# Horizon, Elsewhere and the Post-Colonial Habitation

TAPAS K ROY CHAUDHURY*

Horizon is the ocular certification of the conceptual and of frontiers, the farthest end of the lived experience, or even beyond the empiricized, where the post-colonial habitates a no-man's land for a private space. It is the disruption of the marginal borders, particularly of those who are estranged, fugitive, migrants, diasporic, asylumed, and so much for a trope in the post-colonial discourse. It is an engagement with conceptual boundaries, erected by the urgency for homeliness of the colonial power, or for some privacy in the anonymous diasporic space, as well as the boundaries of meaning. The metaphorically fenced, therefore, posits a pent-land analogy, which is appropriated to nurture marginalized history to underpin, by the narratives of difference, how the *core* is or is to be different from the periphery. Perceiving the horizon beyond the boundaries, presumably, in *elsewhere* than the ambivalence and the hybridity, is one of the major post-colonial theoretical enterprises today. Edward Said has negotiated with boundaries in terms of 'the fetishization and relentless celebration of 'difference'. . . seen as an ominous trend. . . .' Horizon, hence, argues for an uneasy consciousness of individuals and communities, beyond 'not we' or 'not us', being transported into the domain of non-identitarianism. A good part of the post-colonial literature has no better issue to address than the litany of appropriated history, exiled space.

The boundary, in its post-coloniality, is a special metaphor, which is used to state 'the distance between cultures', 'the limits of reason'. Boundaries are viewed as constructs; modernity which is trumpeted as the self-realization of the West has produced 'others', in its imperial discourses, to legitimate its surrogate claims in its cultural encounter with the 'not we'. In colonial representation the boundary of signification has emerged with almost inviolable certainty, as it is necessary for the assertion of Europe's presence. Special thinking, consequently, continues to operate as metonymic of racial, political, cultural power within colonialism. Jacobus Coetzee in his *Dusklands* pictures the absurdity of an ambiguous existence of the one who habits beyond free spaces.

There he stands, inhabiting the prescribed place four paces away and three feet down, resignation is in the air, we are now going to live through gifts of tobacco and words of peace, direction to water and warnings against brigands, demonstrations of firearms, murmur of awe, and eventually a lifetime of the pad-pad-pad of straight line, the transformation of savage into enigmatic follower, and the obscure movement of the soul (weariness, relief, incuriosity, terror) that comes with this familiar transformation, we feel as a fated pattern and condition of life.

The trope of seeing is connected to the metaphor of space within which the colonial subject is separated, defined, demarcated. The space that is sought to be privatized now is the return of the repressed who intends to write back the West in their performative cultural immediacies. Before divided horizons, the 'erstwhile' prior to the worldly alterity and the interminable reworking of power and politics that constitute the marginal's sense of being is the *elsewhere* that the pre-slave of Phyllis Wheatley, an 18th century African slave girl interwove in the lineament of *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral* as an ambivalence of a mediated self:

Taws mercy brought me from my pagan land,
Taught my blighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor know.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
'Their color is a diabolic die'.
Remember, *Christions, Negroes,* black as *Cain.*

It has presumably raised a serious question on how the races are inter linked with nations, the imprisoned space liberated into the texual space of the unmediated horizontality of existence. The *Black Atlantic* incidentally is reiterative; it did not exhaust in Wheatley, from Wheatley to Du Bois to Delany to Paul Gilory, it has re-incarnated to lay its claim on its appropriated space. Du Bois in his *Dusk of Dawn* has engaged in an Atlantic

* Fellow, IIAS, Shimla.

peregrination, being conquered by his surrogation against the tidal waves of heroic nation-building activity in his *erstwhile* whose memory he has surrendered to ambivalence of his present. It is infact a severe theoretical scrutiny by which the post-colonial intends to suture the *Black Atlantic* across its temporality. Delany, of course, has considerably redempted himself from the paradox of the pre-existing and the existential to configurate his marginality and its recovery of self. So, he could be so unequivocal as to say: We must 'make' an 'issue', 'create' an 'event', and 'establish' a 'national position' for Ourselves; and never may expect to be respected as men and women, until we have undertaken, some fearless, bold, and adventurous deeds of daring-contending against every odds-regard-less of any consequence.

