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Major Considerations in the Analysis of Imperial Rule and Postcolonial Criticism

I.

What Is Postcolonialism Criticism? Postcolonial Historiography and Biblical Interpretation

Slemon writes:

Definitions of the 'post-colonial', of course, vary widely, but for me the concept proves most useful not when it is used synonymously with a post-independence historical period in once-colonized nations, but rather when it locates a specifically anti- or *post-colonial discursive* purchase in culture, one which begins in the moment that the colonizing power inscribes itself onto the body and space of its Others and which continues as an often occluded tradition into the modern theatre of neo-colonialist international relations.¹

Sugirtharajah adds that postcolonial criticism is more of

a style of enquiry, an insight or a perspective, a catalyst, a new way of life. As an enquiry, it instigates and creates possibilities, and provides a platform for the widest possible convergence of critical forces, of multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multicultural voices, to assert their denied rights and rattle the centre.²

Postcolonial refers to a 'collection of critical and conceptual attitudes'.³ Thus, it is a type of criticism, rather than a theory or method. Said notes that criticism is seen 'as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse; its social goals are non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of human freedom'.⁴ Homi

1. Slemon, 'Modernism's Last Post', 6.
2. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 13.
3. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 14.
4. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, 29.

Bhabha contends that postcolonial perspectives ‘intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic “normality” to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories of nations, races, communities, people’. Cultural traditions and epistemologies developed in the Global South possess their own legitimacy and should be used to contest the notion of the intellectual and cultural superiority of nations and empires as normative.

What these postcolonial authors share is a view of postcolonialism that introduces the concepts of power and ideology into numerous arenas of interpretation, including literary criticism, the interpretation of the arts, social-critical analysis of institutions, historiography, and political-scientific inquiry. This critical undermining of imperial culture and rule seeks to detect stereotypical and colonial elements and then to eliminate them from both the writings of scholars and the colonized mind of former colonials. The postcolonial evaluation of history, official documents, and missionary reports strives to expose the significant levels of bias in Western writings and scholarship, including historiography, in their portrayal of the colonized. These writers engage in this critical analysis to legitimate colonial identity and value. Postcolonialists hold in common with schools of liberation, Marxists, and feminist/womanist discourses a resistance to any form of egregious oppression and the construction of truth claims that victimize the powerless.

While most postcolonial intellectuals are largely highly educated in metropolitan schools and steeped in the culture of the empire, they seek to recapture their own indigenous identity by returning to a sometimes mythological past and/or rediscovering and reinventing their own people’s history to speak of their own achievements and accomplishments of distinction. These critics shape different narratives that radically resist and undo those of imperial systems. Postmodernism, which is a Eurocentric ideology, has often been embraced for ideological purposes in reshaping the consciousness of the indigenous people and in debunking the Western stories of domination. For diasporan and indigenous postcolonial intellectuals, theorists such as Freud, Marx, Derrida, Foucault, and their successors provide the theoretical grist for the mill that grounds new versions of understanding what is true and authentically real. Even intellectuals within the metropole, who are citizens of the dominating powers, at times turn against or heavily criticize the imperial exploitation of colonials, decrying imperialist inhumanity and fearing that the citizens of the empire themselves will mimic in their social and political arenas what has been done to exploit and suppress the weaker colonials.

II. The Subaltern and Economic Exploitation

Various terms are used to describe and define the colonials in the imperial system of domination, although they are not derived from the metanarratives of the empires. Subaltern is one of the most common and useful terms, meaning essentially ‘of inferior or subordinated rank’.⁵ This term, which equates with the *Other*, points to those who are unfamiliar to and unknown by the subjective knowledge of the conqueror. In the modern world, the West understood itself as the center of power and genuine knowledge, and thus superior, while the subalterns of colonies, former colonies, and the desperate countries of the Global South were construed to lack power, a critical and analytic self-consciousness, and the ability to reason and rule themselves. Authentic discourse, therefore, does not occur but rather a series of banal stereotypes of the *Other* are constructed. The term subaltern is not simply a sociological classification but also a psychological definition of the self. This understanding of self-identity, drawn from Freud and his disciples, derives from the view that it is constructed by the mind or the unconscious. In addition, in the views of some discourse theorists, subalterns require dialogue with the powerful in order to speak their views and understandings. In speech act theory, discourse requires both the participation of speaker and listener, otherwise authentic discourse does not take place. While their own experiences and understandings are generally ignored by imperialists, however, subalterns, who achieve self-realization from their own self-comprehension and discourse among themselves and find willing listeners among the imperial elite, continue to make themselves felt even in the consciousness and self-understanding of the metropole. Indeed, subalterns or the *Other* have the discursive ability to disturb, distort, and deconstruct the dominant representations of empire, due to their radical differences from what the empire considers normative identity, but only when an authentic speech act actually occurs. Otherwise, the subaltern is forced to dwell within the vacuous domain of unbroken silence.

5. For more on the history of this concept see Morton’s ‘The Subaltern: Genealogy of a Concept’, in *Gayatri Spivak*, 96-97.

III. Racism in the Ideology and Practice of Imperialism

Racism directed against the conquered has been intrinsic to imperialism especially since the nineteenth century. With the age of Western empires continuing into the present, racism involves beliefs centering on the superiority of the conquering race's worth, abilities, and knowledge in contrast to the conquered, who are often of different ethnic identities and skin color. These latter are viewed as inferior and subhuman. This racist domination, based on widespread prejudice among the conquerors and their later generations, has continued to affect adversely the former colonies who have emerged since the Second World War to form their own independent states. Many in the populations of former colonies continue to suffer psychological damage from the effects of racism perpetuated among their former masters and from the difficulty of subverting its powers of definition. While racism may be prohibited by law codes of Western nations, its insidious capacity for discrimination and violence continues to effectuate its toll not only on the racial Other but also on the racists themselves.

While there are numerous critical theories of racism, a common recognition among these is the debilitating potency racism has continued to exert in the cultural, political, and social realms of former and present metropolises. Foucault's understanding of discourse is helpful in viewing racism as the social and imaginary construction by the offspring of conquering groups that emerges from imperialism, colonialism, and slavery. By knowing the colonized subject through these lenses, Europeans and their former *white* colonies have come to construct their identities by means of the construal of the superiority of their ethnicity and Eurocentric values of whiteness, culture, democracy, citizenship, and capitalism, while devaluing those whose identities were differently formed and held by peoples of non-white races.

Frantz Fanon was a leading voice in anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s, and he regarded racism as an intrinsic part of the colonial project. Fanon denounced imperial rule for teaching certain colonials that they were inferior, an aberration, and objects of ridicule because of the color of their skin.⁶ Throughout his writings, he regarded racism as endemic to

6. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

imperialism, for it demeans the humanity of the dark-skinned colonized.⁷ Fanon adapted the Marxist understanding of the distinction imperialism draws between the white colonizers who are wealthy and powerful and the non-white populations who are the dominated, exploited, and poor. Accordingly, the imperial negation of the personhood of the colonized denies them every attribute of humanity and respectability and creates a psychological structure that forms a ‘colonized personality’ identified by imperialists as savagery.

IV.

