POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES
A MATERIALIST CRITIQUE

BENITA PARRY

Postcolonial Literatures

Postcolonial Studies

This volume presents a powerful selection of reprinted and new essays by one of the most important critics in postcolonial studies. It constitutes a trenchant critique of the textualism that has dominated the field and proposes alternative critical and reading practices more attentive to historical circumstances and socio-material conditions.

In a first, introductory chapter, Benita Parry outlines the historical and personal contexts from which her work has emerged and points to 'directions and dead ends' in the field she has helped to shape. This is followed by a series of essays that vigorously challenge colonial discourse theory and postcolonialism as we have known them. Parry then turns to literature with a series of detailed textual and contextual readings of well-known texts. These not only demonstrate her theoretical position at work, but also give new dimensions to widely studied texts by Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, H. G. Wells and E. M. Forster. While acknowledging the significance of much work done under the emblem of postcolonial studies, Parry argues throughout that the material impulses of colonialism, its appropriation of physical resources, exploitation of human labour and institutional repression have too long been allowed to recede from view.

What then is the future of postcolonialism? Parry concludes with the compelling argument that theoretical work must strive to join remembrance of the material past with a critique of the contemporary condition, remaining unreconciled to the past and unconsoled by the present. *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique* offers an invaluable framework upon which to build such a future.

Born in South Africa and resident in the United Kingdom since 1958, **Benita Parry** is Honorary Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick. For many years Professor Parry worked as an independent critic writing books and essays on the literature of the British Empire, and more recently on colonial discourse and the postcolonial discussion. Her many influential contributions to the field of postcolonial studies include *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination* (1972, revised 1998) and *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers* (1983).

Postcolonial Literatures
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Benita Parry

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In Memory of Michael Sprinker, 1950–1999

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Acknowledgements

The insistence in this volume that certain explanatory categories are indispensable to the analysis of colonialism and late imperialism (a capitalist world-system, uneven development, exploitation, inequality, injustice, conflict, class relationships, resistance and struggle) would have been redundant before the advent of postcolonial criticism and stems from my intellectual apprenticeship outside of academia. In the South Africa of the 1950s the minority white community, who in large regarded domination as a condition befitting the majority, were habituated to the ignominy of living within a wall built by a punitive state, reinforced by custom and maintained by law. But because even the most stringently policed boundaries can be crossed, one such escape route was found by those few white students at English-speaking universities concerned to meet the restricted intake from the oppressed communities. Within this last group were members of radical clubs and political parties. That such Marxist forums had existed in South Africa since the early 1930s was in part due to the very small number of Africans, Asians and Coloureds who had attended overseas universities and returned as doctors, lawyers, teachers and communists of one or other persuasion. This inadvertent process of radical politicization within an egregiously repressive society was paradoxically furthered by a white immigration policy that accidentally had admitted a scattering of left-wing academics and other professionals from abroad. Similarly, a programme for increasing the white population had extended citizenship to the numerous supporters of either Stalin or Trotsky entering without detection amongst the quota of European Jews of all classes allowed into the country. This convergence meant that South Africa was home to an intelligentsia in the very sense once used by revolutionary circles to name those who had constituted themselves as an intellectual and political vanguard.

And so it came about that one of the militant groupings ranged against the regime had links with the Third International, and another was affiliated to Trotskyism. About the Trotskyist tendencies it remains to be told how an association of such theoretical sophistication, high principle and austere political standards was overtaken by the Congress movement whose organizational skills and manifest ability to act ensured popular appeal, gained it recognition at home and abroad as the official opposition and culminated with its personnel forming the first post-apartheid government. Despite this, the thinking of the less prominent current, since relegated to a footnote in the official histories of South African resistance, survives in the critiques now being made of the neo-liberal doctrine and free-market practice to which the new South African state is ideologically and practically bound.

This organization produced no Marti, Césaire, Fanon, Cabral or C. L. R. James; but all the intellectuals, only a few of whom had been educated in the metropoles or had travelled beyond South Africa, were internationalists versed in the classical texts that had declared war on oppression, and all were familiar with cognate anti-colonial writings. In the many tracts and pamphlets produced by what was then known as the Non-European Unity Movement theorists argued that social revolution in South Africa could only be achieved through a broad-based national liberation struggle; and it was as Marxists that they undertook to examine local class formations and interests within the larger context of an imperialist system. Hence a pathological white South Africa locked into an obsessive racism and seemingly isolated from the outside worlds was understood as tied by a thousand threads to the centres of imperial power which had cynically allowed a comprador regime to pursue phobic theories of biological difference and cultural hierarchy while implementing policies of segregation profitable to domestic and overseas capital.

This is not the place to reminisce about the wit, eccentricities, vanities, contradictions and imperfections of my mentors, to lament that some died in disappointed exile or to regret that others must continue to play the role of dissenters in the new South Africa. Instead I want to recall their intellectual integrity, a refusal of the easy compromises and derisory rewards offered by state and civil institutions to an indigenous elite, a determination to write and disseminate a history of conquest, expropriation, draconian laws and codified insult, an identification with and a respect for the resilience of the wholly dispossessed, and a will to contest the ethos and ideas not only of the polity under which they lived, but of world capitalism. What I especially remember and want to honour are modern subjects whose autonomous modernity had been fashioned in the teeth of a provincial ruling class, and who as participants in an emancipatory project aspired to a universalism still undreamed of in a backward outpost of imperialism.

My thanks to this early education which taught me about the indeterminate relationship between objective structural position, or social interest, and political identification; and to present friends, colleagues and students from whom I have learned much else: David Alderson, Bashir Abu-Manneh, Neville Alexander, Keith Ansell-Pearson, Rasheed Araeen, Derek Attridge, David Attwell, Crystal Bartolovich, Michael Bell, Bridget Bennett, Deirdre Levinson Bergson, Allen Bergson, Timothy Bewes, Peter Blegvad, Elleke Boehmer, Tonya Blowers, Tim Brennan, Ellie Byrne, Erica Carter, Kate Chedgzoy, Bryan Cheyette, Carli Coetzee, Annie Coombes, Vilashini Coopan, Tim Cribb, David Dabydeen, Jennifer Davis, Arif Dirlik, Allison Donnell, Greg Elliot, Robert Fine, John Fletcher, Maureen Freely, Gill Frith, Keya Ganguly, Walter Goebel, Priyamvada Gopal, the late Peter Gutkind, Azzedine Haddour, Sabry Hafez, Nick Harrison, Nina Hassim, Jim Hicks, John Higgins, Stephen Howe, Peter Hulme, Lyn Innes, Daniel Jewesbury, Russell Celwyn Jones, David Johnson, Leila Kamali, Bernard Klein, Juergen Kramer, Peter Larkin, Graeme MacDonald, Peter Mack, John Marks, Anne McClintock, Scott McCracken, John McLeod, Ambreena Manji, Stephan Meyer, Masao Miyoshi, Shane Moran, David Morley, Rob Nixon, Sarah Nuttall, Thomas Olver, Ken Parker, Graham Pechey, Loredanna Polezzi, Jayne Poyner, Ato Quayson, Rosvita Rauch, Bruce Robbins, Caroline Rooney, Choomki Roy, Carole Rutter, Sonny San Juan, Saskia Schabio, Tiro Sebina, Stephen Shapiro, Wai Chew Sim, Tamara Sivanandan, Kelwyn Sole, Judith Squires, Mark Stein, Nicholas Thomas, Jeremy Treglown, Margaret Tude, Andrea White, Gwen Wilcox, Patrick Williams, Marcus Wood and Robert Young.

