ON THE QUESTION OF THE OVERLAPS BETWEEN THE POST-COLONIAL AND THE POSTMODERN

Mahdi Teimouri[1]

Abstract

The article aims to conduct a brief comparative study of the possible overlaps between postmodernism and post-colonialism from theoretical and literary perspectives. My point of departure would be an article by the Canadian art and literary critic Linda Hutcheon. I would then proceed to develop my discussion at the theoretical level by drawing an analogy between Said's concerns in *Orientalism* and Baudrillard's notion of simulation. This discussion is then followed by more practical aspects of overlap in postmodern and post-colonial works of fiction. The article ends with a conclusion cautioning us about taking the idea of the overlaps at a face value.

Keywords: Simulation, representation, parody, historiographic metafiction, heteroglossia

Introduction

In her article '"Circling the Downspout of Empire": Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism' (Hutcheon 1989) Linda Hutcheon develops a discussion surrounding the nature of similarities between literature produced by postmodernism and post-colonialism. She initially points to the major difference between the two which in her view concerns the political and pragmatic aspect of post-colonial theory and criticism. She maintains that post-colonial literature 'possesses a strong political motivation that is intrinsic to its oppositionality' (Hutcheon 1989, p. 150). The problem with postmodernism is attributable to its lack of political agenda and its being 'politically ambivalent: its critique coexists with an equally real and powerful complicity with the cultural dominants within which it inescapably exists' (ibid).

Despite this disagreement, Hutcheon identifies three zones or areas of overlap between the postmodern and the post-colonial: 'formal, thematic and strategic (p.151). The formal aspect is concerned with the use of magic realism which is a popular genre for the postmodern and the post-colonial. The thematic part involves the way both post-colonialism and postmodernism relate to history and historical discourses. A self-conscious reconsideration of discourse of history inevitably involves the 'strong shared concern with the notion of marginality' (p. 153). The question of the valorization of the Other is the ultimate focal point of both types of literature. As for the strategic point of convergence between the postmodern and the post-colonial, Hutcheon refers to 'the use of the trophy of irony as the doubled or split discourse' (p. 154). Hutcheon devotes the rest of her article to the detailed explanation of these points 'with particular reference to Canadian art' (ibid). What I mainly intend to accomplish in this article is to follow Hutcheon's lead by expanding a little more on the points of convergence between post-colonialism and postmodernism. I will also try to further Hutcheon's discussion by citing examples from the literature of the world.

The Death of the Real: Simulation

My point of entry into the discussion about the convergence between the postmodern and the post-colonial is not literary but theoretical. I would like to start with a theoretical similarity between one aspect of postcolonialism and post-modernism which deals with the question of representation and the construction of reality. I would like to point to the considerable attention that has been paid to the idea of representation as an important issue which directly affects the notions of reality and identity. To do so I draw on two major thinkers: Edward Said and Jean Baudrillard.

Said's ground-breaking work, *Orientalism* (Said 1978) deals with the texts which were written about orient to show how they were involved in a process of constructing representations of the Other. Said by drawing on Foucault's theory of discourse which brings to light the 'alliance between power and knowledge' and the way it affects 'colonial conditions' (Gandhi 1998, p. 77) points to the way the orient is *constructed* and dominated in the process of the accumulation and generation of knowledge. In fact, Said implies that 'Europe's strategies for knowing the colonized world became at the same time, strategies for dominating that world' (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999, p.49). In this manner, Said not only believes in the relationship between knowledge and power but also establishes a link between ways of obtaining knowledge and ways of dominating the subject of knowledge.

By attempting to demonstrate the link between reality and representation, Said in *Orientalism* follows a postmodern strategy. A holistic view of his work displays an analogy between the theory of Orientalism and Baudrillard's theory of simulacrum. Just as Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1983) believes that the involvement of images in cyclic representational processes leads first to the reflection of reality secondly to perversion then to the concealment of the absence of reality and finally to creation of a simulation of that (11), Said implies that the same procedure is working in a textual way - the image that is produced in a text is of an abstract (mental) nature. Baudrillard proposes that a simulacrum is not unreal or false representation but it 'never again exchang[es] for what is real, but exchang[es] in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference' (ibid). The referent of representation is the real but the referent of a simulacrum is another image. Simulations are the product of a successive layering of images which becomes so convoluted that telling the real from the image is hardly possible.