Orientalism:

The Subverting of Western Stereotypes of the East

Prior to his death, Edward Said (1935–2003) was one of the leading voices in the formation of modern postcolonialism as a political and cultural approach to the construction of world views that have shaped nations, ethnicities, and institutions since the end of the Second World War. Born in Jerusalem during the increasingly unsettled period of the British Mandate, Said grew up in the tumultuous world of the Middle East that witnessed the end of British rule, the formation of the State of Israel, and the early period of conflict between Arabs and Israelis. After immigrating to the United States, Said received his PhD at Harvard in 1964 and taught at Columbia University from 1963 until his death in 2003.

Said strongly emphasized the principle of contextuality, arguing that texts, like their authors, are intrinsically connected to their time, space, culture, language, social world, and political reality. Neither text nor author can be abstracted from these locations without doing harm to content and meaning. However, once indigenous individuals remove themselves or are forced to relocate from their original contexts to dwell in new ones, these latter contexts provide them with new settings in which part of their identity is formed. However, elements of their past cultures and spaces continue to influence them and shape their ever-changing identity. Exposure to displacement permeates the essence of Said’s writings and is key to his ideas about imperialism and postcolonialism. While European immigrants have eventually been accepted by new cultures in Canada and the United States and are usually granted citizenship, those from the East who migrate to the West are not easily

7. For example, see Fanon’s *Studies in a Dying Colonialism; Toward the African Revolution; The Wretched of the Earth*.

received and fully accepted in American society. This is due in large part to Orientalism, a frame of ideological construal of the East by the West, which was generated by the Western mind and imposed on the East. Orientalism also happens to be the title of one of Said's best-known works, which will be discussed below.⁸

In order to comprehend the insights of Said, it is important to remember that he wrote in the United States as a displaced exile, a Palestinian, whose own personal history was tied to his experience and understanding of power and ideology in the United States. As a Palestinian who migrated to the United States, Said's character and sense of self were shaped by the recognition of his status as a marginal in exile. While teaching at Columbia he wrote: 'Identity—who we are, where we come from, what we are—is difficult to maintain in exile... We are the "other", an opposite, a flaw in the geometry of resettlement, an exodus. Silence and discretion veil the hurt, slow the body searches, soothe the sting of loss.'⁹

The prominence of Said's thought for understanding postcolonialism includes the fact that he demonstrated beyond question that colonialism and imperialism were not simply carried out by military and economic strategies of control and domination, but also by a discourse of imagined knowledge that the empire viewed to be unquestionably true. Significantly influenced by Foucault, Said contended that discourse, whatever the location, is ideologically shaped, for it contains cultural assumptions about knowledge, its authority, and its construal through various forms of power, both physical and epistemological. This contested knowledge was used by imperialists to control the minds of the dominated or by the colonized to deconstruct the cultural and political assumptions of the controlling metropole. The metanarratives of the Western nations are enmeshed in the political, social, and cultural features of their own reality derived from their experiences and views of the world. At the same time, postcolonial ideas, incorporated into speeches and writings, became a way for the marginalized of empires and former empires to respond to and undermine the metanarratives of their masters.

For Said, the postcolonial struggle is linked to what kind of future is possible. Colonial resistance is not simply to the controlling domination of the imperial past, but to the continuing obstacles to the liberation of colonials and the former colonized who seek to experience a future in which they are free to shape the social, political, economic, and ideological character of their own identity and national institutions. Said

8. Said, *Orientalism*.

9. Said, *After the Last Sky*, 16-17.

points to a variety of themes of resistance in which the oppressed participate, prior to liberation. One is the rejection of the remapping of the world drawn by colonial empires that led to the provincializing of countries, peoples, and cultures. Second, resistance also involves the return to earlier expressions of the separate boundaries of peoples and cultures. Third, resistance comprises the reshaping of former colonial identity by negating the imposed definitions given unilaterally by the empire. For Said, identity is crucial to the self-definition of a people, allowing them to reclaim their own norms, cultures, and social institutions and to continue to develop them unimpeded by outside forces. No longer are people held captive in their own lands or the regions of the diaspora to which they have migrated. Fourth, resistance also involves the reclaiming of a people's history seen through their own eyes, not those of the imperial rulers. Thus, resistance becomes an 'alternative way of conceiving human history', freed from the history of imperial superiority.¹⁰ Fifth and finally, resistance enables the development of the understanding of a people's community and liberation in moving from colony, to nation, to solidarity and a shared culture, to a new socio-political reality.

Said also recognized that imperial power is not only expressed through military conquest and control, but also through the epistemic violence of spoken and written discourse done to the defining cultural traditions of a conquered people. Equally so, colonial resistance may be both physically and culturally brutal, possessing a destructive defiance as well as a deconstructive discourse. For empires, discourse is imbued with what passes for authoritative power and knowledge, leading to the mastery and control of their colonies, while for colonies semiotics promote resistance and construct a new linguistic paradigm that construes a fundamentally different cultural reality. Misogyny often enters into these Western portrayals in that the Orient is presented as feminine, exotic, and seductive. In addition, the Orient is further portrayed as wicked, untrustworthy, and uncivilized, posing then a threat to Western civility and moral standards. The Other is given a xenophobic twist, in that whatever is shaped by and embodies non-Western characteristics is judged to be inferior. The development of this imagined, falsely construed world and its people was important in the movements of imperialism in Europe and later in the United States. Orientalism is not only the product of Western imagination, but also an objectification of what is presumed to be real. Thus, the Orient may be scrutinized, studied, and analyzed in rational categories by Western thinkers who abstract themselves from the cultural impress of

10. Said, *Culture*, 216.

what they study. Westerners contended, however, that they knew intimately and understood in depth the various facets of the East through the lens of Orientalism. As shall be noted later, Orientalism has at times infused the academies of knowledge lodged in universities that offered programs in the study of Eastern peoples and cultures taught primarily by Europeans and Americans.

Orientalism thus was a Western discourse of power, combined with an ideology that distinguished between cultural realities of Euro-America and Asia and became an important feature of the world view that, in the guise of obvious subterfuge, compelled the West to move toward imperial domination of colonies in the East. Orientalism served as a discourse of legitimation for Western domination of others by means of a language of identity that defined both conquerors and conquered. The Other is alienated from the cultural and political reality that imperialists shape. Only by disassembling this myth of superiority through the avenues of various kinds of resistance, including revolution and epistemic violence, may liberation from the imperial powers occur.

Thus liberation begins by making the important transition from a culture of blame to a culture of resistance. Unlike Foucault, who lacks any political intentionality, Said's thought is imbued with it. Resistance to the empire by showing the weakness of its discourse and the falsity of many of its ideological assumptions and claims breaks its powerful grip on the colonized. Marginalized colonies and their descendants cannot be confined to and overpowered by the strategies of imperial representation of who and what they now are and must become to be truly civilized. Postcolonial thinkers express discursive world views, which are designed to give meaning and direction to the former colonies, to disassemble the ideology of the imperialists, and to persuade them to listen openly to dissent and thereby transform their erroneous conceptions of the East and its different world views. Yet, postcolonial scholars do not totally reject the world views or cultural vestiges of the dominant, since some of the elements of this cultural and political matrix continue in new forms of ever-changing hybridity. This creates the inner tension that exists within postcolonials, who are 'in the world, but not of the world'. This worldliness of texts and their interpreters means that neither may be geographically or politically isolated. This also means that texts do not contain simply an abstract truth, but rather are related to a network of contextual meanings, institutions, bodies, and cultures that produce a variety of possible understandings of what is thought by someone or some group to be true. Truth thus represents what the ideology of its formulators set forth, a view of reality that usually reflects their own self-interests.

