

## HOMI BHABHA'S THIRD SPACE AND NEOCOLONIALISM

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**ABSTRACT:** *This paper suggests the argument that Homi Bhabha's Third Space, defined in his book The Location of Culture (1994) contributes to Neocolonialism in the sense that it stresses the fluidity of identity and the continuous engagement in ongoing negotiations and enunciations, which compromises the ability of former colonies to formulate their identity independently and to design their agendas for development. They are trapped within the project of Postcolonial Literature which imprisons them in the "us and them" paradigm and sets them the task of forever looking for Third Space and of engaging in continuous debates over identity formulation. On a larger scale, this paper argues, the notion of Third Space is at the heart of the World Trade Organization agreements and is the core of how Social Media Networks function. Hence, the paper views Postcolonial Literature, The World Trade Organization agreements, and Social Media Networks as being linked together through the notion of Third Space and, therefore, as being tools manipulated by Neocolonialism.*

**KEYWORDS:** third space, neocolonialism, postcolonial literature, world trade organization, social media networks.

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## INTRODUCTION

Our present context is characterized by the appearance of cultural, political, and economic relations that serve the interests of neocolonial powers which are to be seen not only in terms of states and governments but also with reference to multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, Social Media Networks and international economic institutions. This is in addition to cultural influences which may be viewed as establishing the intellectual foundations upon which Neocolonialism is based.

After the end of traditional colonization in the second half of the twentieth century, new power structures appeared and some are still in the process of being forged. The bipolar world which emerged after the end of WWII in 1945 and which witnessed the Cold War was dominated by the tension between the two superpowers at the time: The United States, leading the Western world, and the Soviet Union, ideologically dominating a number of Eastern European countries and trying to spread Communism into the newly independent countries in Africa and Asia. The collapse of this bipolar world in the early 1990s has led to the rise of the United States as the only superpower in the world, and therefore, to the creation of the historical condition in which we live at the moment and which is known as

Globalization. Under this umbrella of economic and cultural interconnectedness and integration comes Postmodernism with its emphasis on lack of center, acceptance of differences and living with disintegration and *petite histoires* instead of relying on grand narratives for the explanation of the world.

A former colony is bound to face major challenges in this historical context and its cultural and philosophical consequences. First, it is important for the population of a newly independent country to be clear about their cultural identity and where they stand with reference to the West, not just their former colonizing power but Western powers in general including the United States. Second, the economy in these newly independent countries has to be managed effectively to make the best use of the country's resources and to set appropriate development plans within an intricate international context where Neocolonialism has replaced colonial practices and where cultural negotiations and uncertainties are predominant almost everywhere in the Third World.

This paper holds the argument that Bhabha's Third Space is seen in Postcolonial Literature, the establishment of the World Trade Organization, and the structure of Social Media Networks. It first presents a brief description of how the concept of Third Space is discussed regarding specific situations and experiences. This is followed by the introduction of the theoretical framework upon which the discussion and analysis part is based. It looks at colonized/colonizer relations within the paradigm devised by Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994), where Third Space is the terrain hosting the continuous process of creating and recreating identity and where reaching "the beyond" is the goal which former colonies should set themselves. In this section, the paper touches upon the two literary texts Bhabha uses to sustain his views concerning cultural identity, namely Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Nadine Gordimer's *My Son's Story* (1990). The argument postulated in this part is that the Bhabhasque notion of Third Space is closely related to Neocolonialism, the term which was first introduced in Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). This is followed by a section that presents the discussion and analysis part which will show that Postcolonial Literature, Social Media Networks, and The World Trade Organization are manifestations of Neocolonialism. Finally, the conclusion will assert that Third Space is the place where Postcolonial Literature dwells, is at the heart of the World Trade Organization agreements, and is the core upon which Social Media Networks function. Hence, the paper views Postcolonial Literature, The World Trade Organization agreements, and Social Media Networks as being linked together through the notion of Third Space and, therefore, as being tools manipulated by Neocolonialism.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhabha's Third Space has been an important term in Postcolonial Studies and theories. The following examples show the significance of Bhabha's notion of Third Space in different contexts and historical conditions. Sumit Chakrabarti in "Moving Beyond Edward Said: Homi Bhabha and the Problem of Postcolonial Representation" believes that Bhabha is