The death of the real (the Orient) in Orientalism constitutes the core of Said's argument. Said maintains that to overcome Orient, it should be first 'possessed, then re-created by scholars, soldiers and judges' who embarked upon the excavation of 'forgotten languages, histories, races and cultures in order to posit them [...] as the true classical Orient that could be used to judge and rule the modern Orient' (Said 1987, p. 92). There are two noteworthy points here: (a) re-creation of the Orient through the biased and subjective point of view of particular groups and (b) re-creation based on an old, trite and fixed image inherited from the predecessors in the respective field. The current and real Orient once for all is put aside. In its place an image is mounted which itself is an image produced at second hand while being passed down to scholars, writers, etc. who instead of referring to the real Orient are generally content with the representational legacy of the past or are too complacent to double-check their inferred findings. Sacy's case (a French Orientalist) is a good case in point:

> [A]s a European he ransacked the Oriental archives, and he could do so without leaving France. What texts he isolated, he then brought back; he doctored them; then he annotated, codified, arranged, and commented on them. In time, the Orient as such became less important than what the Orientalist made of it; thus, drawn by Sacy into the scaled discursive place of a pedagogical tableau, the Orientalist's Orient was thereafter reluctant to emerge into reality. (Said 1978, pp. 127-128)

There is a parallel paradigm here which is comparable to Baudrillard's conception of simulation. It implies that the superimposition of textual layers ends in a simulation of the real. Apart from this general impression, Said explicitly points to the generation of simulacrum in the representational process of scholarly undertakings of the orientalists:

> [O]n the one hand, Orientalism acquired the Orient as literally and as widely as possible; on the other, it domesticated this knowledge to the West, filtering it through regulatory codes, classifications, specimen cases... all of each together formed a *simulacrum* of the Orient and reproduced it materially in the West, for the West. (Said 1978, p. 166, my emphasis)

Said gives us an insight into the *modus operandi* of the orientalists' epistemological efforts responsible for the construction of the orient in the mind of the west. Said's conception of the representational system of Orientalism is very similar to Hutcheon's argument in *Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) where she explores the relation between narrative, representation and reality. Hutcheon observes that 'perhaps narrative does not derive its authority from any reality it represents, but from the cultural conventions' and discursive context 'that define both narrative and construct what we call reality' (Hutcheon 1989, pp. 33-34). Hutcheon's interest in illustrating the way postmodern fiction succeeds in de-naturalizing textual representation bears resemblance to the way Said exposes the myth of objectivity in oriental studies. At a pragmatic level Hutcheon follows three operational lines: (a) challenging the hermetic autonomy of a system of representation (such as modernist fiction), (b) dealing with the history of representation (c) and finally throwing into relief the fallacy of absolute representational transparency. Said's *Orientalism* echoes the same concerns. Firstly, Said contests the independence and self-sufficiency of orientalists' discourse by reflecting how cultural, social and scientific situations have repercussions on representational practices. Secondly, Said is similarly concerned with retrospective reviewing of the representation of the orient. Thirdly, by pitting the first and the second points against the orientalists' pretensions to objective representation of the orient, Said questions the transparency of their representational medium.

Having briefly elaborated on the theoretical aspects of overlaps between postmodernism and post-colonialism, I would like now to turn to the practical aspect of overlap in the domain of fiction.

Parody

One of the effective tools which postmodern and post-colonial fiction makes use of is parody. Before explaining more about the usefulness of parody I would like to offer a short introductory note on the status of parody in postmodernism.

