unidirectional,” (qtd. in Anjali Prabhu and Ato Quayson 231) is often deployed as a term to denote innovative strategies applied by disadvantaged and disempowered people in the formation of their identity. Francoise Verges contends that “social organization of slavery and colonialism produced métissage, that is, an intermixing of groups, new cultural forms, new languages, and an identity that remained indecisive. New global capitalism has adopted métissage as new cultural commodity” (qtd. in Anjali Prabhu and Ato Quayson 231). In French, the word métissage means the mixing of cultures. Although generally understood to be a process of intermingling two different species, both hybridity and métissage acquired negative connotations due to the Eurocentric ideologies of race emphasizing the alleged purity of the white Europeans. Both the terms have been initially interpreted, according to Robert C. Young, from nineteenth-century European racial ideologies that promotes miscegenation (10). Creolization is often described as a unique Caribbean phenomenon to explain the new diasporic identity formed through the intermingling of diverse ethnicities including European, African, Asian, and Native Caribbean. According to Edward Kamau Brathwaite, the product of the cultural exchanges, both voluntary and forced, between the Europeans and Africans in the slave society of Jamaica, is the Creole society: both these groups ‘adapt themselves to the new environment and to each other’ (Ashcroft et al. 204).

Although Homi Bhabha explains hybridization as a colonial strategy of governing the diverse colonized people and transforming them into a new homogenous platform, he dismisses the efficacy of such a strategy as it fails to reach its intended goal: the hybrid identity that the colonized subjects forge by embracing the colonial culture and values challenges the essentialist claims to cultural identity. To justify his claim, Bhabha describes hybridization as a continuous process that takes place in the borderline between two or more cultures which he

terms as the “third space”. In “Culture In-Between,” Bhabha explains the third space as the product of the tension between two cultures which is “contaminated yet connective tissue between cultures ... something like culture’s in-between, baffling both alike and different” (“Culture’s In Between” 30). It is primarily because of this difference the third space drew so much critical attention as it renders the previously held views on cultural origins invalid. Rejecting the rigidity that is associated with culture as a complete unit, Bhabha through the third space demonstrates that all culture is prone to substantial change, and that there is always the possibility for modifications and growth. The binary division between the self and the Other, the West and the East that Said’s orientalism takes for granted, is questioned by Bhabha claiming that this is inadequate and incomplete in truly representing the colonized self’s journey to selfhood. The third space thus completely rejects the colonial binaries of self/other, orient/occident, civilized/savage, and introduces a new approach to the colonial scene characterized by the interrelations and interdependence between the colonizers and the colonized. In Bhabha, thus, the self becomes the other, a colonized becomes the colonizer. Said’s paradoxical remark on Bhabha’s appropriation of Lacanian mirror stage explains the unprecedented trajectory that postcolonialism when it was influenced by postmodern theories:

By now Fanon and Aimé Césaire were reread as ambivalent Lacanian theorists caught up in all sorts of mirror games and secret flirtations with the white man. Nationalism, which had earlier mobilized vast numbers of people in the name of liberation, was now reconfigured as ‘imagined community’, a kind of naivety combined with fictional self-presentation borrowed from Europe itself (“Always on Top” 4).

Said’s caustic remark on postcolonialism’s too much dependence on postmodern theories applies more to Homi Bhabha than other critics from the field. Bhabha’s unpredictable

fluidity and constant shifting from one framework to another makes him sound like a typical postmodernist who defies any attempts to understand him. To understand the politics of Bhabha's hybridity that he camouflages under a postmodern cover requires a clear understanding of postmodernism itself. Despite the common prefix "Post" at the beginning of both postmodernism and postcolonialism meaning later or after and indicating a temporal or historical shift from modernism or colonialism, epistemological analysis of these two terms incorporates many divergent and contradictory issues. As Linda Hutcheon claims, "[P]lurality of manifestations in both art and theory" (231) is what defines postmodernism, and in these pluralities Andreas Huyssen discovers "a very conventional thought pattern" that either views it as the extension and continuation of modernism or "claim[s] that there is a radical rupture, a break with modernism, which is then evaluated in either positive or negative terms" ("Mapping the Postmodern" 10). However, both Hutcheon and Huyssen consider this historical dis/continuation less significant a factor in understanding the philosophical dimension of postmodernism given the literary manifestations of post-modernist narrative technique by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* (1605) and by Sterne in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759), not to mention Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913). Jean-François Lyotard's position in this regard seems more appropriate when he asserts that "A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state; and this state is constant" (*Postmodern Condition* 79). But, other than explaining what post-modernism actually means, Lyotard, in Fredric Jameson's words, "has polemically endorsed the slogan of a 'post-modernism' and has been involved in the defense of some of its more controversial productions" (Foreword to

Postmodern Condition xvi). In understanding Lyotard's position regarding the meaning of the term, it is worth quoting Jameson at length: Jameson says:

Lyotard is in reality quite unwilling to posit a postmodernist stage radically different from the period of high modernism and involving a fundamental historical and cultural break with this last. Rather, seeing postmodernism as a discontent with a disintegration of this or that high modernist style—a moment in the perpetual "revolution" and innovation of high modernism, to be succeeded by a fresh burst of formal invention—in a striking formula he has characterized postmodernism, not as that which follows modernism and its particular legitimation crisis, but rather as a cyclical moment that returns before the emergence of ever new modernisms in the stricter sense (Foreword to *The Postmodern Condition* xvi).

Jameson's postmodernism, which is understood from a Marxist perspective, is contradictory with that of Lyotard's: Jameson uses the grand narrative of Marxism which Lyotard makes the object of his criticism. Simply put, for Lyotard the everyday narratives we share among ourselves are of crucial importance, and some of these narratives, for instance Christianity or Marxism for that matter, are what he calls "metanarratives" (*Postmodern Condition* 34). These Metanarratives are also stories with a metanarrator that shapes and conditions the listener's life and existence in this world. Postmodernism challenges the validity of these metanarratives, as Lyotard says:

In contemporary society and culture—postindustrial society, postmodern culture—the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what

mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation (*Postmodern Condition* 37).

Asante's insightful rejection of postmodernism in approaching African history and African agency is very important in this regard as postmodernism questions the validity of African history written from African perspective. Post-modernists, with the discovery of the futility and incredulity of long established beliefs in religious or political or scientific systems, celebrate the human potential in providing "imaginary resolutions to real contradictions" (*Postmodern Condition* xix). Afrocentric intervention in hegemonic western historiography is not an "imaginary solution," rather it is a valid approach based on scholarly research. Lyotard's view on the role played by a writer goes totally against what Afrocentrists do:

The postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes or the work he creates is not in principle governed by pre-established rules and cannot be judged according to a determinant judgment, by the application of given categories to this text or work. Such rules and categories are what the work or text is investigating. The artist and the writer therefore work without rules, and in order to establish the rules for what *will have been done* (*Postmodern Condition* 81).

Afrocentrists follow a clearly articulated research methodology which is open to addition and modification, but the core values to it are constant. And, those values are what postmodernism questions through its rejection of "... race [and its preference of] fluidity, mobility, and fleeting characteristics" (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 158). However, Lyotard's view of postmodernism as a nascent state of modernism is shared in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* by Ihab Hassan who contends that postmodernism "contains its enemy within itself" (263) and that a writer

can “in his or her own life time, easily write both a modernist and postmodernist work” (264). Summarizing Hassan’s concept of postmodernism, thus, it could be said that postmodernism does not refer to a new period in literature, but it represents some features of a kind of literature that is not unique to a particular age.

In contrast to Hassan’s, Frederic Jameson’s analysis of the term is important in understanding the political and economic dimensions of postmodernism as he sees the post-modern condition of the western society as the product of late capitalist consumerism, hence placing it in the context of economic and cultural levels. In his book on Frederic Jameson, Adam Roberts states that Hassan is preoccupied with the post-modernist style whereas Jameson sees it as the very condition of life in a particular economic mode of production and consumption (113). Taking the risk over-simplification, thus, it could be said that, for Jameson, postmodernism is an expression of the new logic of capitalism manifested in works of art and architectures of contemporary western society.

From the above discussion, perhaps, it would not be misleading to say that post-modernism, as it has been explained by Lyotard, is fundamentally a Western phenomenon both with its artistic and philosophical grudges against the Enlightenment project culminated in the high-modernist trends of Joyce and Eliot. Echoing Hans Bertens, it could also be said that:

Post-modernism means and has meant different things to different people at different conceptual levels, rising from humble literary-critical origins in the 1950s to a level of global conceptualization in the 1980s. The result was, and still is, a massive but also exhilarating confusion that has given important new impulses to and opened new territories for intellectual exploration. If there is a common denominator to all these postmodernisms, it is that of a crisis in

representation: a deeply felt loss of faith in our ability to represent the real, in the widest sense (*The Idea of the Postmodern* 10).

This sense of crisis is not only felt by the artists alone but also by those who theorize art. The artists' loss of faith in the face of the civilizational crisis initiated by the European War in 1913 has been capitalized and institutionalized by the theorists. In Richard Rorty's words, these theorists/critics "developed a kind of writing which is neither the evaluation of the relative merits of literary productions, nor intellectual history, nor moral philosophy, nor epistemology, nor social prophecy but all these things mingled together into a new genre. This genre is often still called 'literary criticism,' however, for an excellent reason" (Rorty 66). Terry Eagleton's explanation of it in his book *The Illusions of Postmodernism* can be quite effective in defining it. In the "preface" to this book Eagleton states:

The word *postmodernism* generally refers to a form of contemporary culture, whereas the term *postmodernity* alludes to a specific historical period. Postmodernity is a style of thought which is suspicious of classical notions of truth, reason, identity, and objectivity of the idea of universal progress or emancipation, of single frameworks, grand narratives or ultimate grounds of explanation. Against these Enlightenment norms, it sees the world as contingent, ungrounded, diverse, unstable, indeterminate, a set of disunified cultures or interpretations which breed a degree of skepticism about the objectivity of truth, history and norms, the givenness of natures and the coherence of identities.

Eagleton summarizes the fundamental features of postmodern thoughts which, so it seems, have their roots in the Nietzschean notion of "nihilism". However, the ultimate consequence

of embracing such a view of life is brilliantly portrayed by Fyodor Dostoevsky through the Underground Man in his *Notes from the Underground*. The Underground Man knew the causes of his self-loathing, and celebrated those, and in so doing he debased himself. A post-modernist traces the causes behind the crises s/he faces in life, and very much like the Underground Man s/he celebrates those. As Eagleton states:

The greatest test of postmodernism, or for that matter of any other political doctrine is how it would shape up to that. Its rich body of work on racism and ethnicity, on the paranoia of identity-thinking, on the perils of totality and the fear of otherness: all this, along with its deepened insights into the cunning of power, would no doubt be of considerable value. But its cultural relativism and moral conventionalism, its scepticism, pragmatism and localism, its distaste for ideas of solidarity and disciplined organization, its lack of any adequate theory of political agency: all these would tell heavily against it (*The Illusions of Postmodernism* 134).

No doubt, Eagleton views the postmodern condition from a Marxist position. But, the lack of agency and political commitment that he identifies as the features of postmodernism is not without ground. Postmodernism's rejection of history as a grand narrative often results in the interpretation of a fundamentally historical event by taking it out of its context. This decontextualization is the ultimate aspect of Bhabha's hybridity as he frequently aspires to provide a postmodern analysis of the postcolonial condition. Bhabha's configuration of the postcolonial identity is misleading as he equates postcolonial people with Lacan's infant and hence strips them off of their political and historical agencies.

Bhabha's method of problematizing the identity formation in the postcolonial context is unquestionably poststructuralist: his application of the Lacanian mirror stage blurs the

historical antagonism between the colonizer and the colonized, the oppressor and the oppressed. Lacanian Mirror Stage implies that the idea of self or identity is developed through the external image of the body (either reflected in a mirror, or represented to the infant by its mother). This reflection instigates the child to separate itself from the mother, and this separation takes place exactly when it enters the world of language. The child for the first time uses “I” to represent his/her selfhood. For Lacan, the child or the self needs an “other” to conceptualize his identity that further develops with his/her entrance into the world of language represented through different social relations. Lacan’s concept of mirror stage is heavily influenced by Henri Wallon²⁹, whose ideas of the development of human selfhood was contested by Norman N. Holland and Raymond Tallis³⁰ on the ground that it does not apply to individuals who are blind.

Bhabha’s theory is also heavily influenced by Jacques Derrida as he relentlessly insists on the textual representations of colonial conditions which reinforces the Derridian proclamation that “there is nothing outside the text”. Bhabha’s obsession with semiotic representation of the traumas living under colonial rule, as it is reflected in his essay “Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition,” (“Remembering Fanon 112) has been taken to task by San Juan who states that “In a typical move, Bhabha situates Fanon in the topos of ambivalence, in ‘the uncertain interstices of historical change’” (*Beyond Postcolonial Theory* 27). Bhabha in this essay claims that “Fanon’s *Black Skin and White Masks* rarely historicizes the colonial experience. There is no master narrative or realist perspective that provides a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the

²⁹See in Roudinesco, 29.

³⁰ See Tallis, 153.

problem of individual or collective psyche” (“Remembering Fanon” 115). According to Juan, Bhabha extrapolates the vital question that Fanon asks— “What does the Black man want?”— out of the context and “pos[ing it] in a vacuum [without any] references to colonial racism in Africa, Algeria, the United States, and elsewhere, [Bhabha] blunts the political edge of the text and mystifies Fanon’s argument” (*Beyond Postcolonial Theory* 27). For Bhabha the Black man is a Lacanian infant emerging from a void with primordial desires that do not have any political or historical realities. Bhabha insists that the Lacanian psychoanalytic doctrine of “the splitting moment of desire” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 74) can define the Black man or the Other. According to Juan, Bhabha posits this injunction: the “Other must be seen as the necessary negation of a primordial identity—cultural or psychic—that introduces the system of differentiation which enables the ‘cultural’ to be signified as linguistic, symbolic, or historical reality” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 119).

