

A Study of the Notion of Bhabhasque's Hybridity in V.S. Naipaul's *In a Free State*

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Abstract

*In this article, which addresses the academic, the researchers try to read V. S. Naipaul's *In a Free State* under the light of Bhabha's hybridity. The researchers try to reexamine the way this notion has been defined and inspect the way one's familiarity with this notion informs one's reading of *In a Free State*. The contemporary age observes a wide variety of thinkers dealing with the notion of hybridity, among whom Bhabha is the key figure. Hybridity is among the major key terms which affect postcolonial discourse. The researchers show how hybridity is defined in interaction with related concepts such as third space, ambivalence and mimicry. The researchers demonstrate the way hybridity informs the reading of the different layers of meaning in this work. The researchers illustrate the way hybridity affects the confrontation of the colonizer and the colonized. One can observe the way the concept of hybridity sheds light to the way the colonizer and the colonized interact.*

Key terms: hybridity, third space, ambivalence, mimicry, colonizer, colonized

Introduction

What is the nature of interaction in confrontation of the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized? What is hybridity? What is Homi K. Bhabha's definition of the concept of hybridity? These questions and the questions of the same sort form the foundation of an article, in which, having taken a glance at diverse aspects of the notion of hybridity from the point of view of Bhabha (1949-), the writers examine the role of this concept in a reading of V. S. Naipaul's *In a Free State*. In order to accomplish this wish, the writers examine the history and the definitions of this notion in the first part. A study of the factors affecting the work of Naipaul and the role of Postcolonial movement in the formation of this work is followed by the ways in which reading under the light of this notion affects one's reading of this text.

Homi K. Bhabha, through development of critical terms such as 'hybridity,' 'interstitial' and the 'third space,' marks the discourse of postcolonial theory. However, Bhabha's critical achievement is not bound to the development of these terms. The comment concerning Bhabha in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2001) begins with: "a prominent figure in postcolonial studies, Homi K. Bhabha has infused thinking about nationality, ethnicity, and politics with poststructuralist theories of identity and indeterminacy" (p. 2377). M. A. R. Habib (2005) refers to these "certain tenets of poststructuralism" that Bhabha extends into "discourses about colonialism, nationality, and culture" in *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (2005).

According to Habib, these tenets are “a challenging of the notion of fixed identity, the undermining of binary oppositions, and an emphasis on language and discourse—together with the power relations in which these are imbricated—as underlying our understanding of cultural phenomena” (p. 750).

The history of the application of the notion of hybridity, in the contemporary theory, dates back to Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Discourse in the Novel.” On the other hand, Maria-Theresia Holub (2007) in her PhD dissertation quotes Helen Cixous (1937-) as saying: “The between, the *entre*, is neither one or [sic] the other. I am not of the neither one nor the other. I am rather on the side of *with*, in spite of all the difficulties and confusions this may bring about” (p.8). The repetition of the phrase “neither one nor the other” resonates with Bhabha’s definition of the concept of hybridity mentioned in the introduction to “The Commitment to Theory”(1994).

Up to now, one can observe the debt Bhabha owes to Bakhtin and probably Cixous; however, the influence upon Bhabha concerning his theories on hybridity is not restricted to these two. One can trace the ideas of major philosophical figures like Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) in Bhabha’s theories. By the same token, as that of Bakhtin, Bhabha, having recourse to Derrida, accentuates “the performative dimensions of cultural enunciation” as well: “the *place of utterance*—is crossed by the *différance* of writing ... [which ensures] that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent” (Werbner 2001, p. 136). Simply put, Bhabha believes the colonizer’s language is not free from the impacts of Derridean *différance*, both differing and deferring characteristics of language. These features of the colonizer’s language make it uncontrollable. This lack of complete control over language stands for the destabilization in colonial power. As language is among the powerful means through which the colonizer applies his authority, this feature can be regarded as a vulnerable point of this language.

