

# The chapatti story: how hybridity as theory displaced Maoism as politics in Subaltern Studies

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*ABSTRACT* The displacement of concepts is another, sometimes overlooked, mode in the general disorientation of our times that sells us rightwards drift in the guise of a committed politics. My contention is that recent theoretical discussions disconnected from really existing Asias have used that place as a sounding board or punching bag for ever more abstract and unhelpful speculations. In this case, the conceptual theme is 'hybridity' and this is examined in relation to the ways that Homi Bhabha has adopted and modified the founding moves of the Subaltern historians. This example abstracts the specificity of Asia under a spuriously celebrated hybridity, and what is displaced is the Marxist–Maoist–anti-imperial project that, for many years, was the only viable version of Asia outside of Orientalism. The fortunes and consequences of this displacement are to be (cautiously) evaluated and displaced yet further into what Cayatri Spivak calls 'learning to learn from below' – what may be a reconfigured 'fieldwork' for a political anthropology or cultural studies.

If it is the case that interest in the notion of hybridity within cultural and 'ethnic' studies affirms corporate hegemony and leaves the stratified South in flat shadow,<sup>1</sup> then we might attend to one line of scholarship that has claimed to challenge this (post) colonial legacy. It is, of course, impossible and unhelpful to treat the entirety of the Subaltern Studies 'school' of writings as a coherent whole. Even to periodize early and late versions of the project would be to force some writers into categories they perhaps do not deserve, for good and bad. The Subalternist body of work is diverse, and cannot be adequately summarized without reduction here but, in terms of hybridity, the texts of its founding work have a key resonance. The way in which we might (selectively) get into this discussion is via one of the key theorists of hybridity who reads the subaltern scene; Homi Bhabha.

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Amongst a plethora of ‘culture clash’ discussions around themes such as Westernization,<sup>2</sup> monoculture<sup>3</sup> and globalization, it is particularly Bhabha’s work that has found the notion of hybridization useful in the colonial theatre. In *The Location of Culture*, he argues that colonial mimicry is an affect of hybridity; ‘at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance’.<sup>4</sup> Bhabha, in particular, elaborates on the multiple and divergent uses of translations of the Christian bible, handed out by missionary evangelists in Hurdwar, India, in the early 1800s. Coveting such texts may feign devotion, prospects for conversion or calculations of cheap combustibles, and so camouflage, mimicry, mockery and masking undermines the authority of colonial power. This is best seen in the demand for a vegetarian bible, for example, since the one from the mouths of meat-eaters could not be clean. Bhabha argues that we should ‘understand that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in [the] contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation’, by which he means that communication is always a matter of interpretation. Only then can ‘we begin to understand why hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or “purity” of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity’.<sup>5</sup> Does the example of biblical mockery lead to a politics capable of undoing imperial power? The mimic is the revenge of Macauley’s minute men – the turn of those who become accomplished in the ways of the master against that master. Bhabha is quick, however, to point out that hybridity is many things, just as hybridity is resistance, there is the ‘hybridity of images of governance’.<sup>6</sup>

Hybridity appears to be everywhere, and so this version of hybridity may have abstract and generalizing consequences that undo Bhabha’s intention to get at the specificity of colonial exchange. In his essay ‘Signs Taken for Wonders’, Kuan-Hsing Chen has argued that Bhabha’s discussion of the hybridity of the colonized and the colonizer may de-historicize his objects of analysis. The notion that ambivalences with regard to biblical translation two centuries ago (with the bible used strategically as word of god, and as wrapping paper) may have lessons for the present is an idea that should confront several questions: ‘Has the “hybridity” phenomenon of 1817 continued to move on until now? What are the differences between then and the present? Under what conditions could hybridity work differently?’.<sup>7</sup> The continued productivity of studies of old colonial history for understandings of the present cannot be denied, but the specificity of the present is worth attending to also.

### **The chapatti story**

Instead of asking how hybridity has changed, I intend to ask here why the term hybridity has changed the subaltern project. This will be made clear in his *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, which is, after all, identified as the ideological forerunner of Subaltern Studies, Ranajit Guha describes local acts of resistance that we will see become key moments of hybridity in the reading of the same scenes in the work of Bhabha.