Bhabha’s discourse on hybridity is quintessentially language-centric: dispensing with categories and locations in the service of ambivalence and valorizing a fluid relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, hybridity absolutely negates “postcolonialism’s anti-Eurocentric function of tearing down western culture’s totalizing perspective through the interrogation of orientalist stereotyping, the representation of history, the hegemony of English studies, and gender and racial constructions on the one hand, and with the celebration of multiculturalism and diffusion manifested in postcolonial studies on the other” (Sethi, 14). However, hybridity is explained by Bhabha with reference to liminality which he describes as the environment in-between the interstices where cultural transformations occur. In postcolonial theory, liminality as a term is often deployed to define the conditions of a person trapped between two borders or in a threshold that distinctly divides different spheres. Bhabha

takes serious interest in this border location, as this is where the hybridization process takes place. Ashcroft et al. discuss the significance of liminality in postcolonial theory, particularly because of “its usefulness for describing an ‘in-between’ space in which cultural change may occur: the transcultural space in which strategies for personal or communal self-hood may be elaborated, a region in which there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states”³¹. For Bhabha, liminality can both be a condition or a location where a person is confronted with confusion, indeterminacy, and ambiguity. As he claims, “This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibilities of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 4). What must be noted here is that Bhabha does not conduct any empirical research on the people trapped in the so-called liminal space, rather he relies entirely on textual representations of them, particularly novels by controversial Europeanized non-Europeans like Naipaul.

Although initially used in psychology, liminality first applied by Arnold van Gennep in *Les Rites de Passage* (1909) (translated into English in 1960) to describe the transition rites and the significant changes in a person going through these rites. Gennep contends that various categories of rites can be divided into distinctive three phases: rites of separation (*séparation*), transition rites (*marge*) and rites of incorporation (*aggrégation*) (11). During the first phase, the initiate prepares her/himself for the ritual by giving up his social rank or status. The second phase of the ritual is the liminal period of transition that functions as the middle passage

³¹ See in Ashcroft, 2000, p. 130.

between the previous and the future statuses of the initiate. And finally, the third phase allows the initiate to assume his or her new status and reintegrate into society.

Genep's concept of liminality gained widespread critical attention through Victor Turner's anthropological research conducted on the Ndembu people in Central Africa. While observing the rites practiced by the Ndembu, Turner found that their function was to 'indicate and constitute transitions between states' (*Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage* 93) and that the term *limen*, meaning the in-between or transitional stage, is the most significant one to understand the entire ritual process. During this liminal period, for giving up previous identity the initiates experience disorientation, and remain perplexed for inhabiting new forms of identity in time. The initiates often appear to be inconsistent in terms of the behavior they are supposed to demonstrate based on the newly assumed identity: ambiguity, confusion, alienation, disorientation, and embarrassment are some of the major traits observed in initiates trapped in the liminal phase of the rite. Comparing the disoriented psychological status of the initiates in the liminal phase to the Freudian unconscious, Turner states that "the attributes of liminality or of liminal or liminoid personae are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space"(95). According to Turner, "liminality is that moment "when the past has lost its grip and the future has not yet taken definite shape" (qtd. in Kalua 24).

To theorize the cultural transformations experienced by (ex)colonized people in the threshold, Bhabha borrows Turner's concept of liminality and brands it "the Third Space" characterized with confusion and paradox. With the intention of explaining the "dialectical tension between the poles of order and disorder that have marked [his] life and [his] work,"

Bhabha finds Turner's notion of liminality quite effective, because “[it] is often graspable at a level of cognition as a dialectical process that lacks a constitutive materiality, 'the dialectic without transcendence’”(Bhabha, “Unpacking My Library”, 199).

Turner’s border-space, where “things cease to signify other things,” is used by Bhabha, as the site to locate culture. In the very first line of *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha renames Turner’s border-space as “the realm of the beyond” (1); the beyond as a contested space, “the borderlines of the present” (7); “the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the beyond” (*location of Culture* 2). For Bhabha, this border-space “provides the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the society itself” (*Location of Culture* 2). The elaborating strategies that Bhabha talks about are the tactics deployed by the postcolonial metropolitan subjects like him living in the First World.

Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* theorizes the “postcolonial metropolitan subject” whose identity is formed by a liminal social drama that involves active cultural exchanges. The postcolonial metropolitan subject “highlight[s] the historical reasons for the geographical and cultural discordance between the subject and the nation in which he/she resides” (Lee, “A Phenomenology for Homi Bhabha’s Postcolonial Metropolitan Subject,” 537). According to Bhabha, he experiences a split, a doubling quality that instigates the similar experiences of uneasiness and discomfort in the First World person he interacts with. As Bhabha explains, this place where such interactions take place can serve as a site for the possible exercise of the

agency and the promotion of change through contestation of prevailing concepts of self, culture, nation, and meanings. As he states in “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences”:

The enunciation of cultural difference problematizes the division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address. It is the problem of how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated, and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic. That iteration negates our sense of the origins of the struggle. It undermines our sense of the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons, by questioning our sense of the authority of cultural synthesis in general (qtd. in Ashcroft et al. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, 156).

It is to be noted here that Bhabha, in a very typical postmodernist tone, questions the validity of history which ‘is not necessarily a faithful sign ... but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic’. Bhabha is equally suspicious of the epistemological representation of the colonized people and their culture or history, as he claims epistemology can never fully depict what it endeavors to depict because of the inevitable excesses that escape such knowledge claims. Bhabha’s position is evidently poststructuralist when he claims that “culture” as a sign is homogenous and monolithic as it is unable to signify the diverse heterogeneities within it. Bhabha claims the sum of the parts that constitute a culture is greater than the whole (*Location of Culture* 149). Utilizing this idea of the constituting parts being greater than the whole, Bhabha asserts that postcolonial metropolitan subjects cannot be understood in terms of the general categories like race/class/gender etc. As signs, these

categories cannot contain the experiences of individuals, and individuals can thus contest the typical identities imposed on them by the society or state. This contestation as well as the acceptance of new dimensions of identity is epistemologically non-representable as the individuals themselves are often unaware of the transformations they are going through. This is how Bhabha strips the colonized people's struggles off of their political and revolutionary aspects and reduces their experiences to the level of the unconscious. Fanon's Black man does not have any agency to Bhabha: he achieves his agency through hybridization.

As Emily Lee explains, Bhabha mystifies his methodology in theorizing the agency of Fanon's Black man as "... he jumps from one framework to another and alludes to more than one at a time. He never explicitly defines the parameters of his theoretical field" (539). But, San Juan demystifies Bhabha's postmodernist aerobatics as he asserts that "Bhabha makes Fanon reject the Hegelian 'dream for a human reality in itself-for itself' for a nondialectical Manicheanism" (28). Bhabha provides a semiotic reading of Fanon's desire and deflates the enormous significance of the critical analysis in *The Wretched of the Earth* by stifling him in the third space of displacement and disorientation. Displacement and disorientation thus become the fundamental aspects of postcolonial subjects and postcoloniality itself. In Juan's words, "Reductive closure for Fanon is complete" (28).

For Bhabha, hybridity is the single most aspect of colonial condition. To substantiate his claim, he uses Fanon's analysis of the Black Man's psyche under the pressures of colonial rule. According to Fanon, a Black man faces psychological traumas when he comes to understand that what his colonial masters taught him—to desire whiteness and to detest his black self—is not practically achievable: he can never be white, neither can he completely negate his blackness. Bhabha takes Fanon's idea one step further and suggests that a Black

man is torn between these two binaries and the pressure of choosing an identity results in a state of permanent psychic uncertainty. Fanon's image of black skin/white masks is not, Bhabha explains, "a neat division," but

a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once which makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable *evolué* (an abandonment neurotic, Fanon claims) to accept the colonizer's invitation to identity: "you are a doctor, a writer, a student, you are *different*—you are one of us". It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different'—to be different from those that are different makes you the same—that the Unconscious speaks of the form of Otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement. It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonized, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the White man's artifice inscribed on the black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes (*Location of Culture* 117).

Bhabha's theory is thus primarily focused on the people living in the diaspora, and homeless expatriates. According to Bhabha, people in this territory live a 'half life' as they often revive the memories of their homeland. The memories of the past resurface in the present and create a sense of mental alienation in the displaced migrant. For Bhabha, this sense of alienation is an opportunity for the migrant to redefine himself in the new environment. Bhabha uses this as an explanatory tool in formulating his idea on the interdependence between the colonizer and the colonized. The alienated migrant is forced to accept the colonial values imposed on him which he cannot fully accept but ends up producing something that defies the colonizers'

expectations. What initially appears to be an abuse, the imposition of colonial cultural values, is turned into a privilege by the colonized migrants as they forge a new identity through the hybridization of these values. Hybridity, as Bhabha claims, becomes a new concept that questions the established notions of culture and identity and opens up avenues for the migrants in the third space to contest the binaries of the self and the Other.

Postmodern theorists, rejecting the concepts of universality and homogeneity of culture and history as mundane in addressing the problems in a world that is rapidly becoming global and multicultural, defend Bhabha's hybridity for its emphasis on the formation of identity going beyond the binaries of self and other. Paul Gilroy's critique of cultural nationalism in his book *The Black Atlantic* (1993) sets the tone for theorists to speak about a Caribbean identity that is simultaneously African, American, Caribbean, and British—in a word, hybrid. Through a critical analysis of the new identities generated by the movement of the people from Africa to Europe, America, and the Caribbean, Gilroy demonstrates that cultural exchange is a multidimensional process, and that there is now no such thing as pure white or European culture. Identities formed by such cultural and intellectual fusion require fresh interpretation using new critical tools. According to Gilroy this new identity is 'intercultural and transnational' that 'provides a means to re-examine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory' (ix, 16). Gilroy's ideas on the ways different cultures in the Caribbean mold and modify each other have been further developed by Stuart Hall as he asserts that identity is the product of dynamic interactions between different groups of people, that it is never a given essence. Simply put, Hall is advocating Bhabha's theory of hybridity as the new critical tool in understanding the identity of the people in the diaspora. As he states:

Hybridity, syncretism, multidimensional temporalities, the double inscriptions of colonial and metropolitan times, the two-way cultural traffic characteristic of the contact zones of the cities of the colonized long before they have become the characteristic tropes of the cities of the colonizing, the forms of translation and transculturation which have characterized the colonial relation from its earliest stages, the disavowals and in-betweenness, the-here-and-theres, mark the *aporias* and re-doublings whose interstices colonial discourses have always negotiated and about which Homi Bhabha has written with such profound insight (251).

The problem with Gilroy, Hall and those who prefer a postmodernist lens in looking at the postcolonial landscape is that they reproduce the same mistake that they aim to correct. Although quick enough to reject binaries of self and other, or question the validity of history, theorists promoting hybridity assume that different people under colonization in different geographical locations experienced similar oppressions or deployed similar strategies for emancipation. A middleclass, college-educated Indian serving as a clerk in the British colonial administration in the 1850s' Calcutta, and a disillusioned Kikuyu young man's death wish during the Mau Mau³² to regain his right to his ancestor's land do not share the same consequences: for the Indian man mimicry of English values is predictable, but for the Kikuyu man a total annihilation of anything British is a sworn commitment. Theorists like Gilroy, Hall, or Bhabha apply a sophisticated postmodern vocabulary to equate the experiences of diverse people under a universal term hybridity, even though they are critical of universality and

³² The violent, grass-roots resistance movement launched by the Kikuyu and related ethnic groups against the British colonial government in Kenya in the 1950s. It had its origins in the sense of deprivation felt by the Kikuyu, who had lost much of their land to white settlers.

homogeneity of cultural origins in postcolonial studies. Uncritical application of hybridity, therefore, homogenizes “the colonial presence that was felt differently by various subjects of the Empire—some never even saw Europeans in all their lives and for them authorities or native face. For others, the foreign presence was daily visible, but space was still divided into their sphere and ours” (Loomba, 150). Bhabha’s theory completely overlooks the specificities and particularities of colonial experiences and presents them as constant in terms of time and space. Rob Nixon’s cautionary remark on the celebratory nature of hybridity is quite fitting:

The insights of the by now considerable literature around the issues of masking and mimicry ought always ... to be measured against conditions that are unavoidably local and immensely variable in the possibilities they allow. Otherwise the risk arises by sentimentalizing masquerade by abstracting it into unitary phenomenon that is inherently, if ambiguously empowering (24-25).

The universalism in Bhabha’s approach to identity arises, as Loomba asserts, for his helpless dependence on “semiotic and psychoanalytic terms ... which are not always sensitive to the ways in which subjectivities are shaped by colonial rule to specific histories and locations” (Loomba 150). To Bhabha colonial realities do not exist outside the realm of semiotic representation, as he claims “there is no knowledge—political or otherwise—outside representation” (*Location of Culture* 33). This arrogant reduction of the struggles of millions oppressed by colonialism has been best expressed by Benita Parry who states that “what [Bhabha] offers us is The Third World according to the word” (“Signs of Our Times: Discussion of Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*” 9). The word here ironically stands for poststructuralist and postmodernist discourses, and from Bhabha’s approach to postcolonialism, it seems that hybridity cannot be explained without these discourses. Parry’s

view on hybridity is reinforced by Arif Dirlik who states that hybridity seems to be understood as “uniformly between the post-colonial and the First World, never, to my knowledge between one post-colonial intellectual and another” (“The Post-colonial Aura” 348). Dirlik states that the concept of hybridity or the conditions that trigger the hybridization process can be understood only when the ideological and philosophical standing of the theorists are closely examined.