What Benjamin argues relates to another aspect of the interaction the languages of the colonizer and the colonized have. Benjamin argues that “accurate translation is impossible, since the intentionality of words is lost in translation.” He believes that meanings of the original are “subject to future historical revision.” Accordingly, “no translation can exhaust the meanings of the original.” “Translations can,” Benjamin asserts, “*extend* the translating language and create new meanings in it.” Having recourse to Benjamin, Bhabha assumes that “in the colonial encounter,” therefore, “it is not just the colonized who are subjected to Western ways”; rather, “the colonizers too are transformed, while the colonized deploy borrowed forms to tell their own, distinct narratives which ‘unsettle’ and ‘subvert’ the cultural authority of the colonizers” (*Ibid.*).

Identification is the domain in which psychoanalytical notions such as Freudian “Oedipal Complex” and Lacanian “the Other” influence Bhabha. Akin to the Oedipal stage, the subject, in its general meaning, can love as well as hate the object it wishes to identify with. It is possible to find a person like Peter in *In a Free State* who simultaneously hates and tries to identify with the colonizer. The child wishes to possess the parent of the opposite sex, while simultaneously wanting to stand for the parent of the same sex. The ambivalence created out of this state of love/rivalry is linked to Lacanian notion of “the Other” which plays a decisive role in self-identification. According to Bertens (2001), “for Lacan, we need the response and recognition of *others* and of the Other to arrive at what we experience as our identity” (p. 161). Bobby, as a British subject in *In a Free State*, is entangled in this ambivalence, for self-identification, which is reminiscent of hybridity. There is still another point concerning the role Lacan’s notion of the “other” plays. In this respect, Bhabha, as Pnina Werbner asserts, even accuses colonial anthropologists like “Montesquieu, Barthes, Kristeva, Derrida, and Lyotard” of “denying oppositional agency on the ‘other’, the power to signify, negate, and initiate historic desire” (Werbner 2001, p. 133).

Still, there are noteworthy points regarding identification. Pal Ahluwalia (2001), in *Politics and Post-colonial Theory: African inflections*, refers to Bhabha as arguing that “there is an in-between space which characterises identity” (p. 128). To shed light to the relation of identity to hybridity, Ahluwalia quotes Bhabha: “this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (*Ibid.*).

Apart from the impact figures like Derrida, Benjamin, Freud and Lacan have on the ideas of Bhabha, one can trace the footprint of postcolonial figures in the theories of Bhabha. Tracing the impact of major postcolonial forces on Bhabhaesque hybridity leads the researchers to significant points.

As “Said’s *Orientalism* keeps the spheres of colonizer and colonized rather firmly apart,” one may reject the influence of Said upon Bhabha in this respect (Bertens 2001, p. 209). Postcolonial figures like Césaire totally deny the existence of any “human contact” between the colonizer and the colonized except “relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production” (Bertens 2001, p. 206). Although totally different and more complaisant, metropolitan accounts of colonial life observe as little contact as Césaire. Throughout these historical accounts, the West is not comfortable with the idea that its “civilized and disciplined European ... sons and daughters might ... be affected by the cultures they encountered” the way its presence overseas affects the natives (Bertens 2001, p. 206-07). However, literature provides alternative perspectives such as Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1902). According to Leela Gandhi (1998) in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, “the language of hybridity” appears to elicit its theoretical impulse from “Fanon’s astute reading of colonial oppression as a catalyst for the accelerated mutation of colonised societies” (pp. 129-30). “Fanon’s insistence upon the fundamental instability and consequent inventiveness of anti-colonial conditions” is rehandled by an array of postcolonial theorists to construct the discourse of hybridity (p. 130). Perhaps, Bhabha’s fame rests on the theories concerning “the encounter between two conflicting systems of belief.” However, there are names, such as Stuart Hall, missing in this domain. “Anti-colonial identities, as Stuart Hall argues, do not owe their origins to a pure and stable essence,” instead, anti-colonial identities are constructed in reaction to “the contingencies of a traumatic and disruptive breach in history and culture” (*Ibid.*). Consequently also Bhabha,

albeit in more opaque prose, discerns the emergence of a radically protean political entity at the moment of anti-colonial insurgency. The grim polarities of the colonial encounter, he maintains, are necessarily bridged by a ‘third-space’ of communication, negotiation and, by implication, translation. It is in this indeterminate zone, or ‘place of hybridity’, where anti-colonial politics first begins to articulate its agenda and where, in his words, ‘the construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics’

(Gandhi 1998, p. 130-31).

