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Expressions of Identity: From Colonization to Globalization. Tracing Connections in the Process of Identification

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Past and present – where are we now?

As the ‘irresistible and irreversible’ forces of globalization increase and accelerate, politics, economics and culture impact not only locally but have worldwide repercussions of an intensity and ubiquity hitherto not experienced (Hardt & Negri 2001, p.xi). With retrospect, various moments and movements within history can be seen to have had significant impacts on humanity and the way we live, but never before have phenomena operated with the pervasion and speed of globalization. Narrative may be regarded as a creative response to prevailing political and economic circumstances and provide a way of addressing the contemporary situation through imagination and innovation.

Notions of identity have necessarily shifted throughout history as science has continually uprooted and replaced previously accepted beliefs. The Enlightenment concept of a self-contained subject operating from its own centre evolved into one which involved a social relationship connecting the inner Self to the outside world (Hall *et al.* 1992, pp.275-7). As globalization is facilitating a growth in social interaction, it is reasonable to ask to what extent and how globalization is affecting identity. The growth in mobility and connectivity that has developed during the transition from colonization to globalization raises questions about the relationship between identity, space and time.

Although the issues of identity being raised today must necessarily differ from the 'loss of Self' which resulted from the displacement of colonialism, within a historical context globalization can be regarded as a continuation of processes of change. Bhabha notes that postcolonial texts indicate a move away from 'the philosophical tradition of identity as the process of self-reflection in the mirror of (human) nature; and the anthropological view of the difference of human identity as located in the division of Nature/Culture' (1994, p.66). I propose that it is perfectly possible to observe parallels between the processes at work in colonial and global manifestations of identity and that it is feasible to substitute the global subject for the colonized subject and to substitute the process of globalization itself, despite its ambivalent and fluid *modus operandi*, for the colonizer. It is particularly from the points which Homi Bhabha makes in the chapter 'Interrogating Identity' in *The Location of Culture* that I propose connections may be usefully made between the issues of identity which were caused by colonization and those which are emerging within globalization (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha's arguments are too extensive for this paper, so I shall limit my discussion by using the three conditions which he puts forward as being at the roots of 'the process of identification in the analytic of desire' in a colonial context as a framework which will particularise an analysis of global issues of identity (1994, p.63).

The first condition is that the Self is established and articulated by recognition of the Other, an idea which Bhabha acknowledges as being rooted in Said's notion of the Self being 'confronted with its difference, the Other' (1994, p.66). Identity is confirmed by the distinguishing differences and location of the Other and accompanied by a desire to occupy the place of that Other. The distinguishing differences of the Other are multiplied and magnified within the

context of globalization. The location of the Other is more fluid and desire is amplified by the pervasive and persistent nature of modern communication. Secondly, identity is split by the desire to occupy the space of the Other while simultaneously wanting to retain the essential qualities of the Self. The problems embedded in the concept of global belonging and a 'collective will' are further exacerbated by a divided and doubled identity which reinforces and maintains the 'chasm of cultural difference' (Bhabha 1994, p.43, 45). Such splitting creates a form of doubling which ensures that differences are maintained. It follows, therefore, that the third condition is that the Self can neither adopt the Otherness which it demands and desires, nor be assimilated into it. Accordingly, identity is constructed by transforming the Self into an image of Otherness which must always display its difference and its splitting.

How, then, does a wavering identity reposition and reinvent itself? Bhabha writes:

When historical visibility has faded, when the present tense of testimony loses its power to arrest, then the displacements of memory and the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychic survival (1994, p.26).