The rhetoric of the creation of an event has persisted, and in its urgency it has engendered multiple linearity to be uttered. Chinua Achube, while crafting *Things Fall Apart*, has predicated a way to experience reality where the boundary, which was once interminable, is diminished. The idea has been centred on the anterior; the *eqwugwu*, the ancestral spirit of the community, in human recreation, dissolves the frontiers between the human actors and the spirit *per se*. He wrote:

> Okonkwo's wives and perhaps other women as well, might have noticed that the second *egwugwu* had the springly walk of Okonkwo. And they might also have noticed that Okonkow was not among the titled men and elders who sat behind the row of *egwugwu*. But if they thought these things they kept them within themselves. The *egwugwu* with the springly walk was one of the dead fathers of the clan. He looked terrible with smoked raffia body, a huge wooden face painted white except for round hollow eyes and the charred teeth that were as big as a man's fingers. On his head two powerful horns.

Though Achube appears to have reinstalled a new boundary in an ethnographic irony the fact that 'The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors' is an act of relocation in the history of the compulsive existence of their pre-history. This capacity to control representation is itself a fundamental horizontal practice; nevertheless, horizontality is installed as a cultural product of the text through the literary representation of the pre-colonial cultures. This vision of 'pre-colonial' is one form of horizontality achieved in the post-colonial discourse and the European ontology. But there is another way to breakdown the various boundaries of the natural world, between the foreground and the background, the animal and human, as suggested by Les Murray in her *Equanimity*:

> From the otherworld of action and media, this
> interleaved continuing plane is hard to focus: we are looking into the light-
> It makes some smile some grimace.
> More natural to look at the birds about the street, their life
> that is greedy, pinched, courageous and prudential
> as any on these bricked tree-mingled miles of settlements,
> to watch the unceasing on-off
> grace that attends their every movement.
> The same grace moveless in the shapes of trees
> and complex in our selves and fellow walkers: we see it is indivisible
> and scarcely willed. That lights us from the incommensurable
> we sometimes glimpse, from being trapped in the point
> (bird minds and ours are so pointedly visual):
> a field all foreground, and equally all background
> like a painting of equality. O infinite detailed extent
> like God's attention. Where nothing is diminished by perspective.

The alliance that Murray intends to achieve between the equanimity of perception and the indigenous form of representation is controversial, but that it is with boundary she has been engaged is indeed quiet panegyric to horizontality. The centrality of the issue is what space to inhabit when the marginals invade the diasporic, exiled, estranged boundaries with the contrivance of the horizon. Interestingly, the writer in the borderlands negotiates the fragile space, fragility imputed by their unique observation of porousness, some what directly, though, they cannot decide if their space is the *pre-existing* or the *elsewhere* which can be inhabited securely. Gloria Anzaldua attempted a tentative answer:

> When I write it feels like I'm carving bone. It feels like I'm creating my own face, my own heart a Nahuati concept. My soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself through my body. It is this learning to live with *la Coatlicue* that transforms living in the Borderlands from a nightmare into a numinous experience. It is always a path/ state to something else.

In all difficulties which the *pre-existing* encounters to negotiate with the colonially existed, an yearning is expressed for the *elsewhere* to be found in the twilight of the horizon. It is the metonymic of the post-colonial where the innocent habitation in a home is intimidated not only by the inviolability of the fences but also by the ambiguity of the location. So, it is often found that the architecture of varandah is used as the metonym for a no-man's land where the transculturation of the 'insider' and 'outsider' may take place in an apparently non-negotiable boundaries. The metaphor of the contact zone suggests that the discourse is replaced by a counter-discourse in which the very identities of the 'inner' and the 'outer' become negotiable. Its alterity, the imposition of a home on an alien land by the colonizer, is the arrogant 'extra-