comfortable with his analytical tools and, therefore, constructs and deconstructs notions and concepts in a confident way in an attempt “to achieve (...) a dynamic of equality between the First and the Third World in terms of representation” (11-12). Amaretto Nayak in "Search for a Third Space: A Postcolonial Reading of the Bilingual Writer in Indian Literary Scenario, through Manoj Das as a Case Study" shows the importance of adopting a holistic approach while dealing with the work of bilingual writers in India in order to be able to understand and account for “the fluid nature of all such identities in the current postmodern postcolonial world” (42). Fredrik Fahlander in "Third Space Encounters: Hybridity, Mimicry and Interstitial Practice" admits that the notion of Third Space is not fully clear but at least it gives scope to the understanding of the complexity of encounter, which provides the opportunity for the study of how elements of different origins come together and become involved in the process of hybridity. Bhabha's notion of Third Space, then, is seen as “a metaphor, an analytical tool, which primarily signifies a virtual space, not a physical room” (Fahlander 24). Jin Hee Han in "Homi K. Bhabha and the Mixed Blessing of Hybridity in Biblical Hermeneutics" posits that Bhabha's notions offer possibilities of interpretation as far as Biblical studies are concerned with regard to history as well as with reference to understanding “the powers that be in the contemporary still-colonial world” (371). Ingrid Johnston and George Richardson in "Homi Bhabha and Canadian Curriculum Studies: Beyond the Comforts of the Dialectic" celebrate Bhabha's notions of the fluidity and hybridity of cultural identity and believe that they would help a society of immigrants such as Canada to set social studies curricula in a way that would go beyond the narrow nineteenth century philosophy of the national state, which would appropriately reflect the complexity of cultural identity and the demographic structure of the Canadian nation. Graham Huggan in "The Neocolonialism of Postcolonialism: A Cautionary Note" affirms that a number of American-based writers and artists are aware of cosmopolitanism and are comfortable with dealing with different cultures through relativistic approaches à la Bhabhasque tradition. Yan Zhang and Clive Barstow in "Encountering the Third Space: Identity and Hybridity through Trans-cultural Artistic Practice in Australia and China" explain how Chinese artists and aboriginal Australian artists have kept the local color of identity in their work which enjoys currency and is celebrated by the international art market. Torika Bolatagici in "Claiming the (N)either/(N)or of 'Third Space': (re)presenting hybrid identity and the embodiment of mixed race" is concerned with the structure of the hyphenated identity since the writer herself is of Fijian, Anglo-Celtic, and Australian ancestry, which makes it sometimes difficult for people who deal with her to understand the complexity of her mixed race identity. She investigates the work of four artists who are primarily preoccupied with issues of cultural and racial hybridity and reaches the conclusion that hybridity creates “a third wholly indistinguishable category where origin and home are indeterminate” (Bolatagici 76). Lucy Karanja in "'Homeless' at Home: Linguistic, Cultural, and Identity Hybridity and Third Space Positioning of Kenyan Urban Youth" describes the attempt undertaken by urban youth to invent a language of their own, Sheng, which is different from the English language, the official language in Kenya, and the local languages used by the tribes. Sheng fulfils the functions of marking group identity, bridging ethnic differences, and setting an icon of urban youth culture (Karanja 3). Diana Haag in "Mechanisms of Neocolonialism:

Current French and British Influence in Cameroon and Ghana" shows how both Cameroon and Ghana are closely linked to France and Britain respectively through trade agreements and economic privileges given to the two foreign governments and to French and British companies working in the two African countries. In addition, the power of the two European countries is seen in political interference and in military presence (Haag 13-14).

The present paper recognizes the significance of the notion of Third Space in specific situations and believes that colonizer/colonized encounters and cultural aspects of immigration create rich environments where diversity, differences, and newness in particular cases exist. However, in general, as the discussion of the five literary texts investigated in this paper will show, the sense of inferiority and the uncertainty about cultural identity are still prevalent themes in Postcolonial Literature and the quest for Third Space consumes much energy and results in achieving almost nothing. Postcolonial writers are trapped within the paradigms created by the Western hegemonic view of the world. Literary texts by five writers who come under the broad label of Postcolonial literature are investigated in this paper. These are Ama Ata Aidoo's *Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), Tayeb Saleh's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), Hanif Kureishi's *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985), Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003). Then, the paper introduces the argument that, similar to Postcolonial Literature, both The World Trade Organization and Social Media Network are spaces where cultural negotiation and cultural influences exist in a way that sustains the superiority of Western culture and serves the economic interests of the West.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha reaches the conclusion that cultural identity lacks originality, homogeneity, and a shared history and, therefore, "[t]he access to the image of identity is only ever possible in the *negation* of any sense of originality or plenitude" (Bhabha 51, italics in original). Cultural identity is fluid and is in a constant state of being created and recreated through the process of continuous negotiations, which takes place in what Bhabha calls "Third Space". Third Space, "though unrepresentable in itself, (...) constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity" (Bhabha 37). Bhabha places the notion of Third Space at the heart of colonizer/colonized relations with reference to cultural identity and suggests that walking through Third Space is the means of moving on with human history and reaching "the beyond".

The two literary texts Bhabha uses as examples to sustain his view that Third Space is the destination Postcolonial literature should aim to reach and that the "beyond" is the overall goal of the interaction between the cultures of the colonized and the colonizer are *Beloved* and *My Son's Story*. These two texts are not typically Postcolonial texts in the sense that they do not deal with colonialism and nor do they write back at the Empire. *Beloved* belongs to African American literature in which slave stories constitute the core of the genre and *My Son's Story* is concerned with the very specific historical condition in South

Africa. In *Beloved*, Seth and her daughter, Denver, escape from slavery and live together in a house which they believe is haunted by Seth's eldest daughter whom Seth murdered on her journey away from slavery in order to protect her from being captured. When a young woman appears at their doorstep, Seth believes that this young woman embodies the spirit of her daughter. She takes her in and gives her the name Beloved. Beloved creates problems and tension in the house, which forces Denver to seek help from the Black community. Towards the end of the novel, Beloved disappears, Seth becomes bedridden, and Denver turns into an active member of the Black community. Bhabha describes *Beloved* as contributing to

the continual eruption of 'undecipherable languages of slave memory obscures the historical narrative of infanticide only to articulate the unspoken: that ghostly discourse that enters (...) [the house] from the outside' in order to reveal the transitional world of the aftermath of slavery in the 1870s, its private and public faces, its historical past and its narrative present. (15)