There are two well-known conceptions of parody in postmodernism: Fredric Jameson's and Linda Hutcheon's. The former has a negative view of postmodern parodic practices and prefers to use pastiche in place of parody in describing postmodern art. Coming from a Marxist background Jameson holds that postmodern culture is depthless and ahistorical, a condition that is descriptive of the cultural logic of late capitalism. While Jameson (Jameson 1991) sees postmodern culture and art devoid of merit as 'aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production" putting everything at the service of a consumer society (Jameson p. 4) Linda Hutcheon believes in the existence and political efficacy of parody in postmodern art. Hutcheon sees much to value in postmodern fiction on the accounts of its parodic self-reflectivity which is informed by a political critique and historical awareness. Jameson characterizes pastich as 'blank parody' without any political significance (p. 17). Unlike Jameson who considers postmodern parody i.e. pastiche as a symptom of the age, indicative of the way we have lost our connection to the past and to effective political critique, Hutcheon argues that 'through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference' (Hutcheon 1989b, p. 89). Hutcheon views postmodern parody as a political apparatus working to 'de-naturalize' and defamiliarize those factors affecting representational practices. To this aim parody needs to repeat or mimic those representations (whether visual or textual).

Jameson (Jameson 1991) argues that this inclination toward blank parody is caused by a falling off from modernism, when individual authors were particularly characterized by their individual 'inimitable styles' (p. 16). Such distancing from modernism, from emphasis up on idiosyncrasy, is caused by the merger of aesthetic and commodity production which is effected by

> the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of evermore novel-seeming goods [....] at ever greater rates of turnover [...] such economic necessities then find recognition in the institutional support of all kinds available for the newer art, from foundations and grants to museums and other forms of patronage" (Jameson 1991, pp. 4-5).

If in Jameson's account postmodern parody (pastiche) is helplessly at the mercy of the economic exigencies of our modern world which casts it as a 'value free, decorative, dehistoricised quotation of past forms [...] most apt mode for a culture like our own that is saturated with images' in Hutcheon's view parodic works function as 'value-

problematizing and de-naturalizing forms of acknowledging the history [...] of representations' (Hutcheon 1989b, p. 90).

Parody in the sense conceived by Hutcheon works at two levels: either it draws on documented historical facts or uses canonical works of fiction. In either case it problematizes history and the history of representation producing what Hutcheon calls historiographic metafiction. Parodic works as such differ from historical fictions in that their aim is to establish a controversial and critical relation to the cultural past in a way that is characterized by the practice of writing back in postcolonial fiction: the canonic texts of the past are scrutinized, challenged and parodied in the name of the subject positions (of class, race or gender), which they are seen to exclude. What is noteworthy regarding parody is that postmodernism can best be understood in this light 'as a move towards novelistic self-consciousness, which drags into view other modes of discourse, other possible ways of understanding the world' for the 'former Empire, who wish to grasp the discourses that have been imposed upon them by imperialism and colonialism' (Dentith 2000, p. 175). Parodic postmodern and post-colonial novelists frequently utilize similar methods in accomplishing their purpose. They focus on a canonical work in an attempt to rewrite it by shifting the attention of the novel from an incident or character that was originally primary to a minor one. Dentith cites Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (1997) as an exemplary novel that rewrites *Great Expectations* (pp.181-183). In this parodic work the foreground text bears resemblance to the background one in that it is the story of an Australian convict - Jack Maggs - who returns to England looking for the person whom he has been supporting financially. But it differs from the original story, because here, the convict encounters an ambitious novelist, Tobias Oates, who eggs him on recounting his life story. The descriptions given about this novelist is the same as the real Charles Dickens. The story becomes more complicated when Tobias Oates manages to publish his book named *Jack Maggs* that opens in the same manner as Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs* (Dentith 2000, p. 181).

Unlike *Great Expectations,* which is centred on the character Pip, *Jack Maggs*'s focus is on Magwitch/Maggs's story. But the real force of the novel lies as Dentith explains in being 'an attempt at narrative reconfiguration of the discursive order laid out in *Great Expectations* [...] in which the Empire features as the inescapable margin surrounding representations of the metropolitan center' (p. 182). *Jack Maggs* subverts the original text by foregrounding the repressed discourse in it only to be used in rewriting a new story.