One further point of significance concerning the true nature of interaction between the colonizer and the colonized is that apparently, the colonized are the only victims of colonial system; however, there is a problem in front of the colonizer which makes them victim as well. This problem may be: fading identity. Discourse over the problem of fading identity is where most of the postcolonial controversies encounter. This may be one of the reasons Paul Jay states that “all cultural forms are *hybrid*” (Jay 2009, p. 186) or Kwame Anthony Appiah says that “we are all already contaminated by each other” (Ball 2003, p. 11). Fading identity can be a direct result of hybridity in culture. Fading identity may lead to identity crisis both in the colonizing and colonized cultures. The fact that hybridity “threatens the authority which is based on categorizations of difference” is among the most dramatic aspects of Bhabhaesque hybridity. Hybridity “confuses the signs of difference as signs of authority” (Rothenburger 2001, p. 3-4).

Many of Bhabhaesque definitions of the notion of hybridity locate in *The Location of Culture*. In this study, it plays the role of the main point of reference. Although Hans Bertens (2001) provides a thorough account of the dramatic factors concerning the formation of cultural hybridity in *Literary Theory: The Basics*, the researcher should deal with Paul Jay’s more comprehensive description:

the necessity of cultural conversion led to the creation of indigenous subjects who, forced to absorb Western cultural practices and religious beliefs, subtly transformed them to accord with the vestiges of their own. Colonizing forces, while seeking to wipe out indigenous or slave cultures, sometimes missed but often tolerated and even exploited this phenomenon, since it served to ease the transformation of both indigenous peoples and transported slaves into Western subjects. The result was a mixed one for both colonizer and colonized. For the colonizer, this kind of syncretism helped smooth the cultural conquest of indigenous and slave populations, but it at the same time gave some measure of control over that culture to these populations, a control which often transformed the colonizer’s own culture. This kind of syncretism had mixed results for the colonized as well, who found their cultures virtually wiped out but were nevertheless able to incorporate vestiges of it into the one forced upon them.

(Jay 2009, p 178)

One can observe the gist of Jay's assertion in Mary Louise Pratt's argument that "the coloniser—as much as the colonised—is implicated in the transcultural dynamics of the colonial encounter" (Gandhi 1998, p. 131). To put it simply, hybridity enables the establishment of communication between cultures. It is obvious that the two cultures cannot enter a proper interaction via the application of absolute domination on the side of one culture. There are cultural specifications the colonizing cultures, consciously or unconsciously, take from the colonized cultures.

The Location of Culture is Bhabha's seminal work in which he gives many of the definitions of the notion of hybridity and accounts of the diverse aspects of this concept. The most comprehensive part of it concerning the definition of the notion of hybridity in Bhabha's works is the following excerpt from "Signs Taken for Wonders" in which Bhabha (1994) says:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency.

(The Location of Culture, pp. 159-160, also Spencer p. 192)

In this essay, Bhabha further defines hybridity as "the name of [...] displacement of value from symbol to sign that causes the dominant discourse to split along the axis of its power to be representative, authoritative" as well as "a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal," in a way that "other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition" (*Ibid.* p. 162). To elaborate more on this definition, Bhabha adds: "it is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures, or the two scenes of the book, in a dialectical play of 'recognition'" (p. 162). The interpretation Werbner (2001) has of Bhabha's definition of hybridity, as "'doubling up of the sign', a 'splitting' which is 'less than one and double,'" is that "[t]he same object or custom placed in a different context acquires quite new meanings, while echoing old ones" (p. 136).

To discuss hybridity's diverse aspects in interaction with other postcolonial concepts, the researcher quotes from H. Adlai Murdoch's work "Rhys's Pieces: Unhomeliness as Arbeiter of Caribbean Creolization" (2003) in which, to map the position of the "interstices in colonial discourse, Bhabha posits the interstitial framework as 'the specific "interruption" ... through which the colonial text utters its interrogations, its contrapuntal critique'" (p. 257). Consequently, "this undermining of the binary logic of colonial discourse" enunciates "a critical doubleness, a subversive hybridity that, as Bhabha insists, 'erases any essentialist claims for the inherent authenticity or purity of cultures'" (*Ibid.*). Bhabha argues that "[p]ostcolonial novels [...] serve to 'interrupt' pure narratives of nation" (Werbner 2001, p. 144).