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'The Content and Discontents of Kipling's Imperialism': *New Formations*, no. 6 (1988).

'Narrating Imperialism: Beyond Conrad's Dystopias': An earlier version of this essay included the section on *Nostromo* and appeared in *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the gravity of history*, ed. K. A. Pearson, B. Parry and J. Squires, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997). Reprinted by permission of Lawrence and Wishart.

'*Tono-Bungay*: the Failed Electrification of the Empire of Light': *New Formations*, no. 34 (Summer 1998).

'Materiality and Mystification in *A Passage to India*': *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 31, no. 2 (Spring 1998). Copyright NOVEL Corp. © 1998. Reprinted with permission.

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Part One

Directions and dead ends in postcolonial studies

1 Beginnings, affiliations, disavowals

I have collected these thematically interrelated essays written over some fifteen years in the expectation that they will stand or fall as interventions in the volatile and contested postcolonial discussion. As such some of the chapters advance arguments I would no longer present in their initial form or vocabulary, and contain concessions made out of politesse or diffidence to theoretical positions I now consider unsustainable. Times have changed since the earlier of these pieces appeared and the volume and vigour of work advancing Marxist/Marxisant positions within postcolonial studies has abated the predominance of a textual idealism. All the same it remains important to urge more historically grounded directions and greater discrimination in the enquiries of an ecumenical and proliferating field where the material impulses to colonialism, its appropriation of physical resources, exploitation of human labour and institutional repression, have receded from view.[1]

Amongst the many sober definitions of the term are those denoting a historical transition, a cultural location, a discursive stance, an epochal condition distinguished by the entry into metropolitan cultures of other voices, histories and experiences,[2] and an achieved transition. For many participants in the discussion, the plenitude of signification in 'postcolonial' has enabled a diversity of studies – and indeed both the subjects of enquiry and the theoretical positions are bewilderingly various. The verso to the advantages of a wide-open explanatory field is an arbitrary and ill-considered usage of the term within and beyond the academy. So capacious is the ground on which participants in the discussion have chosen to operate that one commentator has detached its sphere of enquiry from both the anterior historical situation and its consequences by contending that postcolonial studies is more concerned 'with the lived *condition* of unequal power sharing globally and the self-authorization of cultural, economic, and militaristic hegemony' than 'with a particular historical phenomenon such as colonialism, which may be plotted as a stage of capitalist imperialism'.[3] This refusal to engage with the prior terms which the 'postcolonial' is said to displace or supersede[4] serves to occlude both the capitalist trajectory of the imperial project and the capitalist nature of contemporary globalization.

Without underestimating the importance of much work done under the emblem of postcolonial studies, I want to suggest that some influential critical practices have promoted otiose revisions of colonialism and myopic perspectives on the postcolonial. When English and cultural studies departments took the lead in developing what was to become 'a postcolonial critique', the linguistic turn was in the ascendant within literary theory, and cultural studies was in the process of relinquishing its materialist beginnings

in pursuit of 'an essentially textualist account of culture'.[5] With the arrival of modes where the analysis of the internal structures to texts, enunciations and sign systems had become detached from a concurrent examination of social and experiential circumstances, the stage was set for the reign of theoretical tendencies which Edward Said has deplored for permitting intellectuals 'an astonishing sense of weightlessness with regard to the gravity of history'.[6] As postcolonial studies became saturated by premises predicated on the priority of signifying processes, the field emerged as an exemplary instance of such levitation. It is then no accident that despite the active participation of materialists, the discussion has come to be seen as inextricably associated with 'post' theories and has appeared concerned to rearticulate colonialism and its aftermath from a theoretical position freed from the categories of political theory, state formation and socio-economic relationships.[7]

The abandonment of historical and social explanation was soon apparent in the work of those postcolonial critics who disengaged colonialism from historical capitalism and re-presented it for study as a cultural event. Consequently an air-borne will to power was privileged over calculated compulsions, 'discursive violence' took precedence over the practices of a violent system, and the intrinsically antagonistic colonial encounter was reconfigured as one of dialogue, complicity and transculturation. As Simon During has suggested, 'Postcolonialism came to signify something remote from self-determination and autonomy. By deploying categories such as hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence . . . all of which laced colonized into colonising cultures, postcolonialism effectively became a reconciliatory rather than a critical, anti-colonialist category'.[8] Because a negotiatory cultural politics deduced from partial (in both senses of the term) readings of colonialism's texts displaced the record of repressive political processes, the contradictory, volatile but all the same structurally conflictual positions occupied by the heterogeneous categories of colonizer and colonized were muted, and the incommensurable interests and aspirations immanent in colonial situations conjured into mutuality. The vaporizing of conflict in colonial situations by those preoccupied with uncovering a middle ground has little to do with acknowledging the necessary and often coerced 'intimacies' between ruler and ruled, or with understanding the discrepant experiences of the parties as constituting one history. It has everything to do with the dissemination of emollient retrospects lacking in conceptual credibility and amenable to neither intertextual confirmation nor empirical validation. Such vanities dissolve when exposed to the light of investigative studies: 'at the precise moment (1870–1912) when the labour and products of tropical humanity were being dynamically conscripted into a London-centred world economy', Mike Davis has written in *Late Victorian Holocausts*, 'millions died . . . not outside the "modern world-system", but in the very process of being incorporated into its economic and political structures'.[9]

The transition from the realist model in cultural studies should be seen in the context of a wider shift within social theory itself away from materialist understandings of historical processes and the symbolic order, and towards collapsing the social into the textual.[10] The scanting, indeed denigration, of social explanation has not gone unchallenged: questions have been asked of the widespread determination to 'institute culture as the authoritative subject of a discourse on social relations', and more, as 'the principle, the condition of valid social judgment',[11] and its pursuits have been faulted for casual analytic procedures, a lack of historical awareness and political consciousness,

and exorbitant claims to providing a total account of the social world.[12] These strategies have led the social theorist Nancy Fraser to urge the restoration of political economy to its proper place in critical theory,[13] while Fredric Jameson has remarked that matters of power and domination are now articulated on levels other than the systemic ones of 'the economic system, the structure of the mode of production, and exploitation as such'.[14]