Historiographic metafiction

Sometimes the parodied level in postmodern and post-colonial fiction is not a fictional text but rather a document, a piece of history, which contains claims of objectivity, and truthful representation. What Hutcheon terms as historiographic metafiction is a way to challenge, these claims. Historiographic metafiction seeks to simultaneously problematize historiography while retaining self-reflexive and self-conscious features of metafiction. What is metafiction? Patricia Waugh provides a comprehensive definition by describing metafiction as 'fictional writing, which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality' (Waugh 1984, p. 2). Metafiction makes the point of exposing the unreliability and constructedness of the putative realistic writing by interrogating its representational pretensions.

Linda Hutcheon (1988) distinguishes metafiction from historiographic metafiction. She avers that the latter is 'in deliberate contrast to what [she] would call such late modernist radical metafiction, [which] attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally' (p. 108). There has been long contest, going back to Aristotle, between art as speaking of what could or might happen (probability) and historiography or history-writing as speaking of what has happened (possibility). The poets took preeminence over historian, because they introduced universals and not the particulars of the past. According to Hutcheon this separation between fiction, and history continued into 18th-century, when novel was born (Hutcheon 1988, p. 105). The idea of universals gave way to the concept of truth. Early novelist found it a privilege to consider their work as the recording real-life events. Perhaps that is why early examples of novel were written in epistolary forms or like Daniel Defoe the novelist prefaced his work with a piece of literature notifying his readers to the veracity of what they are going to read. The writer intended to evoke a sense of actuality by dissociating his work from accusations of being fictional and imaginary. Writers were conscious of the superiority of history over fiction. They saw history, as made up of facts which stood for truthful record of what had really *happened*. Such a conception of history is dangerous as it presupposes the interchangeability of facts and events. It also fails to acknowledge the power-knowledge relation. Once the belief in the probability of events is replaced with the conviction in the possibility of facts, then writing history becomes the privileged vocation of the conqueror. This paves the way for the smothering of alternative voices and truth-claims. As a result monolithic or teleological perceptions of history become confluent in their complicity with the

hegemonic rule. Postmodern and postcolonial writing close ranks in debunking any ways of conceiving history as a given or as a *donnée*. Facts are those events that get the chance of being written down.

According to Hutcheon the attitude of post-colonial and postmodern fiction toward the relation between fiction and history is that they are influenced by (a) verisimilitude and (b) linguistic constructs i.e. narrativity and teleological tendency. Hutcheon argues that historiography and fiction rather than being concerned with truth 'are both identified as highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure' (Hutcheon 1988, p. 105). In other words in writing history, the historian follows the same structural conventions that govern the work of fiction. These conventions guarantee the consistency of the piece of writing. Consequently a work of historiography is more concerned with its structural and narrative coherence than with representation and truth.

The point is that historiographic metafiction refuses to retain or dissolve the dichotomy of fiction versus history. In fact it is more willing to use and abuse both. According to Hutcheon historiographic metafiction simultaneously installs and blurs the line between fiction and history. Resorting to allegedly historical documents, historiographic metafiction installs the separating line. However, by using metafictional features it highlights the area in which interpretation enters the domain of historiography. Such an ambivalent approach amounts to the disparaging of any notions of history as objective presentation of past events. It also contests the idea of writing history as an exclusive prerogative of the advocates of grand totalizing narratives. Verisimilitude is the governing rule of both fiction and history. Both post-colonial and postmodernist writers who strive to disrupt the hegemonic view of historical facts depend heavily on verisimilitude. They try to show how any account of history needs to be creditable than necessarily truthful. The idea has already been raised by Said when he discusses the failure of western scholars in adopting a new position vis-à-vis the orient. Their work seemingly feeds the expectations that have been generated throughout the years of scholarly investigation and which have congealed into cliché and stereotypical descriptions. A postmodern/post-colonial novelist like J.M. Coetzee lays bare the primacy that verisimilitude has over the truth of the narrative in his works. Two very noticeable examples happen in *Foe* (1986) and *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983).

