



From Poststructuralism to postcolonial cultural self-criticism: From Deconstructing Binaries to Ambivalence

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Abstract

Contemporary political movements such as Marxism and post-Marxism, as well as intellectual and academic movements such as post-structuralism, postmodernism, and psychoanalysis have had a great influence on postcolonial literary criticism. There has been so much debate around the question of whether issues of colonial/neocolonial domination and decolonial resistance should be regarded as political or cultural issues or as a combination of both political and cultural sectors (including ethical and psychological points of view) that the terms “political”, “cultural” themselves have appeared to be relative—assuming different meanings at different times. This paper will show how such poststructural connotations of the “political” and “cultural” regarding the issues of both domination and resistance can appear as problematic in the postcolonial context where the division between the two terms appears so obvious at times that the boundary between them is inescapably erected once again producing ultimately an ambivalence. However, whatever the approach is to colonial/neocolonial dominations, and whatever the mode of resistance is proposed to challenge them, whether it is political or cultural or psychological, radical or liberal, or conflation of them, every discussion ultimately produces a liberal self-criticism at the cost of the once-colonized peoples, states and their cultures.

1. INTRODUCTION: Cultural domination and cultural resistance ideas and the deconstruction of the binary of the dominator and the dominated

Postcolonial studies emerge at a time when under the impact of post-war, world power change and post-Marxism situations contemporary criticism begins to opt for a cultural criticism of hegemonic dominations (such as capitalism and colonialism) instead of favoring earlier ideas of posing direct political resistances to them considering the impracticality of such resistances at that period. Even renowned Marxist critics Aime Cesaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) and Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) draw significant attention to the impact of dominant racist ideologies and discourses in colonial domination although their primary focus is on colonial active domination and the need for anti-colonial direct revolution. With the advent of culturalism, recognizing the inescapable need of the contemporary time, Raymond William’s influential works *Culture and Society* (1958) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977) also reconsider Marxism from the perspective of its possible and reciprocal connection with the cultural or literary field, though again without its being diverted from its primary and political commitments. William’s ideas also resonate in Terry

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Eagleton's work *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976). Edward Said's ground-breaking work *Orientalism* (1978) brings our attention more elaborately to the complicity between power and knowledge, or the political and the cultural in the context of colonial and postcolonial domination. Many critics have pointed out Edward Said and other major postcolonial critics' indebtedness to contemporary poststructural cultural criticism (as pointed out by critics such as Ahmad, 1995; Morton, 2007, p. 161-167; Young, 2001; Brennan, 2004, p. 185-203; Larsen, 2000, p. 140-156) while many critics have found the correlation between postmodern and postcolonial literary criticism (see Appiah, During, Hutcheon and Sangari from *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, 1995, Part IV: Postmodernism and Post-colonialism, p. 117-150; Aijaz, 1995; Murphy, 2007, p. 182; and Lazarus, 2011, p. 21-88). In their attempts to avoid direct political clashes among opposing powers, poststructuralism and postmodernism offer ethical and psychoanalytical perspectives from a cultural line of thought which have an inevitable impact on postcolonial literary criticism (see Ward, 2007, p. 190-201 and Marriott, 2021 and also the review of Marriott's book by Burnham, 2023 for the impact of poststructural psychoanalysis on colonialism and postcolonialism; as well as see Hiddleston, 2009 for the impact of poststructural ethical perspectives on postcolonial literary studies).

1.1.Cultural Domination: Political is Cultural

Under the influence of post structural culturalism, the two major significant changes that occurred have been a shift in the meaning of the term "political" as well as a change in the meaning of "power". In earlier postcolonial criticisms (such as the works of Cesaire, Fanon and Said) we usually find an analysis of colonial political domination (in which cultural expressions had a minor part to play) versus anti-colonial political resistance. However, after decolonization, when there is no formal or official colonial power and when there is no clearly identifiable oppression or oppressors, the idea of political resistance becomes automatically invalid. Moreover, as I have mentioned, during the post-war and post-Marxist periods, attitudes towards the ideas of both political domination and political resistance have already begun to change drastically, especially under the influence of contemporary culturalism, to focus more on the cultural impacts of capitalism and colonialism. The "post" in the postcolonial is never indicative of an end, rather involves an aftermath, and is interpreted as the continuation of capitalist or imperial domination in the forms of economic and cultural domination even after the official end of the colonial active domination. Some critics argue that the idea of economic or cultural dependence of the once-colonized countries on the former colonial power and economic and cultural gain for the once-colonized in a new postcolonial globalized world have also made the idea of active political resistance or decolonization redundant. (Gandhi, 1998, 2019). As a result, the term "subversion" increasingly appears to become more popular than the word "resistance" as it were to replace the political necessity with a cultural one. The question of continuing cultural domination involves the claims of the superiority of English literature and the idea about its continuing civilizing influences on the previously colonized peoples. The idea of British imperial cultural legacy also involves the idea of the rest of the world's inescapable continuing cultural dependence on the English language (During, 1995, 125-129) which is although seen at times in terms of hegemonic influence on it (Al-Kahtany and Alhamami, 2022; Mustapha, 2014). The shift from the political to cultural also relates to a liberal Marxist or rather poststructuralist Althusserian view (1969) of the domination which functions through a process of the dominated group's internalization of dominant ideologies

