CHAPTER XI

Fanon and 'Postcolonial' Discourse

Introduction

Up to this point Fanon's legacy has been examined by testing his predictions in Algeria, looking at his contemporary in the African liberation struggle, Amilcar Cabral; the Black Panthers and the Iranian revolution. This chapter enters a whole new terrain, that of colonial discourse theory. This body of literary criticism grew out of the old discipline of Commonwealth literature. In this context Fanon's work, especially Black Skin White Masks, has served as an important text both as data and evidence for contemporary modes of analysis like deconstruction. The Postcolonial Studies Reader 'explains':

> Following the poststructuralist tenets of Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard, the discursive practices of the coloniser are assumed peremptorily to limit opposition so that all resistance is fated to be complicit in domination, and all we can hope for is what postcolonial guru Homi Bhabha calls the "Third Space of enunciation", the "in-between" of Derrida's *écriture*, of translation and interstitial negotiation, the discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference (Ashcroft et al 1995: 209).

A quick look at the various readers on post-colonialism gives an idea of the themes and Fanon's appropriation in them. In The Post-Colonial Studies Reader there are sections on nationalism and national liberation. Debates about nationalism, hybridity and ethnicity, the body and performance all make at least passing reference to Fanon. The Reader includes excerpts: 'The Fact of Blackness' from Black Skin White Masks and 'Algeria Unveiled' from A Dying Colonialism as well as from Wretched of the Earth around the theme of national culture. The debates around his work by Abdul JanMohamed, Benita Parry, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha are represented. In Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader there are sections on colonised cultures and resistance that includes excerpts from Leopold Senghor, Fanon, Cabral, Spivak and Bhabha. The section on 'Theorising the West' includes work by Said and Césaire. The general theme of all this is how texts and discourses construct the native as the Other and the ways that this can be contested, if indeed it can be.

Rather than lead the reader through a labyrinth of arcane theory and debates within and between various authors, this chapter seeks to survey the field and examine the ways each theorist appropriates Fanon. It is restricted to authors that deal directly with Fanon in their work. A useful distinction appears in Wyrick's (1998: 158) book on Fanon between 'hard' and 'soft' Fanonians. The former (for example, JanMohamed) 'stress the Manichean split and colonial Realpolitik'. The latter (for example, Bhabha or Gates) 'stress the ambivalent interdependence of coloniser and colonised, along with the provisional nature of their cultural texts.' The 'hard' Fanonians see the others as politically conservative. The 'soft' Fanonians see their rivals as fallen prey to the temptation to create totalising theories as dangerous as those of the colonisers.

Apart from examining direct appropriations this chapter again takes as its framework Fanon's dialectical model. While there are many reasons for the rise of the postcolonial movement[1] it can be seen as part of the three stages as reaction to assimilation. Historically the dominant discourse in the Western academy on the colonies was one of humanism. Said's Orientalism, in many ways the founding text of colonial discourse analysis, describes in detail the ways in which the Western academy was able to set up knowledge systems that buttressed western imperialism by creating colonial subjects. The discipline of Orientalism saw itself as humanist, guided by universal values. This did not keep them from seeing 'natives' as different and in need of civilisation.

In many respects postcolonialism is a reaction to this. Just as assimilated Francophone Blacks reacted to racism by retreating into *Negritude* that valorised difference, inverting the value of the stereotypes created by the coloniser. With postcolonialism too there is a retreat into, a privileging of, difference. In the face of imperial 'truth' and 'reason', postcolonialists adopt a radical relativism, opposing the universalising approach of colonialism, they reject any totalising approach. They are deeply suspicious of any group that speaks on behalf of the natives having seen colonial anthropologists and nationalist parties serve their own interests in doing so.

Although the postcolonial reaction seeks to expose the Eurocentrism of Western knowledges it does so in a language that is the product of the French academy: Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, in particular. In an analogous way *Negritude* was influenced by surrealism and was promoted by a section of 'natives' who were petty bourgeois products of the French university system. Both groups valorise difference, their reaction in many ways a retreat into an image of the native created by the coloniser but with the plus and minus signs reversed. This does not mean that postcolonial intellectuals share premises with the *Negritude* movement. Unlike Negritudists they are anti-humanist and anti-essentialist, the parallel here is that both are reactions to a project of assimilation and pseudo-universalism. While this retreat does not challenge the construction it exposes the constructedness of the ideology by the assertion of difference.

Fanon was clear that one needed to move beyond this stage to the 'fighting stage'. In the fighting stage, the critique becomes focused not on 'reverse discourse' but on a critique of the actual social relations and how to change them. For Fanon this supposed a genuine humanism and universalism, to replace the false universalism and bourgeois humanism of the colonisers. With the postcolonial movement the 'fighting phase' is still in the process of responding to the challenges raised by colonial discourse analysis, in particular, the need for a non-Eurocentric social theory. In the realm of literary theory those who have an interest in colonial texts for what they reveal about social relations are the 'hard' Fanonists like Said, JanMohamed and Parry.
The first section of the chapter examines the work of Christopher Miller who engages with the postcolonial concerns about the dangers of universalising and totalising theories like Marxism. As he sees Fanon as a Marxist and uses Fanon's (and Cabral's) work as examples Miller is helpful in explaining exactly how the postcolonialists see as the political dangers of such theories.

Miller's Critique of Fanon

Miller (1990) is critical of the Eurocentric approach evident in literary approaches to African writing and argues that 'a fair Western reading of African literatures demands engagement with,

[1] For example changes in the global economy and the decline of socialist and radical movements (Ahmad 1992), the arrival of Third World intellectuals in the West (Dirlik 1994).

and even dependence on, anthropology' (p. 4). In short that it is necessary for understanding Francophone literature to place it in its 'historical, political, but especially anthropological context' (p. 5). From this point Miller moves to concerns that locate his work in the field of postcolonial theory. He discusses theoretical problems with a focus on preserving 'difference' in an attempt to read African literatures on their own terms.

Miller seeks to do this by reference to the concepts of 'ethnicity' and 'ethics' which he argues are central to disputes in literary criticism. Miller argues that 'ignorance of difference is unethical', he states that this the minority opinion - since many thinkers argue that 'difference is always a prison' and that equality is only possible if the particularity of African identity is abandoned. What is of interest in Miller's work, apart from answering his critique of Fanon, is that he is prepared to 'show how theoretical and literary concepts are acted out in politics' (p. 32).

Miller's notion of 'ethnicity' is that embodied by advocates of difference such as the *Negritude* poets who said that Africa had its own cultural standards. The alternative is to replace such ethnicity by a 'higher', 'ethical' standard that is perceived as superseding difference: class consciousness being the implied referent. Miller proposes 'to investigate the ethical claims of Marxist critics of African literature, along with their critique of ethnicity'.
He goes on:

> This will include the works and political fate of the late Guinean poet and politician Kéita Fodéba, know to posterity through the important place a poem of his occupies in Frantz Fanon's essay in national culture; Fanon and Fodéba are further linked by their textual and extratextual relations with the late dictator of Guinea, Sékou Touré (p. 35).

Miller opens his analysis of Fanon citing the Marxist view that peasants are illiterate and ignorant, superstitious and oppressed by chiefs and feudal landlords. The uplifting of the peasants required by Marxists can only come Miller argues 'at the cost of some cultural, perhaps even physical violence'. This is because 'the Marxist perspective places in the central, dominant position values that may be universal but may also be Eurocentric' and this leads to the erasure of cultural difference (p. 44). Part of this erasure includes the arguments of Marxists that the peasants do not lead but must be led. Miller quotes Cabral to the effect that it was difficult to persuade the peasantry to fight and goes on:

> The Marxist leader must stand in a transcendent relation between the peasant and History. The peasant's destiny will be revealed to him by the leader, in a relation of active to "passive," literate to "illiterate," progress to tradition, knowledge to "ignorance". This relation may be absolutely necessary in order for social progress to take place, but it is similar to the relation that obtained between the coloniser and the colonised. Implicit in this ideology is the belief that there may be truth in Africa, but Africans, especially the peasants, need the intervention of an outsider who will make their own truth known to them (p. 44).