In *Foe*, Susan Barton is under pressure to revise her story in a way that it corresponds to the predefined realistic paradigms of tales of adventure and exploration which are peopled with cannibals. Thus if during her sojourn on the idea she did not come across any cannibals, to spice up her story and add credibility to it she needs to insert one or two incidents that meet the expectations of her readers. Susan is in need of Mr. Foe because no matter how much her story 'gives the truth, it does not give the substance of the truth' (p. 51). Foe's suggestion is that Susan 'invent[s] new and stranger circumstances' (p. 67). Susan begins to realize that without these additions her story would be dull as they faced "no perils, no ravenous beasts [….] No pirates […] no freebooters[…] no cannibals (p. 81). Besides these distortions, Foe suggests that it would be better if her story was set within a larger story (p. 117) to make it tastier. In *Foe* Coetzee shows how the line between fiction as an aesthetic production and history as an epistemological endeavor is negligible.

While in *Foe* Friday's silence and the story of his loss of tongue remain 'a puzzle or hole in the narrative (p. 121), in *Life and Times of Michael K* it is Michael's silence and refusal to eat that becomes the mystery for the medical officer attending to him. The idea of giving substance is also raised in this novel, linking it to materiality and textuality. The medical officer persistently asks Michael to break his silence addressing him thus:

> Give yourself some substance, man otherwise you are going to slide through life
> absolutely unnoticed. You will be a digit in the units column at the end of the war when
> they do the big subtraction sum to calculate the difference, nothing more [….] make
> your voice heard, tell your story! (Coetzee 1983, p. 141)

The irony is that Michael gives some hints about his silence and refusal to eat. However, these hints which point to the cruel, inequitable and ungrateful treatment of people like Michael's mother are misinterpreted by the medical officer. He mistakes Michael's devotion and identification with his mother as the latter's demonic influence on Michael. Michael K's silence provides the Medical officer the pretext to include Michael in a narrative that fits his vision. In both cases the ex-centrics such as Susan and Michael are enmeshed within a larger context where the singularity of their narrative is lost.

While Coetzee tries to show how an unquestioned fidelity to verisimilitude leads to the obfuscation and distortion of the truth, Salman Rushdie in Midnight's Children (Rushdie 1981) chooses to mix fantasy and realism to deliberately create a magic realist work in order to radically problematize the role of verisimilitude and narrative necessity

in the narration of a historical event such as the Independence of India and its partition. The novel itself is a good example of a historiographic metafiction par excellence featuring postmodern and post-colonial characteristics. The novel was written by a writer originally from a postcolonial country, but trained in postmodern world. It is historiographic in that it re-visits the history of India's independence by presenting an alternative account of it from the position of those who witnessed it but were denied the right to take part in writing it.

The protagonist of Midnight's Children is Saleem Sinai, an ex-centric character who is vulnerable to different situations and undergoes different changes. It is not possible to specify stable qualities in him. Perhaps the reason behind this instability of his character is his 'being handcuffed to history' and that his 'destinies indissolubly chained to those of [his] country' (Rushdie 1981, p. 7). During the course of the novel he takes on different names, which can be indicative of his dynamic personality: Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy Sniffer, Buddha and Piece-of-the-Moon. But why a novelist picks up 'ex-centrics' to narrate a story? The answer is that the rewriting of history in postmodern times, and post-colonial context is going to happen through the voices of those previously excluded groups [such as women, African descendent, poor people, homosexual, etc.], who narrate facts and create their own versions of history. They possess a stance different from the one from which History was viewed - white, European, upperclass.

The retelling of history through the eyes of people who were absolute onlookers and bystanders has in postmodern aesthetic, the function of helping to dismantle the binary mindset that had informed modernity. In post-colonial times, the insertion of the views of such groups works as a political tool for the colonized. If history is now being narrated and retold by the people who were excluded, literature is also being rewritten by those who were not included in the western literary canon [examples: Latin American writers and African or Afro-American writers] be it for political, social, economic reasons or for ethical, religious or gender related concerns.