(rather than dominant groups' deployment of violent means like armies or police to control the people) so that the domination is much comfortably exerted "with consent" from the dominated people. In another most influential poststructural theorist Michel Foucault's works (1980, 1991) also, power is no longer vertically imposed from above but spread throughout the whole society in every social interaction.

1.2. Deconstruction of binary between the Dominator and the Dominated

The very idea of power has also undergone radical changes in postcolonial cultural criticism: the idea of power is now seen as fluid: analogies are repeatedly drawn between the power and powerlessness of both the Western and the non-western nations (as the one which is drawn by Aijaz Ahmad, 1995, to challenge the idea of the hierarchical binary existing between the first world and the third world as Aijaz recognizes the existence of both privileged elites and hapless workers in both the worlds). Under the influence of Foucault and Althusser's poststructuralist formulations, it has been now difficult to draw a clear hierarchical structure or binary between the dominant power and the dominated, the powerful and the powerless where the power is seen as permeated everywhere in daily life. The idea of the internalization of dominant ideologies by the dominant people and the recognition of continuing economic and cultural dependence on the dominant power make the former binary between the powerful and powerless unstable as well. Since then the former colonizer-colonized relations have started to be seen in more flexible ways in which neither the Western power is seen as essentially powerful and hegemonic, nor the non-western as necessarily powerless and innocent victims: especially in an age of globalization, cosmopolitanism, global solidarity, global sisterhood and mutual dependence, cooperation and collaboration, the former hierarchical binaries are being seen as out of date. In a 2018 editorial of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Chambers and Pravinchandra draw attention to how the focus of the field of postcolonial literature has increasingly shifted from the colonial past to the contemporary challenges of neocolonialism which makes the old binaries of colonial and postcolonial appear as invalid:

Scholars have also used terms including "post-Orientalist" (Prakash, 1990), "post-post-colonial" (Jay, 2005), and "re-Orientalist" (Dwivedi & Lau, 2014). (Chambers & Pravinchandra, 2018, p.340).

Increasingly, thinkers are dismantling Samuel Huntington's (1993, 2002/1996) tendentious idea of a clash of civilizations and arguing that binaries — between the West and the rest; colonialism and postcolonial metanarratives-----are breaking down (Chambers & Pravinchandra, 2018, p.340).

1.3. Cultural Resistance: Cultural is Political

Nevertheless, the point in which poststructuralism differs from structuralism's one-sided dominance idea is that poststructuralism is not all about the dominated entity's complete merge or loss of self into the dominant power, as it not only loses but also gains simultaneously from its relation with the dominant power. Leela Gandhi draws our attention to an interesting observation that how from British colonial educator Thomas Macaulay to Indian postcolonial critic Ashish Nandi's writings, colonial political hegemony appears to be somewhat justified and compensated for a cultural gain. (Leela Gandhi, 2019, p. 14-15). Moreover, poststructuralism shows how the dominated consciously or unconsciously resists the ideologies of the dominant power which are used to marginalize it. In fact, in post-structuralism, ideas of both domination and resistance are intimately related. With a view to counter totalitarian attitudes of the hegemonic dominant power, poststructuralism not only reveals and resists the hierarchical binary structures between the dominator and the dominated as created by the

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dominant power (as Structuralism does) but also demystifies, destabilizes and displaces those structures. Poststructuralism-oriented postcolonialism also aims to overcome hierarchical or binary relations between the colonizer and the colonized, and attempts to bridge the gap between them, hence keeping its focus away from the issue of the direct political clash between the colonizer and the colonized, rather than putting more emphasis on their cultural relations and interactions; on the once-colonized people's cultural gain and continuing cultural dependence on the former colonizer as well as on the study of colonial/neocolonial cultural materials, textual structures, literary forms and features and destabilizing the hegemonic cultural constructions or ideologies which have seen as being complicit with the actual colonial/neocolonial political dominations. Madhu Krishnanan's (2021, p.1-3) review of Elleke Boehmer's book *Postcolonial Poetics: 21st Century Critical Readings* (2018) and Seck's (2023) article "The Cultural Underground of Decolonization" reveal other dimensions of the conflation of cultural and material/political articulations as well as of colonial and postcolonial situations.