The debate hinges on Guha’s reading of the ‘revolutionary consciousness’ of

the peasantry born of their shared ‘subjection ... exploitation and oppression’.<sup>8</sup> In the context of his discussion of the 1857 Rebellion, Guha quotes Mao Zedong’s 1928 argument that conditions of counter-revolutionary suppression in provinces that are adjacent to each other serve to unite the diverse elements of the peasantry in a shared and ‘common struggle’.<sup>9</sup> The people are united against the oppressor. Guha’s discussion is of the ways that rumours circulate to establish and support this shared consciousness. The key story is of the greased bullets that soldiers were required to use in the Enfield rifle, with the defiling fat being an affront to religious sensibilities. As is well known, a ‘mutiny’ of soldiers in Meerut sparks off an India-wide insurgency. Of course, to see the events of 1857 primarily in terms of the rumour of greased cartridges only facilitates the colonialist view that it was a mutiny within the military rather than a more wide-ranging rebellion that caught the public mood, but there is no question that this confrontation has its role.

Guha is first and foremost interested in explaining the peasants’ political organisation, read off from gaps and allusions in the colonial documents that work like parapraxes. Curiously, and in detail, he notes several examples in the historical records from 1885 (two years before the Rebellion) of British patrols uncovering caches of arms; bows, arrows, and drums.<sup>10</sup> These are indicators of peasant revolutionary consciousness as well and, though his focus is on the drums as ‘nonverbal transmitters’, arrows can also pass through the community as a call to struggle.

A similar story concerns chapattis that are passed from village to village as some kind of warning. In reading this episode, Bhabha wants to emphasize the ‘rumour and panic’ involved, and suggests that the ‘slender narrative of the chapatti’ symbolises the wider contexts of the rebellion.<sup>11</sup> Following Guha, Bhabha wants to read the Rebellion and the ‘subject of peasant insurgency’ as ‘a site of cultural hybridity’; the rumour of chapattis indicates a panic that ‘constitutes the boundary of cultural hybridity across which the Mutiny is fought’.<sup>12</sup> The chapatti is a displacement of the Enfield rifle and its greased bullet, the ostensible trigger. For Bhabha, ‘Panic spreads. It does not simply hold together the native people but binds them affectively, if antagonistically—through a process of projection—with their masters’.<sup>13</sup> He then identifies the British projection of their own binding panic onto the story of the chapatti warning. The British did not know what to make of the stories of travelling bread.

Guha is careful to explain that he finds ‘nothing in the contemporary evidence to tell us what the circulating chapatti meant’,<sup>14</sup> even though they circulate rapidly and are contemporaneous and in some way ‘not altogether unrelated’<sup>15</sup> to the Rebellion, and even if they only indicate, as some speculated, a response to the spread of cholera. Bhabha usefully notes that the coloniser is bound up with the colonized (co-constitution), but that he displaces the politics of this into the realm of translation is revealing for, ‘in the very practice of domination the language of the master becomes hybrid’.<sup>16</sup> The chapattis, drums, arrows and rifles become signs of hybridity as the ‘address of colonial authority’, in the discourse of the evangelical Christian missions, threatened by ‘the oppositional

voices of a culture of resistance'.<sup>17</sup> This resistance is ambivalent so long as it remains talk. But in a brilliant coda to his discussion, Bhabha evokes other rumours that spread panic; in particular, about Christian conversion (hybridity) and an earlier mutiny, this time in Vellore in 1806, where the leather of belts and topis (hats) provoke panic. The trouble is we don't hear much of the mutiny as an organizational question. When Guha mentions Vellore, it is not hats but stories of salt contaminated by the blood of pigs and cows that are the focus. What has happened to common struggle? Apprehension of loss of freedom through forced conversion to Christianity is identified, with a glance to Marx, as 'a product of self-alienation'.<sup>18</sup>