In *Midnight's Children* Saleem is both eccentric and ex-centric: he is not stable and trustworthy in his presenting accounts of miscellaneous happenings. Note how he is suffering from aporia and indecision, see how the paragraph begins: 'No! - But I must, I don't want to tell it! - But I swore to tell it all - No, I renounce, not that, surely some things are better left ...?' then a few lines later he says: 'but the horror of it, I can't won't mustn't won't cannot! - Stop this; begin - No! - Yes' (Rushdie 1981, p. 536). The other important issue raised in this novel concerns the inclusion of historical documents. The significant point about *Midnight's Children* is that it incorporates data, but rarely assimilates them into the overall structure of the novel. Local Indian accounts of events are juxtaposed with real or deliberately falsified historical documents. However, Rushdie never tries to iron out these contradictions. Such deliberate eschewal of maintaining narrative consistency creates a chaotic text alive with contradictory voices and points of view.

Throughout the story Rushdie highlights 'the Divorce between news and reality' by making comparison between newspaper headlines and local rumors: 'Newspaper quoted foreign economies - PAKISTAN A MODEL FOR EMERGING NATIONS - while peasant (unreported) cursed the so-called "green revolution," claiming that most of the newly-drilled water-wells had been useless, poisoned, and in the wrong place anyway'(Rushdie 1981, p. 423).

In another part of the novel, the narrator abstains from correcting his mistake in chronology: 'I have made another error - that the election of 1957 took place before, and not after, my tenth birthday; but although I have racked my brains, my memory *refuses*, stubbornly to alter the sequence of events' (Rushdie 1981, pp. 282-283, my emphasis).

In Hutcheon's opinion trifling with truth and displaying textual playfulness are done with the intention of highlighting 'the possible, mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error' (Hutcheon 1988, p. 114). Rushdie turns his novel into the story about writing novel and history. Such self-reflexivity hits the reader in the eye right in the beginning of the novel, where for fear of his overused crumbling body the narrator emphasises: 'I must work fast, faster than Sheherazade, if I am to end up meaning - yes, meaning = something I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity' (7). This is a parody of Sheherezade in *One Thousand Night and One Night*, while structurally *Midnight's Children* is a parody of *Tristram Shandy*. It is a bildungsroman in which Saleem unlike Shandy 'handcuffed' to the history of his country so the search for unity (narrative, historical, subjective) is constantly frustrated. Saleem Sinai, would like to reduce history to autobiography though he never succeeds and this failure is underlined by the constant presence of *Tristram Shandy* as a parodic intertext ending in the reign of contingency (Hutcheon 1988, p. 162). The story tends to welcome contingency as the narrator decides to refer to each chapter as 'pickle':

> One empty jar[...] how to end? Happily, with Mary in her teak rocking-chair and a son
> who has began to speak? Amid recipes, and thirty jars with chapter-headings for names?
> In melancholy, drowning in memories of Jamila and Parvati and even of Evie Burns? Or
> with the magic children (Rushdie 1981, p. 587).

Just like a jar of pickle in which different fragments are mixed to preserve here Rushdie puts together discrete pieces of historical documents from official and local sources to put forth a version of history. This not only brings to our attention self-consciousness of the text at the moment of its construction, but also makes us aware of an overriding consideration that 'the postmodernists fictionalize history, but by doing so they imply that history itself, may be a form of fiction' (McHale 1987, p. 96).