Classical Marxists also hold a view that capitalist domination will collapse someday from reasons that would arise out of its own contradictions. However, that would happen via human agency. Poststructural cultural criticism, on the other hand, is influenced largely by Lacanian (Althusserian, 1969; Homer, 2005; Ahmed, Mohammed, 2021) ideas of internalization and resistance in which both the idea of domination and resistance are passive and unconscious processes. Poststructural thinker Foucault also holds a similar view that where there is power, there is resistance (meaning passive resistance once again). In postcolonial variant of Lacan's psychoanalysis, in his theory of identity and anti-essentialism, the dominated unconsciously internalizes and then unconsciously resists (as in Homi Bhabha's work, 1994) the ideas of hierarchical binary relation of identity between the colonizer and the colonized, the white people and the non-white, the so-called civilized and the barbarian and so on.

There is also some room for conscious resistance ideas in poststructuralism such as French philosopher Jacques Derrida's idea of deconstructive reading although this idea is once again considered as having limitations for its textuality as it does not relate itself immediately to any active politics as Marxism does (Royle, 2003; Tormey and Townshend, 2006, p.191-205). By using the technique of Derridean deconstructive reading, postcolonial critics pursue a revision of colonial texts, and offer an alternative reading of them with an aim to explore the ideas of problematic correlations between colonial knowledge and colonialist capitalist, fascist and/or racist political powers. A deconstructive reading of colonialist text allows us to see how colonial knowledge provide some hierarchical binary categories or terms which leads to create actual hierarchical relations between the colonizer and the colonized at the convenience of colonial hegemonic domination in real life. All Major postcolonial critics, Edward Said (1978, 1994), Homi Bhabha (1994) and Gayatri Spivak (1988) have used this deconstructive criticism to undermine the assumption of the superiority of canonical English literature by showing its complicity with colonial domination. Instead of going to the further details on how Said, Bhabha and Spivak have appropriated Derridian deconstructive reading, I would like to point at the ultimate outcome to which such deconstructive readings in most cases have turned to in postcolonial criticisms. This paper will show how poststructuralism oriented postcolonial cultural criticism or cultural resistance to colonialism or neocolonialism, in its use of conscious

or unconscious resistance, active or passive politics, produce the same liberal self-criticism, only in different forms. Moreover, the understanding of “the cultural in the political” or “the political in the cultural” appears problematic at times and fails to remain consistent while treating different powers, the colonizer and the colonized/once colonized.

2. POSTCOLONIAL SELF-CRITICISM: postcolonial deconstructive reading of the past colonial domination and anti-colonial resistance

In spite of accepting ideas of the once colonized people’s economic and cultural gain and their cultural dependence on the former colonial powers, the reality of marginalization and the existence of the hegemony of the dominant power are still acknowledged unanimously by almost all critics. Borrowing from poststructural cultural criticism’s idea of the deconstruction of Manichean Human-non-human binaries or Hegelian master-slave binaries is often claimed by critics to have provided postcolonial criticism with the conceptual tools for resisting hegemonic imperial domination and challenging the colonizer-colonized hierarchical binary constructions which have been often criticized for being described in Manichean or Hegelian terms during colonial period (Morton, p. 165) and which have been seen as still being influential in creating hierarchies to aid in neocolonial domination in the present period. While materialist critics may argue that postcolonial use of Hegelian dialectic may be problematic for the postcolonial people to attain their agency or take politically active initiatives against capitalist and colonialist hegemony where the colonizer is seen perpetually as an ultimate master or powerful and the colonized as eternally victimized (although such criticisms aim to challenge these hierarchical binary constructions), culturalists may claim in their defence that the use of Hegelian or Manichean dialectics in postcolonial criticism and to interpret colonial ideological categories not only may lead to revealing their relation with colonial knowledge and their complicity with colonial actual domination but also to dismantle them, proposing a reversal or displacement of them to overturn the hierarchy expressed by those ideologies (Morton, 2007, p. 165-166). (In fact, here lies the difference between structuralism and poststructuralism as I have already mentioned). Poststructuralist deconstructive and liberal readings have been instructive for postcolonial literature and criticism to look at the colonizer, the colonized, the anti-colonial, the postcolonial categories in a new, different and unfamiliar way; or to look at all of them in the same way. When the critics have begun to opt for a post-structural cultural criticism they have tried to argue that this cultural criticism itself can be seen as vital political resistance as Morton and Procter argue (Morton, 2007, p. 166; Procter, 2007, p. 176). Then whenever postcolonial cultural criticism attempts to deconstruct colonialist cultural ideologies and hegemonic binary structures created by the colonial powers between the colonizer and the colonized, it gives similar importance to resisting the past anti-colonial “cultural rhetoric” about the pre-colonial golden past or cultural traditions, anti-colonial nationalisms and the political success in decolonization as well as tries to counter in the present the supposedly totalitarian postcolonial ideologies or cultural assumptions which are seen to be complicit in postcolonial nation state’s supposed hegemonic political domination over its own peoples. Among them, the most interesting is the part where it is argued that the anti-colonial political struggle had been already a cultural struggle from the beginning. Just as the colonial political domination has been often made to be viewed merely as a cultural encounter (such as in Mannoni’s work), the anti-colonial nationalist and political struggle also has been made to be seen merely as a cultural construct produced by the colonized leaders and rulers for their own interests. Then whenever the anti-colonial struggle is acknowledged as a real political