The novel, then, belongs to a literary tradition different from the realm of colonized/colonizer relations. The history of slavery in the United States raises questions concerning citizenship, human rights, and the structuring of the society. The appearance of *Beloved* brings back notions of guilt and violence that may disrupt the peaceful moment of the present and throw doubt upon Denver's arrival at the "beyond" when she becomes an active member of the Black community. Denver's success at moving on with her life would not indicate her ability to reach the "beyond", would not change the past and would have little effect upon actual day-to-day events. After all, Denver functions within the Black community, which means that no negotiations with American mainstream White culture have taken place in a Third Space. Therefore, going "beyond" is not possible in the case of *Beloved*.

In *My Son's Story*, Bhabha focuses on the symbolic significance of the houses. Each has a secret hidden in it somewhere, or a conspiracy, or some suspicious activity (13). There are three houses in the novel: Sonny's house in an isolated neighborhood where he meets a white woman who is a social worker and a believer in the rights of the colored population in South Africa and with whom he has an affair, Aila's house (Sonny's wife) in which the police finds evidence of her involvement in the movement for Black liberation, and Will's house (Sonny's son and the narrator of most of the novel) which is a nocturnal mysterious house (Bhabha 13). Each of these houses "marks a deeper historical displacement", which creates an atmosphere where the public and private, the psychological and the social, and past and present come together (Bhabha 13).

These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge, which like the coloured South African

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subject represents a hybridity, a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality. (Bhabha 13)

This in-between reality has not shaped the lives of the characters in the text in a way that shows success at reaching the “beyond” or reflects the processes of negotiation and enunciation which take place in Bhabha’s Third Space. At the end of the novel, Hanna, with whom Sonny has had an affair, goes away after getting a better job offer, Aila disappears, Sonny and Will live together but Will cannot contain the anger and resentment he feels towards his father. This would throw doubt upon Bhabha’s contention that although the two texts revisit specific historical moments, they “demonstrate the contemporary compulsion to move beyond; to turn the present into the past” (18). The two texts come from the margin, *Beloved* belongs to African American literature and *My Son’s Story* is written from the perspective of the disadvantaged colored community in South Africa. This raises the question of why should the disadvantaged margin make the effort to move on and reach the “beyond”, bearing in mind that racial issues are still of great significance in the world, not on the level of discourse but on the level of everyday life. The examples are the movement of Black Life Matters in the United States and the list of race riots in the United Kingdom which includes 1980 St Pauls riot in 1980, England riots, Brixton riot, Chapeltown riots, Toxteth riots, Moss Side riot and Handsworth riots in 1981, Handsworth riots, Brixton riot and Broadwater Farm riot in 1985, Chapeltown riots in 1987, and Dewsbury riot in 1989. Bhabha’s insistence that “[i]t is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*” does not find expression in the two literary texts he uses to sustain his argument (1, italics in original). The “beyond” for Bhabha “signifies special distance, marks progress, promises the future, but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary – the very act of going *beyond* – are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the ‘present’ which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaced” (Bhabha 4, italics in original). In *Beloved* and *My Son’s Story* the characters do not reach the “beyond” and therefore, it is not possible for the two novels to “be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human our human, historic commonality; *to touch the future on its hither side*” (Bhabha 7, italics in original).

Such view of dwelling in the “beyond”, though seems liberating in the sense that it opens up spaces for experimentation and negotiation, may also be seen as eroding the core of what national identity means especially that in *Beloved* and *My Son’s Story* there is no promise of a future that would be better than the historical moments both texts revisit. This is also the case of newly independent nations. The discussion itself of what cultural identity means for these nations at the time of forming their national governments, drafting their constitutions, and figuring out their foreign policy agenda would be debilitating, as it would distract the people’s attention and consume their energy in continuous negotiations and formulations. Bhabha’s notion of the “split” in writing the nation would become an obstacle for newly independent peoples, for whom solidity of identity is an essential basis for moving forward, in a fashion similar to Europe’s movement forward in the nineteenth century. The rise of industry, the need for raw materials and markets, the importance of

securing trade routes, and the necessity of establishing self-sufficiency had led to building up colonial overseas empires along with strong navies and armies to protect the interests of European countries in other parts of the world (Macdonald 6-7). Hence, the story of the movement towards modernity in Europe did not encompass a “process of splitting” with regard to Europe’s view of itself. The problem Europe faced in the early years of the twentieth century, after the end of WWI, found its origin in the disillusionment that prevailed after WWI which led to loss of faith in the core values upon which Western civilization had been established; values such as liberal democracy, scientific thinking, and Christianity. Reason, too, came under attack. It could no longer explain the world nor could it account for the destruction and fragmentation the war had caused. Truth was no longer attainable in a world where the sense of certainty had been shattered (Perry 490-1). These problems are internal and they had no consequence upon Europe’s expansion plans which had started in the early years of the nineteenth century nor did they affect the belief in progress and in moving forward with modernity.