The key absence in both Guha's narrative, but more so in Bhabha's distillation of the story, is the question of organization that must necessarily be asked in terms of what is required for any revolutionary consciousness to succeed against oppression. Clearly rumour is not enough; even if chapattis are part of the story, the arms cache has more political significance. The section Guha quotes from Mao, though he does not draw attention to it in the passage, is from the latter's critique of localism in a subsection called 'Questions of Party Organization'. Here, Mao is writing against opportunists and 'blind insurrection' so as to build the Red Army into a 'militant Bolshevik Party'.<sup>19</sup> Mao does not mention hybridity, but contains much subtle analysis of what is required for a political struggle that can succeed. (His text, ignored at the time by the Chinese Communist Party leadership, then under Comintern influence, later became a key analysis of the character of agrarian revolutionary mobilisation.) Guha actually refers a number of times to exactly this Hunan Report by Mao in his *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*.<sup>20</sup>

In the retelling of the story by Bhabha, hybridity is admirably foregrounded, but what recedes is any chance or need of a discussion of the shared experience of oppression that binds the peasants together sufficiently to organize an uprising. We are left with rumours, chapattis and only a feint echo of revolutionary consciousness. This is not to say that the word of Mao is god. It is not unlikely that the Maoist text, Volume One of his *Selected Works*, forecloses access to the position of the 'native informant' with the fabled romance of the revolutionary agent, but the advantage of recalling the ways this text is unwritten by hybridity might be that this foreclosure cannot always so readily be undone by postcolonial complicity in the metropole. It is certainly difficult, but perhaps endearing, to insist on Mao amidst identity politics and autobiographical opportunism.<sup>21</sup>

Earlier in his book, Bhabha asked if the 'ambivalent borderline of hybridity' would 'prevent us from specifying a political strategy'; his later answer is that it would 'enhance our understanding of certain forms of political struggle'<sup>22</sup> (although he does not offer that strategy). What these texts show, on close inspection, is a cascading denial of organizational politics; from Mao, where the Party question is explicit, through Guha, where rumour co-exists with the rebellion of the class-in-itself (not for-itself), to Bhabha, where only the hint of the question of organisation remains and ambivalence is understood as the extent

of politics. This trajectory can be faulted, however careful and elaborate, though it is perhaps no surprise that the Party question is silenced today. The possibility of asking it is left open, but the text stops at enhanced understanding. (Marx's eleventh thesis springs to mind.) A focus on the micropolitics of local hybridity and the trinketizing amusements of stories about chapattis, vegetarian bibles or topi hats does not yet make a politics that can win or allow a strategy for converting revolutionary consciousness into something more. How does the surface of trinket stories avoid commodity fetishism without articulation of questions of organization and the Party? Disarticulated and fragmented localisms seem easily beaten; at best, they are coping strategies. How do we learn to learn from the insights of Subaltern Studies and move from understanding to something that does more than appreciate ambivalence?

### **Learning to learn**

What displacements are entailed in those moves the Subaltern Studies project presented at its origins as its key issues; what Gayatri Spivak identifies as the intervention in knowledge production that refuses to see subaltern insurgency as always 'pre-political' and the question of how religion or culture is transformed into militancy?<sup>23</sup> It is likely that the early phase of Subaltern Studies was not as clear about its Maoist credentials as it might have been when it offered these important insights. The citations in Guha aside, it is striking that in this context—subaltern insurgency, anti-colonialism in a rural sphere, the legacy of Naxalbari in intellectual work—the discussion of peasant organisation and struggle, and the texts of Mao are subsequently ignored and absent. In a global scene now keen to foreground the rural as the site of intervention by assimilation, be it the benevolent aid of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through to the World Bank, or the anti-corporate activism of farmers who trash McDonalds in France on behalf of farmers who trash Kentucky Fried Chicken stores in India, this absence of attention to a key set of texts on the forms of peasant organisation is revealing. Yes, there is a vague uneasiness about Maoism that names the cultural revolution as totalitarian; there is the restitution of capitalism in China, the horrors of Pol Pot, and the deviations of the '68 generation adventurism among the European Left, all of which do not commend a Maoist experiment to us. (The relation of the rural to the state is different; the corporations are not to be surrounded as were the cities. The protracted struggle is now that of the itinerant migrant sweatshop worker.)<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, reading with an eye for lessons of politics today, the historical successes of the Red Army in defeating the Japanese and the armies of Chiang Kai Shek, and the subsequent inspiration the Chinese communists offered other struggles such as that in North Korea and, later, Vietnam might still be instructive. These are blunt little red facts that would suggest that the text of Mao deserves some study, at the very least leavened with the caution and distanced cold-eye clinical evaluation of a 'Centre for Strategic Studies' mind. Other, less jaundiced, approaches might find value there.