Ama Mazama’s analysis of this imitation process, which Bhabha brands as hybridization, reinforces Dirlik’s view: Mazama contends that most theorists who aspire to understand the effects of colonization often operate “within a fundamentally European framework”(4). Referring to Fanon’s affiliation to political Marxism and Aimé Césaire’s silence about European progress, Mazama exposes the dangers of critiquing European colonization from within a European framework. In Mazama’s words, “what was being critiqued was not Western European modernity, but its abusive practices, as if the two could be separated” (4). Mazama’s critical reading of Fanon traces the influence of the existentialist philosophy on him and his rejection of “blackness as a racist ontological category” on the ground that it was invented “to objectify African people in an attempt to better justify our inferior status in the colonial order while rationalizing white supremacy”(14). Mazama’s question to Fanon, about “the role of African culture in this process of re-humanization,” is equally applicable to Bhabha: what is the role of the African self in the hybridization process? Does this process address the identity crises, if there are any at all, faced by continental ex-colonized Africans? If it does, why does Bhabha have to select the Caribbean as the site of this peculiar identity that he claims to be universal?

Answers to these question is evident in Ama Mazama's Afrocentric analysis of Fanon who "in no way ... dedicate [him]self to the revival of an unjustly recognized Negro civilization" and that "[he] will not make [him]self the man of any past" (15). Fanon's dislocation, as Mazama demonstrates, becomes quite evident in his assertion that "[t]here is no Negro mission". Ironically Bhabha begins his theory primarily based on the Fanonian experience and uses it in such a way as if Fanon represents colonial struggle in its entirety. While Bhabha is much interested to borrow the worst in Fanon as well as Naipaul, Mazama, as a true Afrocentrist, suggests that Fanon's view on destroying the colonizer, not his imitation, should be embraced. Mazama also suggests that had Fanon been able to live a little longer, we certainly would have evolved with a centric position in terms of his views on culture and civilization (16).

Maulana Karenga's Kawaida philosophy, developed during the fiery days of the Black Panther Movement in the 1960s, significantly parallels Fanon's rejection of his past. Based on African American people's firm determination to overthrow all the barriers on the way to their emancipation, Kawaida theory is "dedicated to cultural revolution, radical social change, and bringing good in the world" ("Kawaida Philosophy and Practice: Questions of Life and Struggle"). Karenga locates this struggle for emancipation in "the hearts and minds of our people" and aspires to contribute to it by "breaking the hold the oppressor has on so many of our minds, reaching within our own history and culture, bringing forth our best ideas and practices, and struggling to create free space for this and other good to take root and flourish in the world" ("Kawaida Philosophy and Practice: Questions of Life and Struggle"). This bold assertion completely negates Bhabha's hybridization as a process of identity formation: Karenga finds force not in mimicking the oppressor but in the very culture of the oppressed

that “provides a necessary moral dimension to our struggle, providing life-enhancing views and values that inform and undergird our practice and teach us the good and rightful way to walk, work and struggle in the world” (“Kawaida Philosophy and Practice: Questions of Life and Struggle”). The foundation of this formidable cultural force is the sacred wisdom of great ancient Kemetic philosophers that Karenga scholastically enumerates in his book *The Husia*. In terms of Karenga’s culturally grounded approach to healing the wounds perpetrated by colonization, Bhabha’s hybridization is just pathologically hopeless. Karenga’s approach is quintessentially Ma’atian as it aspires to restore the balance in African life by reinstating the values replaced by the colonial interventions. The “self-defining and self-determining attitude” that Asante requires to “reform the African American person” (*Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Orientation* 2) is reinforced by Karenga who provides a total redefinition of agency, identity, and progress from the Kemetic perspective. This perspective is essential as Asante contends that “European ideologies from dialectical materialism to postmodernism protect the ruthless Eurocentric idea of White triumphalism and hegemony,” and that European thought does not “allow space for other cultures” (*Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Orientation* 3). The premises on which Bhabha theorizes hybridity—alienation, degradation, dysfunctionality, self-hatred—in Asante’s words, are “directly related to a misplaced consciousness” (*Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Orientation* 16). While Bhabha exploits this misplaced consciousness by misguiding an oppressed person’s effort in reconstructing his identity towards a ridiculous mimicking of his oppressor, Karenga offers a “corrective action that included the reconstruction of cultural values on the basis of African traditions” (*Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Orientation* 117). While Bhabha’s theory is suggestive, Karenga’s is prescriptive: Kawaida theory is the prescription to

rescue and reconstruct the truth, righteousness, justice, order, balance, harmony, and reciprocity that once existed. It is not hybridization, but a reconstruction of the Ma'atic principles that will certainly enable the oppressed to reassert his lost identity.

CHAPTER 4

GAYATRI SPIVAK: AFROCENTRIC RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE SUBALTERN

*and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid*

*So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive*

(Audre Lorde, "Litany for Survival")

Renowned poet Audre Lord's determination to speak up is the continuation of a long and rich history of resistance initiated by legendary African women like Queen Nanny of Jamaica, Harriet Tubman, Harriet Jacobs and many others who spoke both through actions and words. Gayatri Spivak's concept of the subaltern, which occupies a significant position in postcolonial studies, negates the role played by our ancestral mothers as subalterns. Spivak's deconstruction of postcolonialism as a theoretical perspective based on cultural and historical experiences of/on European colonialism is undoubtedly thought provoking, but her final claim that the subaltern cannot speak is the predictable result of trying to understand oppression using oppressor's tools. Using post-structuralist deconstruction or deconstructive post-structuralism Spivak questions the Subaltern Studies Group's efforts in reconstructing the dynamic roles played by disempowered women in India. According to Spivak, these efforts of postcolonial historians to speak for the voiceless Indian subalterns will further deteriorate their already critical condition by placing them in a subordinate position in their own history. Spivak's position is clearly centric, as was Said's when he discovered that the oriental subject is mute

in European discourses, but this centric position does little to no service to those dispossessed women she aspires to protect from the capitalist system. Referring to the Hindu tradition of *Sati*³³ and the European colonizers' holier than thou attitude of "save[ing] brown women from brown men," Spivak claims that "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" Can the Subaltern Speak?" 287). Although Spivak's theory is very situated in the colonial context, her analysis, like that of Said's and Bhabha's, is mostly contained within the text. Her conclusion, that the subaltern cannot speak and never will, indicates to a nihilism characteristic of postmodernism. Through an Afrocentric analysis of Spivak's subalternity, this chapter will demonstrate that this concept is historically situated and that it negates the dynamic roles played by African women in their struggles against European colonialism and American slavery.

Post-modernism, disillusioned by the failure of the Enlightenment project, often resorts to a philosophy of nihilism that devalues almost everything including the fundamental issues like identity, agency, and history. Although Gayatri Spivak is not overtly nihilistic about the validity of identity and agency, her views on the ability of the oppressed people to assert themselves as agents in their own history are primarily conditioned by her postmodern ideologies expressed postcolonially. Spivak's defamiliarization and decontextualization of evidently historical contexts may be viewed by many as innovative post-modern strategies suggested by Francois Lyotard, these did not produce the desired result in her application to understand subalternity in Indian context. Spivak's deployment of postmodernism in

³³ The ritualistic burning to death of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre in India which was abolished in 1829 by the Bengal Sati Regulation Act

understanding the postcolonial condition of disadvantaged and disempowered women in “Can the Subaltern Speak?” inevitably leads to her mistaken view that the subaltern cannot speak. An Afrocentric analysis of Spivak’s thesis demonstrates that the subaltern did speak long before the birth of all these post-isms, and that the subaltern reclaims her subject position in many ways other than speaking. For Spivak, the act of speaking is limited within textual representation, which is of course important, but it negates the silent actions of the marginalized people that go way beyond textuality. Harriet Tubman and Queen Nanny on the one hand, and Harriet Jacobs on the other are prominent examples of so-called subaltern who spoke through actions and words: perhaps Spivak is not interested in listening to them. In the conceptual narratives on resistance against the European dehumanization of African people, the immensely significant case of Queen Nanny, the venerated leader of the Windward Jamaican Maroons, reveals the hitherto unexplored gap between theory and praxis. Queen Nanny’s actions speaks louder than the frail words of freedom Spivak expects from her subaltern: Nanny negates subalternity, so does most women under oppression.

The truly activist stance for the collective emancipation of a group of people found its sacred manifestation in the lifelong struggle that Queen Nanny waged against the Imperial British forces in during the early decades of the 18th Century. Given the time she was born (approximately 1680; Gottlieb, XV) and the circumstances she was in, her contributions in liberating the Maroons, her strategic decisions in fighting against an army equipped with the most advanced technology available at the time, and her unmatched leadership skills transformed Queen Nanny into the epitome of a revolutionary figure that outwitted even the colonial policy makers sitting in metropolitan London. As a leader with gifted insight, Queen Nanny had been significantly instrumental in the formation of a “collective Maroon

consciousness” (Gottlieb 79) that bonded together the fugitive enslaved Africans irrespective of their ethnic or ideological differences. Despite the significant role she played in the resistance against oppression, reference to Queen Nanny and her contributions are often silenced by the historians. The historical significance of Queen Nanny and how her activism challenge the paradoxical schism between theories and praxis of resistance for liberation. Afrocentric approach to identity and history as it has been discussed by Molefi Asante, should be the theoretical framework in understanding the agency of any oppressed group: application of Spivakian subalternity in understanding our ancestral mothers will be a disgrace to the brave actions they took and the great sacrifice they made for our collective emancipation.

Western historiography is fundamentally concerned with distorting facts or suppressing them so that African history becomes sterile with hypothetical parables highlighting futuristic agendas. Readers of history are systematically deprived of the existence of significant historical figures like Queen Nanny or Harriet Tubman and the remarkable role they played in shaping the history of an entire race or community. Postcolonialism, as an extension of postmodernism, gave authority to a group of theorists and educators in misrepresenting the ex-colonies and the people living therein. Post-colonial scholars theorize on resistance, categorize it as nationalistic or constructive force, but they hardly mention the names of once living human beings who perceived resistance through their actions. As Gottlieb tells, “Queen Nanny is ... mostly ignored character in Western History” (Gottlieb 85) and it is the task of Afrocentric historians to reconstruct what Western History has suppressed for so long. This is where Spivak’s theory collides with Afrocentricity as she decrees that the subaltern will not speak. The subalterns spoke and demanded us to listen to them, and now it is too late for us to make them speak again. But, it is not too late to retrace their lost words, not too late to let them speak

through our mouths, because we are their only link to the very history from which they are missing.

Molefi Kete Asante understands the role that Afrocentric historians can play in reconstructing the past and the fundamental necessity of writing the history of Africa from an authentic African point of view. To justify his claims and to validate his assumptions, Asante consciously refuses to cite scholars from Europe or America: in his 2007 book *The History of Africa* he refers to African scholars whose views are far more reliable and credible than those of the Europeans. Asante challenges African history written by Europeans and boldly rejects European periodization of history characterized with markers like Medieval or Enlightenment. Whose enlightenment? The non-whites have no place in the answer. Thus, prioritizing orature over written form of history, initiating a new periodization in history, and rejecting all inauthentic and biased views on Africa by anyone, Asante makes his objective clear as a scholar which is “to provide the world the most valid and valuable analysis of African phenomena [he] can, leaving aside the moribund legacies of colonial and post-colonial studies” (2007a, 50).

This approach to history that prioritizes oral or folk narratives is fundamentally essential in restoring the historicity of Queen Nanny, mostly because the official versions of history endorsed by Euro-American scholars prescribe only written documents or records. Someone with a little sense can understand the politics behind such prescriptions: Queen Nanny is hardly present as a positive actor in the history of her time, and hence historical restoration aimed at rescuing her identity is most likely to be finding her as a witch with supernatural power. This approach will never restore her humanity, her agency, or her true identity. Her identity can only be restored if an Afrocentric approach is applied in the process.

From an Afrocentric position, thus, it can be said that the emergence of Queen Nanny and her collective approach against colonial oppressions and her contributions in the formation of the identity unique to the Jamaican Maroons substantially invalidates Spivak's concept of the voiceless subaltern. Queen Nanny's historical significance is not limited in her successful battles against the British forces, the political and cultural dimensions of her leadership deserve critical rendition as well. Long before the birth of nationalism and nation-states in the world, Queen Nanny shaped the nationalistic feelings among the Maroons in Jamaica. Because of her insight into the dehumanization of the Africans and her accurate understanding of the most appropriate way out of it, Queen Nanny was able to unite the run-away enslaved Africans based on common heritage. This particular notion of common of heritage, despite religious or ethnic pluralities, was the key factor in modern nation states that emerged immediately after World War I. As Gottlieb tells, "Nanny as an historical presence, serves to define, delineate, and separate Maroon culture from the rest of Jamaican culture" (80). Benedict Anderson, who is hailed for his theories and analyses on nationalism in his acclaimed book *Imagined Communities*, talks about exactly the same things that Queen Nanny did almost two centuries ago. Western scholarship recognized Anderson, Queen Nanny does not exist in that.

Queen Nanny's exceptional strategies as an expert in planning battles have often led the Maroon troops to victory against the mighty British army with advanced weaponry. Her effective use of "Abeng" as a device for long distance communications, her application of camouflages in deceiving the enemies, her use of the mythical "pot," and her unique way of narrowing the paths to the Moore Town are some of the examples of Queen Nanny's strategies by which she stood tall against the British army. Made of a cow horn with one tiny little hole at one end, the "abeng" has been used by Nanny to transmit coded messages to a long distance

through messengers posted on Pumpkin or Blue Hills to others at distant places. Through this device, Queen Nanny was able to prepare her soldiers or inform them to set up ambushes long before the arrival of the British soldiers. Contrasting against the bright red-colored uniform of the British soldiers, Nanny used to cover her freedom fighters with leaves and natural things which allowed them to easily mingle with the environment without being noticed by the British soldiers.