If narratives can reasonably be said to highlight the concerns of an age, then the emergence of literature which deals with issues of identity within the context of globalization should be given attention. Bhabha says that 'image and fantasy – those orders that figure transgressively on the borders of history and the unconscious' are instruments which enable Fanon to express the colonial condition (1994, p.61). Surely image and fantasy, which are products of imagination and innovation, are also instrumental in the expression of identity in a global condition? I shall apply Bhabha's three conditions specifically to two contemporary novels which arise from an imagination founded within a globalized context but whose

texts are placed between 1900 and 1986 and therefore roughly span the period between colonization and globalization. The novels themselves present contrasting portrayals of identity. *The Impressionist* by Harry Kunzru looks back to the beginning of the twentieth century for its setting and centres around the residue of colonialism (Kunzru 2002). It portrays the confusion of an alienated hybrid identity whose background is uncertain. *The Inheritance of Loss* by Anita Desai is set in 1986 when globalization was beginning to infiltrate into Nepal (Desai 2007). It illustrates the security afforded by love, home and tradition and the disturbance to identity that occurs when they are threatened.

Transition

Historical and cultural inheritances can be transferred geographically, but not emotionally, for 'society, unlike biochemical processes, cannot escape human influences' (Fanon 1986, p.13). There is no doubt that the technologies employed by globalization are increasing the transference of ideas and information, but does this encourage a toleration of differences and permit the expression of individuality or does mass communication promote a conformity which reduces it (Hall *et al.* 1992, p.303)? Can expanding global connections be said to be eroding privacy so that in striving to maintain or create an identity, an inflexible self-contained nucleus of self-preservation may be constructed to preserve the Self from fragmentation? Are the influences which globalization exerts and the multitude of choices it offers therefore potentially hazardous for individual identity (Hall *et al.* 1992, p.284)? Interaction between cultures accentuates differences at the same time as allowing barriers to be broken down and new connections to be established. Do cultural differences therefore create

and perpetuate their own boundaries? Globalization is creating an unavoidably paradoxical situation.

In the surreal opening to *The Impressionist*, the 'pearl-skinned' Ronald Forrester is subjugated to Amrita, the 'native mother goddess' in a twist of conventional colonial and sexual roles in which 'he has not, never will have, any other purpose than the one she gives him' (Kunzru 2002, p.13-14). He is neither the dominant male nor the white colonizer and his identity is temporarily suspended while Amrita occupies his space, the space of the Other, and is assimilated into a role in which she is at liberty to express the desires which have been subdued by tradition. Although her actions may be interpreted as stemming from the feminism of a later age rather than from colonial resistance, Forrester and Amrita exhibit changes in identities, not exchanges, splitting or doubling; thus suggesting that personal freedom is expanding with globalization and permitting an easier transformation of identities. Their unorthodox sexual union results in the birth of Pran Nath, the central character of the novel.

Globalization has accentuated the difference in the roles of women, not only historically, but also in Eastern and Western cultures. Freedom from the 'tyranny' of sex has a familiar ring to feminist and anti-patriarchal movements (Kunzru 2002, p.82). Sexual identity and gender issues are not specifically addressed in *The Location of Culture*, but have become more prominent issues in a permissive global culture which has drawn attention to the boundaries of sexual conformity that are being crossed or even broken down. Pran is thrown out into the world at the age of fifteen when his 'bad blood' is revealed on the death of his assumed father and is purchased by the royal household of Fatephur for the sexual entertainment and blackmail of Major Privett-Clampe (Kunzru 2002, p.28). The hijras (eunuchs) avoid distinguishing differences by

wearing the burka, but this begs the question of whether it is worn to renounce a male role, neutralize sexuality or confirm a female Other. The chief hijra is not split by a desire to be Other and seems to relish in a negative sexuality by 'performing his own multitudinous freedom' (Kunzru 2002, p.82). He assures Pran that he is nothing and that sexuality is confining.

The potent imagery and close juxtaposition of distinct differences displayed in the attitudes, actions and physical attributes of the characters in these first chapters typifies Kunzru's innovative method of addressing issues of identity which are applicable to both colonial and global conditions and which are not so astonishing today but would perhaps have been less openly discussed in colonial times or its literature. Desai's approach to identity in *The Inheritance of Loss* differs in that it portrays the disruption that occurs when global influences intrude into a society steeped in tradition. The transition from colonization to globalization is traced in a narrative which emphasises a linear progression through time that serves as a platform on which difference and change can be displayed.