Does this demand a return to Mao? To suggest this, is merely to point to the politics of the omission that handles other contradictions and offers ambivalence in the place that Mao once marked.<sup>25</sup> Anarchist anti-capitalists may profess international solidarities and a Guevarist aesthetic, but they do not read the works of the Great Leader. They are dissuaded from reading Marx on colonialism,<sup>26</sup> let alone those who tried to operationalise him in conditions far from the comforts of middle-class Europe. It is important to link up the struggles of rural insurgents in India and China with the global predicament of the present anti-capitalism, since the worst exploitations and oppressions are still visited on those rural fields now become free trade zones filled with ex-rural piece-workers,<sup>27</sup> or gene-modified crop plantations in the grip of intellectual property controls. (The rest are subject to annual devastating floods, displacement in the face of large dams—Narmada, Bakun—environmental disaster from mining—Bougainville, PNG—or disarticulation from economy and development as such, with mass famine or fratricidal war as the only consequence—most of sub-Saharan Africa.)

What would be part of a return to Mao today for those of us involved in anti-capitalist mobilisations? There would be the question of the party; of organisation. There would be issues of practice, disciplinary conduct, the correct handling of contradictions and so forth. Perhaps most readily apparent, from the very first texts of Mao such as the ‘Report from Hunan’ that Guha cites, there would be the injunction to live among the peasantry and learn from their common struggle. It is tempting to wonder if this could be reconfigured today as something like what Gayatri Spivak calls ‘learning to learn from below’?<sup>28</sup> I cannot be sure she would like to see this phrase made over as a formula in this way, but there is something in Mao’s ‘Report from Hunan’ that is intriguing as both good anthropology—he went and had a look for himself (i.e. fieldwork)—and good Marxist political practice—starting from the material conditions themselves. Of course, there are many ways that both anthropological fieldwork and materialism have been derailed by ethnocentric and economist presuppositions, but Spivak’s learning to learn from below specifically attends to this in the task of learning to learn. It is also well known in anthropology that the interfering anthropologist can be a nuisance, and taken as a spy. Negotiating these difficulties is worthwhile in a context that must recognise, for example, that the demands of international solidarity that fly through the internet might also be inappropriate. The insurgent group, or even the local NGO, has neither resources or time to dedicate personnel to running a website and answering outside demands for updates, nor for feeding an anthropologist for no return. Learning to learn also means paying one’s way—the Red Army devised rules for this that did not rely on idioms of hybridity.

Learning to learn from below can only be something like anthropology’s fieldwork or Mao’s peasant solidarity (and Subaltern Studies’ archive), with the application of many qualifications, conditions and cautions. At the least, learning to learn from below perhaps could be a credo for rereading Mao in anthropology, sociology and cultural studies today. For those that need this to be spelled out

programmatically, the task of teaching in these disciplines could be one of promoting strategies for learning to learn from below as part of an organizational project that sees the liberation of all as a key to one's own liberation, and working together to that end. Learning to learn, even if not from the same below, cannot be a unidirectional flow (extraction), but must also entail attention to interaction. Reciprocity is on the cards, as well as vigilance as to what the encounter produces.<sup>29</sup> Learning to learn is not neutral nor without consequences that change all participants in the equation, whatever it adds up to. Learning to learn as a political strategy may mean a refashioned and quite mundane or colloquial communist practice and, as such, it cannot really insist on slogans like 'Long Live the Helmsman'. But it would certainly be a refreshing alternative to banging on in the abstract about hybridity and resting content with a paralyzing 'ambivalence'.<sup>30</sup>