In the resistance against the oppression as the chosen path of life in the New World, Queen Nanny emerges as the epitome of freedom. Her relentless struggle against the colonial powers in Jamaica has canonized her not only as a freedom fighter but as the country's National Hero. She is regarded as true leader of the oppressed as she mentored the Maroons in rescuing fellow Africans from the shackles of slavery by operating commando missions in the plantations. Nanny was a freedom fighter because the rationale behind her struggle was nothing but true liberation, the freedom to assert her right as a human being. Definitely Queen Nanny was a radical, and her radicalism used to hypnotize the oppressed people to long for freedom. Her radicalism was manifested in her actions, the actions that led to the unique Maroon consciousness, a consciousness that helped the oppressed people to unite and operate for a common cause: freedom. And, freedom never comes without resistance: this is what Queen Nanny inculcated in the brains of her disciples. Resistance requires a firm belief in one's existence, and existence without cultural or historical underpinnings is bound to be a crisis, a crisis that Fanon repeatedly denies but actually suffers from. Queen Nanny understood who she was, where she was from, and what she aspired to be: this is why resistance for her was a way of life, not an intellectual rendition of hypothetical plans. Liberation for her was something

worth dying for, not a charity from some over-arching masters: she was prepared to die for it, so were her followers.

Nanny was a subaltern, because, first she was enslaved, and then she was absolutely outside the domain of power. Nanny was a subaltern, because Jamaica was a European colony: it was ruled by Spain from 1494 to 1655, and by England from 1655 to 1962. Despite all this, Nanny might not be considered a subaltern by Spivak, because for Spivak:

...subaltern is not just a classy word for "oppressed", for [the] Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie.... In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern—a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern.... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'.... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse, wanting a piece of the pie, and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern (de Kock 45).

Spivak will not allow historical figures like Queen Nanny and Harriet Tubman to be defined as subaltern because they will render her concept invalid: both Queen Nanny and Harriet Tubman spoke through their actions. Spivak probably will not allow Harriet Jacobs to claim the subaltern title as well, even though she was brutally enslaved: Harriet wrote a book voicing not only her turmoil under slavery but also her views on it. According to Spivak, a subaltern cannot speak in the space of Western languages, and both Queen Nanny and Harriet Jacobs defies this by speaking symbolically through actions and literally through a book. Spivak's

theory is essentially representative of the postcolonial studies “underwritten by the High theory of Derrida, Lacan and Foucault incorporated by their disciples in the academy (especially Said, Bhabha, and Spivak)”, and these “original postcolonial theorists are now considered to have been appropriated by the global economy and judged inauthentic in terms of the problems that purport to represent as they have moved Westward” (Sethi 9). According to Benita Parry, Spivak’s post-structuralist methodology is politically inadequate as “her anti-essentialist position and total disregard of the idea of origin as myth foreclose the fact of the subaltern’s history” (Sethi 11). Echoing Ania Loomba, it can easily be said that Spivak’s concept of the silenced subaltern is more conceptual and interpretative than real, tending to become extremely disturbing for those who are involved in the retrieval of subaltern voices (Sethi 9).

CHAPTER 5

“DIVIDED TO THE VEIN?”: TWO FACES OF POSTCOLONIALISM IN NAIPAUL, WALCOTT, AND NGUGI

There are no post-modern gray lines here; you either stand with the oppressed and against the oppressor or you stand with the oppressor against liberation.

(Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 164)

“I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?
I who have cursed
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?”

(Walcott, “A Far Cry from Africa”)

But I, too, have ropes around my neck, I have them to this day, pulling me this way and that, East and West, the nooses tightening, commanding, choose, choose.

(Rushdie, *East, West*, 21.)

The second and the last quotes above demonstrate how most post-colonial writers, especially from the Caribbean Islands and India, tend to portray their so-called identity crisis, a crisis that many Western critics capitalize in producing their critical works and then marketing those for the consumption by the mass in the “Third Worlds,” while the first quotation shows what their attitude should have been. As a policy of disgracing the once colonized people and their culture, often the West selectively picks up works by controversial post-colonial writers who vehemently adhere to the colonial versions of “Third World” history and function as local agents of Eurocentrism. In return, the West honors these authors with accolades like the Booker Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Nobel Prize and incorporates them into the Canon. English departments throughout the ex-colonies, with the prescriptions from the critics based in the British and American universities, shoulder the responsibility of feeding the innocent students

with the so-called psychological traumas and pains that one has to undergo in a post-colonial society. As the bearers of the legacies of colonization, these students, caught between the erased pre-colonial past and the contaminated post-colonial present, are systematically introduced to the baseless identity crisis that the post-colonial authors like Naipaul and Rushdie propagate and the West disseminates. As a result, the post-colonial students ask: what to choose? And this is a question that has haunted numerous people of the present world crammed with ominous words like hybridity, alterity, liminality—words that have gotten currency with the advent of post-colonialism. Most post-colonial writers, like Walcott and Rushdie, portray this “doubleness” as an essential part of post-colonial identity: the opposing African/Asian and European influences that have shaped the ‘native’ heritage and culture, a curious love-and-hate relationship with this divided loyalty, an attempt at anchoring somewhere but failing to find any strong soil. Torn between such schizophrenic conflicts, as it is evident in the above quotations from Walcott and Rushdie, the postcolonial writers are always in search of identity. One very typical postcolonial experience has been to discover that what you *have been* is not the *real you*, and what you *really are* (were in fact) have been systematically distorted and/or destroyed by the colonial masters. An intelligent, inevitable response to this condition should have been, as Asante asserts above, to locate one’s cultural nucleus and accordingly define his/her identity by diving into the past. Unfortunately, post-colonial authors and theorists seldom tend to take this route in their way to challenging and changing the European misrepresentations of the non-European worlds. And, this is where post-colonialism can learn from the Afrocentric School of philosophy as it has been established by Molefi Kete Asante through his numerous ground-breaking books and scholarly articles since the 1980s. As a radical intellectual and revolutionary thinker, Asante is well aware of the politics of post-

colonialism and post-modernism, and this is why he boldly proclaims that “there is no double-consciousness” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 157). This chapter delves deeper into this double-consciousness and demonstrates that those who claim to be “divided to the vein” are actually not divided, but dislocated.

V. S. Naipaul claims that "Africa has no future" (qtd. in Hardwick), and this claim is poetically criticized by Derek Walcott in his poem titled “At Last”:

You spit on your people,
Your people applaud,
Your former oppressors laurel you.”

Walcott’s poetic proclamations turned out to be absolutely true when Naipaul got the Nobel Prize in literature “for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories” (Nobel Prize for Literature 2001 - Press Release). Despite Naipaul’s confused assertion to Rahul Singh that he is “not English, not Indian, not Trinidadian” but his “own person” his colonial masters conscripted him as a “British writer, born in Trinidad” (*Times of India* February 19, 2002) and recognized him as “Conrad’s heir” (Nobel Prize for Literature 2001 - Press Release). His views on the people of Trinidad will make the most racist person shiver: “These people [Trinidadians] live purely physical lives, which I find contemptible... It makes them only interesting to chaps in universities who want to do compassionate studies about brutes” (*The Guardian* October 11, 2001). Naipaul spat on us Africans and Indians, and we, together with our oppressors, applauded him. We applaud him to this date through teaching his novels as complex responses to hybridity inherent in the identity, behavior, and psychology of the Trinidadian Indians. Often we forget that, despite being a Trinidadian himself, Naipaul approaches the questions of hybridity and mimicry with such harshness that even the colonizers would not have dared to

use in their treatment of the colonized people, and that he defends the values of Western civilization as the only source of enlightenment and progress. Naipaul's dislocation is so severe that he has the audacity to declare that "Africans need to be kicked, that's the only thing they understand" (Hardwick 46). Unlike Naipaul, Walcott did not directly enlist himself as a Eurocentric, but the Swedish Academy did not fail to detect the thin layers of subtle Eurocentrism that run through his poetic allusions. The Nobel Press Release states, "We find Homer, Poe, Mayakovsky and Melville [in Walcott's poetry], allusions are made [by Walcott] to Brodsky ("the parentheses of palms/ shielding a candle's tongue"), and he quotes the Beatles' "Yesterday" (Nobel Prize for Literature 1992 - Press Release). Ironically, it is this aesthetics of assimilation that makes the subject of serious vituperations from his own country. Enough room is left there to examine the reasons for which Walcott, despite being a victim of colonization himself, finds reconciliation and assimilation as viable strategies in solving the crises that European imperialism initiated. Despite his unmatched poetic genius, Walcott's philosophy of assimilation rather than rejection, and his questionable ambivalence towards Europe have invited bitter criticism from the post-colonial world. Critics like Edward Kamau Brathwaite do not find it wrong to accuse Walcott of Eurocentricity and colonial attitude.

However, the so-called Postcolonial traumas that Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul have gone through are not of similar kind. Despite their Caribbean identity with diasporic roots and their overt or covert love for England and English language, Walcott and Naipaul differ much from each other in their positions regarding the center and the margin. Differences are there, indeed, but finally they converge as both the writers fail to hold on to their ancestral roots. An Afrocentric analysis of both their works will demonstrate how deliberately Naipaul and Walcott adhere to the long Eurocentric representation of Africa and India.

Instead of taking a position centered in their respective history and culture and subsequently providing the Trinidadian mass with a sense of identity, Naipaul started exploiting colonial wounds through his creative works. While writers like Achebe and N’gugi attempt to empathize with the victims of colonization and exploit the condition of hybridity as an anti-colonial tool regarding identity, culture, and language, Naipaul rather sarcastically laughs at this mimicry and Walcott suffers from self-pity. While Walcott found the task of choosing between his ancestral past and his contaminated present schizophrenic, Naipaul shamelessly rejects all his ancestral ties to India and embraces everything that colonial England has to offer because of his conviction that:

To be a colonial was to know a kind of security; it was to inhabit a fixed world. And I suppose that in my fantasy I had seen myself coming to England as to some purely literary region, where, untrammelled by the accidents of history and background, I could make a romantic career for myself as a writer. ... And I found that Conrad-sixty years before, in the time of a great peace-had been everywhere before me. Not as a man with a cause, but a man offering ... a vision of the world's half-made societies. ... Dismal, but deeply felt: a kind of truth and half a consolation (*The Return of Eva Peron* 216).

Facing the apparent lack of an established literary tradition and a rich cultural heritage in the colonized Trinidad, Naipaul’s creative efforts are not directed in locating his past, rather he shamelessly rejects anything African or Asian. In his novel *The Enigma of Arrival* Naipaul admits: “I knew and was glamoured by the idea of the metropolitan traveler, the man starting from Europe. It was the only kind of model I had” (153). He believes that “[he] live[s] in England and depend[s] on an English audience” (“London” 5), and that

Asiatics do not read, of course; they are a non-reading people. If they read at all, they read for magic. They read holy books, they read sacred hymns, or they read books of

wisdom. They do not read for the sake of inquiry or curiosity because their religion has filled the world for them completely.... I don't count the African readership and I don't think one should (Jussawalla 77).

Definitely it is up to the writer to decide who he writes for or about; definitely Naipaul has the right to join any literary traditions he likes; but, what makes him declare that none should count the African readership? The answer is evident when he confesses that "without London, without the generosity of the people of London, of critics and editors, one would have been trying to write in a wilderness, without any tradition behind oneself. It would have been an impossible occupation" (Hammer 46). There was no lack of tradition in Africa or India: it was Naipaul's deliberate choice not to join one. The long list of "modern" African literary masters including Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Steve Biko, Ama Ata Aidoo, Okot p'Bitek, Tsitsi Dangarembga, did not feel 'trying to write in a wilderness, without any tradition behind' themselves. It was their clear understanding of the rich and glorious oral tradition, their unstinted efforts to add something to that tradition, and their genuine love for the followers of that tradition that enabled them to create masterpieces like *Things Fall Apart*, *Weep Not, Child*, *Song of Lawino*, and *Nervous Conditions*. Naipaul's literary myopia and historical amnesia did not let him delve into the world's oldest literary tradition as it is evident in the *Epic of Sundiata*.

Now, is this myopia and amnesia on Naipaul's part a calculated effort to be recognized as a faithful servant at the service to British colonialism and Eurocentrism? Of course, it is, because for Naipaul *Heart of Darkness* is the Bible and Conrad the literary Messiah: because of his allegiance to the racist tradition that Conrad initiated, Naipaul has been hailed by the West as one of the best writers of his time. Following the footsteps of Conrad, Naipaul brazenly names India "An Area of Darkness" and in a work with the same title essentializes the Indians by claiming that

Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate, mostly, beside the railway tracks. They defecate on the beaches; they defecate on the hills; they defecate on the river banks; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover. ... The truth is that Indians do not see these squatters and might even, with complete sincerity, deny that they exist” (*An Area of Darkness* 70).

As a devoted disciple of Conrad and Forster, two racist writers misrepresenting Africa and India in their works, Naipaul provides highly controversial and falsified portrayals of colonial and postcolonial Africa and India which in turn have drawn him acclaim from North America and Europe. His obtaining of the 2001 Nobel Prize for literature is seen by the Indians and Africans as a reward for continuing the lies that his masters started five hundred years ago. At times his criticism of the people from Africa and India is so repulsive that readers find it hard to believe how a person of Indian descent could be so Eurocentric in his thoughts and ideas. In his statements on the Trinidadian Indians and Africans, for example, Naipaul endorses a Eurocentric view that surpasses even that of Conrad’s. Naipaul’s overt racism against these people becomes evident when in *The Middle Passage* he tells that the Trinidadians are like "monkeys pleading for evolution, each claiming to be better than the other, Indians and Negroes appeal to the unacknowledged white audience to see how much they despise each other" (*The Middle Passage* 80).