Sai, aged seventeen, has lived in Nepal with her grandfather, Judge Jemubhai, since she was orphaned at the age of eight. Global influences are seeping into Kalimpong but colonial attitudes still exist and the judge blames colonialism for his obsession with Englishness. His domination of the lower classes merely mimics colonial behaviour and he refers to 'damn servants born and brought up to scream' (Desai 2007, p.8). Sai is infuriated by the oppression that the English have wrought on the Indians who seem to have suffered humiliation willingly because of the merit attached to being associated with the English. Although the servants attach more prestige to being employed by a white man than an Indian and adopt the snobbery of the English, they realise that despite their desire they

can never occupy the place of the Other. The cook is not split by the desire to be Other because he knows he can never extricate himself from the master/slave relationship, despite the current rebellion which seeks independence and political reform. Although Sai cannot help being a 'Westernized Indian', her tutor Gyan considers her to be a traitor to her nationality, a 'copycat' who celebrates Christmas and Diwali without adopting either faith (Desai 2007, p.164, 210). Gyan gets drawn into the rebellion, feeling that he is contributing to the making of a new future, but his intelligence suggests to him that the violence involved will destroy the present and the past. In Sai's eyes, Gyan has 'morphed into a bloody frog,' for his shifts in attitude and loyalty have destroyed the apparently artificial image that she has grown to love (Desai 2007, p.249). However, both she and Gyan are defending the same nationalism which instigates the insurmountable class differences that fuel their passionate arguments.

In terms of identity, nationalism recognises the Other but has no desire to adopt its role or occupy its place, demanding instead that distinguishing differences are maintained. Globalization recognises national differences while promoting a mutual toleration of them, whereas colonization recognised differences which it desired to subdue and control. In the midst of national riots, Pran is assumed to be English at Amritsar station which is full of fleeing English women who barricade themselves into family groups, isolating themselves from both their English neighbours and Indian hostility. In a foreign country where differences had previously been largely tolerated, the uncertainty of the political situation now accentuates them. In the uprising against the British in Bombay, Pran finds himself in close contact with the English. The confrontation of the Self by the real Other that he desires to be emphasises the differences which he has

tried to absorb, and he feels like ‘a black cuckoo in the nest’ (Kunzru 2002, p.188). Pran’s identity is doubly split by the recognition of the Indian Other within himself and he concludes that much of the Anglo-Indian community has sided against its Indian origins; that he too is guilty of betrayal.

In a situation where identity is directly confronted or actively denied, either physically or emotionally, the sense of Self needs to be secure for identity to be maintained or re-established when subjected to external challenges. Should integrity be abandoned, then identity is weakened, perhaps forfeited, and thus becomes devoid of meaning, so that dreams of acceptance, assimilation or unison are replaced by a clash of antagonistic differences. In asserting a common cultural bond, nationalism can become a site of potential confrontation.

Confrontation

In *The Impressionist*, the Reverend is tortured by a disreputable past which he blames on isolation and having no ‘force to push against’ (Kunzru 2002, p.230). In avoiding responsibility for his actions, he seems to imply that a confrontation of differences would have resulted in a different sort of behaviour, yet despite his intention to break down national, cultural and religious barriers, differences are firmly established by his inflexibility which itself creates an insurmountable barrier that renders him unable to relate to the colonial Other. Sai gives Gyan a boundary to kick against in their personal relationship and in their disagreement over political and moral principles. Gyan becomes ashamed of the love and gentleness he has shown Sai in the ‘masculine atmosphere’ of rebellion (Desai 2007, p.161), which is easier to deal with than the proximity and potency of Sai, who by addressing not only his maleness, but all

aspects of his identity, threatens to cross and even break down the barriers between them.

The desires of the Reverend and Privett-Clampe centre solely on retaining their identities which are deeply seated in their intransigent nationalism. They affirm their Englishness by their recognition of Pran as an inferior Other. The judge hates his wife's Indian habits which remind him of what he is, while she finds his imitation Englishness ridiculous. She refuses to communicate with him, creating a barrier between them which finally erupts in the judge's violence against her. For the judge, the Reverend and Privett-Clampe, control of their inner selves and those that surround them is a matter of maintaining barriers that they have constructed around themselves. When Sai arrives the judge feels that taking care of her may be a way of redeeming his past and confronting the reclusive identity that he has created of his own volition. In a similar manner, the Reverend and Privett-Clampe seek atonement for their deprived identities by making Pran their protégé.