### **The dialectics of hybridity**

Bhabha writes:

In my own work I have developed the concept of hybridity to describe the construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity. Strategies of hybridization reveal an estranging movement in the 'authoritative', even authoritarian inscription of the cultural sign ... the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration.<sup>31</sup>

Is it unreasonable to consider that perhaps the word hybridity is a cover for not saying dialectics? Though at pains to stress a socialist ambition, a possible tone of anti-Marxism (ex-Marxism or, at least, post-Marxism) is sometimes evident in uses of hybridity. This is found in exactly the place where it might be expected that Marx would be more productive. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, for example, managed 19 index references to hybridity (including hybrid poetics), and only four to Marx (no Mao, only 1 Lenin). Dialectics does not necessarily have to invoke Marx. In Bhabha's discussion, some passages resonate with the plausibility of a straight swap of hybridity with the Marxist notion of dialectics. The sentence '[dialectics] unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power', makes just as much sense with the word dialectics at the front as it does with hybridity.

Hybridity, however, is rarely articulated in terms of Marxist dialectics. Bhabha recognizes that for Franz Fanon, those who 'initiate the productive instability of revolutionary change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity'. He is then able to go on to say that these people become the 'very principle of dialectical reorganization', constructing their culture from the national text translated into modern Western forms of information technology,

language, dress'.<sup>32</sup> In the same essay, Walter Benjamin's notion of the 'dialectic at a standstill'<sup>33</sup> is quoted, yet this process and his 'commitment to theory' seems to be carefully disarticulated from that body of theory that would think dialectics as an internationalist revolutionary project. For Bhabha, 'the problematic of political judgement' cannot be represented as a 'dialectical problem'.<sup>34</sup> He wants to take his 'stand' on the 'shifting margins of cultural displacement', and asks 'what the function of a committed theoretical perspective might be' if the point of departure is the 'cultural and historical hybridity of the postcolonial world'.<sup>35</sup> He continues: 'Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty'.<sup>36</sup> Faced with 'politics' Bhabha rhetorically asks: 'Committed to what? At this stage in the argument, I do not want to identify any specific "object" of political allegiance'.<sup>37</sup> What he offers instead is an 'inter-national *culture*' based not on the 'exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity'.<sup>38</sup> But notions of 'partial culture', 'shifting sands', and 'versions of historic memory' occlude another, and possibly more radical, politics. The ambivalence analyzed in the hybrid threatens to incapacitate the politics of 'intervening ideologically'.<sup>39</sup> When Trinh T. Minh-ha writes, 'after a while, one becomes tired of hearing concepts such as in-betweenness, border, hybridity and so on ... But we will have to go on using them so that we can continue what Mao called "the verbal struggle"',<sup>40</sup> there might be reason to feel very hostile to notions of hybridity as translation which no return to Mao can excuse.

With Bhabha's admirable but hesitant intellectualisms, the idea of a revolutionary project that wants to win through to a sovereignty without necessarily instituting another totalitarianism is ruled out of court. All the while, the danger becomes one where the 'third space' that Bhabha describes can be taken to posit a new *stasis* as the place of hybrid articulation. As such, this is a space which is dangerously ready for calibration with the capitalist market. In the hands of opportunist entrepreneurs, dialectical hybridity and difference will sell well, and this leaves us ambivalent indeed, as we have failed to learn at all:

'To grasp the ambivalence of hybridity, it must be distinguished from an inversion that would suggest the originary is, really, only an effect. Hybridity ... is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures ... in a dialectical play of "recognition"'.<sup>41</sup>

So what if it did make sense to look at the way hybridity has been discussed dialectically? A dialectical politics that managed to see the term reclaimed from racist biology to do work for anti-essentialism (which itself reifies and must be countered, which becomes a new mode of essentializing, and which is then conceived as a verb 'hybridization') further excludes, and so must be critiqued again. None of this makes sense if it is not taken to the field where we learn to learn. Interpretation and understanding is not yet enough. Openness to redistribution requires the mechanism of wanting to change it; dialectically (we would still have this coda) there's 'a world to win'.