The larger intellectual context inhabited by postcolonial studies is intimated in the counter-attacks launched by 'post'-critics on antagonists they see as unreconstructed Marxists. On detecting 'an attempt at consensus-building among Left Conservatives . . . founded on notions of the real', a group of such theorists in 1998 theatrically announced: 'A specter is haunting U.S. intellectual life: the specter of Left Conservatism'.[15] Those who in defiance of the current fundamentalism continue to produce Marxist cultural analysis have now to contend with critics prepared to travesty their practices. In her essay 'Merely Cultural', claiming the theoretical high ground for 'the cultural' or the 'post-Marxist' left, Judith Butler insouciantly chastises an 'orthodox Left' for discounting the importance of the cultural and seeking 'to separate Marxism from the study of culture'.[16] But only the most recalcitrantly mechanistic Marxists – and where are they now? – fit Butler's profile. If Marxist critics reject procedures which subordinate the real to the cultural and the semiotic, they take full account of both the cultural and the semiotic as social practices, as the negotiated processes within which subjectivities, cognition and consciousness are made and remade under determinate historical and political conditions. Moreover Lukács, Benjamin, Adorno, Brecht – not to speak of Gramsci, who pioneered the study of culture as a mode of political struggle – remain central to the contemporary Marxist cultural critique, while the irreducible connections between base and superstructure are continuously, and with increasing finesse, being thought and rethought within a Marxism attentive to the notion of a socio-economic *formation* within which a nexus of heterogeneous and contradictory determinations interact.

Of this connection Fredric Jameson has proposed that it is not a 'model', but 'a starting point and a problem, something as undogmatic as an imperative simultaneously to grasp culture in and for itself, but also in relationship to its outside, its content, its context, and its space of intervention and of effectivity' (*The Cultural Turn*, p. 47); and in its defence Terry Eagleton has provocatively written: 'Culture is the child of a one-parent family, having labor as its sole progenitor . . . At least one reason for trying to make some sense of the much derided base/superstructure image is that, in a kind of Copernican iconoclasm, it at least succeeds in powerfully *dislodging* culture from its idealist supremacy'.[17] Perhaps then the charges made against a left orthodoxy may serve to advance the case for restoring 'the real' to critical theory. At the Third International Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference held at Birmingham, UK, in the summer of 2000, one session called itself 'The (Dis)loyal Opposition: The Return of "Conservative" Cultural Studies'. The abstract lists Marxism as amongst the heresies within present-day cultural studies and asks: 'Have such forms of cultural analysis been vanquished, or have they never gone away? . . . are they the scabrous phantoms of a political consciousness that cultural studies has sought to suppress? . . . What is the future of "conservative" cultural analysis within the trend-fixated field of cultural studies? Who dares to-day to take on the mantles of post-post-Marxism, [post-post]-humanism?'[18]

Recent as the field is, postcolonial studies quickly moved from its beginnings in colonial discourse analysis, which itself was part of the larger investigation undertaken during the 1980s, into systems of representation designed to validate institutional subordination and silence the voices of competitors. All had recourse to the same range of critical paradigms.[19] According to Peter Hulme the disciplinary area known as colonial discourse analysis came into being as a critique of the continental theoretical work it enlisted, and for Hulme it was Edward Said's singular achievement to have brought together 'the rhetorical power of the textual readings offered by discourse analysis . . . with a "real" world of domination and exploitation, usually analyzed by a Marxism hostile to poststructuralism's epistemological scepticism'.[20] Thus, Hulme maintains, Said, who recognized 'the scrupulously ethnocentric nature' of Foucault's undertaking, chose to emphasize the inherent *possibilities* of this work in the interests of extending to a global terrain the concept of discourse with the constant implication of textuality within networks of history, power, knowledge and society.

In freely acknowledging a debt to continental theory, western Marxism and Anglo-Saxon cultural criticism, Said not only interrogated its privileged inclusions and its absences, observing the massive indifference of these modes to colonialism as *constitutive* of metropolitan society and culture, but he also called attention to the failure of their authors to recognize that anti-colonialist critics such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and C. L. R. James had confronted the contradictions and hierarchies in the thought of European modernity long before prominent theorists in Europe, North America and Britain had got round to it.[21] Said's own writings then can be seen to negotiate an alliance between metropolitan theory and the analyses developed by liberation movements, in the process producing elaborations which were not in either source. However, a consideration of what came to constitute the most influential practices within postcolonial theory will suggest the distance travelled from the initial project of unmasking the making and operation of colonial discourses – an undertaking which for all its diversity, shared a concern with the specific historical conditions and social purposes of ideological representation.[22] By no means all the studies that can be subsumed under colonial discourse analysis were attentive to the indigenous systems of thought and hermeneutic traditions which metropolitan writing had mistranslated or traduced; nor were they necessarily concerned with recovering signs of native resistance.[23] All the same, these dimensions were not programmatically ruled out.

This was the effect of privileging immanent critiques of colonial discourse which as one theorist put it, would 'tamper with the authority of Europe's storylines' as the critic who occupies the heritage of imperialism 'intimately but deconstructively' negotiates and attempts to change what s/he necessarily inhabits 'by reversing, displacing and seizing the apparatus of value-coding',[24] or in the words of another, 'attempts to intervene in and interrupt the western discourses on modernity'.[25] When questioning these directions Laura Chrisman has suggested that 'anti-colonial movements . . . become a fundamental element in the theorisation of colonial discourse', which should be construed 'less as a self-determining and pre-determined condition of power/knowledge, and more as a product of struggle and contestation with the oppositional (physical and cultural) presences of the colonized'.[26] This serves as a reminder that it was the writings of liberation movements that had inaugurated the interrogation of colonialism and imperialism. Nonetheless, the relationship of the newer debate to the prior discussion is less intimate than one could expect of a filial relationship; and indeed it appears that

those preoccupied with authoring a 'postcolonial positionality' that is 'neither inside nor outside the history of western domination but in a tangential relation to it'[27] have deliberately distanced themselves from the confrontational inscriptions of the anti-colonialist critique.[28]

However, amongst the numerous retrospects on the beginnings of postcolonial studies Robert Young's recent overview is concerned to situate its practices as operating 'within the historical legacy of Marxist critique on which it continues to draw but which it simultaneously transforms according to the precedents of the great tricontinental anti-colonial intellectual politicians'.[29] The designation of postcolonial criticism as 'a form of activist writing that looks back to the political commitment of the anti-colonial liberation movements and draws its inspiration from them' (*Postcolonialism*, p. 10) is a brave statement in an intellectual environment where so many postcolonial critics are disposed either to ignore, relegate or misconstrue this body of theory. Young however goes on to modulate his account of the field's genesis by introducing poststructuralism as another and metropolitan begetter, contending that 'the colonial apparatus, the imperial machine' is the structure to which poststructuralism is 'post': 'Its deconstruction of the idea of totality was born out of the experience of, and forms of resistance to, the totalising regimes of the late colonial state, particularly French Algeria' (p. 415); and it was, according to Young, Derrida, the Algerian-born Jew 'neither French nor Algerian, always anti-nationalist and cosmopolitan, critical of western ethnocentrism from *Of Grammatology's* very first page, preoccupied with justice and injustice, [who] developed deconstruction as a programme for intellectual and cultural decolonization within the metropolis' (p. 416).[30]