Poststructuralism and postmodernism had already begun to undo the certitude of Western paradigms of knowledge. Thus, in his anticolonial writing and speaking, Said critically made use of existing theoretical models, in particular the writings of Michel Foucault, which had already developed in the West to deconstruct the certitude of Western political governance and cultural knowledge. Said borrowed a variety of his insights from Foucault, including the view that discourse creates a representation of the world. Discourse sets forth forms of knowledge that correspond to established paradigms of understanding. What is scandalous for Said is when any people's culture, usually that of the metropole of an empire, articulates its own ideology as authentic while another culture is prohibited or obstructed from articulating its own representative views. Thus the imperialists assume the hubristic position of speaking, writing, and acting for the colonials they seek to control. The rulers desire to shape the ideology of the colonials to match the imperial world's view of who they are.

By using these earlier linguistic and epistemological theories, Said shaped a version of anticolonial rhetoric that sought to end the dominance of Western mythic portrayals of the East and to begin to fashion new ones more representative of postcolonial cultures. To do so, he engaged postmodern critics and their ideas, along with the poststructuralist Foucault, without assuming a posture of blind obedience to their varied understandings. While he made use of some of the ideas emerging from this discourse, he did so selectively, choosing often to disagree when this differed from his own understanding of texts and experience of the world. He especially remained critical of deconstruction as advocated by Derrida, since he considered Derrida's understanding to eliminate the human freedom, necessity, and responsibility to decide, in this case, to oppose colonialism. In addition, Said does not allow language that takes form in a variety of texts to be extracted from its location in the world. He rejects the all too common academic approach to texts as reified objects open to external analysis by dispassionate literary critics. While strongly denying the view that texts are only humanly constructed objects, he chooses instead to regard them as cultural entities that, at times, reflect reality and still are imbued with the views of their creators and the worlds in which they and their audiences exist. Texts thus provide insight not merely into the external realm that is viewed and understood, but also into the internal world of their composers. Thus the world is not constructed simply by discourse. For his postcolonial insights, this view is fundamental. One cannot ignore the verisimilitude of political and social realities of texts in understanding those composed by both imperialists and postcolonialists. Therefore, texts, for Said, are

worldly, but they are not understood only as reflective of the world in which they are written.¹¹ They also contain the entrance of the writer and audience into their interpretation. This worldliness infuses texts so that they are neither objects external to human involvement nor lifeless entities abstracted from the world that prevails external to writers and interpreters. Texts are not separate from, but rather are affiliated with, the various networks of ideas, interpretations, and relationships that are found in the larger world. The resulting interpretations produce a non-coercive social knowledge of the imagined reality in which the critics and their audiences mutually exist and engage the discourse of texts.

In addition to *Orientalism*, Said confronts *Eurocentrism* and particularly imperialism that exists not only in political policies but also in both the propaganda and the subconscious of Western thinking. Indeed the colonizers even produced vast amounts of knowledge about those they subjugated in order to legitimate their hegemony. Together these two forces, political policies and propaganda, have been especially important for the presence and advance of colonialism.¹² The postcolonial thinker is one who not only exposes the fallacy of this collusion, but also intervenes politically, including the retelling of the history of colonial peoples viewed through their own eyes. Yet the goal of the postcolonial is not simply to accomplish the return of the land and self-rule to the colonized; it seeks to replace the colonized mind with a new understanding of the world and to value its own traditions and culture. This is the moral imperative of the postcolonial writer. Opposing the powerful colonial world is difficult but necessary to create a new reality devoid of imperial oppression and racial and cultural stereotypes of the Other.

The importance of Said's thinking for biblical interpretation resides in three key points that may be extracted from his writings. First, biblical texts cannot be abstracted from the reality of their social, political, and cultural location. To do so is to remove the locality of texts necessary to their understanding. Contextuality is the key to understanding both texts and interpreters. Second, appropriate biblical texts should be read as part and parcel of intellectual resistance to imperial metanarratives and assimilation into the cultural worlds of the empires. Third, biblical

11. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*.

12. See MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*. In writing of British propaganda used to advance the empire, he notes that empire created 'for the British a world view which was central to their perceptions of themselves'. The elements of this propaganda included militarism, devotion to royalty, the identification and honoring of national heroes, a cult of personalities, and racism associated with Social Darwinism (p. 2). Most of these factors are present in other empires, including that of the United States.

writers who join in the resistance to the empires speak from the margins, a place distant from the imperial core. This placement on the periphery of imperial rule is not one of weakness, but of empowerment, as the prophets of Israel and Judah, for example, demonstrated in their influence on the streams and courses of Jewish history.

V. The Location of Culture

Homi K. Bhabha openly acknowledges the fact that he writes from his own background, culture, and experiences, all of which shape his views. He describes himself as a 'Parsi, already a minority in the Indian context' who exists on the border between majority and minority cultures in the United States where he is now residing.¹³ Bhabha uses psychoanalysis in his postmodern discussion of the differences between empires and their colonies. Like many other postcolonials, Bhabha notes that imperial discourse is an important means of maintaining dominion over the ruled. He argues that 'the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origins in order to justify both conquest and the establishment of systems of administration and instruction'.¹⁴ While the colonized hold a deep-seated anger against their rulers, they may also shelter a desire to be like them. This conflict directs us to the three major concepts of Bhabha's postcolonial thought: ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry, each of which may be used to provide insight into postcolonial historiography.

Ambivalence

The first of Bhabha's important ideas is ambivalence. Drawing on the insights of modern psychoanalysis, he contends that one's identity comes from establishing differences with the Other, i.e. the opposite of what one is not. For him the identity of the colonized is shaped by the conflict between the desire to be the ruler and the repulsiveness of domination. This is the attraction of Western modality for the Other. In imagining themselves as rulers, the colonized, however, still learn to look down on themselves. As the dominated, at least in their imagination, they come to despise themselves as would-be rulers. This is the internal fear of becoming what one despises and despising what one is becoming, and yet it continues to characterize the colonized even following liberation

13. Bhabha, 'Location, Intervention, Incommensurability', 64.

14. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

from the empire. This concept may be applied to many of the prophets whose judgment, directed toward their imperial rulers and elitist holders of privilege, leads them to depict the coming destruction of the empires and the rise of a liberated Israel/Judah that will rule over the nations through the powerful acts of its God in history.

Hybridity

Bhabha rejects the simplistic polarizations of the world into distinct cultures and humans into self and others, speaking, instead, of hybridity. Cultures are mixtures and not discrete entities, while the self and the other are not disjoined but rather interrelated. For him, no culture, regardless of the degree of its uniformity, remains static but rather exists in a dynamic temporal and spatial sphere of constant reformulation as changes materialize, requiring adaptation of thinking and activity that become newly institutionalized. The causes of transformation are numerous, ranging from military conquest, to natural catastrophes, to economic developments, to migration, and to new or more intensive engagements with other civilizations. The symbiosis of new events and discourse leads to unavoidable cultural adaptations expressed through evolving tradition. One sees hybridity throughout the changing culture of Israel/Judah as it moves from a classless society, at least when it comes to males of the nation, in the pre-monarchic times to a class system of rulers, nobles, peasants, day laborers, and slaves, and finally to an exclusive community, at least in the views of the radical reactionaries like Ezra and Nehemiah, that discourages enculturation,¹⁵ and excludes, among other things, the acceptance of and especially marriage with non-Jews.