From a Marxist point of view, Patrick Wolfe regards hybridity as "a palpably material outcome of the primary subversion of the colonial divide" (Wolfe 1997, p. 416). In other words, Wolfe adopts "Homi Bhabha's much-adopted terminology" to express hybridity as "the modern condition that includes but also exceeds colonialism's binominal categories" (*Ibid.*, 415). Charles E. Bressler (2007) avoids a clear-cut definition of the notion of hybridity when he defines it as "a disputed term used by postcolonial theorists that refers to a mix or blending of two cultures" (Bressler 2007, p. 345). Gilroy's view of regarding "hybridity as a metaphor for subjectivity, culture, and nation" is similar to the view of Young (Jay 2009, p. 176).

The discussion concerning the history and definitions of this concept exists, in a more expanded form, in the dissertation from which this article is extracted. Before dealing with the ways familiarity with the notion of hybridity affects one's reading of *In a Free State*, one should examine the background of this work and the impacts movements such as postcolonialism have on the formation of this work.

Issues behind the Rise of Colonialism

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the advent of enquiries of admitted assumptions in social and literary practices. The critics' position that "all reality is a social construct," shattered the autonomy of the myth of reality in late 1960s (Bressler 2007, p. 234). This subjective view of reality led to problems in the context of ethical values and common good which require an absolute reality. The thinkers resolved this problem through putting "a dominant cultural group" as the foundation in each society. This led to the suppression of the groups who do not conform. Those, among these groups, who did not choose to be silenced, comprise a tenet which is known as cultural studies. Postcolonial criticism is a subcategory of cultural studies. Neil Lazarus (2004), in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, quotes Bhabha in elaborating on this notion:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third World countries and the discourses of "minorities" within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They 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, peoples. They formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the "rationalizations" of modernity. (p.3)

On the other hand, as John Clement Ball(2003) quotes from *The Empire Writes Back*, "post-colonial culture is inevitably a hybridized phenomenon involving a dialectical relationship between the 'grafted' European cultural systems and an indigenous ontology" (p. 11, also Madsen 2003, p. 69). Bhabha refers to the effect of colonial power as being "the *production* of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions" (Rothenburger 2001, p. 3).

Although resistance is the characteristic feature of postcolonial writings and thought, Naipaul's works scarcely observe the concept of resistance and, as Selwyn R. Cudjoe(1998) in *V. S. Naipaul: A Materialist Reading* implies, alternatively seeks to take side with the colonial values in its narrative art. This is due to Naipaul's sympathy for the colonial cause. Still, Cudjoe believes "the work of V. S. Naipaul is inscribed indelibly with colonial and postcolonial reality" (p. 5).

Shaping Forces of Naipaul's Works

Naipaul is the offspring of the confrontation of cultures. In this respect, he can be a candid for the title: hybrid. V. S. Naipaul's "upbringing in a predominantly black Trinidadian environment" and "education in the colonial system" may be the causes of his low regard toward the blacks and Africa. His Brahmin roots may also reinforce his "anti-African stance in his texts" and his being "receptive to condemning Africa as a futureless region" (Smith 2008, p. vi). Probably, Naipaul's attitude may be the reason Susan Tetlow Harrington, in the abstract of her PhD dissertation, claims, in *In A Free State*, Naipaul invokes the "bitter aftermath of colonialism, examining the reasons that bloody power struggles in newly-independent Tropical African countries have sometimes been followed by dictatorship or one-party rule." Sue Thomas's account of V. S. Naipaul in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* reveals the impetus in the work of Naipaul. Thomas says Naipaul's "sense of living on the periphery of a dominant black colonial culture in Port of Spain and later of a dominant white English culture" is like "inhabiting a 'kind of limbo', as an existential homelessness in relation to elusive community" (Bill Schwarz 2003, p. 229).