Miller sees ethical statements based in universalism as a mechanism for suppressing cultural difference. Whether the mechanism be Christianity or socialist realism the 'claim to an ethical imperative in an anti-colonial context may serve as a justification for another silencing of culture, eradication of difference, the very oppression that decolonisation was supposed to relieve' (p. 45).

All national liberation movements fought in the name of preserving culture (and difference) Miller argues, however, linking 'culture' to a 'progressive ethical vision' as in Cabral and Fanon is no solution to cultural imperialism. He cites Cabral's awareness that there are several African cultures but objects to any normative judgement of them, and to building a single national (and ultimately

'universal') culture. For Cabral such a process requires the study of local cultures to 'discern the positive from the negative' and requires that certain 'negative, reactionary or retrogressive aspects' must be left behind. Miller objects to such value judgements.

He sees Cabral as caught between a universalising ethics and a desire to respect the local culture. In this conflict a reliance on the ethical has dire consequences:

> As it actually happened, in 1963, the power of the ancient ethnic belief came "within a hair's breadth" of causing disaster for Cabral's liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau, the PAIGC. Tribalism, witch-hunting, and a belief in "bullet-immunising charms" came close to destroying the struggle for national liberation, which was saved only by the "unquestioned authority" of Cabral himself (and "only" two executions) (p. 47).

However, as Lazarus (1993: 85) points out:

> It becomes apparent that for Miller, Cabral's fault is that he sought to "convince" the Guinean peasantry to take up arms against Portuguese colonialism. Initially encountering among the peasantry views different from his own, Cabral ought, it seems, as a good, respectful, cultural relativist, to have accepted their legitimacy and abandoned forthwith his own aspirations to struggle for the overthrow of colonial rule!

While the false universalism of European colonialists or Marxist revolutionaries has its dangers Miller's reliance on ethnicity and difference has reactionary consequences. As we saw the process of mobilising the peasantry in Guinea-Bissau was a long and slow one. For Miller the *Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo-Verde*'s (PAIGC) success in removing colonialism, backed by the peasantry whom both Cabral and Fanon regarded as indispensable, is not evidence of popular support and self liberation but merely of colonisation by a new discourse.

Miller completes his case by reference to Fanon's essay 'On National Culture' in Wretched of the Earth. He notes that Fanon never defines a 'nation' and usually means Algeria. He cites Fanon's belief that Algerian independence would pave the way for the independence of Africa and be the basis for a universal humanism. This is as another example of 'liquidating' ethnicity. According to Miller for Fanon national unity 'will either come spontaneously or will be imposed violently' (p. 49). He cites Fanon as saying that the effect of violence is the 'liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism' and the nationalist parties show no mercy to caids and chiefs since 'their liquidation is preliminary to the unification of the people'. Miller sums this up:

> Fanon's response to local resistance is to call out the firing squad...for Fanon, ethnicity is unethical: ethnic forces are consistently reactionary, dupes of the coloniser...what is most impressive in reading Fanon, is the sheer power of a theoretical *truth* to dictate who shall live and who shall be liquidated (p. 50).

Lazarus (1993: 81) points out that:

> The statement *reverses* the logistics of power in the colonial context. It was not the national liberation movement but the colonial state that tended to use firing squads; and it was not "local resistance" but the official *suppression of local resistance* that mandated the liberation front's "response".

Again there are reactionary dangers that underlay the politics of a colonial discourse theory based on difference. Disregarding Fanon's warnings about the dangers of nationalism, Miller links Fanon's ideas about the emergence of the 'nation', with totalitarianism. In colonial discourse theory the discourse of the 'nation' is seen as imposed on natives and native culture in the same way that colonialism imposed its view. The problem with this line of argument is that the discourse of the 'native' which Miller relies on in his analysis of the ethnic (and for his critique of Fanon's lack of respect for native culture) is equally a product of colonial discourse as the idea of the 'nation' is. A point that Fanon made in relation to colonial intellectual's reliance on nativism. As Lazarus (1993: 75) put it: 'Nations, of course, like "natives" are a function of colonialism'. Miller goes on:

> I am interested here in exploring the consequences and the *future* of Fanon's discourse of violent totalisation by reading his references to two Guinean writers and political figures, Ahmed Sékou Touré and Kéita Fodeba. This may provide an abject lesson in the tensions between a transcendent, totalised, ethical truth on the one hand, and on the other, political and literary practice in black Africa, which tends to be very close to ethnic issues. The story will also serve as useful historical background for the remaining chapters of this book (p. 51).

Miller then argues that Touré represents Fanon's ideal leader who is an 'authentic expression of the colonial masses'. Miller moves from Touré's rhetoric at the 1959 Black Writer's conference that serves as an epigraph to the chapter 'On National Culture' to 'Touré apparently serving as a practitioner of what Fanon preaches' (p. 52), since Fanon agrees with Touré that the role of art in post-independence society is to be part of the struggle of the people. Fanon's incorporation of Fodéba's poem at this point takes on a greater significance since Fodéba was Touré's minister of the interior.

Miller rejects the tag of Marxist or revolutionary given to Fodéba's poetry by Fanon (and other critics including French colonial authorities who banned it) seeing it as an expression of Mande ethnicity, as a protest against the French. Miller goes on:

> "Aube Africaine," the poem Fanon uses as an "authentic invitation to reflection, demystification, and struggle" is the story of one African's experience in World War Two, but told from the point of view of his traditional village.

In it the elders are forced to choose one of their number as a conscript. Naman is chosen to represent the Mande in battle. When he is wounded and imprisoned by the Germans the tribe promotes him to the rank of 'Douga' - the order of the vulture - making him a legendary hero. After the war, however, he is killed in Africa when French soldiers massacre African troops returning from combat in Europe. The poem ends with a vulture circling the body of Naman 'seeming to say to him: "Naman you have not danced the sacred dance that bears my name. OTHERS WILL DANCE IT"' (pp. 55-6).

Fanon uses this to shift the context of the poem. For Fanon this was example of the mummified culture of the colonised emerging into the living culture of the 'fighting stage'. For Miller, despite the colonial context of the poem, the 'others' cannot be anyone outside the Mande race, or indeed the Douga warrior caste of Mande elite. Fanon transplants the poem out of this ethnic context into a more universalist one. Fanon says: 'All those niggers and all those wogs who fought to defend the liberty of France or for British civilisation recognise themselves in this poem by Kéita Fodeba', doubtless recalling his experience of fighting for France. Miller objects here to the loss of cultural specificity arguing that the 'ethical is indebted to the ethnic'. It is the assertion of the Mande imperial past that gives the poem any revolutionary implications it may have.

When Fanon seeks to transcend the ethnic as a means of 'opening the future', Miller goes on:

> But if the *future* is the point...then it is incumbent on us to take advantage of hindsight and see what Fanon could not have seen: the fate of his discourse. This will involve a shift of registers. A fall from the mesmerising heights of Fanon's rhetoric, not out of rhetoric itself but into another rhetoric, that of plots and executions (p. 59).

Fodéba was called to serve his new country and thus 'his future was tied to the future of Fanonian discourse as put into practice by Sekou Touré' (p. 60). Guinea followed the road of many postcolonial states increasingly dictatorial, with lip-service to serving the working classes, and plots, real and imagined, used to remove political opponents. In 1969, Touré accused Fodéba of plotting a *coup d'etat* and arrested him with a thousand others, and executed him.