In the formation of their imperial metanarratives, colonizing powers have attempted to forge polarized distinctions in cultures and ethnicities in order to justify the inequalities emerging from sovereignty. The goal of the imperialists has been to colonize the minds of the conquered by articulating and cultivating an ideology of the metropolitan core's cultural and ethnic superiority that would lead to the submission and control of marginalized colonials as alien inhabitants of the empire,

15. Enculturation is a social process by which group members are taught the norms, values, and customs of a changing culture so that they are able to function as full-fledged participants. Parental and educational instructions and cultural processes enable this to occur. Enculturation is an ongoing process brought about by such diverse happenings as conquestion, natural catastrophes, economic changes, migration to new territories, immigration, and encountering new civilizations. This leads to cultural adaptations and hybrids.

bearers of an inferior culture.¹⁶ Domination depends on the perception of difference. For Bhabha, however, colonial discourse only seems successful in the domination of the colonized and the stranger. Beneath the claimed exceptional qualities of the colonizers and their cultural meanings resides anxiety about their aims, claims, and achievements. This emerges from the developing recognition of the sameness of the colonized population in regard to embedding imperial values, language, and culture and to their status as human beings. This equivalence opens up a gap between what is espoused and what is real, which the colonized can use to their advantage in resistance to the empire.

Hybridity, Bhabha argues, subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised is deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly excluded subjects, different cultures, and the reformulation of the dominant metanarrative into mainstream discourse and behavior. The dominant culture likes to think it is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self and thus must guard itself from this threat of the Other by imposing barriers of resistance. These include racial profiling, cultural stereotypes, and xenophobic-inspired repudiation of what is different through cultural standards and legal norms. The colonized, by contrast, engage in mimicry (discussed more fully below), which has as its primary goal the establishment of their counter narrative that works to deconstruct the grand narrative of the empire through seeming to imitate, but in reality rejecting, the imperial culture through mockery and derision craftily shaped to avoid the empire's wrath. This counter narrative is present, for example, in postexilic psalms that praise YHWH as the true God of creation and salvation history in contradistinction to the empires god/s, and in the prophetic use of past traditions to reshape a new order that assumes the form of the coming Kingdom of God.

Bhabha contends that all cultures are constructed in the 'third space of enunciation',¹⁷ which makes the construct of meaning and reference ambivalent. By this expression he means to challenge any sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by a mythical past residing in the national traditions of a social group considered to be changeless. In hybridization the cultures of the dominant power and the conquered continue to change. While the imbalance and inequity that result from domination cannot be ignored, the hybridity occasioned by the colonized challenges and resists a

16. Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind*.

17. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 37.

controlling, imperial culture by depriving it of self-proclaimed superiority, legitimated dominance, and indisputable authority. Resistance does not take only the form of violence, but also includes a doubling process in which the similarities between the ruler and the ruled fabricate doubts about the authoritative rule and the self-proclaimed, superior culture of the conqueror.

Mimicry

The third of Bhabha's formative theories focuses on the colonized's adopting, adapting, and altering of the culture of the colonizer. While cultural representations were central to legitimating the domination of other lands by an empire, a similar process led to the opposition to the dominating power and the subsequent obtaining of independence from the metropolitan center. According to Bhabha, the colonized do not simply imitate the changing culture of the conquering power, since both the colonizer and colonized become interdependent and reflect the mutual and interrelated construction of their identities. For example, indigenous people are taught to speak the English language and to act out the views of British imperial rule, but they do not look English, speak properly the King's English, and find themselves as accepted as equals to the imperialists. The colonial culture inevitably assumes in different ways the culture of the imperialists that is presented to them, including especially the language of the colonizer. The loss of indigenous languages only leads to a buttressing of the efforts to colonize the colonials by separating them from the native speech that defines their identities and gives a rich expression to their cultures and values. Hence, a form of resistance to the empire and its language is *Pidgin English* in which the pure form of the imperial language is distorted and its values rejected. Recapturing the indigenous languages and its symbols and the creating of a mixed imperial language become the means not only of resistance but also of transformation and subversion of the ruling culture in the locations of the colonized. Mimicry demonstrates the fragmented history of the colony and the demand for its own recognition of a rich culture and varied forms of expression.

Thus, mimicry is not simply servile imitation of the empire's culture and customs, but rather an exaggerated imitation of their language, manners, and ideas. Indeed the colonials wear the clothes, use the language, and perform the courtesies of their masters, but in ways that ultimately taunt the masters. The colonials may be unaware of this parody, although the effect is the same whether it is consciously known or a hidden issue of the subconscious. The colonized overstatement

mocks the pretensions of colonialism and empire and becomes a form of resistance to colonial discourse. While the colonizer still wishes to affirm its so-called cultural superiority in order to signify and legitimate its domination, it is finally the colonials who determine the degree of that difference. This is done in a number of ways, including the imitation of the metanarrative of the empire, but restated with a decided twist to deconstruct its arguments for unchallenged superiority. Imitation takes on its own identity and disassembles the myth of the superiority of the colonizer. Further, the requirement of the colonizer to have indigenous intermediaries (mimic men) to influence the cultural dimensions of foreign rule, including such things as language and government, demonstrates similarity, not superiority. These intermediaries are in the unique position of finding themselves able to support or deconstruct the empire's cultural metanarratives. An important goal of the postcolonial, then, is to be a 'vernacular cosmopolitan' who is able to translate cultures and reinterpret traditions in ways that subvert the empire.¹⁸

One sees this subversion in numerous biblical texts composed during different imperial reigns. Thus, while Aramaic especially in the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires becomes increasingly the language of the Jewish population in Judah and in the Eastern diaspora, their composers and spokespersons continue to write and even on occasion speak in Hebrew and express a more colloquial form of royal Aramaic used in edicts and communiqués of the empire. Even the Jewish form of Aramaic is influenced by Hebrew. In addition, the exaggerated imitation of royal traditions of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires in prophetic, apocalyptic, and liturgical texts subverts their metanarratives and visions of superiority.

VI.

Can the Subaltern Speak?¹⁹

Gayatri Spivak has been described as a Marxist and deconstructionist engaged in critiques of feminism, political theory, and postmodernism. She identifies herself as one who lives between postcolonial Indian

18. Bhabha, 'The Vernacular Cosmopolitan'.

19. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988). Also see the following volumes she has composed and/or edited. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, edited with Ranajit Guha; *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited with Sarah Harasym, 1988; *The Post-colonial Critic*, 1990; *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 1999; *Death of a Discipline*, 2003. For a clearly written summary and evaluation of Spivak, see Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory*, 74-113.

socialism and the Western teachings dominated by a colonial education. Among her prevalent subjects are British hierarchy, patriarchy, capitalism, British colonialism, and their continuing effect in the Global South.