In contrast, former colonies faced internal and external problems upon achieving independence from European overseas Empires. In addition to economic and political issues, they had to deal with the tension regarding cultural identity and cultural relations with the former colonizer. The solution suggested by Bhabha to this dilemma lies in the “willingness to descend into that alien territory (...) [which] may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture; based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*. To that end we should remember, it is the ‘inter’- the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space- that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.” (Bhabha 38, italics in original). After years of colonization during which the language, the religion, and the traditions of the native peoples had been subject to change and the identity of the formerly colonized nations had been struggling under the influences of the more powerful civilization of the West, it was difficult for the newly independent countries to be clear about their identity. Many aspects of their traditional cultures had been seen as signs of primitiveness by the White Man as Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* shows. This is in addition to the fact that the official language in many of these newly independent countries is the language of the colonizer, which may be seen as a significant element of Neocolonialism.

The term Neocolonialism was first introduced in Nkrumah’s *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* which describes the monetary policies European powers adopted in Africa after the end of traditional colonization. It also gives due attention to detailing the role of the United States in World economy after WWII. Nkrumah states in his introduction to the book that his aim is to analyze Neocolonialism “by examining the state of the African continent and showing how neo-colonialism ... keeps it artificially poor [and showing] how in practice African Unity, which in itself can only be established by the defeat of neo-colonialism, could immensely raise African living standards” (xx). He describes the natural resources Africa enjoys, highlights the impact of colonial policy of division in Africa and discusses the interest American businessmen and bankers have developed in Africa.

Though written in 1965, long before the rise of the notion of Globalization, the book could detect “the brazen onslaught of international capitalists. Here is ‘empire’, the empire of finance capital, in fact if not in name, a vast sprawling network of inter-continental activity on a highly diversified scale that controls the lives of millions of people in the most widely separated parts of the world” (Nkrumah 35). American and European companies and banks undertook major projects in African countries with the consent of African governments. This may appear to be attractive because of the promise of inclusion in World economy and the opportunities of integration it seems to create. There are also the classes, or let’s say “groups”, as the term “classes” may bring in Communist undertones, that benefit from this condition, which is similar to that of globalization almost everywhere in the world, even in poorer countries where the majority of the population do not have the means of enjoying the fruits of globalization.

The struggle with Bhabha’s Third Space and the notion of the “beyond” in a world governed by the rules of Neocolonialism does not offer much opportunity to the newly independent nations to set a roadmap for themselves. With the establishment of economic interconnectedness and social and cultural interaction via Social Media Networks within the framework of globalization, it has become more difficult for the less privileged entities/nations/countries to walk towards progress, aware of their cultural identities and taking their economic interests into consideration. On the intellectual level too, the domain of Postcolonial literature contributes to their feeling of uncertainty, which would also limit their ability to move forward.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

This section explains the argument the paper holds which is that Postcolonial Literature, The World Trade Organization, and Social Media Networks may be seen as tools of Neocolonialism and that they manifest aspects of Bhabhasque Third Space. While Postcolonial Literature is primarily concerned with the relations between the colonizer and the colonized, The World Trade Organization and Social Media Networks, each in its own way, exercise power over the less privileged parts of the world. The World Trade Organization brings all the member countries into agreements that would ensure that trade, money, goods, services, and labor power move around the world according to terms, approved by member governments, that grant multinational corporations sovereignty similar to that of national government. Politics, in this case, can happen at a level above state governments; through global political and economic integration programs and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. Further, political activity can go beyond national borders through global movements and NGOs. Civil society organizations act globally by forming alliances with organizations in other countries, using global communication systems, and lobbying international organizations and targeting sections of a society or the whole society through Social Media Networks.



The umbrella of Postcolonial literature has recently been expanded to cover, not only literary texts written in English by writers from former colonies basically to address the Empire as *The Empire Writes Back* postulates, but also “has the potential to assemble new communities and networks of people who are joined by the common political and ethical commitment to challenging and questioning the practices and consequences of domination and subordination” (McLeod, “Introduction” 6). Postcolonial literature, in this case, is characterized by “its commitment to think about, and at times theorize in complex ways, the relationship between cultural practices and the historical and political consequences of colonial settlement” (McLeod, “Introduction” 7). Hence, any literary text where cultural interaction is presented may be called “Postcolonial”, which seems to be inclusive, in the sense that the field may encompass a variety of literary productions and a wide range of cultural voices. However, this may also contribute to entrenching the view entertained by Jenny Sharpe that “Postcolonial studies is primarily a First World academic discourse of the eighties and nineties” (Qtd in Sardar xviii). It is a Western project that has been currently enlarged to the extent that it subsumes all texts where reference to cross/cultural relations is made.

When Aschroft *et al* put together the examples of literary texts written in the former colonies and created a theory around them, they emphasized the use of the English language to write back at the Empire, which would raise questions regarding the validity of the voices of these writers who are writing in a foreign tongue about their cultural identity. They use the language of the “Other” to address the “Other” and to describe themselves, which keeps them imprisoned in the dichotomy of “us and them” and hints at the superiority of the “them”; the masters who taught them the language in which they speak about themselves and who made this language the official language in the countries where these writers come from. The examples discussed in *The Empire Writes Back* include V.S. Naipaul whose work is preoccupied with the dilemma of using a foreign language to write the self, Michael Anthony who deals with the issue of authenticity in his description of those who are kept in the margins of Empire, Timothy Findley who is interested in otherness and the possibility of hybridity, Janet Frame who focuses on marginality, and R. K. Narayan whose work concentrates on appropriation of power. These writers appropriated the English language, the language of the Empire to write about their culture and their views on how they relate themselves to the culture of the Empire. Hence, their work, though attempts to stand up and to write back, is imprisoned with the language of the Empire; which makes the project of Postcolonial literature a hegemonic project, rather than a liberating one.