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struggle, it is necessarily considered a failure by drawing evidence of the failure of present postcolonial nation-states to achieve meaningful political sovereignty and emancipate all people. The local elites are often seen as necessarily collaborating with the colonial and neocolonial political powers in the past and the present respectively. In most postcolonial writing and criticism, the former categories of the colonizer and the colonized are thus being made post-structurally unstable.

Under the influence of poststructuralism's anti-foundational politics, poststructural-oriented postcolonialism acknowledges that seeing capitalist/colonialist rule as always powerful and foundational to the history may be regarded as showing complicity with them, rather than the past should be seen in the new light and natives' agency or own participation in the history must be acknowledged (Loomba, 2005, p.207, p. 199) to go beyond the old ideological hierarchical binary relations between the dominator and the dominated. It is considered that colonized people were not merely passive victims—they actively resisted colonial domination. However, there were divisions within themselves. While mass people actively resisted colonial hegemony, local elite rulers who were already hegemonic to their own common people, actively collaborated with colonial rulers and oppressed their own people even further with the aid of colonial powers. As Loomba argues, the elite native voice was also inscribed in colonialism (Loomba, p. 199).

Apart from the issues of local rulers' precolonial hegemonic domination on themselves as well as their collaboration in colonial domination, the issue of locals' resistance to colonial power is again seen as equally controversial. In a poststructural attempt to reduce the gap between the colonizer and the colonized, similarities are too often drawn between colonial and anti-colonial nationalisms. At this point, both nationalisms are discredited: one is discredited for being involved in colonialism, slavery, fascism, racism and so on; and another for participating in anti-colonial struggle which is seen as similarly exploitative. Ania Loomba argues that Anti-colonial nationalism both appropriated and exploited colonial nationalism, which resulted in the creation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Loomba, 2005, p. 169). Both nationalisms have been seen as similarly exploitative for leaders' personal gain; common people are believed not to have benefited from anti-colonial nationalism at all. (Loomba, 2005, p. 170; Loomba, 2015, p. 192). With "tiresome and counterproductive" references to Benedict Anderson's (1991) *Imagined Communities* (Dirlik, 1997, p. Xi-Xii) a generalized analogy is drawn between European and Asian and African nationalisms and the anti-colonial struggle is seen as more ideological and cultural construct than active political struggle; more imaginary, fabricated and rhetorical than real. It is argued that anti-colonial resistance was culturally or linguistically constructed by local leaders in the name of nationalism or national unity and some pre-colonial golden past romanticism and was justified by anti-colonial nationalist elite leaders only by exploiting the issues of own women and working-class people (Aijaz; Loomba; Boehmer; Young). The Colonial versus anti-colonial struggle is also seen as something like a conflict between modernity versus tradition where traditional values relating to motherhood, family and so on, all are seen as fabricated for the purpose of anti-colonial struggle against colonial modernity. With reference to Cabral, Loomba argues, "No nation is perfect—caught up in an eternal, ongoing process of imagined and re-imagined" (Loomba, p. 170). In so much emphasis on the imaginary and cultural, in respect of both ideas of domination and resistance,

the very boundary between the ideas of the political and the cultural itself appears to collapse in the same deconstructive and poststructural process. Poststructuralism oriented postcolonial study's ideas of domination and resistance hence are often critiqued for being discursive and textual and thereby for depoliticizing the issues of capitalist and colonialist domination and resistance (See Morton, p. 161; Ahmad and Dirlik). Yet as I have already discussed that poststructural resistance itself is often seen as vital political resistance in postcolonial criticism. Morton even claims that Derridian resistance is parallel to Fanon's resistance in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) (Morton, p. 166).