### **Conclusion: capitalism has tanks**

The displacement of Marxist categories in the discussion of hybridity also alibis and parallels the displacement and replacement of third worldist solidarity work and internationalist politics with a cosmopolitan ‘post-colonial elite’ politics. This joins up with a stay-at-home-lecturing-from-afar approach by the white left, incapable of engaging a struggle against capital at home, co-constituted here and there. The here and there is forgotten in two complimentary ways (the second is more diasappointing than the first, but both are concerns): the postcolonial hybrids’ self-concern in the face of metropolitan racism and opportunity also leaves the rest of the world in shadow; and the metropolitan white lefts’ feeble attempts at solidarity end up as mere hectoring and lecturing from a position of assumed moral superiority, while leaving the presence and complicity of imperialist capital as managed from and organised in the very heart of the metropole unexamined, and so also in shadow. Of course, metaphors of shadow and space are subject to all sorts of distortion here. Learning from below might mean learning from the Maoists, but they are up in the hills or even mountains, threatening to take Everest (and not just because it is there). There are many examples where the simple geography of domesticated, agricultural level analyses just cannot cope (see, for example, M. Hardt and A. Negri’s mapping of empire on a vertical-horizontal axis).<sup>42</sup> Orthodox Marxisms abound with reified base and superstructure models but, even as the chapatti circulation story takes the mystified aura of the charmed circle in latter day accounts, really existing struggles are never quite as neat as that.

While the cascade that erases Mao as a possible theorist of hybridity is clear, what we would have if Subaltern Studies had retained a Maoist trajectory is less obvious. Was it career comfort that smoothed the way for this displacement? Were the library, conference circuit and bookstore more amenable to discussion (and ego) than the cell group meeting? When called occasionally to account, the politics seem still to be there—there are many who can still talk the talk—but the march through the institutions of this political tendency has not carried with it a mass activist base, for all its successes. Is allegiance to Subalterneity not the displacement of subalterns by postcolonial migrancy against which Gayatri Spivak so often warns?

The advent of hybridity theory is the displacement of an anti-imperial political organization into the glamour of the leftist publishing sector. Mao becomes as much a T-shirt slogan as ‘complexity’ and ‘ambivalence’ are buzzwords. What becomes of learning about the actually existing conditions of global imperialism (from below)? What about learning to learn how to do sociology and activism, anthropology and solidarity, Marxism and revolutionary politics together? Such ambitious dreams are necessary to displace capitalism which has tanks and helicopter gunships, oil contracts and hydro-dam projects, tourism infrastructure and real estate deals, service sector pleasure peripheries, and sweat-shop work conditions. Mercantile global capital is not a new empire so much as empire renewed – the Raj is still red white and blue, the stripes just run a different

angle, there is still no black in the flags, ‘Old Glory’ or the EU stars). Another theorist of hybridity, Paul Gilroy, maybe needs to also say ‘there ain’t no black in the stars and bars’. Yes, there are Black stars—sports, hip-hop—and jazz bars a plenty, plus Marines in Iraq, Afghanistan (and soon North Korea), but visibility or recognition of a few does not indicate an equitable redistribution of the spoils of imperialism, let alone its demise. The imperialists are armed with tanks rather than flour and water, and the opposition needs to be organized, not just theorized or hybridized. Word needs to get around. Like the Chapattis.