territoriality' which is flaunted to demarcate the 'no entry' to those who own the land in tradition and in contemporary legality. In *The Ancestor Game,* Alex Miller introdued Lien to extraterritoriality as '. . . the continued jurisdiction of their country of origin over foreign nationals resident in the International Settlement . . . Did this mean, then, she had wished to know, that these people had travelled to the far side of the world from their ancestral home-lands and yet had managed to remain at home?' Under the circumstances the metaphorical varandah, though emotionally unsafe to live, furnishes the only place for post-colonial habitation where the cultural discourse of the 'inside' and the marginalized 'outside' is less intimidatingly conducted.

So, the question remains how is the home to be inhabitated, and what is it that is the authentic home of the estranged. Tom Morrison has struggled with the dispensation of the Western epistomology to liberate the home from its inherited frontierities. In his *Paradise* he pronounces for the black Americans:

> This their home; mine too. Home is not a little thing.
> I'm not saying it is. But can't you even imagine what it must feel like to have a true home? I don't mean heaven. I mean a real earthly home. Not some fortress you bought and built up and have to keep everybody locked in or out. A real home. Not someplace you went to and invaded and slaughtered people to get. Not some place you claimed, snatched because you got the guns. Not some place you stole from the people living there, but your own home, where if you go back past your great-great grandparents, past theirs, and theirs, past the whole of Western history, past the beginning of organised knowledge, past pyramids and poisoned bows, and back to when rain was new, before plants forget they could sing and birds thought they were fish, back when God said Good! Good! – there right there where you know your own people were born and lived and died. Imagine that. Pat. That Place. Who was God talking to if not to my people living in my home?

Morisson has espoused a theoretical legitimacy to restitute to Richard a home which he has never lived, but its constitutive being neither the anticident nor the elsewhere has landed him into the unsuspecting freak of the post-colonial argument. If it is all where your own people were born and lived and died, it could be no more than the reiteration of the carefully fenced space, which for its rejection of others, is the same sordid space whose other side is settled by the colonizer with their extraterritorial proclamations. It is a paradox of two modes of habitation, two different ways of being in the same world. Contesting marginality is a legitimate enterprise of the estranged, but finding no better term to do so than recapitulating the argument of fences whether colonial or post-colonial is the resignation of an ideology. The diasporic probably can do no batter than that. Boundaries originate in imperial imagination to regulate cultural space of the colonized; but the potentiality of the post-colonial space, unless it is inhabited, is wasted in its invasion by the imperial imagination. It is also equally true that the post-colonial space cannot be settled, as long as the transcendence of the cultural horizon is not materialized, in a rejection of the geopolitical, ethnic, cultural cartography. David Malouf has tried to narrate in *Remembering Babylon* how different it could be to inhabit the post-colonial space from that the habits of European dwelling dictate. The theoretical rejection of the cartography of divisions is the background on which can be foregrounded the conceptual and cultural fences in an underpinning of horizontal consciousness.

*Remembering Babylon* narrates the sojourn of Gemmy, a white castaway whom the aboriginals nurtured beyond civilization. Gemmy has once hovered like a bird on the fences which enclosed a space habited by a small Scotish Settlement in Queensland, and in his rendezvous he has first negotiated with the enclosure of civilization. Malouf describes:

> Out of a world over there, beyond the no-man's land of the swamp, that was the abode of every thing savage and fearsome, and since it lay so far beyond experience, not just their own but their parents' too, of nightmare rumours, superstitions and all that belonged to Absolute Dark.

The Absolute Dark is the conceptual contestation of the frontierity between the savagery and civilization, between the colonial and the colonized, the home and the world. Gemmy unwittingly aims to reconcile his authentic discourse with the one mediated by imperialism. His encounter with both in a state of simultaneity reveals a universe of densely stratified multiple discourses.

It was a question of covering the space between them, of recovering the connection that would put the words back in his mouth, and catch the creature, the spirit or whatever it was, that lived in the dark, the creatures, the spirit, or whatever it was, that lived in the dark of him, and came up briefly to torment or tease but could be tempted, he now saw, with what these people ate and the words they used.