The more the term “Postcolonial” expands to cover all texts written in English, which has become the global language in the present context of globalization, or translated into English, the more hegemonic the project of Postcolonial literature becomes. Indeed, the project of Postcolonial literature may, in this case, be seen as the other side of Orientalism. Orientalism describes non-Western peoples and communities from the lens of Western civilization, measuring the successes and failures of Oriental nations according to the values set by the West. The work of Orientalists created the image of the Orient in “a body

of ideas, beliefs, clichés, or learning about the East” (Said 205). It, however, denied the Orient the voice to describe itself or to respond to the way it is described in the writings of Western scholars who had studied the Orient, from their perspective, for almost two hundred years. The work of Orientalists provided the intellectual foundation for the project of colonization. Since the Orient was incapable of managing its resources in a way that would make it part of the movement towards progress which had already started in the West with the Industrial Revolution and Liberal philosophy, it had to be the burden of the White civilized man to introduce civilization into these parts of the world where poverty, superstition, despotism, and primitivism prevail as seen, for example, in the description of the introduction of the White man into Africa in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*. Different from Orientalism, Postcolonial literature gives expression to the voice of non-Western peoples and cultures. It comes from former colonies or, if we adopt the more inclusive definition of it, engages with resistance to hegemonic influences outside of the paradigm of colonizer/colonized. However, Postcolonial literature still remains trapped within the same notions of “us” and “them” as the five examples presented in this paper will show.

In Aidoo’s *Dilemma of a Ghost*, the interaction between the culture of the West, in this case the American culture, and the culture of the village creates tension throughout the play and is resolved only in the final scene, where Eu, Ato’s African American wife is accepted by his mother. Ato’s mother, representing the local voice in the play has shown anger and resentment at Eu because of the cultural differences between EU and the rest of the family and because of Eu’s failure to have children. In the final scene, it

“turns out (...) that there is an understanding between Ato and his wife concerning starting a family and that it is not her decision alone not to have children now. When this is revealed, Ato’s mother shows sympathy and decides to become nice to Eu because she is an orphan and the play ends on this note of sympathy. (Abou-Agag 61)

The play, therefore, does not show negotiation between the two cultures sine Eu does not meet the village tradition half way and does not make any concessions, which stresses the superiority of Western culture (Abou-Agag 60). *Dilemma of a Ghost* is, in this case, an example of the failure of the notion of Third Space, is part of the Western project of Postcolonial Literature.

Along the same lines, Saleh’s *Season of Migration to the North* shows that Mustapha Said’s self-image is formed with reference to the West. His excellent English language even as a child, his superiority in class in the secondary school in Cairo, and his excellent articles and public lectures in England while working on his PhD in Economics are examples of his attempt at measuring up to the White man. His uncertainty about the core of his identity is further revealed through the description of his two rooms, his bedroom in his apartment in London and his secret room in his house in the Sudanese village where he spends the last years of his life. His bedroom in London may be seen as an example of Third Space where elements from his non-Western culture are present, including himself, and where

Western elements are seen in the geographical location of the apartment, London, the capital of the British Empire and in the White women whom he seduces and brings to his bedroom, including his wife whom he murders while they are having sex. Sex seems, in this case, to be his means of avenging himself and his people and of standing up to the colonizer. It may also be viewed as a process of negotiation, similar to the process Bhabha suggests it takes place in Third Space. However, no success is achieved in this example as two of the women Mustapha Said gets involved with commit suicide and he murders his wife. His secret room in his village house is equally a fiasco. It has remnants of his time in England: books, pictures, manuscripts started while he was in England and some furniture along the lines of the British style. These are cultural elements he keeps maybe in order to remind himself of the period in his life where he lived in the center and where he had his biggest failures but also his greatest dreams. No one is allowed into the room, only the narrator, who may foil Mustapha Said, is given the key. The existence of this room in a village house in Sudan does not contribute much to the formation of Mustapha Said's character nor does it provide space for cultural negotiation and influence for anybody else. Hence, there is no chance in *Season of Migration to the North* for productive processes of enunciation. On the contrary, the central character is tormented and lost because of the link he has always had with the West, right from the early years of his childhood. The absence of information in the novel about Mustapha Said's family stresses his failure to stand his grounds and to lead an independent life away from the entanglements with the West in whatever form they may take. The two rooms, the two spaces which may have the qualities of Third Space, do not provide any solace in the novel. One turns into a crime scene and the other is kept as an abandoned museum.