Her reading and critique of Jacques Derrida have resulted in her use of postmodernism and deconstruction to dismantle Western ideology and imperial metanarratives.²⁰ She has shown that in spite of Western democracies' emphasis on liberalism and freedom, they have used imperial means to conquer, rule, oppress, and exploit the Global South both during the colonial and postcolonial periods. Critical of Derrida's apolitical relativism, she reshaped deconstruction into a political weapon and has used it to disassemble the ideology of the colonialism of empires and its rebirth economically in neocolonialism. She asserts that postmodernism cannot ethically ignore the political realities of human existence, but must open itself to the experiences of people, in particular subalterns or marginalized, by using the mode of discourse. Biblical scholars are learning from her that their work cannot avoid active and progressive efforts to negate the ideological and self-interested ambitions of the Global North. If scholars of Scripture are to engage in postmodernist interpretation, they are ethically required to deconstruct hierarchies based on patriarchy, classism, and imperial domination.

Subalterns, who comprise the oppressed and disempowered in both imperial and nationalist political systems, are to resist and attempt to overthrow systems of oppression. Her key admonition is that people, including in our case biblical scholars, must allow subalterns to speak with their own voice to break through the code of silence established by oppressors and be heard by the hierarchies of class, power, gender, economics, and knowledge if dialogue and transformation of the oppressive world of modernity are to take shape.

Spivak also recognizes the importance of the diversity of cultures in which subalterns carry on their lives. The geographical space of different indigenous peoples is intimately linked to their distinct experiences. This cannot be ignored in understanding a marginalized people either in the past or present. However, she is skeptical that scholars can rediscover the voices that imperialism has silenced, since they are lost forever to human memory. Even if imagined by writers in the past or present, these voices are only the fictional expression of an individual writer. What this means for historiography is the fact that biblical texts, which speak of even the heroes of Israel, are produced by human imagination. The biblical voices of the marginalized are fictional and written by intellectuals who rarely

20. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Spivak's translation of Derrida's classic was published in 1976.

can capture the thoughts, values, and views of the marginalized. This does not mean she denies history can be written, but it does imply that much in the biblical recreation of human beings in the past is historically irretrievable. Without subaltern discourse, which is rare in Israelite and Judean texts, great care has to be taken by historians who are attempting to reconstruct their lives, ideas, and beliefs. One perhaps may speak of possibilities, but these derive only from outsiders in the ancient world who were intellectuals and scholars in the present who cannot escape their own geographical space and culture.

She also adds her voice to the topic of epistemic violence that critiques the imperialist project of creating a metanarrative that legitimates the rule of an empire and forces upon the vanquished its world view, civilization, and claimed epistemological and racial superiority.²¹ She notes that imperial metanarratives not only legitimate corporal violence but also epistemic savagery. Thus the imperialists invent the world for both themselves and those they rule. The colonized are forced through discourse and other means to see themselves as marginals in this imperialist world ruled by the metropolitan government and its citizens. Thus through their normative metanarrative, the imperialists create not only their own identity and role, but also those of the marginals in their socio-political cultural contexts. In addition the imperialists wrongly present themselves as the representatives of the colonized. To counter the imperialists and their metanarratives, Spivak admonishes the West not to read the rest of the world through Western eyes. Instead, Third World texts should be accepted as depicting proper representations of subalterns in different cultures, even if they are fictional persons.²² Speaking to the nature and character of the depictions of women, Spivak criticizes those that reduce females to a one-dimensional character, thus negating individuality and difference. In discussing Third World women, Spivak argues that scholars are to disassemble the structures of epistemic violence of patriarchal imperialism that present a caricature of women, especially in the non-Western world.²³ Her insights entail the recognition that the depictions of Israelite and Jewish women by Western feminist biblical scholars should not be given the status of historical reconstructions, but are more the creation of modern scholars' own issues, interests, and cultures.

21. Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts'.

22. See Devi, *Imaginary Maps*.

23. Spivak, 'The Rani of Samir'.

VII. Postcolonial Historiography

A clear summary of the interests and objectives of postcolonialism has been offered by R. S. Sugirtharajah. He has defined postcolonial interpretation of literature as

signifying a reactive resistance discourse of the colonized who critically interrogate dominant knowledge systems in order to recover the past from Western slander and misinformation of the colonial period, and who also continue to interrogate neo colonializing tendencies after the declaration of independence.²⁴

Postcolonialism is not a theory or method, but more a combination of shared attitudes inclusive of all peoples seeking to achieve new possibilities for a common public life. There are several views most postcolonial interpreters express in their writing, reading, and interpretations of texts. This will be true of the present effort to produce a postcolonial history of Israel.

First, postcolonialists seek to deconstruct the grand narratives of the colonizing and neocolonizing Western empires. In denying sole legitimacy to Western views and values in order to gain liberation from their dominant political, social, and cultural affirmations, postcolonialists understand that all social groups that are dominant have paradigms of meaning that are ideological. In an imperial culture, ideology is used to dominate the marginalized not only by socio-political and military means, but it also seeks to have them internalize these overarching metanarratives as the social construction of reality that is presented as universal and objectively true. Thus, education in the environment is part of the imperial agenda. Postcolonial writers argue for the value of their own cultural heritage and seek to resist efforts to present and define the conquered as cultural and intellectual inferiors. Scholars of the West, taught Graeco-Roman readings of ancient history, write history according to Greek models. Thus in the histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Timaeus, Polybius, Livy, Tacitus, and Plutarch one discovers a common contention of superiority of their Western civilization and the inferiority of Eastern and African cultures. These classical histories came to support the features of the grand narratives of empires, as well as their epistemology, values, political institutions, and religion. This same type of metanarrative construction has often colored the histories of Israel,

24. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, 13.

especially when Christian interpreters exalt the virtues and religious teachings of Israel, Judah, and Judaism and demean those of other non-Western nations.

Postcolonialists reject the prejudices of those who engaged in empire building based on the imperial justification of possessing a superior civilization. They also construct their own interpretative narratives of their nation's or region's history and culture that lack Western biases. Too often Western historians and interpreters overlook the hidden transcripts of meaning composed by the historical and contemporary marginalized who seek to negate the grand narratives of their conquerors and exploiters.²⁵ Postcolonialists point to the connection between Western socio-economic and political power and the detrimental exploitation of the colonized for imperial self-interests.

When interpreting the cultural and socio-political history of their nations and regions, postcolonial writers view the world through the lens of their own culture and remembered traditions and history. History and culture are no longer seen only through the eyes of imperialists. Thus, there is a dialogically derived set of meanings that involves not simply the empires and colonies of the past, but also the First World and Third Worlds (or Global North and Global South) with an eye towards the liberation of the latter. Even those who share the cultural and political margins are themselves often agonistic in their histories and other types of cultural writings. Even so, the goal of postcolonial writing and reading of texts leads to inculturation (i.e. the traditions of the oppressed are included in a more expansive metanarrative) and liberation (or contextual philosophy) that become components of a new and different world view.

Second, postcolonialists often realize that multiple interpretations of culture, civilization, and history exist, not only in the global community of cultures, past and present, but also in their own nations and regions.