## Notes

1. G.C. Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
2. M.N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India and Other Essays* (Bombay: Media Promoters and Publishers, 1962).
3. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Jonathon Cape, 1955).
4. H. K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p 120.
5. *Ibid*, p 37.
6. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 134.
7. Kuan-Hsing, Chen, ‘The Decolonizing Question’, in *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp 1–53, p 23.
8. R. Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p 225.
9. Mao Zedong, ‘Report From Hunan’ (1928), in *Selected Works: Volume One* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1975) p 93.
10. Guha, *op. cit.*, Ref 9, p 233.
11. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, 202. For a convenient and entertaining alternative reading of this event, see the play by Utpal Dutt, *The Great Rebellion (Mahavidroha)* (Calcutta: Seagull Books: 1986).
12. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, pp 206–7
13. *Ibid*, p 203.
14. Guha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 9, p 239.
15. *Ibid*, p 246.
16. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 33.
17. *Ibid*, p 33.
18. See Guha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 9, p 267, p 268; and K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works: Volume Three* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1987), p 339.
19. Mao, *op. cit.*, Ref. 10, p 93.
20. Guha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 9, pp. 29, 48, 58, 67, 89, 135–6 and 163.
21. This probably also explains why the first world cultural studies scholar no longer invokes Mao, no matter how ‘activist’ that scholar imagines themselves to be.
22. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 208.
23. G. C. Spivak, ‘The New Subaltern: A Silent Interview’, in Vinayak Chaturvedi (ed), *Mapping Subaltern Studies and The Postcolonial* (London: Verso, pp 324–340, 2000), pp 325–6.
24. M. Dutton, *Streetlife China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p 9.
25. A discussion of hybridity in the text of Subaltern Studies is not just a project of historical commentary; the implications for contemporary struggles are there to be drawn by readers. Ambivalence about hybridity is perhaps a key. In Cultural Studies’ contemporary pronouncements, hybridity is most often found in the glamour domains of youth music and the cultural industries (especially Hip-Hop and its commercial cultural spin-offs). This should alert us to a vacation from politics. Brian Alleyne’s insightful study, *Radicals Against Race*, makes the point that Cultural Studies has been fascinated with popular culture to the relative neglect of ‘more “dated” forms of resistance such as trade union activity’. His study addresses issues of activism and organisation, and the problematic relations between a white left interested in recruitment and a political education project dedicated to a shared political struggle that builds a wide basis of support to enable participants to ‘engage in their own battles’. Notably, the term ‘hybridity’ does not appear in Alleyne’s index; highly unusual for a text in this era.. See B. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp 8, 93.
26. See Aijaz Ahmad’s critique of Said in A. Ahmad, *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literature* (London: Verso, 1992).

27. A. Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press 1999).
28. Spivak, *op. cit.*, Ref. 27, p 333.
29. 'Encounter' is used intentionally, as it recalls the police strategy of the staged assassination or encounter with Naxalites throughout India in the 1970s. See Gayatri Spivak's discussion of Mahasweta Devi's work for more on being 'countered' in M. Devi, *Breast Stories*, introduction and translation by G.C. Spivak (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1997). See also M. Devi, *Mother of 1084* (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1997).
30. We might add a note on ambivalence as some sort of kin to contradiction or dialectics. Gyan Prakash responds to criticisms made by R. O'Hanlon and D. Washbrook that, as a 'deconstructionist' and a Marxist, he wants to ride two beasts in quite incommensurate directions. By pointing to the British denigration of Indian horsemanship that kept Western-educated Bengalis out of the civil service, Prakesh, with a nod to Bhabha, shows how such an excuse for exclusion is about the management of ambivalences that threaten the polarity of coloniser and colonised. Rather than running off in two directions, however, the competent equestrian will tame both horses. See G. Prakash, 'Can the Subaltern ride? A reply to O'Hanlon and Washbrook', in Chaturvedi, *op. cit.*, Ref. 27, p 221; and R. O'Hanlon, and D. Washbrook, 'After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism and Politics in the Third World', in Chaturvedi, *op. cit.*, Ref. 27.
31. H. K. Bhabha 'Culture's In-Between', in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), p. ———.
32. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 38.
33. *Ibid*, p 18.
34. *Ibid*, p 24.
35. *Ibid*, p 21.
36. Bhabha *op. cit.*, Ref. 38, p 58.
37. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 21.
38. *Ibid*, p 38.
39. *Ibid*, p 22.
40. Trinh T. Minh-ha and A. Morelli, 'The Undone Interval', in I. Chambers and L. Curtis (eds) *The Post-colonial Question* (London: Routledge, pp 3–16, 1996), p 10.
41. Bhabha, *op. cit.*, Ref. 4, p 114.
42. M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2000). For a critique of this, see the extended version of this essay that will appear in J. Hutnyk, *Bad Marxism: Cultural Studies and Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, forthcoming).