Heteroglossia (polyphony)

This term, introduced and developed by Michial Bakhtin, refers to the multi-accentuality of utterances as long as they are situated in a context. A dialectical relation is set up between utterances, and context in such a way that 'context defines the meaning of utterances, which are heteroglot insofar as they put in play a multiplicity of social voices and their individual expression' (Selden 1989, p. 17). The context endows utterances with meaning. However, these utterances are potentially heteroglossic otherwise they wouldn't be understood in the context. Therefore, language beside its representational and mimetic function, possesses an emancipatory role, which grants different voices admittance to a site where none carry significance over others nor dictates guideline for the rest. It is also understood that this libratory disposition of language is not an inherent quality of it but depends on how language as a tool is used. Bakhtin differentiates Dostoevsky from Tolstoy, exactly for the same reason. He believes that Dostoevsky is one of those writers who have produced polyphonic novels, which 'permit the freest play of different value system' and 'in which voices are set free to speak subversively or shockingly, but without the author stepping between character and reader' (Selden 1989, p. 18). Now this subversive feature of language that empowers us to set voices free is what is recognized in post-colonial and postmodernist novels. Let me begin with the distinction, which McHale makes between modernist and postmodernist heteroglossia.

McHale identifies in modernist and postmodernist texts 'multiple worlds of discourse' but sees in the former a tendency that drives all these multiple worlds of discourse 'into a single ontological plane' (McHale 1987, p. 166). What is absent in a postmodernist text is such an urge to unification. There is the pivotal role of a center - an authoritative one - present in modernist texts, which is absent in postmodernist ones. McHale believes that heteroglossia in modernist text never really ends in polyphony, because what we see is just a veneer of polyphony, underlain by a unifying force, making it appear as an 'unintended side-effect of heteroglossia' (McHale 1987, p. 167). Contrary to this, polyphony in postmodernist text is treated as an ultimate and necessary condition which is only possible to materialize by the aid of heteroglossia.

At a stylistic level heteroglossia works, as McHale explains through injection 'of alien discourse into a closed, homogeneous world of discourse' glossing and anti- language (pp.167-170). As it was mentioned, these formal features might be found in either postmodernist or modernist texts. However, postmodernist fiction is typified by a more profound ideological poly-phonal quality. Ideological polyphony finds expression in plurality of truths, in the problematization of monolithic historiography. What is left behind by ideological polyphony is a contingency, a state in which previous assumptions are contested or disparaged and no final answer is given to the bulk of questions.

Among the stylistic tools, helping an author to create polyphony are footnotes, epigraphs and forewords. They are called by Hutcheon paratexts. Paratextual devices are especially used in historiographic metafiction, because they 'remind us of the narrativity (and fictionality) of the primary text to assert its factuality and historiocity' (Hutcheon 1988, p. 82). Though Hutcheon never speaks of or even implies the contribution of these devices to the production of polyphony, it is understandable that the unresolved paradoxical condition produced by them resembles the polyphony of world views offered by McHale.

Take as an example the novelist who introduces different accounts of past events and buttresses them by relying on footnotes or epilogues consisting of newspaper clippings or documents of witnesses. While the main course of the story gets unravelled, miscellaneous voices leave their footprints on it. The application of footnotes could be traced back to non-fictional texts where they were used as a method to verify the documents and substantiate the veracity of recorded events. The employment of such ways of verification in a work of fiction paradoxically 'foregrounds above all the textuality of its representation' (Hutcheon 1988, p. 88). Accordingly, the contradiction aroused by the conflict between text and footnotes or in some cases the dependence of the text on these paratextual elements turn the text into a babel rejecting any unification.

Such strategies are used in postcolonial texts but they serve a different end. Postcolonial literature is reputed for its ability in appropriating distinct aspects of colonialist discourse from textual and ideological domain. The most notable textual aspect in postcolonial writing is that it appropriates the colonizer's language in order to maintain its subversive potency. This adoption of Metropolitan language is paradoxical: postcolonial writers use the language of the

center to express themselves while at the same time they make it a vehicle for the inclusion of their own distinctive cultural and linguistic features. This is best described by Raja Rao who believes that 'english' is used to 'convey in language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own' (Ashcroft et al. 1989, p. 38). Turning the language of the metropolis into a carrier of the colonized cultural codes means putting the latent emancipatory quality of language in to effect. Note that in a situation like this a new role is imposed on language which is metonymic.