25. The expression 'hidden transcripts' was popularized by James Scott, especially in *Domination*. Scott uses the term 'public transcript' to describe the open, public interactions between rulers and the subjugated and the term 'hidden transcript' for the critique of power that goes on offstage, which power holders do not see or hear. Different systems of domination, containing various social, economic, and political elements, have covert aspects that are not expressed in their public dimensions. Scott emphasized the importance of what lay underneath the public discourse and actions. Publicly, the dominated appear to accept their inferior positions, but in a variety of more secretive ways, they question the rulers and their systems of hegemony. If this hidden discourse becomes public, there may be the resultant psychological feeling of liberation by the oppressed, but they may well face the wrath of the empire and the disaster this could rain down upon them. Also see the discussion of Scott in the Introduction to this volume.

Diversity is not limited to different nations or widely separate geographical spaces, but it is also present within the nation and its indigenous culture in geographical space. A multiplicity of interpretations is present, but they originate among indigenous writers whose own views are different from former conquerors. Thus, postcolonialists stress readings that are both dialogical and pluralistic in the construal of meanings. Dialogue should occur not only between colonizer and colonized, colonialist and post-colonialist, rich and poor, powerful and impotent, those in the center and those on the margins, but also between different genders, races, and ethnicities.

As a biblical scholar, Sugirtharajah has criticized biblical scholarship in the West for shaping an interpretative tradition that reflects the values of these nations and for failing to listen to scholars from among the geographical margins. Their voices, whether through narrative fiction or poetry, should be heard. In addition to this, there has often been little ethical criticism of the ravages of imperialism practiced by the kings of Israel and Judah as depicted in narratives and especially the poetry of the prophets. This means that a critical hermeneutic often does not emerge from biblical scholars that challenges and even undercuts the oppressive elements of biblical institutions and of the later church and synagogue. Why? One reason is the hesitancy of many biblical scholars to question the exegetical and hermeneutical methods of interpretation that they have mastered. To admit their shortcomings and biases means that a critical new look at the methods of interpretation must occur that could lead to their radical transformation or even discontinuance. Another is the reluctance to admit that their own world views and results of scholarship are often supportive, not critical, of empires. And a third reason is that the hermeneutical task in Africa, Asia, and Latin America is extremely different from that pursued in the West, due to the widely dissimilar contexts of modern global cultures. Much church history and Western theology is not interested in liberating oppressed margins, and they either often fail to point to the church's own participation in imperial conquest, rule, and exploitation or do not engage in a strong criticism. Many biblical scholars are ministers whose churches profited directly and indirectly from the empires in extending their own reach into other countries in the drive for members. This often has been done without admitting the travesty of injustice that has characterized imperial rule.

These are some of the significant points of interest in a postcolonial interpretation of the Bible. Not only does this approach allow for a new historical reading of Scripture, but it also presents a different hermeneutic that permits the voices from the margins to speak, to be heard, and

to challenge Western understandings. Thus, in this history postcolonialism will be used to gain insight into these two areas: the social history and world views of the cultures of the Bible and the engagement of these with the interests of marginalized peoples in later periods, including especially the contemporary world and those who speak largely from the Third World or Global South.

Postcolonial historiography did not simply appear during the period since the end of World War II and the breakup of major European empires. Rather, its approaches and insights are based on earlier types of history writing, most of which continue to have influence in scholarly interpretations of the past. A brief overview of historiography should provide us with some insight into the writing of postcolonial history in the modern period.

Historiography and the Writing of Israelite History

The writing of Israelite history is a complicated task, due in part to the lack of sufficient sources in the form of cultural data (archaeology, written sources, and epigraphic inscriptions). Historiography is the use and application of historical critical methods to uncover and then analyze oral discourse, written texts, and archaeological data (material and written) in order to reconstruct and describe the history of the development, duration, and end of human civilizations. Culture is not monolithic, for there is constant interaction and even merger with others, while change and transformation is inherent to the historical process. Past cultures engaged in and experienced events, produced distinctive ideologies, and occupied temporal and spatial locations. Historiography, in its various forms, seeks to record and then interpret distinct cultures and their social forms particularly with regard to institutions, political arrangements, religions, and ideologies by using psychological, anthropological, and philosophical theories.²⁶ The interpretative process involves the use of what is called historical imagination to shape the forms, events, and images of a culture in order to set forth plausible reconstructions of history.²⁷

26. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, 2-3. Also see Huizanga, 'A Definition of the Concept of History', Krentz, *The Historical Critical Method*, and Van Seters, *In Search of History*.

27. 'Historical Imagination' is what Collingwood calls a 'moral engagement with the past'. It suggests a dynamic interaction or better a dialogue between history and the past or the present and cultural memory that leads to the possibility of the reconstruction of the past through historical narrative (Collingwood, *The Historical Imagination*).

Historiography seeks to trace a collage of sequential events, interactive and distinct ideologies of various, interactive cultures, and their temporal and spatial locations. Data, of course, do not interpret themselves, and, regardless of the methodology or orientation of an historian, his/her imagination is drawn upon to shape a collage of images that, taken together, comprise the representation of the history of a past culture. Due to the limits of the data and the varieties and subtleties, which these elements may represent, the most an historian can hope to attain is plausibility, on occasion probability, but not certainty. New data, different historiographical methods, and contemporary world views lead to new and at times different reconstructions of a people's past.

Historiography involves three major concerns. The first is to discover the material and cultural data of past civilizations and to reconstruct the human thought and behavior that produced them in particular times and places. The second is to examine the ways that the various pasts of these civilizations have been reconstructed and interpreted by later historians from antiquity to the present. And the third is the informed attempt of the modern historian to interpret the peoples and events of civilizations in order to comprehend their past experiences and preeminent understandings and events by using current theories that shape the histories of the contemporary period.

Contemporary Approaches to Historiography and Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism did not arise in a vacuum without influence from earlier approaches to historiography. Since the Enlightenment, the major philosophies used in historiography in general and historical criticism in biblical studies in particular have included a variety of alternative ways of conceiving history. To understand historical criticism and the more recent approach of postcolonialism that has taken shape in the post-imperial world since World War II, it is important to become aware of the philosophies of history which have been used by biblical scholars in shaping their interpretation of ancient Israel and early Judaism. The major philosophies of history that have led to and influenced postcolonial interpretation include idealism, romanticism, realism, positivism, Marxism and neo-Marxism, and now, more recently, feminism and postmodernism. Most historians write from a vantage point of using insights and principles drawn from a variety of philosophies of history, even though one predominates in each of their reconstructions. This includes those scholars who write from postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial histories are especially dependent on (neo-)Marxism and postmodernism.

Marxist and Neo-Marxist Interpretation of History

Marxism, and its later reshaping, Neo-Marxism, is a philosophy of history based upon a fundamental important assumption that no object, including literature, can exist independently. Literature can only be understood in the fullness of its relations with ideology, class, and economic substructures. Truth is ideological and is created by human institutions and articulated in language (oral and written). An inherent materialism also is present in this method, leading then to the rejection of the notion of eternal ideas that transcend material labor. In the consideration of anthropology, human beings shape themselves through their work, including through the creation of art (philosophy, culture, and world views) that is a branch of production. Class struggle is the inner dynamic of history, and literature encapsulates this endeavor. Literature reflects the self-interests of the group that writes it.