Naipaul’s works are the products of his deeply entrenched racism and his subservient acceptance of the one-sided history of white imperialism: his dislocation has reached such a height that he hardly ever notices any flaws with the colonial masters; blaming the victims is his only way of coming to terms with colonization and its aftermaths. Even when colonization of Africa enters into his narrative, he is highly cautious in selecting the views of pro-European Africans. Regarding Naipaul’s questionable treatment of colonization and its history in *The*

Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad, AbdelRahman says that the few times Naipaul mentions the colonial past here are very significant in terms of how they underplay the historical realities of colonialism. A local student of psychology and his girlfriend found “the past of slavery amusing and laughed at this story of slave trading”, a university teacher admits the European civilizing role and is thankful that “the Belgians gave us a state. Before the Belgians came, we had no state” (AbdelRahman 183). As readers we can expect even worse from Naipaul: he provides us with an Africa from the view-points of some dislocated Africans with no sense of African history or culture. Naipaul does not even care to say anything about the atrocities of Belgian colonialism in Congo and its connection with the present crises of the country. Surprisingly, much of his knowledge on Africa, if we call it so, is second-hand and gained from people who hardly represent the societies they talk for and about. Despite his preference for an objective truth which he believes exist, as he tells Adrian Rowe-Evans in an interview, and that one needs to “take everything into consideration, when one reacts to it,” (Jussawalla 25). Naipaul’s truths are absolutely subjective and highly selective. His accounts of almost every Africans in his fiction or travelogues are the products of his direct observations or his encounters with *expatriate* Africans: fictions become facts at his hands. Representations of Africans in Naipaul’s writings is thus inevitably stereotypical and generalized; based on his own prejudices Naipaul always justifies his version of the truth with utter cynicism. This is quite evident in his view on African women who, according to this self-righteous man, are essentially promiscuous. In many of his works Naipaul transforms this promiscuousness as an essential aspect of African life. For example, in *A Congo Diary* he declares that one can “knock on any door and the woman who answers will sleep with you. No questions of morality; it is a

woman's function to sleep with men" (11). In the same way, Naipaul in another book titled *Finding the Center* tries to establish this conviction by asserting that:

[Girls] at the university didn't sleep with boys at the university. They slept with men in the government. ... It was left to the Abidjan schoolgirls, the Lycennes, to sleep with the poor etudiants; and since an etudiant had only his grant, a Lycenne might have an arrangement with two or three etudiants at a time, sleeping with each once or twice a week, and collecting her accumulated gratuities at the end of the month (113).

Not only the people, even the African landscape along with its natural beauties is not spared from Naipaul's stringent criticism: with dark imageries he goes on creating an Africa trapped in primitivism, the Africa that he finds in Conrad. Like Conrad, he makes a pilgrimage to Congo; but, like a scavenger he picks up only those things that would help him disgrace the country. As he states, "Conrad's value to me is that he is someone who sixty years ago meditated on my world, a world I recognize today" (*The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad* 219). He recounts his views after the visit in the Congo in 1965 and 1966:

I saw there a rich town, abandoned by the Belgians. Street lamps rusty, sand everywhere, collapsed verandas. The Africans were camping in the houses, just the way the ancient English camped in the abandoned villas of the Romans. *Here again in Africa one was back in the 5th century. Native people camping in the ruins of civilization.* You could see the bush creeping back as you stood there . . . When you have watched the bush returning, you are different from a young man from Harvard or London who is traveling, doing his project (Hardwick 46) [Emphasis mine].

Almost eighty years have passed by since the publication of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and in the meantime, the world has witnessed the formal decolonization of Africa and India along with the publication of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ngũgĩ's "Decolonizing the Mind,"

Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*: none of these seminal texts on the hideous effects colonization and its discursive formation had any influence on this reincarnated Conrad. In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays: 1965-1987*, Chinua Achebe raises his voice against the overt racism of Conrad and Naipaul, and states that their objective is to perpetuate the old colonial myth about the Africans as pathologically primitive. Achebe's view is absolutely Afrocentric in the sense that he challenges the long tradition of misrepresentations of the Africans by Europeans. Achebe rejects *Heart of Darkness* accusing Conrad for his evil desire in reinforcing the imaginary superiority of Europe over Africa on the basis of their supposed respective civilization and barbarism (Achebe 2-6). On the other hand, Achebe terms Naipaul a "purveyor of the old comforting myths" of imperialism, as Naipaul is fanatically determined to prove that his guru's views on Africa in *Heart of Darkness* remain equally true to the present Africa in the 21st Century (*Hopes and Impediment*, 18-19). No doubt, Conrad and Naipaul have a unique power over the English language which is evident in their prose, but, wonders Achebe, should their works be called "great," the works that always try to dehumanize an entire race? Both these writers' inability to recognize the rich cultural and historical heritage of Africa is part of the racist logic that essentializes the Other and poses him as primordial and fixed entity. It also denies the Other any existence outside the larger impersonal scheme of Western history. The "Other" in Naipaul and Conrad is not allowed to maintain its otherness: it is Naipaul who assigns the qualities of otherness to his "Other," qualities which are inevitably the negative sides of all the binaries. The "Other" Naipaul is timeless without a past, a present, or a future. According to Naipaul, the natives experience time as an eternal now; "all that had happened in the past was washed away; there was always only the present" (*A Bend in the River* 12). Using the character Salim in *A Bend in the River* Naipaul says: "We never asked why; we never

recorded ... we seemed to have no means of gauging the passing of time" (11). In Naipaul's travel to the Congo, he remarks that "for most the past is a blank; and history begins with their own memories. Most record a village childhood, a school, and then the shock of independence" (*The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad* 191). Naipaul's disregard of the colonized people's history and culture, his overt love for Europe is unmasked by Edward Said in the following extract:

The most attractive and immoral move, however, has been Naipaul's, who has allowed himself quite consciously to be turned into a witness for the Western prosecution. There are others like him who specialize in the thesis of what one of them has called self-inflicted wounds, which is to say that we "non- Whites" are the cause of all our problems, not the overly maligned imperialists. Two things need to be said about the small band whose standard bearer Naipaul has become, all of whom share the same characteristics. One is that Naipaul writes for Irving Howe and Joan Didion, not for Eqbal Ahmad or Dennis Brutus or C.L.R. James who, after noting his early promise, went on to excoriate Naipaul for the scandal of his "Islamic journey," *Among the Believers*. Second, and more important, what is seen as crucially informative and telling about their work—their accounts of the Indian darkness or the Arab predicament—is precisely what is weakest about it: with reference to the actualities it is ignorant, illiterate, and cliché-ridden. Naipaul's accounts of the Islamic, Latin American, African, Indian and Caribbean worlds totally ignore a massive infusion of critical scholarship about those regions in favor of the tritest, the cheapest and the easiest of colonial mythologies about wogs and darkies, myths that even Lord Cromer and Forster 's Turtons and Burtons would have been embarrassed to trade in outside their private clubs ("Intellectuals in the Post-colonial World" 53).

Now, one might say that because of his different racial and religious background, though he rejects this, Naipaul is critical of the Africans in his works. Why then he is so harsh in his portrayals of the Trinidadian Indians? Critics favoring Naipaul often justify this by

saying that the postcolonial racial politics in Trinidad, which marginalized the Indians after independence, is responsible for Naipaul's prejudiced view of the black and the third world as well, though this hardly stands as a reason behind his cynical representation of an entire race. Naipaul's fiction is crowded with Indian characters, and it is worth examining how he views these characters. The narrator in most of his novels often uses humor and pathos in describing the Indians characters, and it seems, at times, the narrator finds it interesting is delineating these characters as "uncivilized mimic men." Unlike most post-colonial writers, Naipaul does not seem to be sharing the trauma that his characters have to go through; rather he makes this the source of fun and humor in his work. As the descendent of a group people who have been displaced from their ancestral land, a people that was made to live in an alien land amidst people never seen before, Naipaul should have felt and transform into words through his fiction the pain and trauma that his ancestors had to undergo. But, surprisingly Naipaul makes his characters, especially Mr. Biswas in *A House for Mr. Biswas*, feel no pain for the loss of the past: Mr. Biswas is haunted not for the past but for his inability to totally free himself of the legacies of that past. He searches for a new identity for him, and this search subtly represents a kind of identity that would be anything but Indian. His objective is not to reconstruct an identity that is already there but to forge a new one with bits and pieces collected from everywhere: the house signifies this. Commenting on Naipaul, Shashi Kamra affirms that "tradition does not have a possessive hold on him hampering his style and sensibility" (19). But, as AbdelRahman opines, "It is the lack of tradition that haunts Naipaul; he becomes desperate to join the tradition, to be part of the canon he was denied access to by virtue of being a colonial. Naipaul seems to compensate for his lack of center, his sense of homelessness and rootlessness, by replacing personal origin with discursive canonicity" (AbdelRahman 178).

Naipaul despises India and Indians as much as he hates Africa and Africans. To him Indians are “empty headed.” When asked by Hardwick about the significance of the red dots that married Indian women use on their foreheads, Naipaul brazenly tells: "The dot means: My head is empty" (*New York Times* May 13, 1979). Naipaul, thus, does go through any trauma or pain, be it post-colonial or anything else, for being dislocated from his ancestral roots. He is happy to be alienated from anything India and recognized as a reliable heir of Conrad.

Both Naipaul and Walcott are now canonized: Naipaul as one of the best contemporary British novelists, and Walcott as a poet “divided more to the [European] vein.” Both of them represent the ugly face of postcolonial literature through dramatized effects of colonization in so-called arts produced from Eurocentric standpoints. Capitalizing the English language, these authors provide the West with the Africa and India exactly as it is expected of them: different, exotic, savage, and hence, Other, without any culture, history, and touch of civilization. Naipaul and Walcott are given special importance in addressing the epistemological crises in postcolonial studies because some of the important concepts in postcolonialism directly theorize the identity crisis of the characters or images they portray in their respective works. In contrast to these two authors, N’gugi wa Thiong’o represents a completely different postcolonialism rooted in the rich African cultural heritage and worldview. An Afrocentric analysis of his works demonstrates that N’gugi consistently advocates a philosophy that empowers the oppressed to reclaim their agency. To show N’gugi’s version of postcolonialism, I will focus on a critical reading of his famous novel *Petals of Blood*. Does Ngugi propagate Fanonist-Marxist ideology and the violent overthrow of any oppressive authority through the constructive violence of the masses in his *Petals of Blood*? Does *Petals of Blood* suggest what the mediating power relations within the post-independent Kenya are? Do the Kenyan elites

with authority attempt to contain any subversion of their authority against the state? These are few of the many questions that my Afrocentric analysis will try to focus on. As a reaction to the limitations of the prevailing critical approaches to a text, Asante suggests literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. The Afrocentric Locational Theory, which has already been discussed above, evaluates how the work is influenced by the time in which it was produced. It also examines the social sphere in which the author moved, the psychological background of the author, the books and theories that may have influenced the author, and any other factors which influenced the work of art. In addition, Afrocentric Locational Theory acknowledges that any criticism of a work is necessarily tinged with the critic's beliefs, social structure, and so on. Afrocentric Locational Theory thus represents a significant change from previous critical theories like New Criticism, because its main focus is to look at things both inside and outside of the work, instead of reading the text as a thing apart from the author. This is why an Afrocentric analysis of *Petals of Blood* must discuss the historical period of which this novel is a product, the ways in which power was consolidated by the hegemonic group, and Ngugi's preference of Fanonist idea of violence to emancipate the oppressed and powerless. To do so, *Petals of Blood* must be situated in its historical context and with other texts, namely Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, to show that literary texts are rooted in particular contexts, and are not free of ideological or historical constraints.

To carry out an Afrocentric reading of *Petals of Blood*, in fact, it is essential to have a clear idea of its author's historical background. Like many of his contemporary African novelists, Ngugi also was frustrated with the post-independent crises of the African states, in his case Kenya. In his first four novels, Ngugi deals chronologically with aspects of Kenyan

(and more specifically Gikuyan) colonial and post-independence history. *The River Between* centers on the 1929 circumcision controversy and the opening of independent schools, *Weep Not, Child* on the Mau-Mau uprising of the 1950's, *A Grain of Wheat* on the uneasy passage to independence in 1963, and *Petals of Blood* on the Kenya of the mid-seventies racked by a corrupt black upper-class and its foreign counterparts.

In *Petals of Blood*, as the plot develops, the reader is presented with a fairly exhaustive survey of Kenya's history. Still Ngugi does not merely report facts. He suggests a Marxist analysis and solutions to the problems. He also dramatizes these ideas through the intervention of several characters who embody the different attitudes to a given historical situation. Each major move is interpreted in relation to the great mythical or actual heroes of the past. The names of such figures as Kimathi are enough to evoke a prestigious reality which can only find its equivalent in the old kingdoms of Mali, Songhai or Zimbabwe. This is where N'gugi is clearly Afrocentric as he wants his readers to understand the present with the glorious past in the background. The mention of such wonderful names produces a magic effect on the listeners. Hero-worship sometimes appears to exist as a remedy to every ill. Yet such idealization has dangerous implications which Karega admits when he recalls how, in Siriana school, the pupils went on strike to have Chui, their hero, as headmaster, and how, once their demand was satisfied, Chui turned as bad as his predecessors. Nderi wa Riera too used to be considered as a defender of the poor, preaching the re-distribution of land and radical reforms which frightened the capitalists. Yet he was soon bribed into accepting the status-quo.

Now, if we relate the portrayal of Chui and Nderi wa Riera to the novel's historical context, it becomes evident that here Ngugi explicitly suggests the recurrence of the colonial oppression in post-independent Kenya, that the rulers may change but not the ruling strategies.

Colonialism is replaced with capitalism and the colonial rulers with the new black-bourgeoisies like Kimeria. As evidenced by *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi is still searching for a political strategy to successfully end "the whole thing" - global monopoly capitalism of which Africa is a constituent part. The slogans and demands that informed independence struggles such as the Mau Mau have succeeded only in elevating a new ruling elite, merely replacing white oppressors with black ones. N'gugi's view on literature justifies his portrayal of the historical realities of colonialism in the novel:

Literature does not grow or even develop in a vacuum; it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society. The relationship between creative literature and these other forces cannot be ignored, especially in Africa, where modern literature has grown against the gory background of European imperialism and its changing manifestations: slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Our culture over the last hundred years has developed against the same stunting dwarfing background (*Homecoming* xv).