Similarly, the launderette in Kureishi's *My Beautiful Launderette*, may be seen as a Third Space that has failed to provide interlocutors with the possibility of existence in an in-between space where elements from different cultures may engage in fruitful negotiations. In the last scene, Omar and Johnny are in the shower at the back of the launderette seeking protection from the racial violence in the street outside. In Kureishi's *My Beautiful Launderette*, the violence that is seen from beginning to end remains evidence enough that the shower scene raises questions of whether or not violence may erupt again; questions about who Omar and Johnny really are, and about "[t]he very concepts of homogenous national cultures (...) [which] are in a profound process of redefinition" (Bhabha 5). The play, thus, may be seen as a question rather than a statement of reconciliation and inclusion. Although the film appeared in 1985 and the text came out in print in 1986, all the core issues and questions *My Beautiful Launderette* presents have been relevant before and since the time of writing the screenplay. Rueschmann points out that while writing the introduction to her book *Moving Pictures* in July 2001, "the violent confrontations between British Asian youth and police in the city of Bradford in the north of England, triggered by the xenophobic taunting of white Britons associated with the right wing National Front, exploded on the streets" (xvii). This means that "[a]s long as cultural difference is seen as deeply threatening to the English way of life, cultural praxis must be one field where the fate of the nation is contested" (Dahl 53). The final scene in *My Beautiful Launderette* poses serious concerns regarding the future of the English society. The English boy and the

Pakistani-English boy, who are involved in a homosexual relationship, take refuge in the launderette when violence erupts in the street and Johnny is attacked and injured.

They resort to the launderette, presented in the play a place of business success and personal freedom, for moments of respite after the street fight in which Johnny is badly injured. However, homosexuality was a controversial issue and racial tension a major pressing problem in England at the time. Therefore, the image at the end of the play is shocking and thought-provoking. It brings the two cultures, the British and the Pakistani, and the two cities of London and Karachi together in an ambivalent relation in the face of hostility and confrontations". (Abou-Agag 467)

The play ends on a note similar to that found at the end of both *Dilemma of a Ghost* and *Season of Migration to the North*. It stresses the power and superiority of the West, which makes of Bhabha's notion of Third Space a dream to be sought and never realized in the literature of Postcolonial writers.

This dream is at the heart of Smith's *White Teeth*. The novel tells the story of three families living in England, the mixed-race family of the Joneses, the British-Indian Iqbals, and the white middle-class Chalfens. Against the backdrop of this ethnically rich social structure, different ways of dealing with Western civilization are depicted. Some characters fully accept the values and lifestyle of the West such as Magid Iqbal, others are angry and depressed such as Samad Iqbal, others are happy and comfortable in the West because of the opportunities it offers such as Clara Jones and Alsana Iqbal, others are unsure about where they stand such as Irie Jones, and others are angry and violent such as Millat Iqbal. These characters are involved in some intricate relationships that reflect the problems such a mixed society faces. Irie, for example, goes through much trouble to relax her hair in order to look as beautiful as the White girls in school and Millat would notice her. Alsana becomes miserable when she realizes that she has completely lost her son, Magid, to the Chalfens. The Chalfens cover the expenses of bringing Magid back from Bangladesh as well as his tuition fees in England. Upon arrival at London, Magid decides to live with the Chalfens. He becomes Dr. Chalfen's assistant and gets involved in the project of the Future Mouse. The final scene which describes the official launching of the Future Mouse project is a core scene in the sense that it brings together all the trends, ideologies, and orientations the novel has been concerned with. Science is represented in this scene by Dr. Chalfen, Dr. Marc Pierre Perret (The French Doctor who worked with the Germans in WWII and whose killing was the reason behind Samad's and Archie's friendship ever since their war time), and Magid. The project is not approved of by Muslim fundamentalists led by Millat, Jehovah's Witnesses among whom is Clara's mother, and environment activists with whom Joshua Chalfen is involved. Violence and chaos dominate this last scene when the one of the fundamentalists shoots at the table where the scientists are seated. One of them is bleeding and the mouse runs away and disappears into an air vent. This brings doubt upon the possibility of taking major steps in scientific research and raises questions

about the homogeneity of the British society, or at least about the possibility of finding some Third Space where all these ideologies, cultures, and worldviews would engage in fruitful negotiations. The note of violence at the end of the novel proves that contrary to what Stephen Moss believes, the society described in the novel has not managed to go beyond racism.

Conversely, Ali's *Brick Lane* ends on a positive festive mode, in spite of the failure of the two central characters, Chanu and Nazneen to engage in fruitful negotiation in a Third Space with Western Culture. Chanu came to England as a young man carrying his BA certificate in English literature in his briefcase dreaming of getting a great job and of achieving success in the full sense of the word in the land of the White Man (Ali, no page number). However, none of his dreams came true. He feels the racism of the British society and he is always in debt. When he decides to take his family back to Bangladesh, Nazneen has to work so that the family would be able to save the necessary money for the trip back to the fatherland. Nazneen, who was brought to England as a young woman to marry an older man and to live in a country where she does not know the language or the traditions, decides at the end of the novel not to follow her husband's plan. She tells him she will stay in England and the girls will stay with her. This decision comes from Nazneen's belief that in England her girls will have the opportunity to get a good education, to find job opportunities and to enjoy freedom and safety. Nazneen has experienced freedom only in England; she has enjoyed her body, dancing at home while songs are displayed on TV, in the short-lived affair she has had with Karim, and in the final scene in which she skates for the first time in her life, still wearing her sari. She is comfortable doing this because she believes that in England you can do what you like. This happy note, however, does not reflect the elaborate and intricate process of enunciation described by Bhabha, nor does it mean that Nazneen has reached the "beyond". It is simply a celebration of life in a place where she and the girls are safe and protected from severe traditional restrictions back in their fatherland and where their future may be fulfilling.