If Young is not displacing Marxism with deconstruction in accounting for the ancestry of the postcolonial critique, then perhaps he is placing deconstruction amongst 'the great tricontinental anti-colonial intellectual' traditions according to which the Marxist legacy was transformed within postcolonial studies – a possibility supported by Young's description of his own work as an attempt to translate deconstruction's philosophical and literary strategies 'into the more painful framework of colonial and postcolonial history' (p. 412). Young is sanguine about bringing the distinctive theoretical projects into alignment within postcolonial studies; yet the rejection by poststructuralism of the Marxist notions underpinning left anti-colonial thinking – the capitalist system, structural divisions, nationalism, an emancipatory narrative, universalism – suggests that the discrepancy between the informing premises is not readily negotiated. This is a problem observed by Tim Brennan when accounting for the paradoxical position of Marxism within a field where prominent theoretical tendencies have sought to suppress a parentage in anti-colonial liberation movements: 'If in the postcolonial discussion an undifferentiated Marxism has played a frequent role, it has done so usually as an example of how a certain brand of Eurocentrism promoted technological or disciplinary modernity, and therefore, by definition was antagonistic to non-Western forms of emergence'.[31]

All the same and despite disavowals, residues of Marxism can be seen to circulate as if unconsciously and without acknowledgement in the discussion: on the one hand Gramsci's concept of hegemony is pervasive and resonances can be heard both of his notion that the inventions of cultural activity kept the ideological world in movement, and of Raymond Williams's contention that the maintenance of domination depended on 'continuous processes of adjustment, reinterpretation, incorporation, dilution', conducted in relation to 'alternative', 'oppositional', 'residual' and 'emergent' cultural

formations.[32] On the other hand the Marxist analysis of colonialism has been eschewed. At stake is whether the imperial project is historicized within the determining instance of capitalism's global trajectory, or uprooted from its material ground and resituated as a cultural phenomenon whose intelligibility and functioning can be recuperated from tendentious readings of texts. For where 'the politics of the symbolic order' displaces the more demanding politics operating in real-world situations, and a theoretical commitment to rejecting fixed subject-positions as ontologically faulty and dyadic polarities as epistemologically unsound acts to erase structural conflict, there is no space for anti-colonialist discourses which inscribe irreconcilable contest, or for anti-colonialist practices that were manifestly confrontational.

Integral to this revisionist endeavour is the re-presentation of colonialism as transactional, a move that displaces the received perception of conflict with the 'in-between' space of negotiation. If the purpose is to construe colonialism as a complicated, overlapping and entangled event, then this should not imply that its operations are to be understood as necessarily conducted in an interstitial space.[33] The understanding that both interconnection and division were innate to the colonial encounter is to the fore in the work of Nicholas Thomas: while insisting that colonialism's power was never total, its history having been shaped by both indigenous resistance and accommodation, its discourses not only exhausted by its own internal contradictions and debates, but always in unacknowledged traffic with the native's discontents (see *Colonialism's Culture*), Thomas dissociates himself from those paradigms within 'the anthropology of exchange' which he considers to be 'myopically liberal in their models of reciprocity and assumptions of consent'. For what is relegated as mere external contingency, he argues, is that this interchange took place in the 'context of illiberal domination' that was colonialism; and what is overlooked is that the centrality of exchange in everyday practice does not encompass 'the larger field of power relations that constitutes the circumstances of colonized populations'.[34]

A similarly nuanced reading is offered by Annie Coombes: although she is concerned 'to indicate some of the more ambiguous and strategic exchanges in the dialogue between colonizer and colonized' and to explore 'the possibility of an interactive and mutually transformative relationship' between communities that were heterogeneous rather than 'easily unified and straightforwardly oppositional entities', Coombes does not overlook that 'any dialogue said to occur between colonizer and colonized is already circumscribed by the all too tangible violence of imperialism'.[35] This suggests the impediments to colloquy in the context of a coercive colonialism and hence the need to devise other terms to describe transactions where the native was sometimes an informant, always a topic, but rarely, and only in very special circumstances, an interlocutor recognized as an agent of knowledge. The same qualification applies to accounts that would designate as 'cultural dialectics' or 'a politics of reception'[36] the appropriation by the west of Asian and African architectural styles, decorative arts and artifacts, or the successive vogues in Europe for the myths and metaphysics of the east and Egypt. European culture is undeniably 'hybrid', as are all cultures, and certainly metropolitan societies were multiply inflected by traffic with the colonial worlds. But this infiltration of influences should not be represented as a conversation with other cultural forms and cognitive traditions, a phrase that should properly be retained for reciprocal communications.

The inequality and constraints in the exchanges of colonial encounters emerges from Mary Louise Pratt's deployment of the notion of 'transculturation' as a

'phenomenon of the contact zone', a process where 'subordinated or marginalized groups select or invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture', determining 'to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for'. But when Pratt asks 'another perhaps more heretical' question, 'how does one speak of transculturation from the colonies to the metropolis', of the ways 'the periphery determines the metropolis', what she is able to offer suggests a greatly attenuated, indeed a solipsistic notion of 'transculturation', since the only instance she cites is 'the latter's obsessive need to present and represent its peripheries and its others to itself'.[37] Thus whereas the peripheries can readily be shown to have appropriated and redeployed materials from the centre, what emerges is that the centre was *unable* to recognize the materials from the periphery as constituting Knowledge.

The poverty of serious discussion on liberation theory in a field devoted to the production of anti-colonial/imperial critiques signals a preference for rewriting a historical project of invasion, expropriation and exploitation as a symbiotic encounter. Previous Marxist and Marxisant enquiries into empire and its consequences had narrated colonialism and imperialism as stemming from capitalism's urge to insert the non- or incipiently capitalist zones into its world-system, had recognized racial domination as an integral component of Europe's expansion, attended to the exploitation of labour in the extraction of raw materials, and observed the construction of a minimal and strategic infrastructure and the establishment of an apparatus of administrative coercion.[38] Many of these matters had already been addressed by Marxist activists who were faced with organizing mass movements in overwhelmingly agrarian societies divided by custom, language and religion, lacking a proletariat and harbouring collaborationist elements amongst traditional regional hierarchies and more recently constituted comprador elites. Hence theorists addressed the anomalies of combined and uneven capitalist development in their regions, analysed the class formations consequent on the introduction or acceleration of new modes of production, considered the possibilities of anti-colonial alliances within which different interests and tendencies intersected and clashed, sought to form vanguard parties that were not disconnected from the people and local forms of resistance, and devised programmes for non-coercive development that would avoid installing capitalist social relations. Few of the problems engaging radical anti-colonial thinkers figure in the contemporary postcolonial discussion of the colonial past.