Gemmy's historical subject hood of his aboriginal discourse is now interrogated by his being on the fence of civilization. The boundary demarcating discourses suddenly turned out to be so porous that horizontality, as a loud theoretical rejection of all the claims of inalienable frontierities, has emerged as the logical retrieval of the cultures from their binding paradoxes. The movement from being out of historical subject hood to be within the subjectivity of history is therefore a matter of serious strategic interest in the post-colonial discourse. Gemmy is the paradigmatic other of Kim whose childhood history of Indianness was the pre-history of his

European adulthood, narrative of boundaries culturally fissured and horizontality having travelled through it at ease was suddenly repaired by the discourse of imperialism to grant subject hood to Kim on the notion of 'race'. For Gemmy too the question remains; though he started out white, had he remained white? Can he loose it? The binarism of 'black' and 'white' is the comfortable identity which has been appropriated by colonialism to signify the otherness of the 'other'. Gemmy seeks to violate the frontier edicts by his transgression, because:

> You meet at last in a terrifying equality that strips the last rags from your soul and leaves you so far out on the edge of yourself that your fear how is that you may never get back.

It was the mixture of monstrous strangeness and unwelcome likeness that made Gemmy Fairley so disturbing to them, since at any moment he could show either one face or the other; as if he were always standing there at one of those meetings, but in his case willingly, and the encounter was an embrace.

For Gemmy in as much as for child Kim the question continues to exist; can there be a white Aboriginal? For Kim the answer has been an unmitigated 'no'. The white face was finally shown, because without it the foundation of imperialism which has been laid on the racial metonym for demarcation will be weakened. The entire past of Kim, the Indian summer, has been abrogated with all its authentic existence as a strange nightmare of a cultural fugitive. 'The East is East and the West is West' is the appropriate imperial rhetoric which has to be engaged to reclaim the civilization from the invasion of its aboriginality. Gemmy's hybridity is also oppositional. It may seek to subvert but in its subversiveness it evidences the oppositionality of the horizontality discourse of post-colonialism.

Though Malouf's novel offers a different kind of horizontality which intends to modify the rigidity of opposition that a post-colonial fiction normally posits, but the general trend to 'write back' remains the basic argument in this enterprise. Coetzee's *Foe* which is symptomatic of 'writing back' to Defoe's imperial edict *Robinson Crusoe* is an espousal of *alterity*, an alterity that is grieviously searched to retort the hegemony of the 'Great Tradition' of empire. It is a discourse that questions the existing, the enclosed and the codified by offering discursive modes that are fluid, almost indefinable and continually renewable. Coetzee has decided to foreground the battle for the conquest of the identity of difference in a narrative of indegenousness. 'Indegenous', culturally legitimate and legally valid for its operationality, is the counter-point with which the imperial discourse aimed to marginalize it to the farthest extremity of its conceptual habitation. In this powerful enterprise of rejection the voices from the margin grow ever stronger, ever more intelligible without even a limb of articulation, the lost self of Susan and the connibal's marginality of language-less pre-history, which like Friday can only breathe the sound of the islands. Cruso is said to have uttered once. 'The world is full of islands', but very unsuspectingly he has also given voices to the multiplicity of discourses which each one of his islands, as metaphor, signals. Cruso has contrived a discourse to appropriate the marginality of Friday, until Susan landed, to construct his hut which he pompously calls his 'castle' emponymized for imperial power and hierarchic distantiation. A sequestration has been thoughtfully achieved by:

> A fence, which a gate that turned on leather hinges, completed an encampment in the shape of triangle which Cruso termed his castle. Within the fence, protected from the apes, grew a patch of wild butter lettuce. This lettuce, with fish and birds' eggs, formed our sole diet in the island. . . .