Desire

According to Bhabha, Fanon articulates 'the problem of colonial cultural alienation in the psychoanalytic language of demand and desire' (1994, p.61). 'Desire that emerged from the traumatic tradition of the oppressed' is active in the process of colonial identification (1994, p.87). Any demand or desire which is discernible within the global subject must differ from the direct confrontations and personally focused responses of the colonized subject, in part because they stem from the worldwide dissemination of information, often remotely accessed, and the persuasive, subliminal commercial elements embedded therein. Bhabha suggests that 'the analysis of colonial depersonalization not only alienates the

Enlightenment idea of 'Man', but challenges the transparency of social reality as a pre-given of human knowledge' (1994, p.59). I suggest that globalization too is responsible for depersonalization and alienation and may be accused of generating unrealistic demands and desires in its seductive presentation of an Otherness which appears more attractive than the reality that exists.

Sai's views are the result of her education and are still being influenced by her avid reading of books rather than reports in newspapers, whereas her tutor Gyan's views stem from direct contact with social realities such as poverty. Gyan comes from a poor family who have struggled to provide him with an education that has pressurised him to be a different Self. He has become distanced from them, despises their submissiveness and resignation and longs to be free of them while still feeling fiercely protective.

The cook's son, Biju, is one of a vast number of illegal immigrant workers in America whose actual circumstances are far removed from the glamorous promises of a better way of life. Any desire to become as the Other is mocked by the situation in which workers are exploited and camaraderie is only a short-lived illusion formed mostly from selfish motives. The notion that different nationalities mix freely is contradicted by the amount of racial prejudice that Biju experiences. After making many mistaken judgements, he concludes that it is not possible to define personality by race. His friend Saeed reveals his desire in a confident display of Self, saying: '*First, I am a Muslim, then I am Zanzibari, then I will BE American*' (Desai 2007, p.136). Biju is highly conscious of his nationality and feels a great sense of alienation abroad. He misses being involved with a community and being of some value in other people's lives and desires dignity and to 'live according to something' (Desai 2007, p.136). He recognises the futility of the desire to be in

the place of the Other and his identity, both personal and national, strengthens under pressure.

The judge has also been immersed in two cultures, as he goes to England to be educated after an arranged marriage. In England, he meets discrimination that he does not expect to which his reaction is to withdraw into solitude: craving anonymity ‘to keep even himself away from himself’ (Desai 2007, p.111). Yet he is overwhelmed by his desire to be the Other and works at ‘being English with the passion of hatred and for what he would become, he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both’ (Desai, 2007, p.119). He washes fanatically to eradicate his Indianness and feels his traditions to be foolish. In such extreme cases, the individual transforms into an exaggerated version of the Other which emphasises the differences that it intends to eliminate.

Both Pran and Sai suffer from a lack of parental contact and neither are particularly touched by the death of their parents, but their resilience takes different forms. Pran is alone and forced to live by his wits, whereas Sai has a solid network of physical and emotional support. If emotional stability is a factor in defining identity, then I also suggest that the liberty inherent within globalization conceals particular perils precisely because it may distance the individual from his emotional and physical base. Love and friendship increase Pran’s vulnerability. His confidence is undermined when he becomes infatuated with Lily who is the embodiment of everything he aspires to – wealth, self-assurance and status – but whom he fails to impress because she recognises him as a ‘half-and-half’ like herself (Kunzru 2002, p.265). When Pran’s Jewish school friend Gertler is victimized, he desperately wants to reveal his true identity, but chooses self preservation over loyalty. By the time Pran falls in love with Astarte, his adopted identity is so outwardly

credible that she fails to detect his disguise and he realises that he could never persuade her of the truth. Astarte forsakes him for a black man because he is too white, too English, too pretty and too boring. Ultimately, Pran's demand and desire to be Other has created an external image that belies his internal emotional conflict.