The recuperation of liberation theory as a revolutionary project for overcoming both colonialist social institutions and archaic indigenous forms seems essential at a time when postcolonial critics traduce its positions, negate its analysis of exploitative and conflictual conditions, and ignore its ethical analysis of colonialism's illegitimacy. In aspiring to transform material and existential conditions, liberation movements did not seek to resurrect a pre-colonial past or imitate a capitalist present; and because alternative systems still stood in the way of capitalism's accelerating global reach, popular Marxist struggles, despite the recalcitrance of pre-capitalist oligarchies and the hostility of an emergent bourgeoisie, looked forward to the immanent possibility of constructing socialist societies. This capacity to disengage from the past and imagine a transcendence of the existing social order makes liberation theory an original and indigenous project of modernity, neither enforced nor gifted by a predatory colonialism which had

institutionalized economic and social retardation to further its own interests and inhibit colonial peoples from experiencing and conducting themselves as modern subjects.

If some postcolonial critics have intimated their recoil from the thinking and temperament of liberation theory, others, whether because of doctrinal aversion or willed ignorance, have dismissed anti-colonialism as always nativist, essentialist, atavistic and wedded to pre-modern ideologies. What is overlooked is that notions of communal ethnic identity were invoked in the interests of mobilizing populations against their foreign rulers, while cultural heritages denigrated and despised by colonialism were affirmed as authentic traditions. Such recuperations, however, were not made in the interest of discovering uncontaminated origins or claiming ethnic purity, and were remote from any attempt to retrieve a past known to be irrecoverable. Even Fanon, the most modernist of theorists, recommended the construction of an insurgent black subjectivity while offering a perspective of a future beyond ethnicity – for Fanon decolonization 'sets out to change the order of the world'.[39] Nor should disenchantment with post-independence regimes blind critics to the import of liberation struggles conducted in the name of nationalism, an ideology and practice which prominent participants in the postcolonial discussion denigrate in the interest of valorizing hybrid, deterritorialized and diasporic forms of consciousness that are apparently uninflected and untroubled by ethnicity or class. The referents of this configuration suggest urbane sophisticates voluntarily dislocated from their natal lands but productively inhabiting capital cities, who may or may not be actively engaged in constructing practical critiques of either metropolitan or more distant infamies, or in putting into practice their compassion for the exploited and insulted of the earth. However, as if extrapolating from their own situations,[40] advocates of the unhomely condition have proleptically proposed a multitudinous category of the dispossessed who will/must come to desire and attain deliverance from the shackles of nation and place. The most enthusiastic proponents of this vision are not postcolonialists but Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, whose work (discussed in Chapter 6) impinges directly on the discussion of what the postcolonial has come to signify for many working within the field.

Moreover a disavowal of nationalism overlooks the distinction between imperialist and anti-imperialist nationalist problematics, the former being an appropriative nationalism taking the form of 'projects of unity on the basis of conquest and economic expediency', whereas the latter are oriented towards the task of reclaiming community from the fragmentation and denigration attendant on colonialism.[41] Yet so commonplace is the charge of a retrogressive nationalism inherent in anti-colonial movements[42] that it seems vital to specify and contest such tendencies where they are evident, in order that informed discussion can proceed on the more consequential differences between moderate nationalist movements for independence within the status quo, and which were directed at entrenching the hegemony of the native bourgeoisie, and revolutionary anti-capitalist nationalisms. Meanwhile in scorning emancipatory expectations as naive and self-righteous, and liberation movements as self-interested, critics have rendered nugatory the joining of intelligible and still viable indigenous resources and age-old traditions of colonial resistance with the ethical horizons and utopian reach of socialism.

In accounting for the arrest of the revolutionary energies that had once driven liberation movements, proper weight must be given to sabotaging by the powerful

nation-states of political regimes deemed dangerous to their interests. It is also necessary to observe the constraints on any form of disengagement from globalization. Yet it remains true that the undoubtedly restricted political choices and decisions made by post-independence governments are also ideological ones. Analysing the tragedy now being enacted in post-apartheid South Africa, John Saul has argued that the capitulation of the new leadership to the neo-liberal logic of global capitalism had been initiated during the political transition, when the African National Congress demonstrated its willingness to safeguard the essentials of the established economic system by withdrawing 'from any form of genuine class struggle in the socio-economic realm' and abandoning any economic strategy directed at the material requirements of the impoverished majority: 'Left critics would argue that many of the ANC's more recent claims to be powerless in the face of the market place have a disingenuous ring when measured against the fact that the movement itself had, early on in the game, thrown away so many of the instruments that might have been useful in crafting a more asserting strategy towards capital ... the option for neoliberalism was, first and foremost, an ideological one'.[43]

Some would add that the choice of this ideological option was predictable given the class alignment of the Congress leadership. Certainly the fact of so many post-independence regimes eagerly adopting the ethos of neo-liberalism presents a subject of urgent enquiry for postcolonial studies, one that necessarily entails attention both to the class forces and programmes of the anti-colonial struggles, and to the developing forms of contestation within the new nation-states. Neil Lazarus has argued that the left needs 'a sober, concretely grounded and historically sensitive analysis of the specific forms assumed and generated by the global restructuring of capitalist class relations'.[44] Only then will it be possible to examine the state apparatus, economic organization, social relationships and cultural forms of actual and differential post-independence regimes and to understand the structures of globalization where the centres of economic, political and cultural power remain entrenched in a small number of nation-states.

This means understanding globalization – so often celebrated for enabling the free circulation of peoples, goods and ideas – as the contemporary incarnation of capitalism, and engaging critically with the current usage of cosmopolitanism where it is drained of any political connotations. Consider this definition offered by the editors of a new volume: 'Cosmopolitanism, in its wide and wavering nets, catches something of our need to ground our sense of mutuality in conditions of mutability, and to learn to live tenaciously in terrains of historic and cultural transition. ... A cosmopolitanism grounded in the tenebrous moment of transition is distinct from other more triumphalist notions of cosmopolitical coexistence'.[45] In a different and more consequential register Bruce Robbins, without aligning himself with the older communist tradition, and in response to a perception of internationalism as being 'in distress', has proposed translating 'cosmopolitanism, usually understood as a detached, individual view of the global, into the more collective, engaged and empowered form of worldliness that is often called internationalism'.[46] This suggestion is at variance with Tim Brennan's observation that current understandings of cosmopolitanism, which have been used for both conservative and radical purposes, are 'theoretically incompatible with internationalism'.[47] It is therefore surely fitting to recall some recent and more distant manifestations of internationalism as a theoretical position and a political allegiance grounded in class affiliation and anti-imperialist partisanship: an Indian exiled by the Raj who assisted in

the formation of the Mexican Communist Party (N. N. Roy); the participation in the Spanish Civil War of African-American volunteers to the Lincoln Brigade; a Caribbean intellectual (C. L. R. James) who involved himself in both Pan-Africanism and metropolitan left politics; African insurgents who during the 1970s greeted the rise of popular anti-fascism in the imperial homeland while engaged in fighting the Portuguese army in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau; an Argentinean (Ché Guevara) instrumental in the making of the Cuban insurrection, subsequently a combatant in the anti-imperialist Congolese war and then a prime mover of the abortive revolution in Bolivia during which he was killed; a French intellectual (Régis Debray) who was imprisoned for his part in the same uprising; Cuban troops defending the newly independent regimes of Mozambique and Angola against the military incursions of the then South Africa acting on behalf of international capitalism.