While Miller then says that this was not a 'necessary outgrowth of either Marxism or Fanon's theories', this seems disingenuous given that his whole line of argument is based on this idea. Miller asserts that Touré followed an 'ethical' stance like Fanon's. While one can argue that Fanon (or Marx) has been misread or misused; for Miller these discourses, nevertheless, result in violence because one fails to relativise one's own beliefs. What Miller's tendentious reading overlooks is the real sense in which Fanonian discourse was practiced by Sekou Touré. This was Touré's role as the type of bourgeois nationalist against whom Fanon warned were good for nothing racketeers, and it is clear that while Miller insists that texts must be seen in their contexts this is exactly what he refuses to of in relation to Fanon.

The remainder of the chapter examines the direct appropriations of Fanon into colonial discourse analysis.

The 'Fanonian' Tradition in Postcolonial Studies

This line of thought is founded on a trinity of thinkers: Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak though only the first two have written on Fanon directly. The following section does not develop a thorough analysis of postcolonial studies but focuses on the appropriation of Fanon within this field. It traces key thinkers who write directly on Fanon: Said - Bhabha - JanMohamed - Parry. There are internal debates: Spivak defends herself against Parry, Lazarus (1993) agrees with Parry but thinks she is misreading Spivak and so on. Gates (1991) outlines the various positions, with Robinson (1993) taking issue with the whole postcolonial use of Fanon. Thus it begins with Said since he wrote the key text and then looks at the 'soft' Fanonist, Homi Bhabha, followed by the other 'hard' Fanonists.

Edward Said

In many ways Said's Orientalism is a founding text for this current, inaugurating a new area of academic inquiry - colonial discourse analysis.[2] In it Said looks at the ways in which Western academic knowledges produced the 'East'. Drawing on Foucault's ideas of 'power/knowledge', Said (1978: 24) seeks to ask 'how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative, perspective?'

[2] Said's book has been subject to critique. These are not explored here. For a critical analysis see Ahmed (1992) and Jalal al-'Azm (1984).

Said's text can be read as having two themes. The first in which colonial power operates via a scholarly apparatus that appropriates textual representations of 'the Orient' as an object of knowledge for the discipline, which are then able to be used to regulate colonial relations. This presupposes access to Others in the colonies. The second theme is that of the production of representations of the 'Orient' manufactured in universities. These representations, which are more or less fictional, serve as a projection and are part of the colonial project, manipulated more or less intentionally for that purpose. As Stephen Slemon notes 'this ambivalence sets the terms for what are now the two central debates within colonial discourse theory: the debate over historical specificity, and the debate over agency' (Ashcroft et al 1995: 48).

It is not until the 1987 *Foreword* to Selected Subaltern Studies and his 'Yeats and Decolonisation' essay the following year that Said directly refers to Fanon. The Foreword is a general piece that locates subaltern studies as a kind of Indian 'history from below'. An attempt to recover the native voice from the imperialist narratives and documents of the British Raj. Said cautions that there is a danger of 'nativism', of constructing a narrative which is equally partial, in both senses, as the master discourse that it critiques. He refers to Fanon's warning that after the great transformation of national liberation, 'national consciousness must convert itself into a new social consciousness' if this does not happen then imperialism returns in new forms.

In 'Yeats and Decolonisation' Said takes Yeats, who is canonical figure in English literature, and re-locates him as an Irish national poet. This relocation exposes the ideological nature of the canon and opens up the possibility of a different reading based not on aesthetics but seen as part of the colonial world ruled by European imperialism.[3] He gives a brief outline of the history and extent of European power - 'by the beginning of World War One Europe and America held 85 percent of the earth's surface in some sort of colonial subjection' (1988: 71). Said convincingly argues, against the canonical grain, that Yeats shares a place with critics of imperialism like Cabral and Fanon as well as revolutionary nationalists like Senghor and Césaire though this is not how he is usually understood. He draws directly on Fanon's argument about need to avoid the bourgeois stage and to move beyond national to social consciousness.

In 'Representing the Colonised' Said discusses the crisis of representation in disciplines like anthropology. He is critical of the focus on Otherness and texts rather than American imperialism. Here Said's engagement with the actual social relations beyond the text signal his interest in a 'fighting' culture - that is Fanon's third stage. Said argues:

> For, in fact, there is no way that I know of apprehending the world from within our culture (a culture by the way with a whole history of exterminism and incorporation behind it) without also apprehending the imperial context itself. And this I would say is a cultural fact of extraordinary political as well as interpretative importance, because it is the true defining horizon, and to some extent, the enabling condition of such otherwise abstract and groundless concepts like "otherness" and "difference". The real problems remain to haunt us: the relationship between anthropology as an ongoing enterprise, and, on the other hand, empire as ongoing concern (1989: 217).

He identifies the 'fundamental historical problem of modernism' as the West's being asked to take the Other seriously (p. 223). Fanon's work forces Europe to confront an emerging counter-narrative

[3] The substance of this article is repeated in Said's Culture and Imperialism (1993: 265f).

as part of the process of Algerian national liberation. Said argues that the 'whole point' of Fanon's work is:

> to force the European metropolis to think its history *together with* the history of the colonies awakening from the cruel stupor and abused immobility of imperial domination, in Aimé Césaire's phrase, "*mesurée au compas de la souffrance*" [measured by the compass of suffering]. Alone, and without due recognition allowed for the colonial experience, Fanon says the Western narratives of enlightenment and emancipation are revealed as so much windy hypocrisy; thus he says the Greco-Latin pedestal turns into dust (pp. 223-4).

He argues that Fanon's vision draws on imperial and anti-colonial sources (for example Lukacs and Césaire) to forge an inclusive vision of a post-imperial world based on a 'collective and plural' identity:

> I do not think that the anti-imperial challenge represented by Fanon and Césaire or others like them has by any means been met; neither have we taken them seriously as models or representations of human effort in the contemporary world. In fact Fanon and Césaire - of course I speak of them as types - jab directly at the question of identity and if identitarian thought, that secret sharer of present anthropological reflection on "otherness" and "difference". What Fanon and Césaire required of their own partisans, even during the heat of struggle, was to abandon fixed ideas of settled identity and culturally authorised definition (pp. 224-5).

Said sees Fanon and Césaire as models of engaged intellectuals whose challenge to anthropology is to seek ways to break out of its alliance with imperialism.[4]

Culture and Imperialism, was published in 1993, though it is based on Said's lectures given in 1985-86. Here he looks at the roots of imperialism in European culture, and at resistance, an area in which his earlier work, Orientalism, was seen by many to be lacking. In the section 'Resistance and Opposition' he draws on Fanon (and Césaire) to explore resistance in the post-colonial world after the limits of nationalism have been exposed. Using Wretched of the Earth Said draws on Fanon's analysis of the need to move from national consciousness to social consciousness. If this does not happen then the future would not be liberation but an extension of imperialism. Said sees Fanon as deconstructing Western humanism, imperialism's regime of truth, by locating it in the colonial wasteland that it gave rise to. By locating Western reason geographically - it is 'of the West' - Fanon seeks to 'liberate their energies from the oppressing cultural matrix that produced them' and to forge a real humanism. The use of the Manichean allegory allows Fanon to deform the culture of imperialism and formulate new strategies for liberation (pp. 325-6).

The move from colonised object to subject, that Fanon describes as being detoxified by violence, begins with an act of will on the part of the colonised. Once the revolt has begun other divisions spring up. Said argues that 'the true prophetic genius of *The Wretched of the Earth* is located precisely here: Fanon senses the divide between the nationalist bourgeoisie in Algeria and the FLN's liberationist tendencies, and he also establishes conflicting narrative and historical patterns'. Fanon spells out the dangers of co-option and analyses the liberationist strand and its need to link up with the people and address the strengths and weaknesses of spontaneity. Fanon dramatises the

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[4] For a 'soft' Fanonist like Gates (1991) this characterising of Fanon and Césaire as 'types' is objectionable. It is a way of colonising them via discourse which reduces them to colonial types. Miller makes the same argument. In effect this line of argument by focusing on language games ignores Said's argument as if any system of categories is oppressive and Fanon is in need of saving from Said's textual practice.

alternative narrative as one of outcasts fleeing to the countryside to link up with the masses. There is a need to go beyond the limits of nationalism as Said says:

> Fanon was the first major theorist of anti-imperialism to realise that orthodox nationalism followed along the same track hewn out by imperialism, which while it appeared to be conceding authority to the nationalist bourgeoisie was really extending its hegemony (pp. 328-30).