However, as of *Petals of Blood* written in 1977, Ngugi identified the political course for overturning "the whole thing" through the effective use of violence. Here he avidly suggests Frantz Fanon's notion of "constructive violence" as it is recommended by Fanon in his groundbreaking book *The Wretched of the Earth*. According to Fanon, the emancipation of the colonized people can only be achieved only when they [the colonized] violently confront the colonizers in armed fight and overthrows them through a revolution. Unlike V.S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott, N'gugi advocates a philosophy of resistance grounded in victorious consciousness that Asante defines as one of foremost aspect of Afrocentricity: for N'gugi its not mimicking the oppressor but a violent annihilation of him is the ultimate solution to

oppression. As a committed artist N’gugi is well aware of the inefficacy of contemporary literature in motivating the masses to see the world through a Fanonian lens, and this is why he uses his character Karega to reflect his own dissatisfaction with African literature:

Imaginative literature was not much different: the authors described the conditions correctly: they seemed able to reflect accurately the contemporary situation of fear, oppression and deprivation: but thereafter they lead him down the paths of pessimism, obscurity and mysticism: was there no way out except cynicism? Were people helpless victims (*Petals of Blood* 200)?

N’gugi goes beyond the national boundary and locates the evils of imperialism now perpetrated by capitalism at a global scale. And, this shift from a local perspective on exploitation to a more holistic one helps N’gugi transcend the limitations of race and nationalism the hinder true art from becoming universal. N’gugi’s universalism is quite evident in his views on exploitations in America that he expresses through the Lawyer:

Is this not what has been happening in Kenya since 1896? So I said to myself: a black man is not safe at home; a black man is not safe abroad. What then is the meaning of it all? Then I saw in the cities of America white people also begging ... saw white women selling their bodies for a few dollars. In America vice is a selling commodity. I worked alongside white and black workers in a Detroit factory. We worked overtime to make a meagre living. I saw a lot of unemployment in Chicago and other cities. I was confused. So I said: let me return to my home, now that the black man has come to power. And suddenly as in a flash of lightning I saw that we were serving the same monster-god as they were in America ... I saw the same signs, the same symptoms, and even the same sickness (*Petals of Blood* 166).

Thus, an Afrocentric interpretation of the lawyer's speech directly leads us to Ngugi's Marxist solution to all class struggles and exploitations. As a hardcore Marxist, Ngugi believes that capitalism is the root cause of all class exploitations and that capitalism is the naked form of Imperialism. Therefore, to effectively bring an end to these vices, the mass must follow Wanjia's example—the violent overthrow of the oppressor.

Naipaul and Walcott have been awarded with the Nobel Prize, and they have also been conscripted as the noble heirs to Conrad and other European writers. N'gugi, despite being rumored to be in the shortlist for several times, is yet to be certified by the Nobel Committee as an artist. We all know, N'gugi, like Naipaul and Walcott, does not look back to Europe for recognition, rather he uses his pen as the only weapon to expose the hypocrisy of colonization, capitalism, and neocolonialism.

CHAPTER 6

AFRICOLOGICAL RECONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE POSTCOLONIAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISES

"Up from the intellectual and spiritual pit which has held our mighty people! Let each person take his post in the vanguard of this collective consciousness of Afrocentrism! Teach it! Practice it! And victory will surely come as we carry out the Afrocentric mission to humanize the universe." (Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, 6)

i thought of eden
 the first time i ate a fig
 i thought of a whiteman
 the first time i saw a god's portrait
 i thought of a blackman
 the first time I met a satan on earth
 i must be honest
 it wasn't only bantu education
 it was all part of what they say is western civilization
(Beier 1998: 266)

The preceding chapters discussed the epistemological problems of post-colonialism and highlighted how contemporary post-colonial theorists consciously or unconsciously operate under its neo-colonial and capitalist premises. Despite its ethnocentric declaration of rescuing the past of the ex-colonized people from the debris of Eurocentric misrepresentations, post-colonialism is dwarfed when faced with the authorized European history. In the earlier chapters it has been demonstrated how the theorists from this school often bypasses the issues of identity and agency of anyone who talks about the post-colonial world. Their sole objective, it seems, is to limit their investigation on the fixed pages of the texts under scrutiny: the contexts from which the text springs forth is often lost in the technical analysis. In this manner, post-colonial interpretation of a given text does not seem to lead the reader in reaching a concrete conclusion regarding the author's attitude to Eurocentrism, effects of colonization, and European exploitations of the non-European world. Moreover, it has also been highlighted how the West selects controversial post-colonial authors and promotes them with different literary prizes

only to maintain its misrepresentation of the African and Indian people. However, the critics of post-colonialism cited in the earlier chapters have discussed at length the epistemological and pedagogical problems of the discourse in numerous books and articles, but unfortunately, all ended with the detection of the problems alone: there was no solution. Unlike most post-colonial critics', Molefi Asante's criticism of post-colonialism does not end in itself as he proposes through his Afrocentricity a new historiography as the basis of location which influences the most elementary discussions of a text by bringing the gift of new information that the Western world had denied for more than five centuries. With "an extensive survey of African history," Asante aims at providing "a framework for a civil society based on the simple idea of us viewing ourselves as agents of history, not marginal to Europe or Arabia, but central to our own historical experiences"("Commitment to the Civil Society"). Based on Asante's ground-breaking book *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, this chapter will be aimed at discussing "Afrocentricity" in details and the ways the post-colonial critics could be enlightened by borrowing from the Afrocentric School.

Post-colonialism, with its theorists primarily located in the Euro-American universities, tends to understand the reality of the ex-colonized world through the knowledge developed in the Western world. As Graham Huggan tells in his review of *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind* by Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra:

The mostly white academics who work within the postcolonial field in either country (Australia and Canada) recognize that they are caught in a double bind: they obviously wish to foster Aboriginal cultural autonomy, yet they are aware that their own privileged position — and the rhetorical advantages it brings — might be construed as doing just the opposite. Postcolonial critical theory — much of it inspired

by the various French poststructuralisms — proves, at best, to be a double-edged sword; for while on the one hand it clearly allies itself to the material practice of anti-colonial struggle, on the other it presents itself as a carefully nuanced understanding of the constraints on human agency (131).

This dualism, according to Asante, develops deliberately from the miss-education which, borrowing the term from Du Bois, most post-colonial critics theorize as “double consciousness” to justify their dislocation. Some of them are so dislocated from their own past and simultaneously so much Europeanized that they, like Fanon, “would not be a man of the past and would not exalt his past, or any past” (Asante, 2007a, 12). Their conscious disengagement from their past and their confusing representation of the present renders post-colonialism as a theory manufactured in the West and exported to the East where it hardly addresses the neo-colonial dominations. In contrast to these theorists, Molefi Kete Asante in his numerous books elaborately discusses the importance of identity, agency and location of the writer/narrator/theorist while saying anything about Africa in particular and the non-western world in general. Without the proper sense of agency and location, according to Asante, “we permit a dysfunction between who we are and who we are told we ought to be” (2007, p 158). This dysfunction is what characterizes present post-colonial studies as most theorists of the discourse are more inclined to looking at the ex-colonized world primarily from outside, and this is the result of the education they receive in the Euro-American system, a system that deliberately excludes the true history of disempowered people. These “third-world” critics, according to Bahri, are “invited to supply authentic difference” to the western world which, in Trinh T. Minh-ha’s words, “will not go so far as to question the foundation of

their beings and makings” (Bahri 282). They are, in Appiah’s words, “a comprador intelligentsia” that is known in the West “through the Africa they offer” (1991, p 348).

However, Asante is well aware of the politics of post-colonialism and post-modernism, and this is why he boldly proclaims that “there is no double-consciousness” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 157) and that “there are no post-modern gray lines here; you either stand with the oppressed and against the oppressor or you stand with the oppressor against liberation” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 164). But, Asante also knows it better that true liberation is something which is not to be taken as a charity from someone, rather it is something that must emerge from within, something which must be based on a glorious past, the past which the Europeans have long buried in the five-hundred years of discourse called colonialism.

Unlike most Eurocentric critics, Asante clearly states his position: He is an African living in the predominantly racist American society. As readers we are informed that his philosophy is directly concerned with his existence primarily as an African, an African who never forgets his ancestors, his history, and his culture. This is why as readers we are given the crux of his manifesto through the “chicken/eagle” parable on the first page of the book. This parable, as a very common item of African culture, highlights the question of identity and insightfully claims that despite getting hybridized, one’s fundamental identity remains the same. Bhabha should have thought twice before theorizing over ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry. Like Bhabha, many of us now suffer from the dualism duped by the Post-modern propaganda of the non-existence of identity, agency, culture and the like. This parable is a significant reminder that everyone has a fundamental identity in terms of his location and agency.

With this strong sense of his identity as an African, Asante goes on to define “Afrocentricity,” which, according to him, is “a paradigmatic intellectual perspective” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 2). It is a perspective that exclusively provides an African with the authority and position to speak about anything that concerns her/him and Africa. This makes it clear that Afrocentricity is an outlook, not *the* outlook, on everything from an African point of view: hence it is not a settled corpus of ideas or a closed system of beliefs. This African point of view is what brings Afrocentricity in direct contradiction with Eurocentrism, which, for centuries, imposed European perspectives as *the only* legitimate views of things. This hegemonic Eurocentrism thus ignited the Eurocentrists like Clarence Walker to label Afrocentricity as a “history” or a “mythology.” Asante tells that necessarily Afrocentricity is based on the experiences of Africans, and that for some it might also function as a therapy, but it is not a mythology. Quoting Ama Mazama, Asante asserts that in any discussions on Africa or African people, an Afrocentrist looks for African agency. As he tells:

The Afrocentric paradigm is a revolutionary shift in thinking proposed as a constructural adjustment to black disorientation, decenteredness, and lack of agency. The Afrocentrist asks the question, “What would African people do if there were no white people?” In other words, what natural responses would occur in the relationships, attitudes toward the environment, kinship patterns, preferences for colors, type of religion, and historical referent points for African people if there had not been any intervention of colonialism or enslavement? (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 9).

Referring to Walker’s view on Afrocentricity, Asante quotes Mazama who tells that “no Afrocentrists claim Afrocentrism as a record of the black past” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 5). He refers to Karenga, Mazama, himself, and Modupe who viewed Afrocentricity as a

“quality of thought,” a “paradigm,” a “perspective,” and a “meta-theory.” As an answer to Walker’s claim of Afrocentricity as “Eurocentrism in black face,” Asante tells that Afrocentricity is a perspective required for the Africans to “operate from their own sense of agency” and that it is “not reverse of Eurocentrism; neither it is a counter to Eurocentrism” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 6). The very necessity of this perspective with a strong theoretical grounding has been emphasized by Harold Cruse and Kwame Nkrumah, and Asante examines their crucial contributions to the maturation of Afrocentricity.

Afrocentricity, thus, from the beginning has been the object of baseless criticism and linguistic racism. Referring to the Oxford definition of Afrocentric, Asante shows how the Europeans often intentionally distorted and negated the true essence of the word. He regards Afrocentricity as a way to end confusion and chaos brought about by Eurocentric particularism. Asante’s aim is to provide the reader with a “clear, coherent and persuasive argument for a reconceptualization of the way the Africans view themselves and the way others have viewed the Africans” (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 8). He separates Afrocentricity from Africanity in the sense that Afrocentricity is a conscious mode of existence, whereas Africanity refers to the practice of African customs with or without being conscious. He also tells that it should be viewed as the opposite of Eurocentricity as it does not, like Eurocentricity, impose its views as the only ones. Asante, however, is very critical of those who tend to equate Afrocentricity with Africanity because through this they tend to falsify the concept or create a black version of Eurocentricity. Asante further tells that Afrocentricity is not a political or religious ideology: it is a way of interpreting reality and that it is teachable and accessible to anyone who cares to learn it without being influenced by the ‘center’.

The first and foremost aspect of Afrocentricity is location, as for a proper apprehension of a phenomenon first it is required to be located and then analyzed in relationship to psychological time and space. This is the only way to investigate the complex interrelationships of science and art, design and execution, creation and maintenance, generation and tradition, and other areas bypassed by theory. According to Asante, both location and centeredness are reasonable positions for an individual committed to discovering the power of the center. He tells that Afrocentricity is about location, precisely because African people have been operating from the fringes of the Eurocentric experience. He tells that there is a lack of consciousness among the African people, and it was his aim to strike a blow to ignite the people. Asante, hence, refers to Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy of *Consciencism* which was a result of Nkrumah's contact with the hegemonic cultural and intellectual dominance here in America. Asante tells that young African students are taught all the European philosophers against all forms of African knowledge and experience, and that this inculcates in them the superiority of the Europeans. Nkrumah calls this "defective education" as with this the black students become "prone to accept some theory of universalism." Nkrumah suggests a kind of education that would let the students practice the philosophy of consciencism and make Africa the center of their ambitions.

A related issue that might be invoked here is that of the texts and authors taught in most English departments, especially in the subcontinent: Greek and European philosophers, Greek and English literature, history, and sociology. The deliberate exclusion of native philosophers and scholars from the curriculum systematically aids the dislocation of the students who function as what Thomas Macaulay wanted them to. Very few of them, unlike the Zimbabwean student who wrote to Asante (*An Afrocentric Manifesto* 25), ever realize the

necessity to unlearn most of the things they learn from their colonial masters. The English department in India came into existence long before it did in England, and the ultimate purpose of the department was to manufacture bureaucrats to serve the colonial masters in ruling the colonized people. We are the products of Thomas Macaulay's master plan which he outlines in *Minute on Indian Education (1835)*:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.

Most graduates in English are so disoriented and dislocated that they hardly have a proper sense of their identity, and being duped by the post-colonial theorists they ridiculously try to explain their condition as “double-bind” or “hybridized”.