The hut, ringed with stakes like a stockaded fort, defends Cruso's private space, because the space for the 'other', space of the marginal, the shifted indegenous (the apes, cannibals and castaways) is public, which has to be gazeable to the hegemonic scrutiny. He inscribes on that enclosed privacy the visible presence of the colonizer; Susan's silent diseant on claims of adequacy, because something more is needed to evidence their arrival at the periphery of the world is refused by Cruso. 'Nothing is forgotten . . . Nothing *I* have forgotten is worth the remembering' is the patented language of authority, but Susan contests, which is also the discourse of the marginal that:

> You are mistaken! I do not wish to dispute, but you have forgotten much, and with every day that passes you forget more! There is no shame in forgetting: it is our nature to grow old and pass away.

To this Cruso has responded with the first-order subjecthood, the checkmate *I*, while other requirements, as originations of the gendered second-order subjecthood of Friday and the feminine third-order subjecthood of Susan, are incongruent to the discourse of the *imperium*. The imperial discourse has been continued by Cruso in levelling the terraces, walling them with stones dug out of earth to prepare the 'text' on which others, the invaders like him, can inscribe their 'signs', their 'alphabet' and thereby 'write' a meaningful story. Susan cannot share the overwhelming confidence of the imperial will to be the single authentic historian of the enterprise of appropriation. So Susan feels that the island is never still, it seems to gently slip into the waves.

> When I lay down to sleep that night I seemed to feel the earth sway beneath me. I told myself it was memory of the rocking of the ship coming back unbidden. But it was not so; it was the rocking of the island itself as it floated on the sea. I thought: It is a sign I am becoming an island-dweller. I am forgetting what it is to live on the mainland. I stretched out my arms and laid my palms on the earth, and, yes, the rocking persisted, the rocking of the island as it

sailed through the sea and the night bearing into the future its freight of gulls and sparrows and flease and apes and castaways, all unconscious save me. I fell asleep smiling. I believe it was the first time I smiled since I embarked for the New World.

The narration, presumably, is that of a movement of the imperial discourse being spilled over by the post-colonial discourse of the questioning marginals. It is a movement, which necessarily eclipses memories, erasing the strong, long-established image of a closed space and a linear and stable temporality. Consequently, it imposes the mobile dialectic of different moments and diverse types of temporality: Cruso's linear time, Susan's female, repetitive time; Friday's pre-verbal, indecipherable, native time. It is also time of the post-colonial future. Through her sudden perception of the movement of the island Susan understands that, along with her biologically determined identity, another is being constituted, which also has temporal implications. It is indispensable for Susan to know herself, her own personal story, to construct her own identity and to make her own choices, even if this only means deciding what to recount of her own experience.

I am not a story, Foe. I may impress you as a story because I began my account of myself without preamble, slipping overboard into the water and striking out of the shore. But my life did not begin in the waves. There was life before the water . . . All of which makes up a story I do not choose to tell. I choose not to tell it because to no one, not even to you, do I owe proof that I am a substantial being with a substantial history in the world. I choose rather to tell of the island, of myself and Cruso and Friday and what we three did there; for I am a free woman who asserts her freedom by telling her story according to her own desire.

Understandably, Susan's narrative is the rejection of the third order statehood of a tortured feminine self; she seeks to reclaim her authorship and to securely found it on her assertion to operate her *will,* but in the process she had also to contend with silence, the silence of 'unspoken words', the silence of 'sights concealed'. Susan is verbal which has privileged her to state her assertion, but Friday, the second order pre-verbal statehood, who has already had endowed his silence with a gesture of articulation, is also staking claims of his historical subjectivity. It is in Susan's intense dialogue with Foe that the sound of silence could be heard. Foe continues:

I said the heart of the story . . . but I should have said the eye, the eye of the story. Friday rows his log of woods across the dark pupil or the dead socket of an eye staring up at him from the floor of the sea. He rows across it and is safe. To us he leaves the task of descending into that eye. Otherwise, like him, we sail across the surface and come ashore none the wiser, and resume our old lives, and sleep without dreaming, like babes.