The major part of Naipaul's literary career takes form in England. "To achieve mass appeal with an English audience as a regional West Indian writer" is one of the most important apprehensions of Naipaul in England (*Ibid.*). "Naipaul suggests in 1958, he would need to supplement writing skill with a few thematic and structural 'devices': 'Sex' ... [as well as] 'Race'" (*Ibid.*). Although the application of this strategy is more apparent in works written before *In a Free State*, one can still trace the impact of this strategy in *In a Free State*. As one can observe, Bobby is "an English ... character." On the other hand, Linda is not that type of "'quick-to-strip' female protagonist" (Naipaul 1971, p. 229-230). Naipaul is, according to Dagmar Barnouw (2003) in *Naipaul's Strangers*, "vulnerable to hostile and on occasion stunningly thoughtless attacks by postcolonialist critics from Said to Homi K. Bhabha and Derek Walcott."

In spite of being vulnerable to these hostile attacks, Naipaul develops "a particular kind of mobile social intelligence that allowed him to see with the problems also the benefits of colonial rule, and with the positive also the negative aspects of the 'postcolonial condition'" (p. xiv).

In the eyes of "readers invested in the cultural politics and rhetoric ('theorizing') of academic postcolonialism," Naipaul is "the outsider determined to become the unquestioned, therefore unquestioning, insider, the former colonial turned colonialist"; however, from a less orthodox view, Naipaul's experience of the reflections in Western culture of Enlightenment tolerance for human diversity and temporality enabled him to go on changing and redefining the relation between outsider and insider" (Barnouw 2003, p. 14).

Hybrid Fiction

One of the most important factors in having a proper reading of the text of *In a Free State* is paying attention to the setting. One must keep in mind that the setting is a colonized region ruled by the legacy of Europeans which is, in Harrington's (1995) terms in the abstract, "having taught Africans the ways and means of exploitation" (*Ibid.*). Accordingly, the ruling system of the state is among the hybrid structures in which colonialism has been replaced by neo-colonialism. The former metropolitan colonialists have been replaced by local dictators. There are two cases in which Timothy Weiss (1992), in *On the Margins: The Art of Exile in V.S. Naipaul*, refers to Uganda as a possible setting for *In a Free State* (167 and 176). Weiss believes *In a Free State* "anticipates violent events in East Africa, such as the breakdown of Uganda in the 1970s, and it taps into the old myth of the dark continent" (p. 176). Although Naipaul does not mention the name, the details he provides in the setting guides one to think of Uganda. A glance at Uganda after independence confirms this claim. Sidney Taylor's (1967) *The New Africans: A Guide to the Contemporary History of Emergent Africa and Its Leaders* provides a thorough account of it:

The British Protectorate of Uganda, consisting principally of tribal districts and four traditional kingdoms joined in federal relationships with the Central Government, became a fully independent member of the Commonwealth on October 9, 1962. A year later the post of Governor-General was replaced by that of a President, elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term. The first President was Sir Edward Mutesa, kabaka (King) of Buganda, the richest of the kingdoms. Early in 1966 there was political unrest and Opposition members of Parliament made accusations of corruption against the Deputy Commander of the Army, Colonel Idi Amin, and Ministers of the Government. Dr Milton Obote, the socialist Prime Minister, assumed full powers of government (February 22) and two days later suspended the constitution, saying there had been an attempt by people who held positions in the Government to overthrow it with the help of foreign troops. Five Ministers were detained. In April, 1966, Dr Obote introduced a new constitution which abolished the federal relationships, ousted the Kabaka and himself became Executive President. (p. 453)

The setting Naipaul creates is among the best samples in which he examines the "bitter aftermath of colonialism, examining the reasons that bloody power struggles in newly-independent Tropical African countries have sometimes been followed by dictatorship or one-party rule" (Harrington 1995, p. ii). What is certain is the shift from colonialism to neo-colonialism which can be regarded as a hybrid structure composed of colonialism in its modern shape, nationalism, etc. She also believes "the most lasting legacy of the Europeans may in fact be their having taught Africans the ways and means of exploitation" (*Ibid.*).