Another central component of Marxist and Neo-Marxist philosophy is that exploitation has been an enduring feature of history, in which the wealthy and powerful were pitted against the poor and vulnerable. The former profited from the labor of the latter, who did not receive just compensation for their work. Instead the ruling class appropriated their wealth for their own profit and use. According to Marx and his followers, in the beginning was an idyllic time in which simplicity, equality, and communal sharing predominated. But with the advent of private property, this idyll was shattered. In ancient times class struggle took place in city-states in which owners of property were pitted against serfs and slaves. Yet in the final birth of the communist world at the end of capitalist-dominated history, the coming great revolution will overcome injustice and oppression through the abolition of private property and usher in a new age in which there would be fair distribution of the rewards of human labor.

Following the end of World War II and the death of Stalin in 1953, Marxism was freed from the domination of the state. This allowed reformers to shape new developments and specific schools of thought that collectively are identified as neo-Marxism. The Frankfurt school, consisting of such scholars as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas, was one such new development that held to individualism, the ideals of democracy, the integration of the proletariat into the main stream of social life, and spontaneity, all the while rejecting an unbending view of a rigid, historical determinism. These scholars, while varied in many of their views, were united in their opposition to the essential views of positivism and materialism and made use of Kant's critical philosophy and its development. Social change was configured in the mode of German Idealism (e.g. Hegel), with ideas

playing a dominant role. For the Frankfurt school, cultural Marxism analyzes the roles of the media, art, theater, film, and other artistic institutions in a society, often with an added emphasis on race and gender in addition to class.²⁸ Among postcolonial scholars are neo-Marxists who are strongly opposed to capitalism and its inevitable exploitation of labor.²⁹ Marxism and what were considered to be improvements over its limitations provided, for them, a different way to read history and to understand the present. History was no longer the sole property of imperial states whose scholars vaunted their achievements and civilizations. Several prominent biblical scholars have made use of neo-Marxism in writing social-scientific studies of the Bible, including Norman K. Gottwald and Roland Boer.³⁰ Their work strongly criticizes the empires and their metanarratives as biased, self-serving, and reductionistic in that the marginalized in the metropolises and among the conquered are either erased from history or belittled as uncivilized people who require the culture and values of the empires to become fully human.

Postmodernism

The emergence of postmodernism at approximately the same time as postcolonialism, i.e. the period following the end of World War II, is not simply a coincidence. In noting this connection, Robert Young views postcolonialism as Europe's explanation that it is no longer the center of the world.³¹ The growing interest of postcolonialism in the United States has the same objective. Subsequently, due to this removal of the West from the center of meaning and culture, many postcolonialists have embraced various facets of postmodernism in their resistance to the grand narratives of former empires and in the construction of their

28. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*.

29. For example, see the writings of Frantz Fanon, including his *Black Skin, White Masks*.

30. Boer, *Marxist Criticism of the Bible*.

31. Young, *Postcolonialism*. Also see Young, *White Mythologies*, and Jameson, *Postmodernism*. A Marxist critic of postmodernism, Jameson notes that the features of late capitalism include mass culture, mass media, multinational corporations, and information technology as well as massive global debt, huge structural divides between social and global communities, the neo-liberal view of Wall Street that leads to the lust for economic and therefore socio-political power, and the death of traditional cultures that have shaped identities. Postmodernism should not be identified simply with postcolonialism, but also with neocolonialism. Jameson concludes that political postmodernism, if it should exist, will necessarily have to invent and project a global cognitive mapping on a social and spatial scale.

own theories and strategies for the determination of meanings. Since postcolonialism embraces postmodernism's primary argument that there is no single meaning or reality or objective free interpretation, but rather there are multitudes of meanings or realities, usually based on the self-interests of texts and interpreters,³² interpretation becomes the function and outlook of a particular perspective, something that is both historically and culturally located and yet in constant flux. This does not mean that interpretation or reality is solipsistic, thus denying the concrete existence of data (temporal, physical, active, and spatial), but rather that meaning is construed in large measure by the imagination of the historiographers or other types of interpreters working within their own social locations and out of their own ideological framework.

Postcolonialism

To this point, most Western historiography has evolved within a paradigm that is produced by and resonates with the very ideology that has shaped Western European and Northern American social and humanitarian research since the Enlightenment. The hegemony of this ideology has not diminished in its powerful expression made possible by the economic wealth and paradigms of knowledge of the Western academy and its publishing houses, both secular and religious. Western historiography is largely grounded philosophically in positivism and is written by historians who dwell within and are shaped by the cultural and social forces of the Global North in which they live and work. This cultural bias is one of the greatest weaknesses of Western historiography in that it projects an assumed cultural superiority over nations and cultures of the East and the Global South. Furthermore, the influence of classical Greek and the Roman Empires on the education and world views of the West only adds to this stance of cultural eminence.

In opposing features of Western historiography, in particular Orientalism, postcolonialism is designed not only to indicate how colonies resisted the empires that ruled them, but also to demonstrate how its insights may be used to oppose the continued imperial domination of non-Western nations, not only through the economic and military policies and activities of the elite nations and the urban metropolises, but also by means of undercutting what the West considers to be the canons of normative knowledge. Postcolonial interpretation not only resists the cultural domination of the West, but also provides new insights into ways that allow oppressed peoples to inhabit a diversity of global and

32. Segovia, 'In the World but Not of It', 198.

cultural spaces and to produce their own metanarratives of meaning. Indeed, postcolonialism may be used to assist in the creation of a new global order based on values different from those currently in operation in neoliberal, capitalist ideology.

VIII. The Imperial Metanarrative

The dominant imperial narrative that may be expressed in a variety of forms from instruction in the schools to the governmental rule of colonies to hymns and celebrations contains an ideology that is hierarchical, consisting of masters who dominate and rule the conquered and exploit their countries natural resources. By these means, empires attempt to control the diverse reality over which they rule. The desire is to inculcate among the colonials values conducive to the interests of the metropole and the importance of mimicking their civilization. Creators of metanarratives imagine and generate a national mythology that speaks of their origins, superior civilization, and accomplishments.

From their internal desire for identity that leads them to seek and accomplish integration into social groups and even nations, humans acquire a sense of commonality and belonging. Once conquered, human communities are usually forced to redirect their identity to come into conformity with the values and other elements of civilization of the empire. Imperial grand narratives celebrate and re-awaken the memory of the members of both the empire and the peoples conquered. These narratives point to the shared awareness of a conquering people to take delight in the power of being chosen by fate, a divine pantheon, or in the West the Christian God, in order to civilize and rule the world. The celebrations of formative events and achievements establish the bonds of the people in the metropole of belonging to land, home, and community.³³

Religion assisted in the empire's quest to shape a common culture and system of control for the peoples ruled by legitimating violence, the hierarchy, and its so-called divinely chosen rulers. In addition, religion also authenticates the sources of social power that were put into effect either by willing conversion or by coercion to the imperial deity or

33. McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, 68-75.

deities and the acknowledgment of their divine status. Religious propaganda in the empire teaches that human challenges could be successfully met by the aid of transcendent power and sacred authority, an assumption that could be disproven only by the empire's collapse.

Paideia, or education, and the moral character of an educated person controlled by the empire is another important means for colonizing the mind. It involves two related features: the process of education that culminates in a young person eventually taking his/her place in society, and the character of the educated person. Imperialists argued that the cultivated mind, received through what the empire considered proper schooling in subjects based on imperial knowledge and values, enables a person to become virtuous and civilized. Teachers from the metropolitan centers are often employed to teach the students of the colonies in order to superintend and instruct indigenous students. These students are taught that the empire reflects the natural or mythic order of reality and that their highest ambition should be to serve the empire. They become colonized colonials who learn to abhor their own culture.