What these essays are concerned to suggest is that without moving in a direction where studies of actually existing political, economic and cultural conditions, past and present, are no longer separated from meta-critical speculations, or culture and discourse from histories that have happened or are still in the making, postcolonial studies will remained ensnared in an increasingly repetitive preoccupation with sign systems and the exegetics of representation.

2 Problems in current theories of colonial discourse

Writing of the disparate projects that seek to establish alternative protocols in disciplinary studies, Edward Said finds their common feature to be that all work out of a secular, marginal and oppositional consciousness, posit 'nothing less than new objects of knowledge . . . new theoretical models that upset or at the very least radically alter the prevailing paradigmatic norms', and are 'political and practical in as much as they intend . . . the end of dominating, coercive systems of knowledge'.[1] The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, which is condensed in this ecumenical scan of contemporary dissident criticism, can act as a caution against the tendency to disown as necessarily less subversive of the established order, work done within radical traditions other than the most recently enunciated heterodoxies.

Said's own critique of Orientalism, directed at 'dismantling the science of imperialism', has fed into and augmented colonial discourse analysis, itself engendered where literary theory converged with the transgressive writings of women, blacks and anti-imperialists in the metropolitan world, and postcolonial interrogations of western canons. The construction of a text disrupting imperialism's authorized version was begun long ago within the political and intellectual cultures of colonial liberation movements, and the counter-discourse developed in this milieu which is known to western academies, read by black activists in the USA and transcribed as armed struggle in the other hemisphere, was written way back in the 1950s by Frantz Fanon, psychiatrist and polemicist, theoretician and guerrilla. Although critics now developing a critique of colonialism do invoke Fanon, this can be a ceremonial gesture to an exemplary and exceptional radical stance where the adversarial rhetoric spoken by the individual is inseparable from participation in collective action, or a theoretical engagement with writings that combine political analysis with representative psycho-autobiography. It is noticeable that the address does not necessarily validate a problematic enlisting an epistemology of dialectical process, replete with notions of alienation, existential freedom and authentic human experience; nor does it invariably read the texts as discourses of emancipation.

The theoretical coordinates to Fanon's thinking were phenomenology and a left-existentialism penetrated by Marxism, and in his writings Hegelian categories are historicized and politically engaged to expose the construction and structure of colonialist ideology. By disclosing the social and cultural positioning of the preconstituted and metaphysical poles of white and black, Fanon's writing is directed at liberating the consciousness of the oppressed from its confinement in 'the white man's artefact'. To

this end, the dichotomy construed by colonialist thought, white as the sovereign law and black as its transgression, with its attendant chain of naturalized antitheses, is shown to be axiologically fixed in discourse ('Good–Evil, Beauty–Ugliness, White–Black: such are the characteristic pairings . . . that we shall call "manicheism delirium" ')[2] while existentially it operates to deform the dialogical interaction of self with other selves, constitutive of and indispensable to being, and coterminous with consciousness, into the conflictual self–other colonial relationship.

To those concerned with deconstructing the texts of colonialism, Fanon's offensive strategy, directed at repossessing the signifying function appropriated by colonialist representation, could appear as a necessary but insufficient intervention. Critics working from such a position might concede that a procedure identifying the loaded oppositions used to organize colonialism's discursive field does demystify the rhetorical devices of its mode of construction; however, they could argue, a reverse discourse replicating and therefore reinstalling the linguistic polarities devised by a dominant centre to exclude and act against the categorized, does not liberate the 'other' from a colonized condition, where heterogeneity is repressed in the monolithic figures and stereotypes of colonialist representation, into a free state of polymorphous native 'difference'. To dismantle colonialist knowledge and displace the received narrative of colonialism's moment written by ruling-class historiography and perpetuated by the nationalist version, the founding concepts of the problematic must be refused. Thus Homi Bhabha rejects the notion of the colonial relationship as a symmetrical antagonism on the grounds that the ambivalence of the colonial presence and the object it constitutes 'makes the boundaries of colonial positionality – the division of self/other – and the question of colonial power – the differentiation of colonizer/colonized – different from both the Hegelian master-slave' dialectic – or – the phenomenological projection of "otherness" '[3] In a related vein, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak states: 'I am critical of the binary opposition colonizer/colonized. I try to examine the heterogeneity of "colonial power" and to disclose the complicity of the two poles of that opposition as it constitutes the disciplinary enclave of the critique of imperialism'.[4]

The strategies used in effecting a change of terrain are: to expose how power secretly inheres in colonialism's system of 'natural' differentiations and to show that in the process of producing meaning, these dualisms are undermined and repositioned as interdependent, conjunct, intimate; to decentre the native as a fixed, unified object of colonialist knowledge through disclosing how colonialism's contradictory mode of address constitutes an ambivalently positioned colonial subject; to dislodge the construct of a monolithic and deliberative colonial authority by demonstrating the dispersed space of power and a disseminated apparatus, wielded by diverse agents and effecting multiple situations and relations; and to dispel the representation of brute, institutional repression by making known the devious techniques of obligation and persuasion with which the native colludes but simultaneously resists. In the territory cleared of metaphysical divisions, undifferentiated identity categories and ontological absolutes which provide the ideological justifications for colonialism's system, criticism then reveals for analysis the differential, variously positioned native – for some critics a self-consolidating other, for others an unconsenting and recalcitrant self – and in place of the permanently embattled colonial situation constructed by anti-colonialist theory, installs either a silent place laid waste by imperialism's epistemic violence, or an agonistic space within which unequally placed contestants negotiate an imbalance of power. 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 defamiliarization, the taxonomy of colonialist knowledge in order to break its hold over the oppressed? And what are the politics of projects which dissolve the binary opposition colonial self/colonized 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?