The characters in the five literary texts used in this study have not been able to achieve harmony with their surroundings. They are struggling with their identity and are uncertain about where they belong. Eu, though is accepted by Ato's family in the final scene remains a foreigner who feels superior to her husband's family. The confrontation between Eu's behavior and the village tradition ends with the unconditional acceptance of Eu into the family with no concession on her part. Ato's mother, the representative of the village traditions is the one who makes the compromise and shows understanding of her daughter-in-law's plan to postpone having children. Mustapha Said never achieves a sense of belonging and remains a stranger wherever he goes in spite of his mastery of the English language and his competence as an economics student. Omar, though manages to achieve economic success and is willing to do whatever it takes to secure himself a place in society, still feels different. His homosexual relationship with Johnny may be seen as his way of getting back at the Empire, of avenging himself against the White man's culture. The rich tapestry described in *White Teeth* does not reflect the possibility of engaging in social relations without taking race into consideration. Though Clara Jones is happily married to

a White man, her daughter is struggling with the physical features she has inherited from her mother. Later, when this daughter marries Joshua Chalfen, she moves away with him and lives with her grandmother at some Caribbean island, maybe suggesting that such marriage would not survive in London. *White Teeth* also describes the sense of betrayal Samad Iqbal feels when he discovers Archie Jones' lie concerning the killing of the French Doctor. This may be looked at within the framework of East/West relations; the West has again betrayed the East. Samad joined the British army in WWII believing that when England wins the war, it will grant India its independence. Samad is miserable in the final scene when he realizes that his life-long friendship with Archie has been based upon a lie. Nazneen in *Brick Lane*, on the other hand, celebrates her life in England when she goes skating at the end of the novel. The price she pays in order to stay in the White man's land is that she breaks up her family. Chanu goes back to the fatherland alone and Nazneen and the girls stay in England.

The five texts used as examples in the present paper, then, show that the characters cannot reach Third Space; they do not have the opportunity to engage in negotiations with the culture of the White man. Instead, there are clashes and the party which has to make the compromise is usually the weaker side, the ethnically and culturally different. Therefore, it may be safe to say that Postcolonial literature focuses on the misery and suffering of those who belong to the margins, those who have a different cultural and ethnic background. Immigrants or children born to immigrant families or mixed families, as has already been discussed with reference to the five texts used in this paper, are always struggling with questions of identity and many of them fail to fit in with their surroundings; some adopt a low profile, satisfied that they are safe in England away from the conflicts back home like Alsana; some maneuver their way around to make the necessary money to lead a comfortable life but realize that there are still aspects that money cannot control such as Omar; some are miserable such as Samad; some turn into violent manipulative people such as Mustapha Said. Therefore, Postcolonial literature basically describes the techniques people who reside in the margin adopt in order to continue living in the White man's land or the ways some characters choose to avenge themselves against the White man. Such trajectory would consume much energy and would deprive non-Western nations and communities of the opportunity to feel independent in the full sense of the word or to feel that they are full citizens in the Western countries where they live. Hence, it may well be said that Postcolonial literature is not a liberating genre and that looking at it with the view that the researcher's job is to find Third Space in Postcolonial texts or to see whether these texts have reached the "beyond" would draw the researcher's attention away from the injustices to which ethnically different people living in the White man's land are exposed. In the case of writings that come from previous colonies, insisting on finding Third Space and reaching the "beyond" would distract the newly independent peoples away from the real concerns they have to address such as building up their armies, developing their economies and entrenching their identity. The approach taken to Postcolonial literature, then, may be said to be harmful as it keeps the non-Western cultures entrapped within the Western project in which they have to be always tied to the colonizer or to the Neocolonial powers.

Similarly, the World Trade Organization (WTO) aims at tying the countries of the world through trade agreements that are presented as the only form of doing business and of taking part in World economy. WTO may be seen as a space that offers member countries the opportunity to be engaged in the global economy through the regulations it has set in a number of agreements ratified by the governments of the member countries for the movement of goods, services, money, and people around the world. The major decisions taken by WTO are reached in meetings where representatives of the governments of member countries are present. It has 160 member countries, representing 98% of world trade, which reflects the overall goal of WTO “to open trade for the benefit of all” (<https://www.wto.org/>). It, therefore, may function as the structure upon which the economic interconnectedness of Globalization stands. This paper zeroes in on The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 which is based upon the GATT agreements of 1947 ([https://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/06-gatt\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/06-gatt_e.htm)). GATT 1947 gives contracting parties the same advantages, favors, and privileges to all like products “originating in or destined for the territories of all other contracting parties, with the possibility of imposing an internal tax or an “anti-dumping or countervailing duty” within the provisions of the GATT ([https://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/06-gatt\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/06-gatt_e.htm)). This agreement creates a space for goods, money, people, and culture to move around the world in a way that goes beyond the power of local governments, which creates a kind of Third Space where parties are not treated on equal footing, since some parties are more privileged because they belong to the part of the world where industry takes place. Other parties are at a disadvantage and they turn into markets for the major industrialized parties. This is the institutionalized translation of Nkrumah’s view of economic relations between former colonial powers and the newly independent countries. Via the WTO agreements the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world are controlled and shaped by the discourse of consumerism. Hence, the space created by the WTO for trading freely around the world is not fair to all parties involved in the processes of international trade. It is dominated by the Neocolonial powers and it makes of the less privileged countries open markets for the goods and services the more advanced countries produce. The WTO agreements, then, may be viewed as a kind of Bhabhasque Third Space in the sense that goods, money, services, and people function in this space along regulations set for all members. These regulations are different from those implemented in individual countries. In this Third Space, the negotiations are always conducted in a way that benefits the highly advanced and the highly industrialized countries.