Foe has decoded the silence and Susan tries to read Friday with her sense of responsibility, 'it is for us to open Friday's mouth and hear what it holds; silence, perhaps, or a roar, like the roar of a seashell held to the ear'. Towards the end of the narrative Friday's silence has been fully deciphered; out of his silence a *meaning* has been retrieved that in his subterranean marginality Friday is the eternal fluvial of civilization, a quiet defiance of his indignity and the indignity of those who have been pushed to the brink of placelessness by an unfeeling territoriality. Coetzee almost poetically writes:

But this is not a place of words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home, Friday.

He turns and turns till he lies at full length, his face to my face. The skin is tight across the bones, his lips are drawn back. I pass a fingernail across his teeth, trying to find a way in. His mouth opens. From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through his body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin, through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my eyelids, against the skin of my face.

It is precisely the *non-being* of the island, the subalterns on the margins of empire whose silence is not defeated by the archaeology of a noisy centrality, is the principal actor on the centrestage of Coetzee's 'writing back'. It is in this new speech act the Fridays make a radical creative space which affirms and sustains their subjectivity, which gives them a new location from which to articulate their sense of the world.

Further, the entire issue is belatedly felt to centre around the concepts of 'place' and 'habitation'. Can the marginal inhabit a place which satisfies *place-ness*? There is probably no better conceptual arsenal to negotiate with the intractable question of *place-ness* than 'habitation' as the strategy to address the problem of the current universality and also partly anonymity of the Western representation of place. 'Where is my place' roused by the indeterminacy of the place offered/proposed to be offered by the post-colonial settlement arguments has intricated the issue in its studied silence to answer the other question, 'where do I belong to'? The question of belonging bothers as long as *belonging* is despised as an intangible emotional captivity, or it is not regarded as a serious statement of identity as well as a means for the transformation of the conditions of one's life. The conceptual shift from spatiality to 'place-ness' has been necessitated to be a shift from empty space to human and social space can obtain its material and ideological conditions of *place-ness* in a densely woven network of ethnic, cultural and historical belonging only. So, the urgency to search for the roots takes

precedence upon other conditions of habitation. Sally Morgan's novel *My Place* and later Amitav Goshe's novel *Search for Roots* are indeed a quest for some physical and cultural locations to confidently refer to the hidden identities. But it is also an irony of colonial existence that though Morgan has traced the ancestry to Corunna Downs, the return to it is stifly terraced by colonial displacement. Corunna Down, Sally's 'my place', the object of unchanging pre-colonial identity is not just a post-colonial location, a postal address for mere habitational attestation, it is nurtured by various physical and imaginative environments. In the earlier part of the novel the reader can explore from Sally's grandmother the way of inhabiting space that enables one to transform it, to own it, to make it an extension of one's self. Significantly Sally has been asked to sit on the step and be very quiet;

> Suddenly, the yard filled with a high trilling sound. My eyes searched the trees. I couldn't see that bird, but his call was there. The music stopped as abruptly as it had begun. Nan smiled at me, 'Did you hear him? Did you hear the bird call'?
>
> 'I heard him Nan'. I whispered in awe.

It is a way of inhabiting Corunna Down, which makes it Nan's own; it dwells in a space outside location, in the imaginative *place-ness* which in the sense of being has carefully nurtured her sense of belonging. In fact, it is a *way of being* more than location that securely installs the idea of habitation. For Nan 'my place' suggests an inherited way of physical and imaginative habitation which authenticates her Aboriginality for her identity. The gift of being transforms into belonging a location, a human space. But the critical point in the discourse is could Sally retrieve 'my place' from the obliteration of the colonial a-historicality? bell hooks proposes that for a diasporic or estranged people, in particular for those dislocated in one way or the other by the historic dislocation of colonization, 'Home is that place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference'. It is a strange way of recovering 'boundary' for 'my place'. Paradoxically, even Coetzee who has contested boundaries in his *Foe* as the legacy of hegemony, which has disclaimed not only legality of authorship and along with that the liberty of imagination also finds boundaries in a privious novel necessary for the civilizing project. Indeed the trope of boundary has become inextricable from the trope of seeing in Western epistemology. Boundary, as a metaphor, has a strong presence within the discourse or spatiality. Its rejection does not constitute *place-ness*. Its acceptance does not transform a habitation into 'my place'. Coetzee has been imprisoned by this pardox in his *Dusklands*.