Mimicry actively assumes the identity of a desired Otherness which effectively causes a split that, unlike Bhabha's second condition, does *not* want to retain its original self or display differences, but the image, however convincing, is not a reality and cannot give access to the place of the Other. Pran's desire to accomplish a superior white identity entails the rejection of the Indian part of his hybrid Self. Mimicry becomes the key to projecting the image of the Other that he desires, and yet there is a sense in which he is not in control, for he doggedly 'builds and inhabits his puppets' as if the necessity for survival is ultimately manipulating him (Kunzru 2002, p.250). When the cook puts on his best clothes for a photograph to project a respectable image to himself and to others, he is not performing mimicry. He is just temporarily disguising himself as a preferred Other, nevertheless displaying the difference.

Pran's ability to be a 'chameleon' provides him with a protective shield from an external Other, but it also prevents him from accessing his inner Self (Kunzru 2002, p.205). In the riots, his perfected Englishness endangers him and he escapes to England with false identification papers realising 'how easy it is to slough off one life and take up another! Easy when there is nothing to anchor you' (Kunzru 2002, p.285).

History

Pran discovers that England is just as nationalistic, racist and class conscious as India. His school friends all have a tangible past and Pran's evasiveness about his history raises doubts about his trustworthiness. Bhabha says that cultural differences emerge at times of crisis and at those times identity claims recognition from an 'ex-centric' position, either on the margins or in attempting to access the centre (1994, p.254). Pran has to remain on the margins to maintain his invented identity, and although he superficially occupies the place of the Other, his image is fragile.

Part of Bhabha's discussion about the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized derives from his reading of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (Fanon 1986). Bhabha says that 'the very nature of humanity becomes estranged in the colonial condition and from that "naked declivity" it emerges, not as an assertion of will nor as an evocation of freedom, but as an enigmatic questioning' (1994, p.59). Can it be said that the rapid and unstoppable spread of, and connection between, ideas in the global condition have the capability of undermining tradition and history? And in their absence is an enigmatic questioning also arising? Narrative enables the individual to position himself within a historical context, which may be indicative of increased significance when the changes which globalization embodies may be said to be exhibiting a disregard for tradition and history.

The Nawabs (rulers) of Fatephur are regarded with suspicion due not only to the brevity of their family tree, and therefore their authenticity, but also to their association with the British-Indian Empire. The irreligious and degenerate behaviour of the male heir is regarded by traditionalists and nationalists as the beginning of a social decline due to the infiltration of modernity and foreign customs.

Heredity and history, as contributory factors in the process of identification, have a particular relevance within globalization, where popular culture sometimes favours tradition as part of a transient trend, disconnected from original context or meaning and converts it into a derisive form of entertainment through images, parodies or facsimiles. Astarte, an English girl with whom Pran falls in love, considers modern civilization to be 'stifling' and favours cosmopolitanism and a simple way of life, but her privileged position and financial security mocks the traditional values that she desires (Kunzru 2002, p.358).

Hybridity

Hybrid forms of postcolonial identity have evolved into complex mixes of ethnic diversity to which globalization is adding further permutations, so that identity is now decentred, destabilised and constantly forced to reposition and reconstruct itself. Detached from his history, and unable to locate himself within a situation which is not only unfamiliar, but constantly and rapidly changing, the individual may have difficulty in relating both to himself and to others. Hybridity confuses the process of identification because the distinguishing differences of the Other are within the Self. The demand and desire of a hybrid identity stem from the conflict with an internal Other as well as a response to an external Other. Hybridity may involve a desire to be in the place of an Other which mirrors part of the Self, or a desire to retain only one part of the hybrid Self while being in the place of a different Other. Splitting and doubling is multiplied in hybrid conditions and will undoubtedly increase with globalization, but it is possible that as it becomes more commonplace it will become less problematic.

Pran's assumed Indian past is de-stabilised when he obtains a photograph of his English father. The image of 'blinding alien whiteness' in the photograph symbolises Pran's confrontation with his new Self and he has to readjust his relationship with himself before he can relate to the Other (Kunzru 2002, p.64).