Social Media Networks function on the cultural level in the same way the WTO agreements work in the realm of economics. Social Media Networks create a space for ideas to circulate around the world in a way that goes beyond the power of local governments. Most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, WeChat, Tumblr and Instagram. The present paper looks at two issues related to the study of Social Media Networks and Third Space. These are the representation of the self on various social media platforms and the use of the Hashtag on Twitter to create public opinion and propagate an issue. According to Courtney Patrick-Weber, the meaning of the authentic original self in the twenty first century has to be redefined in order to encompass all the forms of the self that

appear on different Social Media platforms. Digital technology has made it possible for users to present facets of their selves or identities on different platforms. It even provides them with the opportunity to be anonymous in some cases. This means that users have entered into a space similar to Bhabha's Third Space in the sense that on Social Media platforms users bring in some of their culture and interact with other users who also come to this space bearing some aspects of their culture as well. Since each user creates multiple identities to suit the different platforms s/he uses, it has to be accepted that human beings do not have a homogeneous authentic self. For example, a user's professional account may feature basic information related to the world of academia or business. The same user may have a Facebook account via which s/he may post personal pictures, some information about her/his hobbies and likes, and some information about her/his social life. On another platform, s/he may follow certain public figures and contribute to awareness raising campaigns with reference to environmental issues, political causes, or charity activities. On Twitter, for example, the Hashtag is a tool used to bring together people who have similar opinions concerning political, social and environmental issues. It may also be used, as Thomas Breidband argues, to create "collective identities" that respond to tragedies and crises (5). The Hashtag may, then, be viewed as a Bhabhasque Third Space in the sense that it brings together users from different parts of the world and provides them with the opportunity to contribute to the creation of a new collective identity which enjoys the power to make changes in the real world. The question to raise in this case is about the origin of the Hashtag. After all, cyberspace is dominated by technology companies residing in the West. Therefore, it is debatable whether or not users of Social Media Networks are really free to choose which causes to adopt and which campaigns to follow. Similar to Bhabha's notion of Third Space, Social Media Networks do not seem to be a democratizing tool. Users are usually subject to advertisements that pop up all the time to attract their attention to either a cause or a commodity. The power of the technology companies running Social Media Networks is similar in this case to the privileges multinational corporations enjoy in the world of business and trade according to the WTO agreements.

## CONCLUSION

The notion of Bhabha's Third Space and his contention that the overall goal is to reach the "beyond" have been important aspects of Postcolonial Studies. However, even on the level of literature, it has not been possible for writers to describe Third Space in their work. The five literary texts discussed in this paper show that the characters who come from ethnic backgrounds are not given the opportunity to engage in negotiations with the culture of the West. They are misunderstood and discriminated against. Postcolonial literature, as these five examples reveal, has not managed to reach Third Space and the "beyond". This actually reflects political and economic circumstances in the era of decolonization. Bhabha describes this reality in his book *The Location of Culture* when he admits that "in the language of political economy, it is legitimate to represent the relations of exploitation and domination in the discursive division between the First and Third World" (20). He explains then the role of multinational corporations and technological industries in circulating signs and commodities around the world (Bhabha 20). Colonial Empires, though lost their



colonies in Africa and Asia, are still in control of politics and economy in the world. This is seen in the establishment of the WTO and in the creation of Social Media Networks. In addition, he states that our contemporary times witness “a sharp growth in a new Anglo-American nationalism which increasingly articulates its economic and military power in political acts that express a neo-imperialist disregard for the independence and autonomy of peoples and places in the Third World” (Bhabha, 20). The analysis of the tools used to entrench exploitation and domination would help Third World countries and former colonies develop resistance strategies, which would provide them with the possibility to make more informed decisions with regard to their development plans. They would also realize that Postcolonial Literature, written in English or translated into English, may be viewed as a Third Space in which Postcolonial writers describe their own cultures in a foreign language. This makes representations of local cultures removed from reality and from the actual peoples and nations described in Postcolonial literary texts. For example, the lives of immigrants in *Brick Lane* is described in English and the people living back home in Bangladesh cannot read the text in English and therefore, they will not know of the difficulties and the challenges immigrants face in the West. Postcolonial literature, in this case, inhabits a Third Space, where it is involved in continuous efforts to find its identity. Being in this Third Space makes Postcolonial literature tied all the time to the Western culture and does not provide Postcolonial writers with the opportunity to write their own culture independently and freely. Along the same lines the spaces the WTO and Social Media Networks create respectively place Third World countries and former colonies at a disadvantage. After all, these spaces are controlled by the more technologically advanced corporations in the West. Therefore, Postcolonial literature, the World Trade Organization, and Social Media Networks are similar in the sense that they have the notion of Bhabhasque Third Space at the heart of their structure. Hence, they may all be seen as tools of Neocolonialism. They stress the dominance and supremacy of Western culture and provide non-Western nations and peoples with little scope to create and assert their identities.

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