Even when anti-colonial is acknowledged as a political struggle, its authenticity and validity are once again brought into question. The anti-colonial struggle is seen as both anti-imperialist and a struggle for power for local elites (Young, p. 164). Young notices a division within the local anti-colonialists: between bourgeois nationalists who were engaged in the struggle for power within themselves which often resulted in ethnic or communal violence (Young, p. 164-165) and socialist revolutionaries who sought resistance against capitalism from a larger level (Young, p. 170). The local elite leaders or 'bourgeois nationalists' are blamed for exploiting both lower-class people and women to their ends in the name of nationalism. Anti-colonial struggle is seen to have exploited nationalist stories which only reflected few elite leaders' personal or family stories and personal interests. The idea of the division within the local themselves in which locals can be seen as hegemonic and exploitative to themselves undermines the Hegelian dialectical relation and the clear binary between the powerful and the powerless. Socialist revolutionaries are also taken to tasks for prescribing violence in the anti-colonial struggle, as Young argues that anti-colonial direct resistances were militant and that Fanonian violence was not template for everyone (Young, p. 164) and that 'anti-colonial barbarity' was a deviation of classical Marxism (Young, p. 167-169). Even when anti-colonial struggle is seen as a genuine struggle of common people, it is again often described in terms of militant activities or criminality, because evidences of subaltern resistance are often collected from documents such as criminal records, newspapers and reports of court trials (Morton, p. 168). However, such techniques of collecting information about subaltern resistance from colonial records raise the question of their authenticity as Morton observes:

The problem with this approach to subaltern insurgency was that it assumed that the way in which acts of subaltern insurgency were represented by the colonial state was an accurate reflection of the ways in which the subaltern understood their own reasons for participating in a political uprising, such as a riot, a strike or a protest (Morton, p. 168).

3. PRESENT NEOCOLONIAL DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE TO IT: postcolonial nation state and postcolonial self-criticism

Regarding the post-independence nation state, there is a general assumption that the hegemony of local elite rulers and leaders on their own people (which was always already there) has continued to the present period. Besides, postcolonial nation state is believed to replicate the hegemony of colonial state as the old colonial administrative system has not been changed in most places after decolonization (Chatterjee, 1993; Chakrabarti, 1995; Boehmer, 2005, p. 231). Moreover, postcolonial nation states are believed to be involved in present

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neocolonial dominations by allowing multinational companies to grow inside them and thereby aiding capitalism to develop and flourish from postcolonial own local ground. In most cases, such representations of postcolonial nation-states serve specifically as the proof of the failure of decolonization, and more broadly, the failure of Marxism (as decolonization is presupposed as the wholesale product of Marxism). It is generally assumed that liberation from around two hundred years of colonial rule has given nothing to working class people as well as women. By echoing Aijaz (1995) and Dirlik (1998), all later critics, Larsen (2000), Young (2001), Lazarus (2011), and Loomba (2005, 2015) explore in their works, how anti-colonial victory for the once colonized countries turns into socialist defeat as it has not been yet able to emancipate all people. (Young, 2001, p. 170-172; Boehmer, 2005, p. 231; Loomba, 2015, p. 31-32) and hence the need for a political struggle against neocolonialism is also continuing. Postmodern and poststructural cultural critics of postcolonialism (who see cultural criticism as vital political approach) also aim to purge the postcolonial nation states of their hegemonic ideologies (which they are seen to have once borrowed from colonizers and continued to retain) and unanimously agree with materialists about postcolonial states' violence and exclusion of minority people. Here specific conditions of particular nation-states are often taken as reflective of all postcolonial states under broad generalizations. And small unknown non-western native writers for cheap publicity come up with their insights with evidences from inside.

Achille Mbembe's work *On the Postcolony* (2001) is drawn into our attention by Stephen Morton (Morton, p. 170-171) to point out the fact that in many Sub-Saharan African areas, colonial rulers did not establish nation states following European models of "welfare" states which they did for their own nations. For their colonies, colonial rulers imposed hegemonic legislative systems which continued to remain after the end of colonialism. Such deprivations ultimately led those places to disastrous conditions especially after decolonization: "The colony is primarily a place where violence and upheaval are lived, where violence is built into structures and institutions" (Mbembe, p. 174; Morton, p. 170). Colonial criticism therefore continues in postcolonial criticism when criticism of the colonizers turns logically to the criticism of the once-colonized. The once colonised is blamed both for following European hegemony and not following the European standard.

The view of postcolonial nation-states as the bearer of neocolonial ills is usually vociferously drawn as evidence of the failure of anti-colonial struggles such as in Boehmer's words (2005):

Since the early 1970s, as is widely known, post-independence nations have been increasingly plagued by neo-colonial ills: economic dis-orders and social malaise, government corruption, state repression, and various carry-overs from the prebendal and command structures of postcolonialism the colonial period. In much of the once-colonized world, decolonization in fact produced few changes: power hierarchies were maintained, the values of the former colonizer remained influential. Liberation equated with mere 'flag independence', a change of political arrangement only (Boehmer, p. 230-231).