Hybridity lies in many different layers of this text. As Larry Alan Husten (1983), in the preface of a PhD dissertation titled *From Autobiography to Politics: The Development of V. S. Naipaul's Fiction (Trinidad and Tobago)*, says, the fact that "*In a Free State* contains the first of Naipaul's post-autobiographical fictions" as "Naipaul highlights the difference between the two modes by including an autobiographical frame around the fictions" hints at the hybridity in technique. Naipaul's conscious or unconscious reference to the concept of hybridity begins with the very first lines of *In a Free State*. The setting he composes consists of a "country in Africa" ruled by a mixture of monarchy and presidency. As Ashcroft et al. (2003) mention in *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, "hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc." (p. 118). This situation becomes more complicated when one finds that "the king and the president intrigued with the local representatives of white governments" (Naipaul 1971, p. 99).

When it comes to "the territory of the king's people," cultural hybridity reveals itself in the form of the "colonial name of the Southern Collectorate" (p. 99). Naipaul's low regard of the Africans finds an opportunity to flourish when on "a seminar on community," there are "more English participants than African," who have "little to say" (*Ibid.*).

Having recourse to Bhabha's ideas, in *The Location of Culture*, concerning one's state of confusion as to find one's own worldview, the researcher asserts that "unhomeliness" is not specific to the colonized. As a white, living in a black dominant culture, Bobby may be susceptible to this state. The sense of "unhomeliness" is induced through the reference to "an English-Indian creation in the African wilderness" and the fact that "everyone in it was far from home" (Naipaul 1971, p. 100). This reference prepares the mind of the reader to accept the fact that Bobby is apt to become hybridized. Bhabha believes that the first feeling a newcomer has upon entering a new culture is the sense of "unhomeliness."

Naipaul's description of the costumes and the hair styles in the next section is reminiscent of the notion of mimicry which is in close affinity to the concept of hybridity. As Ashcroft et al. state, mimicry is a crucial term in "Homi Bhabha's (1994) view of the ambivalence of colonial discourse." For Bhabha, "mimicry is the process by which the colonized subject is reproduced as 'almost the same, but not quite'" (p. 140). Mimicry becomes inverted as Bobby "wearing a saffron cotton shirt of a type that had begun to be known as a 'native shirt'" is in a bar in which "the liberations it offered were only for black and white" (p. 100). The shirt "was like a smock, with short, wide sleeves and a low open neck; the fabric, with its bold 'native' pattern in black and red, was designed and woven in Holland" (pp. 100-101).

Naipaul (1971) represents hybridity further in the Zulu's statement: "In this town there are even white whores now" (p. 101). There is a time in the history of almost all the colonized nations when the colonizer rapes the colonized; however, the white prostitutes are now available even to the black. This can be a consequence of hybridity. In this section, Naipaul's depiction of sexual imageries points at some dramatic points:

The Zulu fanned himself with his cap and turned away. 'Why do these white people want to be with the natives? A couple of years ago the natives couldn't even come in here. Now look. It isn't nice. I don't think it is nice.'

'It must be different in South Africa,' Bobby said.

'What do you want to hear, mister? Listen, I'll tell you. I did pretty well in South Africa. I bought my whisky. I had my women. You'd be surprised.'

'I can see that many people would find you attractive.'

'I'll tell you.' The Zulu's voice dropped. His tone became conspiratorial as he began to give the names of South African politicians with whose wives and daughters he had slept. (Naipaul 1971, p 102)

One can deal with this excerpt from different points of view. On the one hand, Bobby's appetite for the Zulu hints at the "queer" nature of his sexuality. Regarding the fact that Bobby is not straight and considering heterosexuality as the basic standard, one may claim that Bobby is in a way hybrid in this respect. On the other hand, the words mentioned by the Zulu may suggest a sort of racial hybridity. The Zulu's reference to the availability of "white whores" in the town, his disapproval of the tendency of "white people ... to be with the natives," and his way of addressing Bobby by the word "mister," which is used by the prostitutes to address their costumers, may represent him as a racially hybrid descendant. Of course, Naipaul's particular method of the depiction of the Zulu may be the result of Naipaul's low regard of the Africans as Smith points out (Smith 2008, p. vi).