We cannot count the wild. The wild is one because it is boundless. We can count fig-trees, we can count sheep because the orchard and the arm are bounded. The essence of orchard tree and farm sheep is number. Our commerce with the wild is a tireless enterprise of turning it into orchard and farm. When we cannot fence it and count it we reduce it to number by other means.

Here the mathematical configuration and bounding of space are shown to be critical in the colonizing project, in as much as it is for the purpose of habitation, by 'enclosing' with both physical and epistemological means to install 'my place'. The boundaries in the colonial discourse are therefore very subtle and pervasive. It is being increasingly realized that the 'boundary' in the post-colonial discourse entails a capacity to re-appropriate, renegotiate, realign and replace colonial boundaries not solely as legacy of colonial spatial division and epistemological extremities but as opportunities to manipulate wide variety of circumstances, cultures and societies to serve habitational purposes.

Therefore, the question of the colonized response to boundaries is a critical one in the post-colonial discourse, its own construction of horizon, the conceptual admission of porousness, the disclosure of space and the *place-ness* of the habitational space have woven a dense theoretical snare in which the post-colonial freedom is imprisoned. So, bell hook suggests that there are other ways of dealing with boundaries than by simply rejecting them, and the most subtly transformative way lies in the mode of their habitation. Probably, pragmatism may legitimate some such position, though the provisionality of boundaries held as the key in this argument to a more subtle dismantling is doubtful. It is true that the pre-colonial *erstwhile* does no longer exist in its inherited geometry of space; it is a mobile topography mediated by a mobile culture and by a mobile social space. Therefore, the trope 'my place' in the post-colonial discourse, without which location cannot be settled by any theory of habitation, necessitates the acquisition of some new meanings in terms of an internalized sense of speciality and of post-colonial epistemology. The tenuousness of the colonial spacial function of boundaries is to be contested, because without some such act the question posited by Gayatri Spivak that 'Can the Subalterns Speak'? perhaps cannot be answered. If the erstwhile eludes, as the colonial conditions have made it very ambivalent, then the act 'to habitate' has to be performed outside the epistemological limits of the West into the *elsewhere* of the post-colonial epistemology. The *elsewhere* which was also the erasure of Tagore, *'not here, not here, elsewhere, somewhere else'* is the inevitable predicament of the post-colonial existence.

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# The Indian Village
## Colonial Power, Historiography and Forms of Knowledge

MANISH THAKUR*

Recent scholarship on South Asia has distinctively brought to our attention the power relations of colonial categories, and the constructed and highly mediated nature of social and cultural historical experience. While focusing on the interpretation of power and knowledge in the colonial archive, they convincingly demonstrate the processes through which experiences of colonial modernity were constructed and organized into the lives of the colonized. The colonial state formation was not simply an episodic moment in the long historical journey of the Indian society. Rather, the practices, modalities and projects of the colonial state constructed a new understanding of caste, tribes, religion, and the village. As Dirks puts it succinctly, 'the power of colonial discourse in India was not that it created whole new fields of meaning instantaneously but that it shifted old meanings slowly, sometimes imperceptively, through the colonial control of a whole range of institutions'.[1]

These theoretical and methodological shifts in the concerns of the anthropological practice, from the bounded spatial entities to 'the construction of cultural categories and the process of that construction', have yielded rich insights illuminating the power relations of colonial history.[2] They have helped to interrogate processes by which official knowledge was produced. Not only do they foreground the implication and deployment of anthropological knowledge in all the administrative concerns but also reveal the creation of new subjectivities and political language. Even otherwise, a critical assessment of the legacy of colonial knowledge and its categories is more than an arcane question of representation. This legacy has posed great challenges to the postcolonial enterprise of nation building. In a way, 'the postcolonial

* Department of Sociology, Goa University, Goa.