The issue at hand is post-colonialism and its lack of location in terms of time and space, and the applicability of Asante's Afrocentricity in solving it. Because of the uneven development of colonization globally and dissimilar process of decolonization across the colonies, it would be historically inaccurate to proclaim that all ex-colonies share a common past. Hence, it is absolutely impossible to locate a unified colonial subject: universal colonial experience is thus a myth. This view is partially wrong in the sense that despite diversities, there is at least one aspect of colonization shared by all irrespective of time and space, and that is violence. What unifies the inherent diversity in post-colonial experiences is the common past of colonial oppression. It is because of this shared traumatic past that post-colonial critics often tend to apply the term ‘post-colonialism’ uncritically to refer to a unified colonial experience. Hence, the location of the colonial experience as well as the location of the theorist who theorizes on it is of crucial importance to give authenticity to that theorization. With a

firm historical and cultural location in time and space, in fact, one can definitely unveil the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position, and show how baseless are the views of many of the post-colonialists.

But, there is something more than knowing and showing from one's "—centric" perspective; there is also *doing*, and that the chief arena for *doing* is the educational system. According to Asante, to establish a new intellectual *djed* or stasis is an act of revolution, because by its very existence it critiques and unsettles five hundred years of mental enslavement prosecuted through language. With our realization that all phenomena are expressed in space and time, we can redefine our "—centricity" as "a consciousness, quality of thought, mode of analysis, and an actionable perspective where [we] seek, from agency, to assert subject place within the context of [our] history" (Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto*, 16).

Asante does not forget to refer to Harold Cruse, another forerunner of the Afrocentric Idea, who regarded cultural crisis as the fundamental question faced by the Black community and that we have become the victims of worst cultural propaganda. Solving this crisis, according to Cruse, would enable us to confront all other issues. The tendency of Postmodernism in propagating the non-existence of race, culture, and religion often deludes some of us, and hence, we do suffer from cultural dualism. The remedy to this crisis is the rewriting of history from one's own consciousness as human subjects. The non-whites did not come to the "white-world" devoid of any civilization; rather the Whites shamelessly excluded from their version of African and Asian history the thousand years of glorious past of Kemet and India. Appiah and those who think along his line are the victims of this corrupted history, and because of this they, despite their overt involvement with the giant corporations like Microsoft and Ford Foundation, do not feel ashamed in labeling post-colonialism as a wing of

corporate capitalism. Appiah's historical knowledge is so devoid of insight that he failed to differentiate between "African Slaves" and "Enslaved Africans" in his edited version of *Microsoft Encarta Africana 1999* for which he is reported to get three million dollars (Asante, 1999). We know "who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery".

In rescuing dislocated Africans like Anthony Appiah, Harold Cruse expects the Afrocentrist to possess some qualities like commitment to cultural agency, lack of economic or moral fear, and the willingness to pursue the objective of freedom. Along this line of thought Asante adds that an Afrocentrist is a human being capable of acting independently. African people, Asante asserts, must be seen as agents in economic, cultural, political, and social terms. He tells that when agency does not exist, we have the condition of marginality. As an authentic agent of Africa and everything that concerns Africa, an Afrocentrist demonstrates some basic characteristics which, according to Asante, are an interest in psychological location, a commitment to finding African subject place, to defend African cultural elements, a commitment to lexical refinement, and a commitment to correct the dislocations in the history of Africa.

However, the first and foremost responsibility of an Afrocentrist, according to Asante, is to rescue and retrace the actual African history which the colonial powers have distorted over the course of half a millennium. Asante tells that for many centuries Africa was forced to speak in the voice of others, and this has distorted the voice of Africa. He tells that the first step to total liberation from the colonial hegemony comes with being liberated in the mind, and true liberation is possible only through the deconstruction of African history by Europeans. In pursuing Afrocentric historiography, Asante tells, we must not confuse Africanity with

Afrocentricity. Afrocentrists make a homological argument that the study of African people from an Afrocentric point of view contributes to the general understanding of humanity. According to Asante, the new historiography is a legitimate approach to the place of Africa in the world.

According to Asante, there has never been a major campaign by Egypt to protect the original African people as the owners of the land. Issues involving the politics of land and loss are discussed without reference to the Africans. Black Africans have a definite understanding that the ancient Pharaonic civilization was theirs and that their people are the direct descendents of the land. It is the Classical Africa, as Asante tells, that must be viewed as resource for African renaissance. In his 2007 book *The History of Africa*, Asante introduces a totally new history of Africa with its own periodization because he felt that he “could not write a history of Africa with a periodization coming from outside the continent” (Asante 2007b, 6). As a true Afrocentrist Asante rejects any European concepts in understanding Africa historically, and thus he divides African history in seven specific swathes as “The Time of Awakening,” “The Age of Literacy,” “The Moment of Realization,” “The Age of Construction,” “The Age of Reconstruction,” and “The Time of Consolidation”.

Asante proudly refers to the achievements of Cheikh Anta Diop and Martin Bernal who challenged the history of Africa written by the Europeans, and with concrete scientific evidences they established the fact that Kemet (ancient Egypt) was the center of African civilization developed by the Blacks. This phenomenal discovery of the ancient civilization infuriated the Europeans because recognizing Egypt as Black would lead them to agree that “geometry, mathematics, politics, sculpture, art, astronomy, medicine, and the names of gods owe their existence to the Black people”. We know, the most effective way to intellectually

dwarf a people is to hijack their history and make them believe that they are without any glorious past so that a sense of inferiority is perpetually inculcated in them. The colonizers effectively used this strategy to enslave the innocent African people both physically and intellectually, and according to Asante, “the first step to liberation comes with being liberated in the mind” (Asante: 2007a, 56). Through his new historiography, Asante has undertaken that noble project of liberation, a liberation that would come from within the minds of his people, a liberation with foundations not in the distorted and false ideas of the Europeans on Africa but in the glorious Kemetic past, a past that stretches to a time when Europeans did not even exist.

Moreover, as an Afrocentrist Asante is not obsessed with rescuing the past alone, his views on the problems in the present are also of serious critical insight. Living in the predominantly racist American society, he is well aware of the roots of problems in the Black community. He thus says, “The little African American child who sits in a classroom and is made to accept as heroes and heroines individuals who defamed her people during their lifetime is being actually decentered, marginalized, and made a non-person, one whose aim in life might be some day to ‘shed her blackness’ as a badge of inferiority” (Asante: 2007a, 80). He further tells that “Few contemporary schools teach history the way it should be taught to transform students who enter schools and colleges” (Asante: 2007a, 86). According to him, what is needed is a pedagogy of veracity built upon the actual facts of history as far as we know them. To operationalize his ideas Asante created the first PhD program in African American Studies at Temple University and proposed a curriculum for the Philadelphia School District in 2003. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, his proposals on teaching African American History, African History, and African Diaspora have agitated Schools District’s administrators

and boards of education. As Asante tells, “They are those people who seem to insist that the only legitimate history is European history and that nothing written by Africans, Asians, Latinos, or First Nations people really matters” (Asante: 2007a, 140). In one of his articles on the same issue, Asante asserts that:

Whiteness in the university is not found merely in the lack of matriculating African, Latino, or Asian students, but in the whiteness of the curriculum, the very heart of what we as professors teach, research, and otherwise transmit to our students. The fundamental dogma of the American academy seems to rest upon the belief that the European culture is the world's only source of rational thought. Every sequence of courses in the disciplines seems to assume that whites created the foundations of all knowledge on the basis of European values. And there is rarely anything in the structure of the curriculum to challenge that assumption (“Multiculturalism and the Academy” 22).

Eurocentrism justifies its supposed superiority with its reference to Greece as the origin of civilization. In the earlier chapters it has been discussed how the universities in the metropolitan are functional in producing and disseminating Eurocentric knowledge through a capitalist network of production and consumption. Asante, with his concept of Afrocentricity “has challenged the imposition of Eurocentrism as universal without attempting to claim such universality for it- self”. He tells that he does not have any problem with Eurocentrism as long as it does not impose itself on others as the only basis for education. To clarify his point, Asante refers to the description of a course from the History Department titled “Topics in African History” reads: “Survey of pre-colonial African history, includes trans-Atlantic slave trade, legitimate commerce, scramble for Africa, European colonialism, anti-colonial African nationalism.” As an Afrocentrist Asante challenges the way the course has been designed, because it deliberately relegates the Africans to the position of objects in their own history. To

mention one more time, Asante's challenge goes beyond the typed words of the journal to the greater world outside when he published *The History of Africa* in 2007. Asante is very critical of the Eurocentric role of the universities and their overtly racist curriculum, and his criticism brilliantly sheds light at the root of such racism:

The more I have thought about the fix we are in in the academy, the more I lay the problem at the manner in which we have structured the curricula of universities since the Greco-Germanic invasion of the American academy in the 19th century. Not that the overthrow of the Latin-based model of education by the Greek-based one was not anticipated by the colleges and universities of the 19th century, but the enthroning of Greece at the head of every discipline in the West carried within it certain dangerous seeds of European hegemony that eventually would demand a response from non-Europeans. Al-most in every quarter of the academy and from every continent have come those responses ("Multiculturalism and the Academy" 22).

In his criticism of the universities as the agents of Eurocentrism, Asante's position is like that of Ngugi wa Thiong'o's critical stance against the English department: in *Decolonizing the Mind* Ngugi demands the abolition of the English department because of its prioritizing "one single culture." Joseph McLaren elaborately discusses the similarities between these two famous Africans in their courageous fight against the White supremacy in the academy and outside in the greater world. As he states:

Ngugi's ideas in *Moving the Centre* have relevance to the debate over Eurocentrism, Afrocentrism, and multiculturalism. His critique of Eurocentrism can be examined in relation to Afrocentric critical theory and the writings of its foremost exponent, Molefi Kete Asante. Asante's *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (1988), *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987), and *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (1990) can be paralleled to Ngugi's *Moving the Centre* in that both writers engage the center as a locus of cultural and political transformation. Of particular interest is the way Ngugi views language and the role of the African writer in the face of neocolonialism. Ngugi's

support of indigenous African languages has parallels to Asante's exploration of Ebonics, or Black English, as a mode of discourse and expression. An additional relationship between both writers is the inherent political nature of their works.

“Afrocentricity” is now widely accepted as critical theory with a firm philosophical basis in addressing fundamental issues related to identity, agency, and history. Despite being primarily concerned in providing Africans a true sense of their glorious past rooted in Kemet, Asante and other prominent Afrocentrists’ works can be studied and researched in addressing and healing the wounds caused by European colonization. From my understanding of Afrocentricity I can now assert that teaching a post-colonial text to any students in any institutions without first teaching them the true history concerning that text is bound to be a futile attempt in understanding the post-colonial reality. Unfortunately, most of the history books on the ex-colonies available in the western world are by western scholars, written from western perspectives. The pedagogical crisis in post-colonial studies can be resolved if, only if, we undertake a total rewriting of history from our individual historical and cultural centered positions. Bahri and Trinh T. Minh-ha’s problem in the classroom in teaching post-colonialism will no longer end up in the production of difference and leaving the normative intact, if they first take a historically and culturally centered position setting aside the myths of marginality and forgetting “naked careerism”. I must say that *Afrocentric Manifesto* can help solve the intellectual crisis not of the Africans alone, it is equally useful to anyone who thinks s/he or his/her culture and identity is at stake. The propositions that Asante makes in the book, namely a new historiography, an authentic subject position with a clear sense of location, and a bold rejection of anything biased or false said by others that concerns the subject, can definitely fill the loopholes that post-colonial theorists tend to evade. An Afrocentric position, thus, can lead

any marginalized person to true liberation, liberation from all the dogmas of hegemonic European culture and fabricated knowledge.

WORKS CITED

- AbdelRahman, F. "V. S. Naipaul: The White Traveler under the Dark Mask". *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*. 2006. No. 26, Cairo.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1959.
- . *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays: 1965-1987*. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
- Akbar, Na'Im. "Africentric social sciences for human liberation". *Journal of Black Studies*, 1984, 14, 395-414.
- Ani, Marimba. *Yurugu: An African-centered critique of European cultural thought and behavior*. Trenton, Africa World, 1994.
- Appiah, Kwame. *In My Father's House*. London, Methuen, 1992.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter, 1991), pp. 336-357. The University of Chicago Press.
- Asante, Molefi. *African Pyramids of Knowledge: Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Africology*. Brooklyn: Universal Write Publications LLC, 2015.
- Asante, Molefi Kete .Facing South to Africa: Toward an Afrocentric Orientation. New York: Lexington Books, 2014
- . "Commitment to the Civil Society: The Role of an Afrocentric Ideology in Reducing Religious, Regional, and Ethnic Obstacles to National Integration. Dakar, Senegal (2009). Web. 12 Jan 2013 <http://www.asante.net/articles/42/the-role-of-an-afrocentric-ideology/>
- . *An Afrocentric Manifesto*. Polity Press: Cambridge, London. 2007a.
- . *The History of Africa*. Routledge: New York. 2007b.
- . "The Afrocentric Idea" in *The Afrocentric Paradigm* by Ama Mazama (Ed). Africa World Press: Trenton, NJ. 2003.
- . "Microsoft Encarta Africana edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Anthony Appiah". 1999. Web. <http://www.asante.net/articles/35/afrocentricity/>
- . "Academic Affairs Distinguished Lecture Series". The full audio tape of the lecture is available on YouTube at < <https://youtu.be/bdCuVr4TEvw>>