Then Boehmer provides a list of works (which began to emerge from the late 1960 onwards, which she terms as the “novel of disenchantment”) that demonstrate these themes: Achebe’s *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah*, Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born* (1969), Naipaul’s *The Mimic Men* (1967), *Guerrillas* (1975), and *A Bend in the River* (1979), Ngugi’s *Devil on the Cross* (1982), Earl Lovelace’s *The Wine of Astonishment* (1982), Buchi Emecheta’s *Double Yoke* (1982), and *Shame* (1983) by Salman Rushdie.

4. Problem with the conflation of political and cultural in the representation of the postcolonial nation state as political power

Quite interestingly, no matter if the colonial political domination has now been considered as the matter of the past, or reconsidered as the cultural encounter (as in Mannoni’s works), or has been regarded as being continued in the present in the form of a cultural neocolonialism, the ghost of the term “political” continues to haunt the part of the once-colonized countries and societies. Funnily enough, after attempting earlier to erase the dividing line between the political and the cultural, if there is anything left about the political, then it has continued to be a very bad influence on the once-colonized societies on the basis of which the boundary between the political and cultural is erected once again. As things stand, the logic seems to be that, even if the colonial or neocolonial powers have been bankrupted from their political significance in the present re-evaluation of them, their collaborators continue to exist on the local grounds of postcolonial nation states to continue the dominance of the “political” over the cultural. Foucauldian poststructural idea of decentralization of power no more works for postcolonial nation-states, as power is seen as centralized in the very political institution of the postcolonial nation state.

However, as the most of the postcolonial writers are immigrant writers, many critics have shown concern about whether the immigrant writers can represent any longer their places of origin and their people truly or honestly, drawing attention ultimately to one of the basic questions of postcolonialism regarding its representational politics: *who is speaking for whom*. Such as, Aijaz Ahmad asks whether Homi Bhabha’s specific immigrant reality can be taken as representational for all postcolonial subjects (Aijaz, 1995). Anthony Appiah (1995) and Arif Dirlik (1997) express similar concerns:

POSTCOLONIALITY IS THE condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of 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. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other and for Africa (Appiah, 1995, p. 119).

Postcolonialism for all its claims to represent what used to be called the Third World, issues from transnational intellectuals located in the centers of power; ---indeed, postcolonialism has been described by some as a Eurocentrism (Dirlik, p. x).

A postcolonial novel, as Appiah argues, not only seems to be post-realist in its form, like a Western postmodern novel, but also appears to be post-nativist in its content as well, when it seeks to delegitimize nationalist anti-colonial struggles for independence:

Postrealist writing; postnativist politics; transnational rather than a national solidarity. And pessimism: a kind of postoptimism to balance the earlier enthusiasm for *The Suns of Independence* (Appiah, 1995, p.122, 123).

Anthony Appiah jokingly states that African novelists who want to escape neocolonialism, are no longer committed to the nation (or to their religion), and will seem misleadingly postmodern in the name of being sympathetic to “human suffering” and “ethical universal”. Like Boehmer, Appiah also provides a list of “novels of disenchantment”:

Maybe, then, we can recover within postmodernism the postcolonial writers’ humanism—the concern for human suffering, for the victims of the postcolonial state (a concern we find everywhere: in Mudimbe, as we have seen; in Soyinka’s *A Play of Giants*; in Achebe, Farrah, Gordimer, Labou Tansi—the list is difficult to complete)—while still rejecting the master-narratives of modernism. This human impulse—an impulse that transcends obligations to churches and to nations—I propose we learn from Mudimbe’s *Landu*. (Appiah, p. 123).

5. Impact of poststructural psychoanalytical perspectives on postcolonial criticism and the paradoxical traumatic act of forgetting and remembering

Psychoanalysis has also contributed in a significant way to the poststructuralist attempt to erasure of the hierarchical binary between the powerful and the powerless, and in the colonial/postcolonial context, the binary between the colonizer and the colonized. Initially when dealing with colonial relations, psychoanalysis provided a structural representation between the colonizer and the colonized and represented the colonized in negative terms which served as the justification of colonialism. During the latter half of the nineteenth century as Abigail Ward (2007) notes concerning Françoise Vergès’s studies that a discourse arises in France which defines the relation between race, culture and psyche. This study was limited to lower class French people who were treated as vagabond or pathologically degenerate people. Later this study included the colonized people to the categories of the vagabond, the insane and the criminal (Ward, 2007, p. 191). Mrinalini Greedharry (2008) also gives us almost similar information upon observing the work of Sigmund Freud, one of the founding father of psychoanalysis, at the beginning of her book *Postcolonial Theory and Psychoanalysis: From Uneasy Engagements to Effective Critique*:

A postcolonial reader who comes to Freud looking for insights and concepts is faced with the difficulty of dealing with his problematic discussion of non-western civilizations. One of the more notable features of Freud’s work is his use of metaphors and analogies that place neurotic individuals, children,

women and 'primitive' peoples in close relation to each other. In fact, both *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilization and Its Discontents* take cues from analogies just like these (Greedharry, 2008, p. 1).