One cannot summarize the interactions of the concepts of mimicry and hybridity in a single case. One can still trace the notion of mimicry in interaction with hybridity in the following excerpt:

Bobby said, 'Do you like my new shirt?'

'I wouldn't be seen dead in one of those native shirts.'

'It's the colour. We can't wear the lovely colours you can wear.'

The Zulu's eyes hardened. Bobby's fingers edged along the cap until they were next to the Zulu's. Then he looked down at the fingers, pink beside black.

"When I born again –' Bobby stopped. He had begun to talk pidgin; that wouldn't do with the Zulu.
(Naipaul 1971, p. 103)

Apart from Bobby's intention to hunt the Zulu, what makes this excerpt significant is the hybridity created through mimicking. The Zulu, probably out of a colonial habit, cannot stand wearing "native shirts." Bobby, probably in order to conform to this postcolonial society, wears these shirts. Another point of importance is Bobby's utilization of pidgin as a means to conform. As mentioned before, linguistic form is one of the shapes hybridization takes (Ashcroft et al 2000, p. 118). Considering Bobby's voracious appetite for the African boys, his justifications concerning the reason of his stay becomes ironical; however, one should keep in mind that Bobby is entangled in a mental conflict as how to conform to the new condition after his mental breakdown in England. Bobby counts the reasons for his settlement in that country:

I am here to serve,' Bobby said. 'I'm not here to tell them how to run their country. There's been too much of that. What sort of government the Africans choose to have is none of my business. It doesn't alter the fact that they need food and schools and hospitals. People who don't want to serve have no business here. That sounds brutal, but that's how I see it. (Naipaul 115)

Apart from the irony inherent in this excerpt, Naipaul probably uses Bobby as a mouthpiece to declare Naipaul's own words. The multi-reference effect of this part can be reminiscent of hybridity in Naipaul's language. The irony stretches to sarcasm as Bobby later states:

'Ogguna Wanga-Butere is my superior,' Bobby said. 'He is my – "boss". I show him respect. And I believe he respects me.'

'I'm sorry, but when those names trip off your tongue like that, you make them sound very funny.'

'I very much feel that Europeans have themselves to blame if there's any prejudice against them. Every day the president travels up and down, telling his people that we are needed. But he's no fool. He knows the old colonial hands are out to get every penny they can before they scuttle South. It makes me laugh. We lecture the Africans about corruption. But there's a lot of anguish and talk about prejudice when they number our little rackets. And not so little either. We were spending thousands on overseas baggage allowances for baggage that never went anywhere. (Naipaul 1971, p. 121)

Bobby's statements here reveals the fact that Bobby answers the hailing of dominant ideology. This conformity to the present situation makes its acceptance much easier for him than Linda. The first apparent result of Bobby's hybridity is the point that it makes Bobby more apt to handle the situation and cope with the problems. What is even more important is the reference to neocolonialism, as hybrid colonialism, when Bobby tells Linda that "the old colonial hands are out to get every penny they can" and through his confessions of corruption.

Naipaul takes advantage of a variety of methods a fictive writer may use to depict hybridity in a text. A writer of fiction is not bound to dialogues or stage directions. Besides dialogues, descriptions and commentaries on situations are in the service of a writer of fiction. The following excerpt depicts hybridity in a variety of ways from the point of view of Linda:

'When we were in West Africa for those few months,' she said, patting powder, squinting at the hand mirror, 'you would never have said that the Africans there were remotely English. But as soon as you crossed the border into the French place there you saw black men just like ours sitting on the roadside and eating French bread and drinking red wine and wearing little French berets. Now you come here and see these black English grooms.'

(Naipaul 1971, p. 124)

This excerpt is a fine depiction of the process of identification. As mentioned in chapter two, this part reminds one of Lacan's "'excess' in the colonial imitation" which leads to the creation of "a new, hybrid identity for the colonial subject" (Leitch 2001, p. 2378). In this excerpt, one can observe Lacan's process of identification which has a fundamental impact on Bhabha's theories of hybridity (Bertens 2001, p. 161).