Space

In Bhabha's colonial identification process, an ambivalent space is created by a split identity. The notion of 'space' is encountered in both novels and has a positive, creative function, perhaps indicative of the freedom from convention which globalization allows.

Old-fashioned ways of living are restored during the monsoon season in Nepal when modern technology becomes incapable of coping with the extreme weather. At this time, Sai normally feels calm because being cut off from the world is 'the only time when her life in Kalimpong was granted perfect sense' (Desai 2007, p.106). Isolation can affect identity in contradictory ways. Here it is consolidated, and when Gyan encroaches on Sai's space requesting recognition, it unbalances, but does not undermine or destroy, her harmonious relationship with herself.

The convent which Sai attended inflicted fear, guilt and humiliation on her and 'any sense that Sai was taught had fallen between the contradictions, and the contradictions themselves had been absorbed' (Desai 2007, p.30). The space between these contradictions allows Sai's identity to develop. Sai does not have to contend with hybridity, is secure in her identity and has no desire to be other than herself. When Sai falls in love with her tutor Gyan, she decides that if love exists at all, it does so in the space between desire and fulfilment and the emotion takes over her being. Her identity doubles rather than splits, one part confronting a new indefinable

form of herself which strengthens her self-awareness, and another part forming her response to the Other, to Gyan. Gyan and Sai compare themselves with an open curiosity, but Sai finds that such close scrutiny turns her 'to water under Gyan's hands' (Desai 2007, p.129). Unlike Pran, she is honest about who she is, which maintains a constancy in her sense of Self, and although her identity becomes intangible and fluctuating, she and Gyan become 'melted into each other like pats of butter' without losing their individuality. (Desai 2007, p.129). Their emotional attachment is based on a desire to share in a mutual recognition of the Other without being assimilated into that Other.

The temporal dimension

The relationship between past, present and future features in the final episodes of both novels. Bhabha's emphasis on the role of a 'temporal dimension' in the orientation of the colonial subject is also relevant to the global subject. (1994, p.53) As the past becomes further removed and less applicable to the present or the future, it appears to be increasingly difficult to discern a way forward along a distorted path which, because of the extensiveness of possibilities offered by globalization, seems to be constructed on chaos. It seems inevitable that the dislocated individual must suffer some degree of emotional turmoil, and any challenge to identity may increase the determination to protect it. I would argue that, particularly in the presence of globalization, estranged individuals create their identity on a mutilated version of their past because their indigenous cultures have been, and continue to be, eroded by the present. There can be no way back because the points of reference have changed.

Biju eventually tires of feigning contentment. On his return home, he 'felt everything shifting and clicking into place around

him, he felt himself shrink back to size, the enormous anxiety of being a foreigner ebbing – that unbearable arrogance and shame of the immigrant’ (Desai 2007, p.300). Between the airport and Kalimpong he is robbed and abandoned wearing a nightgown, symbolising the eradication of the ‘fake version of himself’ which was not one half of a split hybrid identity like Pran’s, but was created out of the hopeless desire to be in the place of a privileged Other (Desai 2007, p.268). Biju moves forward into the future by returning to the original source of his identity. The anonymity of home enables Biju to relax back unchallenged into his own identity and regain control, free from the boundaries of foreignness that have restricted him. The judge craves anonymity as self-protection and on his return home he lives ‘with the solace of being a foreigner in his own country’ (Desai 2007, p.29).

At the Empire Exhibition, Pran is shocked to see native people suffering the humiliation of being exhibited as artefacts and feels confronted by the part of himself that he has been avoiding. He is invited to research the Fotse tribe in Africa, whose philosophy is that time is a continuous cycle of birth and death in which good and evil are balanced and there is no differentiation between old or new and past or future. In a representation of the performance of globalization, technology has infiltrated into Fotseland, ruining its fundamental characteristics, and the familiarity of a ‘two-speed world’ of progress versus tradition, coupled with the proximity of people with whom Pran feels a distant yet intimate association, powerfully reconnects him with his own past (Kunzru 2002, p.424).