Freud has observed, as Greedharry notes, numerous points of agreement between the psychology of primitive people as it is taught by social anthropology; and the psychology of the neurotics as it has been revealed by psychoanalysis.

Then after the Second World War, as has been observed by Ward, a new liberal approach was developed by French-speaking theorists (who appeared to be sympathetic to the plight of the colonized people) to describe the psychological impact of colonialism on the colonized, it attempts to analyse such psychological impact on both the colonizer and the colonized (although we can assume that they both were not affected by colonialism to the same extent). The colonized has thus drawn attention either as pathologically degenerate people in the earlier structuralist formulation to serve *the reasons* or justification for colonialism, or has later drawn a liberal, sympathetic and poststructuralist reconsideration to reveal *the impacts* of colonialism by being seen as equally victimized like the colonizer by the colonial system (such as in Octave Mannoni, Albert Memmi, Frantz Fanon and Ashish Nandi's works) (see Ward, p. 190-191; Hiddleston on Ashish Nandi, p. 65). In Mannoni's works, the troubled history of colonization and the impact of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized are to be understood via the relation between the colonizer and the colonized which is seen as merely the encounter between two personalities that involve two psychological complexes: inferiority complex and the dependency complex (Ward, p. 193). In such liberal accounts of the colonized or the colonizer suffering from some psychological problems, the troubled fact of colonial deliberate political motivation and violence as well as the psychological problems issued from colonial violence are once again omitted wittingly or unwittingly. There is a huge impact of Lacanian psychoanalysis on postcolonial studies. In Lacanian Psychoanalysis, The Big Other (the dominant system/power) also lacks something (Homer, 1995). In Octave Mannoni's works, colonialism was put into practice by a very few elite officers who had been heavily and psychologically affected by the colonial system of domination, and the soldiers had no choice but to follow the orders of their superiors (also see Fanon, 1986, p. 91-92). Ward points out that, While Mannoni argues that the colonial situation creates certain fantasies under which the colonizer felt encouraged to dominate over the colonized and oppress him, and the colonized, on his part, felt himself dependent on the colonizer, Frantz Fanon refutes the idea saying that psychological problems happened after colonial oppression, not before it (Ward, p. 194). Ward comments that the idea of the relationship between psychoanalysis and postcolonial criticism has never been a straightforward or unproblematic one, as psychoanalysis has been both accepted and rejected by postcolonial writers and critics (Ward, p. 191).

Frantz Fanon's works proceed to analyze how the political and psychological factors become complementary to and affect each other. His works demonstrate how colonial domination and the act of violence had psychological impacts on the colonized. In his *Black Skin White Masks* (1986), the colonized people such as the Negro and Algerian Arabs internalize racist ideologies created by the French colonial education system which leads to an identity crisis or inferiority complex within them to the point that they often dream of being white and break the colour line or black-white hierarchical binary by marrying from the white

race. They often feel the same hatred for their own body and own race as the white race does for the black race. Such psychoanalysis acknowledges that the colonized himself who internalizes colonial racist ideologies is somewhat responsible for his own subordination by the colonizer in the colonial process. The colonized people thus provide both the cultural and psychological “reasons for” and “impacts of” colonialism. Fanon’s liberal poststructural psychoanalysis also includes the psychological impact of the colonial violence on the European colonizers themselves who are helplessly caught up in a colonial system of domination which is bound to produce violence.

Fanon’s poststructuralism is tempered however by his sense of Marxism as Fanon perceives colonial relations in Marxist terms, as between colonized peasants and elite colonizers and proposes a Marxist idea of a direct revolution against capitalist domination in his works. Fanon attempts to save his own non-western people from their identity crisis by pointing out that the Negro or the Arab is not inferior in reality but constructed as such by the white Europeans for the purpose of colonialism. Therefore, they must stay where they are, retain their own identity and rather put an end to colonial domination which has brought them so much miseries. In other words, in Fanon’s works, the psychological or cultural problems were created by political domination of colonialism and hence should be resolved via political revolution against that hegemonic domination (Fanon 1986, p. 106-107; Fanon, 1963, p. 76-77). However, many critics argue that the time has changed and that Fanonian concept of direct political revolution and resistance is now considered impractical and out of date in a post-Marxist period (Morton, p.169; Young). Besides, in the present in a more globalized world the two opposing forces, the colonizer and the colonized are now seen as mutually dependent on each other.