Postcolonial writing uses and abuses English in the way that 'the privileged centrality' of it is negated when it is made 'signify difference while employing a sameness which allows it to be understood' (Ashcroft et al. 1989, p. 50). Postcolonial language is metonymic because it bears the burden of representing the world of the colonized and because it is loaded with untranslated words, glossing and syntactic fusion which metonymically represent the colonial culture. The insertion of language variance produces a 'cultural gap that emphasizes difference yet situates it in a way that makes the piece accessible' (Ashcroft et al. 1998, p. 138). The metonymic performance of post-colonial literary language offers a new possibility of identifying similarities between it and its postmodern counterpart as David Lodge argues that modernism is metaphoric, but anti-modernism is metonymic (Selden 1989, p. 62).

Employment of untranslated words, glossing or syntactic fusion provides the oppressed with an opportunity to infiltrate the colonialist discourse and to dismantle its dominating and totalizing unity by making it bear tokens of different world views. As Ashcroft et al. argue in postcolonial novels a polydialectical manner of writing is applied in the way that Standard English alternates with vernacular and syntactic fused versions of English (1989, p. 71).

Conclusion

Throughout this article I meant to explore via a comparative view the zones in which intersection between postmodernism and post-colonialism might occur. As it was demonstrated in the introduction, Linda Hutcheon has already covered this topic. Using her own ideas and others' my objective in this article was to develop and clarify her argument in a more relevant and familiar context. To avoid any sweeping generalisation about the similarity between the post-colonial and the postmodern, at this juncture, I would like to bring up some arguments which question the possibility of reaching a consensus about an absolute commensurability of the postmodern and the post-colonial. Hutcheon identifies a major difference in postcolonial and postmodern art and criticism: the former advocates a theory of agency that enables it to exceed 'the postmodern limits of deconstructing existing orthodoxies into the realms of social and political action' (Hutcheon 1989a, p. 130). Whereas postmodern theory challenges the idea of coherent and autonomous subject, postcolonial theory still believes in the ability of the subject to defy theories of subjectivity in postmodernism and to negate the idea of fragmented (argued by Jameson) and interpellated (developed by Althusser) decentred subject.

Diana Brydon (Brydon 1995) believes that the most obvious difference between postmodernist and post-colonial practice manifests itself in their treatment of history. She remarks that while both admit to 'history's textualized accessibility', postmodernism unlike post-colonialism 'which focuses on the reality of a past that has influenced the present', concentrates 'on the problems of representation and on the impossibility of retrieving truth', consequently postmodern fiction is more apt to indulge in the play with facts of the past than post-colonial fiction (Brydon 1995, p. 142). *Orientalism* is an exemplary case which demonstrates the post-colonial interest in illustrating the way a particular perspective from the past can influence the present. *Orientalism* delves into the textual representations of the past which have come to prejudice the construction of the present image. The disparity between the postmodern and the post-colonial in this respect can again be attributed to the importance that can be attached to the necessity of preserving human agency for discourses of minority. For the marginalized neither the perpetual deferral of the materialization of identity and culture nor a regressive return to an absolute past is advisable. They need to negotiate their way out of this binarism to a point where the belief in human agency and historical verification do not fall into the absolutism of tradition or relativism of postmodernist. An argument similar to this is presented by Appiah below.

Kwame Anthony Appiah offers an insight into the post-colonial fiction's similarity to and dissimilarity from postmodern fiction. He enumerates the former's anti-realism and anti-metanarrativism (challenging earlier legitimating narratives) as instances of similarity with the latter. However post-colonial writing differs from postmodern fiction in 'ethical universal', that is, in humanism underlying it as in total contrast to (moral, cultural etc.) relativity and anything-goes principle underscored in postmodernism (Appiah 1995, p. 123). The lack of faith in the self-sufficiency and autonomy of human agent divests postmodernism from any commitment to follow humanitarian objectives. This is can be the ultimate point of divergence between the post-colonial and the postmodern.

Notes

[1]Mahdi Teimouri is a Ph.D candidate at the English Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya. He has previously taught at several universities in Iran.

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