In a reversal of differences and desires, the Indian part of Pran’s hybridity emerges and it may be because of this, or possibly from a humane, philosophical or intellectual standpoint, that he finds it impossible and unjustifiable to intrude into the lives of the Fotse. At

the end of the novel, Pran finally sees that identity cannot just be put on like a piece of clothing, nor be discarded with ease, and he withdraws into himself, overtaken by a 'blankness' which refuses identification (Kunzru 2002, p.92). This mental space allows Pran to re-establish his sense of Self and, in a state of collapse, he is unable to resist a Fotse ritual in which 'the thing he thought was himself is plucked out and flung away'(Kunzru 2002, p.477). Pran has never been part of a team or community and never been honest with himself or others. Now he does both and with no demand or desire other than to exist harmoniously with himself, he finally accompanies travelling traders on foot across Africa with no thought of the past, present or future. As 'time was just time' to the Fotse, Pran is now just Pran (Kunzru 2002, p.456).

Sai's response to the rebellion is a realisation that the world is larger than herself and that she is not at the centre of it as, in her solitude, her reflection in the mirror had led her to believe. She senses that the future will repeat an endless cycle of war and peace. The politics of the present has destroyed everything of the past that was familiar to her and she feels she must leave before she is trapped in a place without the history which supplies her sense of Self. She must escape from the oppression of conflict to protect and maintain her identity even if it is only based on an illusion. At beginning of the novel, Sai wonders 'Could fulfilment ever be felt as deeply as loss?'(Desai 2007, p.2). Loss in the context of this narrative refers to the performance of identity when faced by love, ideology, nationality, class and the past, present and future, all of which are challenged by globalization. To the cook, however, identity is not a matter of loss, but gain, because modernity is embodied in the future. He says: 'if you invested in it, it would inform you that you were worth something in this world' (Desai 2007, p.72).

Present and future -- where are we going?

Identity is challenged, confused and fragmented by globalization. In the novels discussed, there is evidence of a desire to return to one's roots to find the Self, as well as a desire to find identity through a physical and emotional distance from family, home and associated cultures. Globalization is offering a liberty that heralds new possibilities, but in its implication of an emancipated future, is history being sacrificed? Should globalization embody a future that is history-less, identity may well be pushed further from its anchoring point and lose definition as it drifts. If globalization is creating ambivalent conditions which neither confirm nor deny identity, will '*the struggle of identifications*' be necessary and enacted independently or inter-dependently? (Bhabha, 1994, p.43) Indeed, the hijra's notion in *The Impressionist* that one can be 'as mutable as the air' suggests that perhaps there is no need for a defined identity at all (Kunzru 2002, p.82).

I suggest, however, that part of human desire is to do with belonging and recognition, even if only centred on a comfortable relationship with the Self rather than external Others, and that identity, therefore, needs to be *resilient* enough to *resist* being undervalued or swallowed up by forces stronger than itself. Fanon says:

Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time. Ideally, the present will always contribute to the building of the future (1986, p.14).

Time places accents on the present that differ from those of the past and technology is extending the horizons of the future. However, from the indications derived from the framework proposed for discussion here it would seem that the components of identity have changed little since colonial times. It is worth considering whether by its very nature globalization is creating controls, subliminally or

overtly, which govern identity in a manner which replicates that of colonial domination.

It remains to be seen whether the promises and alternatives which globalization offers will segregate, unite, aggravate or ameliorate differences. The implications of the two novels discussed are that globalization is imposing crises no less critical than those caused by colonization. Bhabha says:

Culture only emerges as a problem, or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders, races, nations (1994, p.50).

I have suggested that through imagination and innovation the narratives of an age can serve as a key to an understanding of the human condition. In today's global situation, narrative can fill the void of dislocation in a time-honoured fashion which continues to survive amidst new technological communications. Narrative may, therefore, be more valuable than ever before in contributing to some sort of reconciliation of a troubled, divided, double Self. The following statement by Bhabha perhaps provides a suitable summary:

What is crucial to [...] a vision of the future is the belief that we must not merely change the *narratives* of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces, both human and historical (1994, p.367).

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