In addition to military force and the colonization of the minds of the subjugated, empires also utilize the loyalty and services of local leaders among the colonies. These native leaders, usually hailing from the upper class, collude with the empires and are often appointed to represent imperial interests while assuming the administrative, legal, and economic responsibilities of the colonies. They implement the laws, education, and local administration imposed by the metropolises. Their task is to provide and support the imperial elite in maintaining political and social control, economic gain, and power. These intermediaries are largely former leaders who now receive their authority and positions through their selection by imperial administrations. What these local officials gain are social and political status, substantial opportunities for wealth, tax breaks, and a measure of power. Financially they may receive grants of estates and shares in the revenues generated by institutions in exchange for faithful service to the empires. Their profits come from the exploitation of their fellows.³⁴ Yet they were never considered to be the social, political, and racial equals of the empire's own citizens, particularly its aristocracy.

Colonies also were settled and at times even governed by citizens of the imperial metropole seeking to make their fortunes in the new territories.³⁵ While establishing their political and economic control on the colonial level, settlers came to regard indigenous peoples as

34. Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, 219-30.

35. Boer, *Last Stop before Antarctica*, 7-8.

subhuman, a view that, if allowed to go unchallenged, leads native colonials to adopt self-perceptions of inferiority and self-debasement. At times the intermediary class of indigenous leadership gives way to a new ruling class of previously foreign settlers.

IX. Colonial Resistance

Resistance to colonization, and its culmination in liberation, are achieved by constructive ideology and actions of intervention.³⁶ These take on a variety of forms, including the affirmation of an indigenous discourse of culture as well as labor strikes and revolts to undermine the dominating rule of empires.³⁷ In the process of decolonization, prior to the recovery of colonial geographical space and modes of self-rule, principal beliefs and cultural resistance are sought by recovering the re-imagined history, world views, knowledge, and culture of the former colony in new and transformed configurations.³⁸ Through discourse, behavior, and works of the imagination, postcolonialism resists and rejects the continuation of Western hegemony, which seeks not only to dominate but also to exploit the peoples of weaker and poorer nations. This hegemony is built upon a twisted ideology of violence, both physical and psychological, that promotes as authentic only the views and understandings of the empire. Resistance involves subverting the empire's metanarrative through mimicry, i.e. imitation that mocks, derides, and misshapes imperial language, ideas, and values. In addition, the undercutting of grand narratives is undertaken through discourse to demonstrate the falsity of imperialist ideologies that seek to legitimate their civilization's pre-eminence and the incontrovertible truth of its world views.³⁹ This requires a new rhetoric that espouses the values and ideas of the ever-changing colony by the indigenous intelligentsia set on contravening the absurdity of imperial metanarratives. Of course, violent opposition often occurred in revolutions that included pacts with other colonies to throw off the shackles of imperial force. The goal of postcolonialism is for nations, formerly subjected, to gain their own self-identity and means of rule by casting off the oppressive domination of the empire.

36. Young, *Postcolonialism*, 57.

37. Thiong'o, *Moving the Centre*.

38. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 209-20.

39. Lyotard's rejection of metanarratives is set forth in his volume *The Post-modern Condition*.

X. The Diaspora

Postcolonialism also examines displaced populations which continue the native traditions of the past but also forge new memory and history among the displaced, while not dispensing with the degrees of diversity inherent to their cultures. Postcolonialism unveils the probable reasons for a displaced ethnic community's uprootedness, examines how its literature responds to a new and strange geographical and cultural space, and points to various ideological and cultural adaptations of people who have been transplanted to live in an alien environment. The interpretative goal is to identify the cultural and ethnic bonds of solidarity that enable them to exist as an identifiable population in communities in new locations.

Postcolonialism also studies and seeks to describe the displaced people's culture and their reinterpretation of formative traditions within new contexts. These postcolonial 'translated writings', as Salman Rushdie describes them, arise from displaced communities, tend to be anti-authoritarian, and even set forth a multicultural presentation of egalitarianism that negates the provincialism of metropolitan communities and their cultural ideology.⁴⁰ Becoming marginals in their new dwellings, displaced peoples settle into communities of their own ethnic identities and find themselves in the interstices of the larger culture of the location in which they now dwell. While earlier generations may long for existence in the former homelands, this desire gradually fades as adaptations are made by subsequent generations. Instead of seeing the margins as areas of bondage, postcolonial scholars regard exiles in new communities in the metropole as important creators of new understandings arising from their resistance to the forces of hierarchy, uniformity, and hegemony in different geographical spaces. To function in the new world they learn the culture and the nature of those who dominate the larger space, but without completely dispensing with their past traditions. They form a hybridity of traditions and ways of existence in their new locations.

40. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 9-21. He asserts that everyone is a migrant from a past that is lost, a time of experiences which one wishes to reclaim, but cannot due to an imperfect memory and relocation. Also see Gilroy, 'Diaspora'.

People who have migrated to other lands by choice or by force live border lives in their new contexts.⁴¹ Indeed, as Rushdie asserts, the immigrant is perhaps ‘the defining figure of the twentieth’, and now the early twenty-first, centuries.⁴² This was also true, however, of ancient civilizations, including the culture and religion of Judaism. Rushdie contends that all of us are migrants who become immigrants, from our past to the present, from our homes to new locations, from a culture that is known and comfortable to one that is new, unknown, and often disconcerting. Transitory groups of migrants find themselves separated by time (past and present), location (the former land of dwelling and present space in the metropole), and culture (majority and minority). In the early generation, the longing for the past leads to the continuation of the former language, literature, religion, and ritual that provided cultural identity in the homeland, even though these begin to be reshaped by the new features of the present location. Border crossings to new locations lead to writings and other cultural forms that may be highly imaginative, adaptive cases of hybridity. These crossings interrupt traditional understandings of knowledge, community, and culture, for they require blending and contrasting the past with the present. These migrations are liminal in that location, culture, and experience are betwixt and between. They are not binary separations of people into classes of slaves and masters or outsider and insider, but rather are hybrids in which the mingling together of populations with their differences reshapes both those who cross the border into a different reality and the metropole’s earlier inhabitants. The traditions of the past are not abandoned by migrants, but rather are interwoven with new understandings within a different culture to which they must adapt. Those who cross the threshold and enter the diaspora begin to form for themselves a new identity in which they are part of a strange and different culture and geographical space. People of the diaspora are required to reshape and reinterpret the world into which they enter, thereby shaping a new cultural hybridity that adapts older traditions to new circumstances and may threaten to disturb and change conventional understandings of the existing culture in which they enter. In addition the culture they enter often experiences hybridity. All of this does not mean that conflicted differences and understandings of the formative elements of their changing identities do not exist among diaspora. The diaspora community, however, experiences ideological, ethnic, and often geographical isolation from the majority population and its culture.

41. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*.

42. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 177.

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This chapter has sought to raise the central methodological issues in postcolonial criticism by summarizing key scholars and noting the interconnections to history, historiography, and postmodernism. With this theoretical framework in place, we now turn to consider the conquest of Israel and the colonization of Judah by the Assyrian Empire.