When the colonizer is seen as victimized as the colonized by the colonial system, or the colonized is seen as being complicit with the colonial hegemonic system, there cannot be seen any clear-cut binary between the two, the dominator and the dominated, the powerful and the powerless. Then the issue of resistance to the dominant power becomes already invalid. Moreover, since the period of post-Marxism, the issue of a Marxist type of political resistance to the neocolonial power has been deemed as impractical for several reasons (see Tormey and Townshend, 2006, p. 5-6; Jameson, 1986, p. 76-77). It was during that time, that the Lacanian idea of Unconscious or passive/indirect resistance became popular (Tormey and Townshend, p. 27-28; Homer, 2005) where at least the existence of hegemonic domination and the need to pose some kind of resistance to it can be acknowledged, (although the method of resistance is to be reconsidered). During the same period, Jean Lyotard’s idea of postmodern indirect resistance through literary style (instead of the content of literature) also began to draw significant attention (Tormey and Townshend, p. 63; Malpas, 2003). The works of Fredric Jameson (see Roberts, 2000) combine both the Lacanian poststructural idea of the resistance of the Unconscious and the Lyotardian Postmodern idea of the indirect resistance through a literary style which became very influential and had an enormous impact on postcolonial literature and criticism which was emerging at that period. Anthony Appiah and Neil Lazarus’s work draws our attention to the proliferation of the ideas of postmodern literary and unconscious/indirect textual resistance in postcolonial literary works. Such proliferations significantly undermine the reality of actual decolonial resistance to colonial powers. When

Fanon's idea of direct political resistance to colonial domination is considered out of date by many critics, and the focus is turned to Lacanian psychoanalysis, the colonial problem itself starts to be described in terms of the problem of the mind or consciousness. Critics also turn to Homi Bhabha (1994) who although like Fanon identifies the Lacanian idea of the crisis of identity with his own crisis of immigrant identity, and borrows from Lacan the idea of the internalization and resistance, unlike Fanon, prefers Lacanian idea of the resistance of the unconscious to the idea of active resistance.

With reference to trauma studies, some critics have attempted to identify similarities between traumatic experiences that arise from the holocaust and those issues from colonial and postcolonial situations. In postcolonial criticism, on the one hand, psychoanalytical studies of the colonial situation reveal the traumatic experiences (both of the colonized and the colonizer) that resulted from the colonial violence; on the other hand, shows the ways to get over or forget the past trauma. In psychoanalysis, however, a traumatic patient never fully forgets the traumatic incidents, they eventually recur in the patient's memory. In postcolonial criticism, they return to the postcolonial subject's memory only to enable him to cope with the present postcolonial violence, after all, colonial violence is a matter of the past, and the more serious issue is to get over the present trauma. Here remembering the past is only a channel to deal with present traumatic experiences. The issue of resistance to colonial domination is recalled to counter the supposed postcolonial hegemonic domination. Here at this point, although it is taken for granted that the movement of decolonization was a failure and must be forgotten considering the present postcolonial violence, the lesson learnt during decolonization is acknowledged (in terms of a Marxist success) to be remembered as the present to counter the neocolonial violence which is again always supposedly issue from postcolonial local grounds. The postcolonial subject is caught between such paradoxical act of forgetting and remembering (Abigail Ward, p. 190).

6. Problem with appropriating psychoanalytical perspectives to postcolonial criticism

Although the overemphasis is given on the "unconscious" and "the imaginary community" to keep our attention away from the conscious politics of colonialism, neocolonialism and decolonization and to counter the totalitarian views of nationalism involved in these movements, the postcolonial subject and the community are at times demanded to be conscious and real flesh and blood, to be capable of being united once again to counter the real postcolonial violence done on themselves by themselves. Although the issue of active resistance to neocolonial power has often been considered already invalid or impractical, it is reconsidered as relevant seeing the need to fight against its collaborators from the local grounds of all postcolonial countries. To this end, some recent critics offer a combination of both Marxist and poststructuralist politics, both conscious and unconscious modes of resistance to be more effective at once in both subverting postcolonial ideologies and leading to active movements against postcolonial political hegemony.

7. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the terms "political" and "cultural", appear to remain as relative terms, taking the form and changing the meaning simultaneously according to different times, places, contexts and peoples. The terms "cultural" and "unconscious" frequently change their relation with the term "political", sometimes engaging with it in conflicts, other times overlapping with it in

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reconciliation, then separating from it again in a different reconsideration. In any consideration, in conscious politics against colonialism and neocolonialism; or unconscious, passive, deconstructive, cultural negotiations with them, postcolonial writing and criticism routinely tends to produce ironically a “liberal” self-criticism and ambivalence at the cost of own peoples, places and cultures in the name of subverting colonial/neocolonial dominations.

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