Fanon saw the need to move from national to social consciousness, new identities must be forged based on larger collectivities (African, Arab, Islamic) which had been fragmented by imperialism. Here Fanon uses Fodeba's poetry as an example of the transformation of self-consciousness that opens the door to true national self-liberation and universalism as an ongoing process of forging a new anti-imperialism both in the colonies and in the imperial core. 'At its best, the culture of opposition and resistance suggests a theoretical alternative and practical method for reconceiving human experience in non-imperialist terms' (p. 333). Said restates his argument as follows:

> The ideological and cultural war against imperialism occurs in the form of resistance in the colonies, and later, as resistance spills over into Europe and the United States, in the form of opposition to dissent in the metropolis. The first phase of this dynamic produces nationalist independence movements, the second, later, and more acute phase produced liberation struggles. The basic premise of this analysis is that although the imperial divide in fact separates metropolis from peripheries, and although each cultural discourse unfolds according to difference agendas, rhetorics, and images, they are in fact connected, if not always in perfect correspondence (pp. 333-4)

Doubtless, Said argues, Fanon and Cabral would be disappointed at the results of their efforts. Fanon was right about the bourgeoisie as a 'gang of thieves' but did not provide the antidote to stop them. The anti-imperialist critique of nationalism by liberation theorists like Fanon and Cabral is unacknowledged since their theories are rarely given the authority standing of their Western counterparts whose own theoretical work incorporates Eurocentric premises. Looking at Foucault and Fanon who share a similar intellectual genealogy (Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Canguilhelm and Sartre) and an interest in power and confinement by Western systems of knowledge only Fanon 'presses that formidable arsenal into anti-authoritarian service'. Fanon seeks to treat colonial and metropolitan societies together while Foucault's work 'moves further and further away from any serious consideration of social wholes, focusing instead upon the individual dissolved in an "microphysics of power" that it is hopeless to resist' (pp. 334-6). Fanon seeks to analyse both sides of the colonial situation seeking a path to liberation. Foucault, ignoring the imperial context of his own theories, 'seems actually to represent an irresistible colonising movement that paradoxically fortifies the prestige of both the lonely individual scholar and the system that contains him.' Said also points out that Habermas too is guilty of this. He quotes him as explaining that his work has nothing to say to 'anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles in the Third World though Habermas recognises that this is a 'Eurocentrically limited view'.

Anti-imperialist writers on liberation have attempted to break the links between Western culture (and its critical theories) and imperialism by:

> First, a new integrative to contrapunctional orientation in history that sees Western and non-Western experiences as belonging together because connected by imperialism. Second, by an imaginative, even Utopian, vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance. Third, by an investment neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy (p. 337).

This involved writing history while taking account of the struggle between imperial Europe and the periphery from the standpoint of the struggle against imperial domination. In the face of such a struggle against a globalising imperialist world-view there could be no neutrality 'one was either on the side of empire or against it, and, since they themselves had lived the empire (as native and white), there was no getting away from it.'

The best liberationist writers present not mere theory or facts but embody (rather than represent or deliver) the energies of anti-imperialist liberation. There is little doctrine, reusable theory that can be used to buttress a new state ideology. It is part of what can move us from a history of domination towards the actuality of liberation. It resists orthodoxy and skirts theoretical systems but does not abandon social principles of community, critical vigilance, and theoretical orientation.

Homi Bhabha

Bhabha can be read, along with Gates, as participating in a form of the retreatist response of Fanon's dialectical model. Based on a particular class position this group of intellectuals rejects Fanon's Manichean allegory seeing the colonial situation as one of ambivalence not of oppression. With a narrow focus on Black Skin White Masks Bhabha sees Fanon as a text to be deconstructed, rather than applied. Reading Bhabha's essay 'Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and Colonial Condition' (which serves as the Foreword to the 1986 edition of Black Skin White Masks) his reading misrepresents the thrust of the text and ignores the premises on which it is based. Even the sympathetic Gates (1991: 462) says that 'Bhabha's rather passionate essay, entitled "Remembering Fanon," can easily be read as an index to all that Bhabha wants us to forget.' This section examines what he means, working through the foreword and re-inserting the context (or excised words) to Bhabha's quotes.

Bhabha opens his essay with a jibe at the English Left - at this time reeling from the effects of Thatcherism and the Coal Miners' strike - for its marginalising of Fanon and notes that Fanon tends to evoke myths as a Third World prophet or apostle of violence. He notes that Fanon refuses to be claimed by events and that it is 'ironic' that 'his severe commitment to the political task in hand, never restricted the restless, inquiring movement of his thought'. But it is not for the 'finality of political direction' that Fanon is useful but as a 'purveyor of transgressive and transitional truth' (p. viii).

Fanon may have yearned for the 'total transformation of Man and Society' but:

> he speaks most effectively from the uncertain interstices of historical change: from the area of ambivalence between race and sexuality; out of an unresolved contradiction between culture and class; from deep within the struggle of psychic representation and social reality (p. xi).

For Bhabha, Fanon's truly radical thought lives in the dispersal of familiar terms that were the traditional grounds of racial identity. Bhabha cites Fanon as follows:

> If psychiatry is a medical technique to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalisation...The social structure existing in Algeria was hostile to any attempt to put the individual back where he belonged.

Bhabha glosses this saying that extreme alienation produces a 'restless search for a conceptual form appropriate to the social antagonism of the colonial relation.' It was while working at Blida hospital that Fanon realised the impossibility of his mission as a colonial psychiatrist, perhaps a conceptual form was a part of it, but returning to the context, this was Fanon's letter of resignation, and he quit the hospital to join the FLN. Fanon says a few paragraphs later:

> The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man's needs. A society that drives its members to desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society to be replaced...the decision I have reached us that I cannot continue to bear a responsibility at no matter what cost, on the false pretext that there is nothing else to be done (Fanon 1967b: 63-4).

Bhabha translates this kind of revolutionary impulse as Fanon's 'desperate doomed search for a dialectic of deliverance' which explores the edges of Hegelianism, existentialism and psychoanalysis but Bhabha says refuses any 'total' theory of colonial oppression.

Quite rightly Bhabha locates the 'distinctive force of Fanon's vision' in the tradition of the oppressed, he cites Walter Benjamin's suggestion that 'the state of emergency in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a concept of history that is in keeping with this insight.' How does Bhabha propose to do this? He moves not to an analysis of the state of emergency (say the rise of Thatcherism) but begins a play on words. The 'state of emergency is always also the state of *emergence*'. The struggle against colonial oppression challenges the idea of progress, the idea of civilised Enlightenment Man, the idea of social reality as a given, but for Bhabha 'even more deeply disturbed is the social and psychic representation of the human subject'.

Fanon's opening question in Black Skin White Masks is 'what does the black man want?' For Bhabha to this loaded question, in which 'cultural alienation bears down on the ambivalence of psychic identification', Fanon responds with an 'agonising performance of self-images' (p. xi). The challenge of the question disrupts the 'representative narrative of Western personhood' (p. xii).

Bhabha states that in asking:

> 'What does the black man *want*?' Fanon insists and in privileging the psychic dimension he changes not only what we understand by a *political* demand but transforms the very means by which we recognise and identify its *human agency*. Fanon is not principally posing the question of political oppression as the violation of a human 'essence', although he lapses into such a lament in his more existential moment [sic]...It is one of the most original and disturbing qualities of *Black Skin White Masks* that it rarely historicises the colonial experience. There is no master narrative or realist perspective that provide a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the problems of the individual or collective psyche...The colonial subject is always 'overdetermined from without.' It is through image and fantasy - those orders that figure transgressively on the borders of history and the unconscious - that Fanon most profoundly evokes the colonial condition (pp. xii-xiii).