The colonel can be a character foil to Bobby. In many respects, the colonel takes the opposite seat in front of Bobby. The character of the colonel can be interpreted as a metaphor of the inefficiency of patriarchal approach the metropolitan center applies to colonize colonies through armed forces. Peter may represent any of the Commonwealth countries that await the death of the colonel to inherit the wealth.

Had it not been the fact that the colonel resists establishing any relationship through adopting some cultural vestiges of the colonized, he may be able to sleep without the fear of assassination. Even when absolute peace and calmness rules in the hotel, the colonel creates an atmosphere full of tension. He usually tries to awaken the sense of hatred in Peter, one rare case among the black characters addressed by a name, probably due to the debt Naipaul owes to Joseph Conrad. The colonel wants Peter to narrate his bitter story: "one night she was very sick. I get car and take her to hospital. They say no. Hospital for Europeans only. Huts for natives. Indian doctor take her. Too late, sir. She die." Then, the colonel emphasizes that "don't you forget it. Your hate will keep me alive" (Naipaul 1971, p. 182). The colonel thinks Peter's life is dependent on him: "I wonder what will happen to him when I go" (p. 184). This is exactly the same as the view metropolitan centers have toward colonies. The history the colonel narrates illuminates his view towards the Africans:

'If the Europeans had come here fifty years earlier, they would have been hunted down like game and exterminated. Twenty, thirty years later – well, the Arabs would have got here first, and they would all have been roped up and driven down to the coast and sold. That's Africa. They'll kill the king all right. They'll decimate his tribe before this is over. Did you know him? Have you been listening to the news?'

'I only saw him,' Linda said.

'Came here for lunch once. Very polished. If I were a younger man I would go out and try to rescue him. Though that wouldn't have made much sense either. He's no different from the others. Given half the chance, he'd be hunting the witchdoctor. They say there's good and bad everywhere. There's no good and bad here. They're just Africans. They do what they have to do. That's what you have to tell yourself. You can't hate them. You can't even get angry with them. Really angry.'

(Naipaul 1971, pp. 184-85)

The colonel's non-conformity to the dominant hegemony seems to bind him: "they came out and stood in the hotel gateway. The colonel appeared to recognize this gateway as a boundary. He kept within the gravelled yard and never stepped on the concrete that sloped down to the asphalt of the boulevard" (Naipaul 1971, p. 201). Although the colonel is not fond of the Africans, hybridity affects him either consciously or unconsciously. Bobby reveals this fact when he says: "I thought only Africans smelled. What is it that Doris Marshall says? That little bit of settler wisdom about civilization and cleanliness?" (p. 206).

Naipaul, then, depicts a picture of a city in Africa of the early 1950s: "crooked telegraph poles, sagging wires, the broken edges of the asphalt road, scuffed grass sidewalks, dust, scattered rubbish, African bicycles, broken-down lorries and motor cars outside the bus-station shed: the town had failed to grow, but it still worked" (p. 212). It is as if the remnant signs of colonial era are still observable in the city. The description Naipaul gives of the driver of white Volkswagen also suggests hybridity: "the man who came around from behind it was not white and short, but black, tall, solidly made. Not the blackness or the stature of Africa: there was about his hard features and warm complexion something that suggested other bloods, another continent, another language" (p. 213).

One of the forms of hybridity observable in this work is hybridity in behavior. To bring an example, the researcher refers to one of the cases the enmity of the tribes is observable: "some were roped up in the traditional forest way, neck to neck, in groups of three or four, as though for delivery to the slave-merchant" (p. 229). The dominant tribe imitates the colonial behavior of once-dominant Arab colonizers. One of the cases, in which Naipaul represents hybridity in costumes, is: "here and there women and children had returned to the ruins, the women plump in the manner of the women of the king's people, looking over-dressed in their Edwardian costumes" (p. 236).

Conclusion

Finally, Naipaul's last comment on hybridity in this text is the most conspicuous one of the watchman of the Collectorate: "he was neither of the king's people nor the president's. He came from another country; in the Collectorate he was neutral, a spectator, and as safe as the compound he watched over" (p. 238). There seems to exist a paradox in what Naipaul depicts and what he intends to convey. It is as though the secret of safety in this context is avoiding contamination; however, fusion in the melting pot of cultural specifications may be the secret of an active and progressing interaction.

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