In Fanon's writings the colonized as constructed by colonialist ideology is the very figure of the divided subject posited by psychoanalytic theory to refute humanism's myth of a unified self. Denied the right to subjectivity, internalizing and refracting the colonizer's address to its other as darkness and negation, alienated from a ravaged natal culture, the colonized is condemned to exist in an inauthentic condition: 'To speak is to exist absolutely for the other . . . To speak . . . means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization . . . Every colonized people – in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality – finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country . . . To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture'.[5] The problem Fanon addresses is the constitution of a self-identity where native difference is validated and which empowers the native to rebel. Thus although distancing himself from a rediscovery of tradition which instead of reconceiving and dynamizing the autochthonous culture from within, violently reaffirms customs and beliefs and resumes the worship of ancestors, Fanon argues that such a resurgence assumes an incomparable subjective importance in effecting a break with the colonized condition: 'On emerging from these passionate espousals, the native will have decided . . . to fight all forms of exploitation and of alienation of man.'[6] Here Fanon's writings intercede to promote the construction of a politically conscious, unified revolutionary self, standing in unmitigated antagonism to the oppressor, occupying a combative subject position from which the wretched of the earth are enabled to mobilize an armed struggle against colonial power:

> Decolonisation is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature . . . Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men . . . the primary Manicheism which governed colonial society is preserved intact during the period of decolonisation; that is to say, the settler never ceases to be the enemy, the opponent, the foe that must be overthrown . . . The immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called into question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonisation – the history of pillage – and to bring into existence the history of the nation – the history of decolonisation.[7]

That a radically subversive move can be effected through the inversion and active alteration of categories by which the hegemonic ideology produces and marginalizes a dominated or deviant group, has been argued by Jonathan Dollimore:

> Jacques Derrida reminds us that binary oppositions are 'a violent hierarchy' where one of the two terms forcefully governs the other. A crucial stage in their deconstruction involves an overturning, an inversion 'which brings low what was high'. The political effect of ignoring this stage, of trying to jump beyond the hierarchy

> into a world quite free of it, is simply to leave it intact in the only world we have. Both the reversal of the authentic/inauthentic opposition . . . and the subversion of authenticity itself . . . are different aspects of overturning in Derrida's sense. Moreover they are stages in a *process* of resistance.[8]

Such a process of resistance is initiated by Fanon's oppositional discourse when the definition colonizer/colonized conceived under the old regime of thought is displaced by a different usage of the same term, one invoking implacable enmity both as analysis of a political condition and as a galvanizing political slogan. This gloss on Fanon's theory would not be acceptable to Homi Bhabha, who in his foreword to a new edition of *Black Skin, White Masks*, 'Remembering Fanon', locates the insurgency in his writings elsewhere.[9] Because for Bhabha no interventionary strategy can derive from an inversion of colonialist Manicheanism, he dissents from Fanon's reinscription of the colonial self/colonized other ('he is too quick to name the Other, to personalize its presence in the language of colonial racism' (p. xix)), while valorizing those inscriptions when that 'familiar alignment of colonial subjects – Black/White, Self/Other – is disturbed . . . and the traditional grounds of racial identity are dispersed' (p. ix). In a deconstruction of Fanon's text which criticizes Fanon's recourse to Hegelian concepts, the phenomenological affirmation of self and other and the Marxist dialectic, Bhabha proffers Fanon as a premature poststructuralist:

> 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. In articulating the problem of colonial cultural alienation in the psychoanalytic language of demand and desire, Fanon radically questions the formation of both individual and social authority as they come to be developed in the discourse of Social Sovereignty . . . In shifting the focus of cultural racism from the politics of nationalism to the politics of narcissism, Fanon opens up a margin of interrogation that causes a subversive slippage of identity and authority. (pp. xiii, xxiv)

This reading rescues Fanon as theorist of the ideology of cultural representation as well as retrieving his radical insights into the politics of race/sexuality and the 'complexity of psychic projections in the pathological colonial relationship' (p. xx) from appropriations which would claim him as the author of univocal propaganda tracts. But does it not also annex Fanon to Bhabha's own theory? By displacing Fanon's work from 'one political moment or movement', relegating the extent to which it 'historicizes the colonial experience' and privileging the agonism and uncertainty of the colonial relationship over Fanon's specifications of relentless conflict, Bhabha's construction shifts the political charge of the text from inscriptions urging the colonized to insurrection in the uncertain hope of a transformed condition beyond the imperialist world order – a revolutionary impulse which Bhabha reads as Fanon's 'desperate, doomed search for a dialectic of deliverance' (p. x) – to Fanon's meditation on the ambivalent identification, black skin, white masks, which makes it possible 'to redeem the pathos of cultural confusion into a strategy of political subversion' (p. xxii). Such a reading, where aspects of *Black Skin, White Masks* congenial to Bhabha's deconstructive practice are abstracted from the body of Fanon's writings – within which this privileged mode can be seen as a

provisional exploration of the colonial syndrome that was subsequently directed, with the poetry intact, towards cultural analysis and programmes for political action – obscures Fanon's paradigm of the colonial condition as one of implacable enmity between native and invader, making armed opposition both a cathartic and a pragmatic necessity.

Fanon's anti-colonialist critique, read as a text of resistance and liberation, is the principal landmark from which Abdul JanMohamed's *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*[10] takes its theoretical bearings, and the divide between the problematic within which his study is developed, and the work of poststructuralist critics who propose a model of colonialism at critical points incommensurable with the terms of Fanon's theory, can be used to bring different analyses of colonial discourse into focus. Here the proviso must be that neither JanMohamed's mode of ideological analysis nor the work of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, which will be discussed as instances of deconstructive practice, are to be taken as representative, but rather as particular performances of methods with divergent notions of textual politics and criticism's emancipatory role. Because those engaged in deconstructing colonialist knowledge necessarily connect the signifying system to social forces, and overtly ally their writings with the victims of imperialism's violence, the charge of political quietism cannot be levelled against their work, which like ideological criticism positions itself as implementing a politics of reading.[11]

What then is the politics, on the one hand, of a criticism that sets out to identify both the dominant and oppositional ideologies embedded in texts as expressions, transformations and functions of an extra-linguistic situation, and on the other, of textual paradigms where discourse is privileged as the primary form of social praxis and which seek to expose the making, operation and effects of ideology by stirring up and dispersing the sedimented meanings dormant in texts? There is moreover a further political question to be asked of colonial discourse theory itself as it is now constituted: can a practice which is predominantly concerned with the text of colonial authority, which does not address itself to colonialism's culture and neglects to engage with its heterogeneous system of knowledge, produce, as it claims, a critique displacing the west's 'white mythology'? Since this essay questions the parameters within which colonial discourse analysis works, it seems imperative to acknowledge its signal achievement in moving the discussion away from the colonialist text as an authentic portrayal of reality, to the system of ideological representation which such writing produced.

Before the intervention of this analysis – and despite the protests of a long-standing scholarship exposing the western-centric images and suppositions of the 'ethnographical novel'[12] – the study of colonialist writing was ruled over by a liberal criticism which from an untold landmass had carved out a territory it named The Literature of Empire or The Colonial Fiction, to hold in thrall generations of self-professed anti-colonialist scholars and students in both the metropolitan and postcolonial worlds. Affiliated to the hegemonic explanatory order and written within the same ideological code as the discourse of colonialism, this putative oppositional discussion rebuked colonialism as the unacceptable face of western civilization, while endorsing the affirmations and prohibitions authorized by the culture pursuing and implementing colonial power.