It is difficult to follow this reading of Fanon. In the introduction to Black Skin White Masks (two pages after the question 'what does the black man want?' is raised) Fanon after asserting the need for psychoanalysis says:

> The analysis I am undertaking is psychological. In spite of this it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process:
> -primarily economic;
> -subsequently, the internalisation - or, better, the epidermalisation - of this inferiority (p. 11).

Fanon operates from a realist perspective very different from Bhabha's idealism. To argue that Fanon is 'privileging the psyche' and not historicising the colonial experience is hardly the case. As for being 'overdetermined from without' the original passage contrasts the Jews who are 'overdetermined from within' afraid of the stereotype others have of them, to the black:

> I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but of my own appearance. I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed. Having adjusted their microtomes, they objectively cut away slices of my reality. I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in, but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why, it's a Negro! (Fanon 1967a :116)

This is not a 'performance of self-images' but a phenomenology of self and other, which explores not image and fantasy, not the idea or discourse as Bhabha would have it, but the effect of race as a social fact. Bhabha goes on that using psychoanalysis enables Fanon to question the rational and centred idea of subjectivity that lies at the heart of citizenship in the West. It is the colonial situation that exposes this myth. Normal colonial social relations produce neurosis and the sort of psychic affects Fanon describes like paranoia and violence, usually these are seen as aberrant and external to Western rational subjects but are here revealed as part of it.

All of this is true but then Bhabha extrapolates that:

> The representative figure of such a perversion...is the image of post enlightenment men tethered to, *not* confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of the colonised man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his actions at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being. The ambivalent identification of the racist world...turns on the idea of Man *as* his alienated image, not Self and Other but the 'Other-ness' of the Self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity (p. xiv).

This requires, however, that Bhabha correct Fanon's own comments on Lacan's 'mirror stage'.

Fanon, contra Bhabha, says:

> When one has grasped the mechanism described by Lacan, one can have no further doubt that the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. Only for the white man the Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as the not-self - that is, the unidentifiable, the unassimilable. For the black man, as we have shown, historical and economic realities come into the picture (Fanon 1967a: 161 note 25)

Alienation is the problem Fanon seeks to overcome. It is not supposed to be the basis of identity, and in exposing the reality of violence and irrationality of colonial relations to his audience Fanon does intend to confront them with their own dark reflection not tether them to it.

Bhabha identifies three conditions that underlie the process of identification. One is that to exist one must be in relation with an Other. Here he cites the settler and natives paranoid stares at each other. Second this place of identification is split. 'Black skin white masks' is not a neat division, one is a black doctor, one is the same as other blacks but different in social standing (keeping

company with whites who insist that you are not one of *them* (blacks) but one of *us* (doctors that is, whites). For Bhabha 'it is not the Colonial Self or the Colonised Other but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness - the white man's artifice inscribed in the black man's body.' Finally, 'the demand of identification - that is, to be *for* an Other - entails the representation of the subject in the differentiating order of Otherness,' as in the passage of 'Look a Negro' where Fanon feels the weight of history, of the primitive and savage read onto his body.

Bhabha argues for a psychoanalytic reading of self/other not as 'personal identity' but as process of identification, which is an unstable process of illusory centredness, of totalisation, of unstable identity. Bhabha argues that Fanon's answer to the question 'what does the black man want?' is the following:[5]

> When it encounters resistance from the other, self consciousness undergoes the experience of desire [- the first milestone of the road that leads to the dignity of the spirit]...As soon as I desire I ask to be considered. I am not merely here and now sealed into thingness. I am for somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity in so far as I pursue something other than life[; In so far as I do battle for the creation of a human world - that is, of a world of reciprocal recognitions].
>
> I occupied space. I moved towards the other...and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea.

From this truncated quotation Bhabha concludes that the black man 'wants the objectifying confrontation with otherness.' He goes on

> The place of the Other must not be imaged as Fanon sometimes suggests [sic!] as a fixed phenomenological point, opposed to the self, that represents a culturally alien consciousness. The Other must be seen as the necessary negation of a primordial identity - cultural or psychic - that introduces the system of differentiation which enables the 'cultural' to be signified as a linguistic, symbolic, historic reality (p. xviii).

For Bhabha the Black (or Arab) imagined by whites is imaginary. They are merely useful devices for establishing European civilisation as civilisation, Europe's history as universal. Bhabha's critique obscures Fanon's prior discovery of these claims (Robinson 1993: 85). Unlike Bhabha, Fanon is not interested solely in the ambivalence of processes of primordial identification, he does not think that alienation and misrecognition are the basis of human subjectivity.

Since Fanon's political commitments require action or as Bhabha puts it 'the state of emergency from which he writes demands more insurgent answers'. At times Fanon:

> turns too hastily from ambivalences of identification to the antagonistic identities of political alienation and cultural discrimination; he is too quick to name the Other, to personalise its presence in the language of colonial racism - the real Other for the white man is and will continue to be the black man. And conversely. These attempts, in Fanon's words, to restore the dream to its proper political time and cultural space can, at times, blunt the edge of Fanon's brilliant illustrations of the complexity of psychic projections in the pathological colonial relation (pp. xix-xx).

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[5] I have taken the liberty of reinserting some of what was left out of these quotes. The first paragraph is from Fanon (1967a: 218). The second paragraph of the quote is on page 112, one hundred pages before.

Again Bhabha 'corrects' Fanon, for Bhabha looking at the social context only blunts the edge of one's critique. Returning to Fanon, as Bhabha claims he wants to do, the reference to Fanon's wanting to put dreams in their proper time and place comes from Fanon's critique of the psychoanalytic work of Mannoni on the dependency complex of the Malagasy.[6] Here it is in Fanon's words:

> the discoveries of Freud are of no use to us here. What must be done is to restore this dream *to its proper time*, and this time is the period during which eighty thousand natives were killed - that is to say, one of every fifty persons in the population; and *to its proper place*, and this place is an island of four million people, at the centre of which no real relationship can be established, where dissension breaks out in every direction, where the only masters are lies and demagoguery (1967a: 104).

For Bhabha this kind of socio-diagnostic psychiatry 'tends to explain away the ambivalent turns and returns of the subject of colonial desire'. True enough, but Bhabha thinks that 'Fanon is fearful of his most radical insights' preferring to fall back on 'an existential humanism that is as banal as it is beatific'. There is something about psychoanalytic writings of this type that beg psychoanalysing. Here it would seem that it is Bhabha who is fearful of Fanon's most radical insights, so he represses the line of Fanon's argument with the effect of de-politicising Fanon's critique.

For Bhabha it is Fanon's 'deep hunger for humanism' that makes him overlook all the ambivalence. Fanon fails to see that 'in demanding "*turn white or disappear*" the coloniser is himself caught in the ambivalence of paranoiac identification' (p. xxi). Again returning to Fanon's use of the phrase:

> In other words, the black man should no longer be confronted by the dilemma, *turn white or disappear*; but he should be able to take cognisance of a possibility of existence. In still other words, if society makes it difficult for him because of his colour, if in his dreams I establish the expression of an unconscious desire to change colour, my objective will not be that of dissuading him from it by advising him to "keep his place"; on the contrary my objective, once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in a position to *choose* action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict - that is, toward the social structures (1967a: 100).

A partial use of a Fanon phrase is used to decontextualise Fanon. Bhabha sees a contradiction in Fanon's recognition of a Manichean delirium in the colonial situation and the hope of achieving mutual recognition. Bhabha rejects the hope, arguing that the '*non-dialectical* moment of Manicheanism' (my emphasis) suggests an answer. Thus Fanon's dialectical transcendence in which the Manichean ideology is exposed and the colonised, at the risk of their lives, take up arms and compel the coloniser to recognise them, is rejected. Instead Bhabha sees in Fanon's analysis of the veil as a weapon, a strategy of subversion that 'seeks not to unveil the fullness of Man but to manipulate his representation'. It is not at all clear in what sense women choosing to take up a revolutionary struggle are simply manipulating representations, though this may be a part of the process, here Bhabha reduces revolutionary praxis to the effects of representation.