- . "The Ideology of Racial Hierarchy and the Construction of the European Slave Trade" <http://www.asante.net/articles/14/>
- . "Locating a Text: Implications of Afrocentric Theory," In Mazama, Ama (Ed.) *The Afrocentric Paradigm* (pp. 236-244). New Jersey, Africa World Press. 2003
- . "Commitment to the Civil Society: The Role of an Afrocentric Ideology in Reducing Religious, Regional, and Ethnic Obstacles to National Integration. Dakar, Senegal (2009). Web. 12 Jan 2015 <http://www.asante.net/articles/42/the-role-of-an-afrocentric-ideology>
- . "Multiculturalism and the Academy." *Academe*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (May - Jun., 1996), pp. 20-23
- . "Location Theory and African Aesthetics", In Welsh-Asante, K. (Ed). *The African Aesthetic*. (pp. 53-62). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.
- . *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990.
- . "Afrocentricity For Dummies." YouTube, uploaded by Shaheed Kamanzi, 17 December 2012, <https://youtu.be/bdCuVr4TEvw>>
- Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Empire Writes Back*. London: Routledge. 1989.
- . *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London, Routledge. 2000.
- . *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge. 1995.
- Bahri, Deepika. "Marginally Off-Center: Postcolonialism in the Teaching Machine". *College English*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (Mar., 1997), pp. 277-298. National Council of Teachers of English.
- Baldwin, J. (1981). Notes on an Africentric theory of Black personality. *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 5(4), 172-179.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory*. Manchester: MUP. 1995.
- Bhabha, Homi. Unpacking my library . . . again. In *The postcolonial question: common skies, divided horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Linda Curti, 199-211. London: Routledge, 1996.
- . "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences," *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin, Routledge, New York 2006, p. 155–157.
- . "Culture's In Between" in *Multicultural Sates: Rethinking Difference and Identity*. (Ed) David Bennett. Routledge, New York: 1998. P. 30

- . "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt." In *Cultural Studies*, edited by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- . *Location of Culture*. New York, Routledge, 1994.
- . ed. *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition," in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds). Routledge, New York: 2013. p. 112
- Hall, Stuart. (1996). "When Was 'the Post-colonial'? Thinking at the Limit", in I. Chambers and L. Curti (eds), *The Post-colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 242-259.
- Bauval, Robert. and Brophy, Thomas. *Black genesis: The Prehistoric Origins of Ancient Egypt*. Vermont, Bear & Company, 2011.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Oxford, OUP, 1995.
- Brooker, Peter. *A Concise Glossary of Cultural Theory*. London, Arnold, 1999.
- Beier, Uli and Gerald Moore. *The Penguin Book of Modern African Poetry*. Middlesex, Penguin, 1998.
- Breckenridge, Carol, and Peter, Veer. "Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament." *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. Eds. Breckenridge & van der Veer. Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 1993.
- Brown, Wayne. ed. *Derek Walcott: Selected Poetry*. New York: Heinemann. 1993. *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 67.
- Brown, Stewart and Ian McDonald. Eds. *The Heinemann Book of Caribbean Poetry*. Oxford, Heinemann, 1992.
- Clarke, John. *Notes for an African world revolution: Africans at the crossroads*. Trenton, Africa World, 1991.
- Cook, David. *African Literature: A Critical View*. London, Longman, 1977.
- de Kock, Leon. "Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: New Nation Writers Conference in South Africa." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*. 23(3) 1992: 29-47.

Dickey, James. "The Worlds of a Cosmic Castaway". *New York Times*. February 2, 1986
February 2, 1986. Web. 18 Jan 2013.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/08/30/specials/dickey-walcott.html>>

Diop, Cheikh. *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*. Chicago, Third World. 1978.

Dipesh, Chakrabarty. 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography'. *Nepantla: Views from South*, Volume 1, Issue 1, 2000, pp. 9-32

Dirlik, Arif. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism". *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter, 1994), pp. 328-356. The University of Chicago Press.

---. "Is There History after Eurocentrism?: Globalism, Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History". Author. 1999.

Donnell, Alison, and Welsh, Sarah. Eds. *The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature*. New York, Routledge. 1996. *Cultural Critique*, No. 42 (Spring, 1999).

duCille, Ann. "Postcolonialism and Afrocentricity: Discourse and Dat Course" in *The Black Columbiad*. Eds. Sollors, Werner, and Diedrich, M. Harvard College, 1995.

Eagleton, Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Massachusetts, Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London, Penguin, 1990.

---. *Black Skin White Masks*. London, Paladin, 1970.

Foucault, Michel. "Power and Strategies," *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972- 1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester, 1980) 142.

---. *History of Sexuality*. Trans. Robert Hurley. London, Penguin Books, 1990.

---. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1977.

---. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. (trans) Richard Howard. New York, Vintage Books, 1988.

---. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. Smith, Sheridan. New York, Routledge, 1989.

Fetson, K. "Homi Bhabha's Third Space and African identity", *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, [Post-colonial Theory] (June 2009), p. 24

Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. Monika, Vizedom and Gabrielle, Caffee. London, Routledge, 1960.

- Ghosh, Bishnupriya "The Postcolonial Bazaar: Thoughts on Teaching the Market in Postcolonial Objects" *Postmodern Culture* Volume 9, Number 1, September 1998.
- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Gottlieb, Karla. *The Mother of Us All: A History of Queen Nanny*. Trenton, Africa World Press, 2000.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 222-237. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
- Hamner, Robert. Ed. *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Washington, D.C., Three Continents Press, 1977.
- Hardwick, Elizabeth. "Meeting V. S. Naipaul." *New York Times*. May 13, 1979. Web. Jan 12, 2013 <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/07/specials/naipaul-meeting.html>
- Hasan, Ihab. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Towards a Postmodern Literature*. Wisconsin, University Press of Wisconsin, 1982.
- Hawley, John. ed. *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. Westport, Greenwood Press, 2001.
- Herskovits, Melville. *The myth of the Negro past*. New York, Harper & Row, 1941.
- Hilliard, Asa. (1989). Kemetite concepts in education. In I. V. Sertima (Ed.), *Nile Valley civilizations* (pp. 153-162). Atlanta, GA: Morehouse College.
- Hoskins, Linus A. "Eurocentrism vs. Afrocentrism: A Geopolitical Linkage Analysis". *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Special Issue: The Image of Africa in German Society (Dec., 1992), pp. 247-257
- Huggan, Graham. "Postcolonialism and Its Discontents". Rev. of *Dark Side of the Dream: Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind*. by Bob Hodge; Vijay Mishra by Bob Hodge; Vijay Mishra. *Transition*, No. 62 (1993), pp. 130-135. Indiana University Press.
- Jackson, Leonard. *The Dematerialisation of Karl Marx: Literature and Marxist Theory*. London: Longman, 1994.
- Myers, Linda. "Transpersonal psychology: The role of the Afrocentric paradigm". *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1985, 12, p. 31-42.
- James, Cyril. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York, Vintage Books, 1963.
- Jeffries, Judson. *Huey P. Newton: The Radical Theorist*. Mississippi, U P of Mississippi, 2002.

- Ben-Jochannon, Yosef. *Our Black Seminarians and Black Clergy without a Black theology*. New York, Alkebulan Books, 1976.
- Jon, Simons. *Foucault and the Political*. London and New York, Routledge, 1995.
- Juan, San. "The Limits of Postcolonial Criticism: The Discourse of Edward Said" in *Solidarity* < <https://www.solidarity-us.org/node/1781>>
- Jussawalla, Feroza, ed. *Conversations with Naipaul*. Jackson, UP of Mississippi, 1997.
- Kalua, Feston. "Homi Bhabha's Third Space and African identity", *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, [Post-colonial Theory] (June 2009), p. 24
- Karenga, Maulana. *Introduction to Black Studies*. Los Angeles, Kawaida Publications, 1982.
- Khair, Tabish. *Babu Fictions*. New Delhi, OUP, 2001.
- Kamra, Shashi. *The Novels of V. S. Naipaul*. New Delhi, Prestige Books, 1990.
- Kuortti, J. and Jopi, N. (Eds) *Reconstructing Hybridity: Post-colonial Studies in Transition*. Amsterdam and New York, Rodopi, 2007.
- Lee, Emily. "A Phenomenology for Homi Bhabha's Postcolonial Metropolitan Subject". *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (2008) Vol. XLVI
- Lee, Kyung-Won. "Is the Glass Half-Empty or Half-Full? Rethinking the Problems of Postcolonial Revisionism." *Cultural Critique*, No. 36 (Spring, 1997), pp. 89-117
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London, Routledge, 1998.
- Macaulay, Thomas. "Minute on Indian Education (1835)". Web. 17 Jan 2013 http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html>
- Magubane, Bernard. *The Ties that Bind: African American consciousness of Africa*. New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1989.
- Mazama, Ama, (ed.) *The Afrocentric Paradigm*. Trenton, Africa World Press, 2003.
- . "The Afrocentric Paradigm: Contours and Definitions". *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Mar., 2001), pp. 387-405
- McClintock, Anne. "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism'". *Social Text*, No. 31/32, Third World and Post-Colonial Issues (1992), pp. 84-98. Duke University Press.

McDougal III, Serie. *Research Methods in Africana Studies*. New York: Peter Lang, 2014.

Modupe, Danjuma Sinue. "The Afrocentric Philosophical Perspective: A Narrative Outline." In *The Afrocentric Paradigm*, edited by Ama Mazama, 55-72. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003.

Naipaul, Vidiadhar. *The Middle Passage*. New York, Macmillan, 1962.

---. *An Area of Darkness*. New York, Macmillan, 1964.

---. "Without a Place: Interview, Ian Hamilton" *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Ed. Robert D. Hamner. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents P, 1977. 39-47.

---. "London." *Critical Perspectives on V. S. Naipaul*. Ed. Robert D. Hamner. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1977. 5-12.

---. *A Bend in the River*. NY, Knopf, 1979.

---. *A Congo Diary*. LA, Sylvester and Orphanos, 1980.

---. *The Return of Eva Peron, with The Killings in Trinidad*. NY, Knopf, 1980.

---. *Finding the Center*. New York, Knopf, 1984.

---. *The Enigma of Arrival*. New York, Knopf, 1987.

---. *The Middle Passage*. New York, Vintage, 2002.

---. "An Interview with Rahul Singh". *Times of India*. February 19, 2002.

wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986.

---. "Moving the Centre: Towards a pluralism of cultures." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 26/1 (1991): 198-20

---. *Moving the Center: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom*. London, Heinemann, 1959.

---. *Petals of Blood*. London, Penguin Books, 2001.

---. *Homecoming: essays on African and Caribbean Literature*. London: Heinemann, 1972

Nixon, Rob. *Homelands, Harlem, and Hollywood*, New York and London, Routledge, 1994.

- Nobles, Wade. "African Consciousness and Liberation Struggles: Implications for the Development and Construction of Scientific Paradigms". Presented at Fanon Research and Development Conference, Port of Spain, Trinidad. 1978.
- "Nobel Prize in Literature 1992 - Press Release". Nobelprize.org. 12 Jan 2013
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1992/press.html
- "Nobel Prize for Literature 2001 - Press Release". Nobelprize.org. 18 Jan 2013
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2001/press.html
- Parker, Michael, and Roger Starkey. (ed). *Postcolonial Literatures: Achebe, Ngugi, Desai, Walcott*. London, Macmillan Press LTD, 1995
- Parry, Benita. "Problems in current theories of colonial discourse" in *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1987).
- . "Signs of Our Times. Discussion of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*", *Third Text* 28/29, Autumn/Winter: pp. 5-24.
- Phillips, Caryl. "Reluctant Hero" in *The Guardian*. Thursday 11 October 2001.
- Ponzanesi, Sandra. *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture: Contemporary Women Writers of the Indian and Afro-Italian Diaspora*. SUNY Press, 2004.
- Prabhu, Anjali, and Quayson, Ato. "Francophone studies/Postcolonial studies: "Postcolonializing" through Relation". *Postcolonial Theory and Francophone Literary Studies*. Eds. H. Adlai Murdoch and Anna Donadey. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2005. 224-234
- Raymond, Tallis. *Not Saussure: A Critique of Post-Saussurean Literary Theory*. London, Macmillan, 1988.
- Rorty, Richard. *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.
- Roudinesco, Elisabeth. "The mirror stage: an obliterated archive" in *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan* (Ed.) Jean-Michel Rabate. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. 2003.
- Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991*. London, Viking, 1991.
- . "The Indian Writer in England," in *The Eye of the Beholder: Indian Writing in English*, ed. Maggie Butcher. London: Commonwealth Institute, 1983.
- . *East, West*. London, Jonathan Cape, 1994.

- Shohat, Ella. "Notes on the Post-Colonial". *Social Text*, No. 31/32, Third World and Post-Colonial Issues (1992), pp. 99-113. Duke University Press.
- Said, Edward. "Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World." *Salmagundi* 70-71(1986): 44-64.
- . *The World, the Text, and the Critic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- . "Always on Top", *London Review of Books*: Vol. 25 No. 6 · 20 March 2003 pages 3-6
- . *Orientalism*. New York, Vintage, 1978.
- . *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1993.
- . *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews With Edward Said*. Vintage, 2002.
- . "A Window on the World." *The Guardian Review*. August 1, 2003.
- . "Between Worlds," *London Review of Books* 20, no. 9 (May 7, 1998): 3.
- . "Orientalism Reconsidered", *Cultural Critique*, No. 1 (Autumn, 1985), University of Minnesota Press.
- Sara, Suleri. "Woman Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition". From *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. London: Routledge. 1995.
- Schiele, J.H. "Afrocentricity: Implications for Higher Education" *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Dec., 1994), pp. 150-169
- Sethi, Rumina. *The Politics of Postcolonialism*. London, Pluto Press, 2011.
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Practical Politics of The Open End." *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*. Ed. Sarah Harasym. New York: Routledge, 1990. 95-112.
- . "Race Before Racism: The Disappearance of the American". *boundary 2*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Edward W. Said (Summer, 1998), Duke University Press. pp. 35-53
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/303613>
- . "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. London: Macmillan, 1988. 271 - 313.
- Turner, Victor. *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage*. New York, Cornell University Press, 1967.

Viswanathan, Gauri. *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*. New York, Columbia UP, 1989.

---. "Pedagogical Alternatives: Issues in Postcolonial Studies." Interview. *Between the Lines*. Eds. Bahri and Vasudeva. 54-63.

Yacoubi, Youssef. "Edward Said, Eqbal Ahmad, and Salman Rushdie: Resisting the Ambivalence of Postcolonial Theory" *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, No. 25, American University of Cairo, 2005. Pp. 193-218

Young, Robert. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London, Routledge, 1995.