Bhabha notes in his closing remarks that it is a difficult process of approaching the past to 'make sense of the trauma of the present'. It is not clear exactly what Bhabha has in mind here though it contrasts with Fanon's call to 'use the past to open up the *future*'. While memory includes a history of race and racism and cultural identity it is in 'shifting the focus of cultural racism from the politics of nationalism to the politics of narcissism' that 'Fanon opens up a margin of interrogation

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[6] Fanon's is critical of Mannoni's idea of the *mutual* dependence of coloniser and colonised and something of this critique could be applied to Bhabha's idea of ambivalence.

that, causes a subversive slippage of identity and authority' (p. xxiv). According to Bhabha, Fanon had no image of better society as the 'social' is 'always an unresolvable ensemble of antagonistic interlocutions...' (p. xxv). It is difficult to connect Bhabha's analysis to Fanon's text and context.

While Bhabha may simply disagree with Fanon, he does not make it clear in what ways and why. Reinserting the context into Bhabha's commentary and reinserting Fanon words back into Bhabha's selective quotations makes it clear that Bhabha has fundamental differences with Fanon's way of thinking which makes the label 'Fanonist' applied to Bhabha, a somewhat ambivalent one at best.

The next section finalises the series of appropriations by colonial discourse analysts. Moving beyond the retreatist position to the 'fighting' stage we find Abdul JanMohamed and Benita Parry who both are critical of Bhabha's work which obscures the life and death struggle that is the reality of colonialism.

Abdul JanMohamed

JanMohamed's book Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa argues that critical studies of African literatures and colonial ones have ignored the socio-political context in which these novels were written.[7] They need to be studied not just in relation to European literature but also in the 'generative ambience' of the colonial situation. JanMohamed takes it for granted that the colonial situation is 'largely determined by economic motives' and the 'metropole-colony relationship is essentially the same as that between capital and labour, it is the socio-political aspects of the relation between coloniser and colonised that are, from a literary point of view, more significant' (p. 2). The Manichean allegory from Fanon's Wretched of the Earth captures the oppression inherent in the colonial situation and is used to explore the ideological effects that exist in colonial fiction. [8]

JanMohamed seeks not to explicate the mediations from the economic to the literary but wants to keep in view the drastic measures of imperial domination (population transfer, 'reserves', forced labour, the destruction of indigenous cultures and so on). The speed at which these measures were implemented created a social pathology. The domination of the coloniser/colonised gives rise to a series of familiar rationalisations that are projections of the settlers' own anxieties. The mutual hostility is accompanied by the dependency of the colonialist who requires both the annihilation and the multiplication of the natives.

The white man attempts to resolve the dilemma by the ideology of the 'white man's burden' but this creates the contradiction that the more the natives become 'civilised' the less justification exists for the European's superior status. For the native the Europeans superiority complex is matched by an inferiority complex only solvable by emulation of Europeans. Even when this is possible (in a minority of cases) then it results in assimilation to the system that dominates them while remaining with the indigenous culture marks them as 'savages'. The native ambivalence arises from his admiration of European technical prowess while being subjugated by it, not as in Bhabha by intra-psychic processes.

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[7] Once again the intention of the chapter to draw out the application of Fanon in literary criticism and not to assess its accuracy in relation to particular texts.

[8] Gabriel (1989) has attempted to use the Manichean idea and Fanon's three stages as a basis for developing a theory of Third World films. See also San Juan (1977) and Berger (1990) for a discussion of the need for a engaged critical reading practice.

In Manichean Aesthetics JanMohamed analyses six authors - three Europeans and three Africans - exploring 'the nature and influence of colonial social structure on the literary structures of works produced within that ambience' (p. 6). The colonial situation facing each author is outlined and the general ways in which they have responded to it including the resulting cognitive and emotional aspects of the writer's
experience and how they are embodied in their texts with the aim of defining 'the ideological structures that underlie the literary texts and mediate the transformation of social structures are transformed into thematic preoccupations as well as into the aesthetic structures and styles of the texts.'

Drawing on Jean Paul Sartre's Search for a Method, and Frederic Jameson's Marxism and Form and The Political Unconscious he states:

> The theoretical assumption underlying this procedure is that novels and autobiographies are aesthetic as well as ideological discourses and that ideological discourse is composed of cognitive and emotive elements. Normally, the emotive intentionality of the discourse selects and organises the various aspects that form the cognitive, that is, thematic and formal structures of the text, and usually, particularly in realistic fiction, that emotive internationality is hidden by the cognitive structures (p. 7).

Like Fanon, JanMohamed does not deny the importance of class in social and literary relations in the colonial context but sees that at the level of lived experience this function is taken over by race. He seeks then to provide a 'phenomenologically accurate description of colonial experience' (p. 7) seeking to avoid both class reductionism or a rejection of race as a significant factor.

In drawing his conclusions JanMohamed argues that he has demonstrated that the relations between literature and it's social context in the colonial situation support Jameson's thesis that all literature is informed by a 'political unconscious'. A subtext exists that can be reconstructed and allows the historical conditions of the production of the text to become visible. Otherwise the text 'articulates its own situation and textualises it, thereby encouraging and perpetuating the illusion that situation did not exist before it, that there is nothing but a text...' (Jameson in JanMohamed 1983: 264). Thus each novel codifies lived experience and can be used to access the emotive intentionality of the author. It shows how self and other are constructed and explores the relations between literature and society. These relations are mediated in ideology 'not false consciousness but rather as a distillation of *lived* relationships' (p. 266). JanMohamed argues that these symbolic relations need to be 'charted through a psycho-political rhetoric of ideology' which explores how the world is represented in ideology and the contradiction within a hegemonic literature are 'solved' (p. 267).

In the piece 'The Economy of the Manichean Allegory' JanMohamed opens with a critique of authors who bracket the political context in which a work was written. He argues, in particular, that Bhabha's work while often illuminating 'rests on two assumptions - the unity of the "colonial subject" and the "ambivalence" of colonial discourse - that are inadequately problematised'. JanMohamed argues that Bhabha asserts without explanation the unity of the 'colonial subject (both coloniser and colonised)'. While JanMohamed concedes this may be the case 'at some rarefied theoretical level the varied material and discursive antagonisms between conquerors and natives can be reduced to the workings of a single "subject"; but such a unity, let alone its value, must be demonstrated not assumed' (1985: 59).

JanMohamed goes on that Bhabha ignores Fanon's definition of the colonial situation as a "Manichean" struggle - a definition that is not a metaphor but an accurate representation of a profound conflict. In many cases the colonial power installed a new mode of production over the old, destroying the old economy and culture:

> In that kind of context what does it mean, in practice, to imply as Bhabha does that the native, whose entire economy and culture are destroyed, is somehow in "possession" of "colonial power"? Bhabha's unexamined conflation allows him to circumvent entirely the dense history of the material conflict between Europeans and natives and to focus on colonial discourse as if it existed in a vacuum (p. 60).

This fetishisation of colonial discourse as belonging equally to the coloniser and the colonised, and the mapping of contradictions as 'ambivalence' allows Bhabha to make it seem as though colonial authority is genuinely and innocently confused (that is, "ambivalent"), unable to choose between two equally valid meanings. To do this now is naive at best. Bhabha's strategy serves the same ideological function as older liberal humanist analysis - the repression of the political that is sedimented in the discourse.

JanMohamed goes on that:

> We can better understand colonialist discourse, it seems to me, through an analysis that maps its ideological function in relation to actual imperialist practices. Such an examination reveals that any evident "ambivalence" is in fact a product of deliberate if at times subconscious imperialist duplicity, operating very efficiently through the economy of its central trope, the manichean allegory. This economy, in turn, is based on the transformation of racial difference into moral and even metaphysical difference (p. 61).

Moving on from his critique of Bhabha the bulk of JanMohamed's article is given over to how racial difference functions in colonialist literature via the economy of the Manichean allegory. The perception of racial difference is influenced by economic motives. Before the slave trade Africans were seen as neutral or benign, after it they became the epitome of evil. To appreciate the role of colonial fiction in this context JanMohamed distinguishes the 'dominant' and 'hegemonic' phases as well as between the material and discursive practices. The dominant phase is from conquest to 'independence' in which control is direct via the bureaucracy and/or the military. During this phase the 'consent' of the natives is indirect. Even though the 'natives' sometimes collaborate, for example, in the slave trade, this testifies to pre-existing hierarchies in colonial society rather than to their interpellation into colonial discourse. In general the natives are subjugated by material practices, population transfers and so on which rely on military force. Discourses are not as useful for social control in this stage. In the hegemonic stage, the natives accept a version of the coloniser's system of values as well as their mode of production. This stage relies more heavily on 'consent', though it can be backed with force if needed. The natives' internalisation of Western cultures begins before the dominant stage but success depends on two factors - local conditions and the emphasis placed on integration by the coloniser.

Distinguishing between material and discursive practices allows JanMohamed to articulate the contradictions between overt and covert aspects of colonialism. The covert purpose is straightforward exploitation of the colony's natural resources, the overt one articulated by colonial discourse is the civilising mission, and the adoption by 'natives' of the benefits of western culture. Though this is an assumption of the colonialist literature it is accompanied by an insistence on the savagery/evilness of the natives which alerts us to the real function of these texts and that is to

justify imperial exploitation. If such literature can show the barbarity of the 'native', the civilising mission can continue indefinitely, with maximum profits and moral superiority intact.

For JanMohamed the ideological functions of such discourses must be understood not in terms of its real effects on the natives but in terms of European politics and culture. The functions of racial difference, of fetishisation of native savagery, must be seen in this ideological context (pp. 62-3). One must also note the relation of the author to the colonial discursive field organised around the Manichean allegory, shaped by political and economic factors, even when an author makes a determined effort to resist them. The nature of the audience, the European buying public, rather than those who speak 'native' languages means the accuracy of the representation is not an issue. This makes the 'native' a commodity for exploitation by colonialist fiction. The commodified sameness ("they're all alike") is fed through the Manichean allegory as the medium of exchange:

> The exchange function of the allegory remains constant, while the generic attributes can be substituted infinitely (and even contradictorily) for one another. As Said points out in his study of Orientalism, such strategies depend on a "flexible *positional* superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand." Within such a representational economy, the writer's task is to "administer" the relatively scarce resources of the manichean opposition in order to reproduce the native in a potentially infinite variety of images, the apparent diversity of which is determined by the simple machinery of the manichean allegory (1985: 64).

Discursive practices do to the symbolic, linguistic presence of the 'native' what material practices do to their physical presence (p. 64).

Colonialist literature is an exploration and representation of a world not yet domesticated by Europe, thus the world uncodified - unruly, chaotic. JanMohamed argues that faced with the presence of the Other there are two options. Either you treat the Other as essentially identical, basing judgements on your own cultural standards or you assume that the Other is radically different, but this returns to the security of one's own cultural perspective. Genuine comprehension of the Other requires a bracketing of one's own values and this entails the almost impossible task of negating one's own being, which is itself formed within a culture. The coloniser's assumption of superiority means they will rarely question the validity of their society's viewpoint. In denying the dialectic of self and Other in the formation of one's self and one's culture, colonialist literature is rarely what it claims - an exploration of the racial other, it merely ethnocentrically preserves and presents its own view. JanMohamed states that 'such literature is essentially specular: instead of seeing the native as a bridge to syncretic possibility, it uses him as a mirror that reflects the colonialist's self image' (p. 65).

He then divides colonialist literature into the Lacanian categories of the 'imaginary' and the 'symbolic'.

> The emotive and cognitive intentionalities of the text of the "imaginary" text are structured by objectification and aggression. In such works the native functions as image of the imperialist self in such a manner that it reveals the latter's alienation. Because of the subsequent projection involved in this context , the "imaginary" novel maps the European's intense internal rivalry. The "imaginary" representation of indigenous people tends to coalesce the signifier with the signified. In describing the attributes or actions of the native, issues such as intention, causality, extenuating circumstance, and so forth, are completely ignored; in the "imaginary" colonialist realm, to say "native" is automatically to say "evil" and to evoke immediately the economy of the manichean allegory (p. 65).

In this way the European's intense internal rivalry is mapped via the Manichean allegory which fetishises a fixed, non-dialectical relation between Self and native. Threatened by the alterity the coloniser has created, they retreat to their own group and its ideology.

JanMohamed sums up:

> My point, then, is that the imperialist is not fixated on specific images or stereotypes of the Other but on the affective benefits proffered by the Manichean allegory, which generate the various stereotypes. As I have argued, the manichean allegory, with its highly efficient exchange mechanism permits various kinds of rapid transformations... [like metonymy and metaphor]. Exchange-value remains the central motivating force of both colonialist material practice and colonialist literary representation.
>
> The fetishising strategy and allegorical mechanism not only permit a rapid exchange of denigrating images which can be used to maintain a sense of moral difference; they also allow the writer to transform social and historical dissimilarities into universal, metaphysical differences (p. 68).

Thus 'Africans' are seen as part of the landscape, it becomes a 'fact of life' that they must be civilised and that this process can and should continue indefinitely.

The article goes on with further analysis of colonialist fiction. It comments on the realist mode of the novel and elaborates on the 'imaginary' and the 'symbolic' played out in self/other dynamics. All these are indebted to and developments of Fanon's analysis of the colonial situation applied to the field of colonial fiction.

The final section looks at the expatriate South African, Benita Parry, while she is also in the fighting stage, she is critical of JanMohamed as well Bhabha.[9]

Benita Parry

In 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse' Parry makes the excellent point that while Said's work on colonial discourse analysis tried to dismantle imperialism's 'authorised version of history' this process really began with the colonial liberation movements earlier this century. The creation of a counter-discourse by activists like Fanon was taken up and used in Africa, Latin America, the USA and Iran. Frantz Fanon's name is invoked in colonial discourse analysis as an exemplary radical whose rhetoric forms part of collective action. Fanon directs his writing to liberating the colonised person's consciousness that is deformed by a 'Manichean delirium' in which white represented the good and the right, and black, the evil and wicked.
To deconstructionists this repossessing of the signifier is necessary but not sufficient. While happy with Fanon's deconstruction of the binaries, they argue that Fanon's reverse discourse replicates the polarity and represses heterogeneity in the interests of monolithic stereotypes of the colonist. Like Miller they argue this will not liberate the 'other' because it represses native 'difference'. For them to dismantle the colonialist discourse and the historiography it sustains the founding concepts must be refused. Parry (1987) notes that:

> Homi Bhabha rejects the notion of the colonial relationship as a symmetrical antagonism [i.e. Manichean] on the grounds that the ambivalence of the colonial presence and the

[9] She is also critical of Spivak's work. This section does not address her critique of Spivak or of Bhabha where it is not directly concerned with Fanon.

> object it constitutes 'makes the boundaries of colonial positionality - the division of self/other - and the question of colonial power - the differentiation of coloniser/colonised - different from both the master-slave dialectic or the phenomenological projections of "otherness"' (p. 28)

The question Parry asks is:

> How then do these deconstructions of colonialism's signifying system act more radically to disrupt the hegemonic discourse than does Fanon's method of exposing, through defamiliarisation, the taxonomy of colonialist knowledge in order to break its hold over the oppressed? What are the politics of projects that dissolve the binary opposition colonial self/colonised other, encoded in colonialist language as a dichotomy necessary to domination, but also differently inscribed in the discourse of liberation as a dialectic of conflict and a call to arms? (p. 29)

Parry argues that the problem for Fanon is the construction of an identity in which difference in validated and the native is empowered to rebel. In this sense the *Negritude* movement is a key moment in liberation as a step in the process but there is a further step in Wretched of the Earth eventually the Manichean allegory must be overturned by a politically conscious revolutionary self, opposed to the oppressor and prepared to fight. It is through collective resistance that the old coloniser/colonised binary is displaced.

After putting Fanon in his political context Parry then turns to her critique of Bhabha. Focusing on her discussion of Bhabha's 'Remembering Fanon' whihc was discussed earlier, she rightly points out that Bhabha seeks to make Fanon into a 'premature poststructuralist' (p. 31). According to Parry, for Bhabha, this reading rescues Fanon from the charge of being merely a propagandist to being a cultural theorist concerned with the psycho-analytics of colonial racism. However, as Parry (pp. 31-2) points out, and we saw above, this displacement out of the anti-colonial struggles (of relentless conflict to one of ambivalence and uncertainty) which Fanon sees as a matter of life and death requires very selective reading.

In contrast JanMohamed takes his bearings from Fanon's liberationist perspective but Parry argues neither Bhabha nor JanMohamed are to be taken as representative but as particular performances of methods with various notions of textual politics and the emancipatory role of critique. Parry raises the question: what are the politics of a critique like JanMohamed's which sees texts as embodying competing ideologies linked to extra linguistic situations, and of another textual politics which privileges discourse and seeks to disperse any meaning dormant in the text? (p. 32)

Before colonial discourse analysis the study of colonial fiction was based on a liberal criticism that rebuked colonialism as unacceptable without questioning the broader outlines of Western culture that made both colonialism and liberal critiques possible. It separated imperialism from capitalism, and analysed texts mimetically, that is by establishing the accuracy, psychological plausibility and humanist value of such literature in relation to Western knowledges about native's incomprehensibility or colonialist unkindness. In this way liberals never questioned the basis of the colonial discourse and in that sense were complicit with it. Studying colonial texts under titles like 'Commonwealth literature' disguised the real relations between centre and periphery as one of shared values and norms.

Parry argues that colonial discourse analysis has moved beyond empiricism and liberalism and challenged the construction of such knowledges but has its own problems. If one refuses alternative histories from Western historiography, Marxist models, and national liberation movements, without

producing an account of social change and conflict, there is a danger in seeing all forms of imperialism as colonialism. This leads to the constitution of European Self versus colonial Other as a monolithic model that ignores Europe's diverse modes of self-presentation and their remodelling. The other notable absence in an analysis that follows from a focus on deconstruction is that native resistance is limited to circumventing the colonialist texts. Parry argues that the critical practices of Bhabha and Spivak limit the possibility of anti-imperialist critique.

Parry, rightly, argues that such analysis puts us a long way from Fanon's understanding of the colonial situation as a 'murderous and decisive struggle between two protagonists'. Oppositional discourse is born in a political struggle, which invokes the past as a protest against capitulating to the denigration of the coloniser, this supersedes a commitment to 'nativism' but also rejects the colonialist paradigm. Fanon concedes the need to defend the past against the coloniser's assimilationism but there are limits on this. The old legends need new life before a new literature of combat emerges which disrupts the old, creating a new public and new horizons. Fanon's theory assumes a community's engagement in militant social action in which natives, often speaking the invader's language, protest and reject the imperial signifying system. This move is not made in colonial discourse theory. In Fanon's terms the fighting stage emerges in the struggle for a new ensembles of social relations.

Apart from debates over social relations there are important debates over the construction of subjectivity. Parry is quite sympathetic to 'nativism' as a necessary stage in the recovering of an historical memory as was Fanon. However, Parry argues that JanMohamed is less clear than Fanon about the process of 'rediscovering tradition'. What for Fanon is a process of consciousness-raising JanMohamed treats as the emergence of an oppositional discourse. While JanMohamed recognises the importance of the past, Parry argues that his work is without the ability to construct a future. This is a product of his choice of texts and his method, which assumes that texts and contexts are mimetic or simply reflect the author's stated political views. The importance of Manichean Aesthetics lies in its location of texts in concrete conditions that bear on the production of meanings, particularly the coercion and conflict marginalised in much colonial discourse analysis. It is limited in assuming a mimetic relation between material conditions and the text instead of analysing how the texts embody a particular politics. While JanMohamed is critical of liberal discourses for ignoring the political and social context, his theoretical assumptions leave little space for contradictions in ideology or emergent discourses that construct a not-yet-existing set of conditions. The deconstruction of 'reverse' discourse is limited as a reaction to dominant discourses (pp. 49-50).

Summary

It is in colonial discourse theory that Fanon has recently become popular. This chapter examined this use of Fanon, representing another partial appropriation of his legacy. Here in this academic terrain the old debate between the aesthetic and the political is played out in a new form. Miller's critique of Fanon that makes the politics of postcolonialism most explicit. The idealist premises of such theorists construct liberation discourse itself as part of the problem. Thus Fanon's totalising discourse leads to totalitarian outcomes. This ignores Fanon's own warnings about the limitations not just of nationalist discourse but of the bourgeois nationalist class. These 'soft' postcolonial appropriations of Fanon can usefully be seen as an example of Fanon's second stage of cultural response. This 'retreatist' or 'nativist' response was in Fanon's day that of colonial petty bourgeoisie intellectuals who rejected assimilation. Here the 'soft' Fanonists reject the false

universalism of Western knowledges by a retreat into difference. Both then and now this stage was politically limiting, if not reactionary, if it did not lead to a critique of social relations as it does for the 'hard' Fanonists.

One of the key questions for colonial discourse analysis is the problem of representing the other. For Said the process of deconstruction is less textual and more Fanonist inasmuch as he seeks to expose the constructedness of discourses in a similar way to Fanon, by inserting the absent term, the colonial other. For example, Fanon can agree with Freud that blacks are phobogenic but in asking "why?" (and what are the effects on real people) he exposes the Eurocentric assumptions on which the theory rests. By reinserting Mannoni's theory of the dependency complex into its 'proper time and place' its ideological underpinnings are made clear. Said by reinserting a canonised poet like Yeats into his 'proper time and place' allows the reader to see the imperial context in which literary work takes place.

At the other end of the spectrum of postcolonialism is the work of Homi Bhabha. Bhabha's appropriation of Fanon specifically rejects the premises on which it is based. Notions like 'lived experience' and the effects of structures are rejected. Bhabha's focus is on the psycho-dynamics of otherness and marginality with the rejection of class analysis. This excises the critical normative and revolutionary humanist vision of Fanon's work. Bhabha's postmodern vision deprives Fanon of the weapons he would take for granted in constructing a culture of resistance. Class, gender and humanism are submerged in favour of cultural relativity and difference. Despite claims to finding a 'proper time and place' for Fanon Bhabha's focus is on Fanon as a 'text' without context. The 'soft' Fanonists take Fanon as a text to be deconstructed; their radical phrases are a cover for a sophisticated liberalism (or conservatism) that seeks to make Fanon an object of analysis as if deconstruction of categories was somehow going to undermine the impact of imperialism.

In contrast the 'hard' Fanonists, like JanMohamed and Parry, maintain a political focus. While still concerned about texts, the focus is on what these texts can tell us about the sets of colonial social relations (the Manichean economy as JanMohamed calls it) and the ways that these relations become part of 'lived experience'. For JanMohamed literature must be seen in its proper time and place as part of a dialectical process. Unlike Bhabha who sees the need for a non-dialectical understanding of the Manichean allegory, JanMohamed sees such an approach as ideological. Parry makes the key point that the deconstruction of colonial discourse did not begin with the post-colonial literary theorists of the 1980s but with the liberation movements. They created their own counter discourse not by critiquing texts but by changing the institutions that produced them.