The commentaries of this school thus succeeded both in splitting the notion of colonialism from that of an expansionist western capitalism, and in underwriting a way

of dividing the world invented by colonial discourse. Mimeticism was the name of its interpretative mode; establishing the historical accuracy, psychological truthfulness and humanist perceptions of the fictions, its game. The verisimilitude was checked out against other fabrications – the books, reports, surveys, treatises and ruminations written by western scholars, colonial civil servants, army officers, missionaries, journalists, explorers and travellers. The ethics were judged by the effort to understand the incomprehensible ways of the native, or the censure delivered at colonialist unkindness and insensitivity. Because the critics shared the cultural assumptions and commitments of the fictions they were discussing, they were unable in their gloss to distance themselves from inscriptions of the colonial worlds as deviant; and by colluding in displacing a conflictual political relationship with a metaphysical and moral contest, their exegesis constituted itself as yet another discourse of colonialism. A contiguous disciplinary mode of occluding the structure of domination in an embattled colonialist past and of mystifying the continuing asymmetrical nexus between the hegemonic centres and their peripheries, has been procured by 'commonwealth studies' and its progeny 'commonwealth literature', where the choice of an anodyne name denoting a multi-cultural community existing in perfect harmony, acts to suggest that there exists an association of diverse peoples joined together in a past of common endeavour and a present of shared purpose.

Having freed the study of colonialist writing from an empiricist criticism and a liberal politics to disclose the ideological construction of colonialism's objects of knowledge, colonial discourse analysis has generated its own theoretical difficulties. One problem, I would suggest, hinges on a model of colonial discourse overwhelmingly concerned with processes of othering which is detached from the more extensive and multivalent discursive practices of the imperial project. When the writing of an alternative history of colonialism on theoretical grounds refuses the authority of official western historiography, rejects a Marxist version charged with 'reducing out imperialism-as-history', and distances itself from liberationist histories accused of weaving a seamless narrative, but does not produce its own account of change, discontinuity, differential periods and particular social conflicts, there is a danger of distinctive moments being homogenized. Thus colonialism as a specific, and the most spectacular, mode of the imperial project's many and mutable states, one which preceded the rule of international finance capitalism and in mutated forms has survived its formal ending, is treated as identical with all the variable forms.

Since the colonial space is taken to be coextensive with the entire discursive zone of the imperial project, the constitution of the European self, by defining and encoding its colonies as other, is privileged over Europe's diverse modes of self-presentation that were reassembled in the triumphalist culture of colonialism-as-imperialism, and in permuted form has persisted in a cultural hegemony where western norms and values are equated with universal forms of thought. For Spivak the 'axiomatics of imperialism' are an unspecified 'territorial and subject constituting project'; and Bhabha's engagement with the civil discourse of England's liberal conservative imperialist culture is restricted to examining how the text of post-enlightenment civility alienated its own language in normalizing the colonial state or subject. The other notable absence in theorizing colonial discourse is a necessary consequence of analytical strategies which in focusing on the deconstruction of the colonialist text, either erase the voice of the native or limit native resistance to devices circumventing and interrogating

colonial authority. Positions against the nostalgia for lost origins as a basis for counter-hegemonic ideological production (Spivak), or the self-righteous rhetoric of resistance (Bhabha), have been extended to a downgrading of the anti-imperialist texts written by national liberation movements; while the notion of epistemic violence and the occluding of reverse discourses have obliterated the role of the native as historical subject and combatant, possessor of other knowledges and producer of alternative traditions.

The work of Spivak and Bhabha will be discussed to suggest the productive capacity and limitations of their different deconstructive practices, and to propose that the protocols of their dissimilar methods act to constrain the development of a radical anti-colonial critique in which resistance is privileged. It will be argued that the lacunae in Spivak's learned disquisitions issue from a theory assigning an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse in constituting and disarticulating the native. In essays that are to form a study on master discourse/native informant,[13] Spivak inspects 'the absence of a text that can "answer one back" after the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project' ('The Rani of Sirmur', p. 131), and seeks to develop a strategy of reading that will speak to the historically muted native subject, predominantly inscribed in Spivak's writings as the non-elite or subaltern woman. A refrain, 'One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice-consciousness', 'There is no space from where the subaltern (sexed,) subject can speak', 'The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read', 'The subaltern cannot speak' ('Can the Subaltern Speak', pp. 122, 129–130), iterates a theoretical dictum derived from studying the discourse of *Sati*, in which the Hindu patriarchal code converged with colonialism's narrativization of Indian culture to efface all traces of woman's voice.

What Spivak uncovers are instances of doubly oppressed native women who, caught between the dominations of a native patriarchy and a foreign masculinist-imperialist ideology, intervene by 'unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting(s) of the social text of *Sati* – suicide' ('Can the Subaltern Speak', p. 129): a nineteenth-century princess who appropriates 'the dubious place of the free will of the sexed subject as female' ('The Rani of Sirmur', p. 144) by signalling her intention of being a *Sati* against the edict of the British administration; a young Bengali girl who in 1926 hanged herself under circumstances that deliberately defied Hindu interdicts ('Can the Subaltern Speak'). From the discourse of *Sati*, Spivak derives large, general statements on woman's subject constitution/object formation in which the subaltern woman is conceived as a homogeneous and coherent category, and which culminate in a declaration on the success of her planned disarticulation. Even within the confines of this same discourse, it is significant that Lata Mani does find evidence, albeit mediated, of woman's voice.[14] As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues in her critique of western feminist writings on 'Third World Women',[15] discourses of representation should not be confused with material realities. Since the native woman is constructed within multiple social relationships and positioned as the product of different class, caste and cultural specificities, it should be possible to locate traces and testimony of women's voice on those sites where women inscribed themselves as healers, ascetics, singers of sacred songs, artisans and artists, and by this to modify Spivak's model of the silent subaltern.

If it could appear that Spivak is theorizing the silence of the doubly oppressed subaltern woman, her theorem on imperialism's epistemic violence extends to positing

the native, male and female, as a historically muted subject. The story of colonialism which she reconstructs is of an interactive process where the European agent, in consolidating the imperialist sovereign self, induces the native to collude in its own subject(ed) formation as other and voiceless. Thus while protesting at the obliteration of the native's subject position in the text of imperialism, Spivak in her project gives no speaking part to the colonized, effectively writing out the evidence of native agency recorded in India's two-hundred-year struggle against British conquest and the Raj – discourses to which she scathingly refers as hegemonic nativist or reverse ethnocentric narrativization.

The disparaging of nationalist discourses of resistance is matched by the exorbitation of the role allotted to the postcolonial woman intellectual, for it is she who must plot a story, unravel a narrative and give the subaltern a voice in history, by using 'the resources of deconstruction "in the service of reading" to develop a strategy rather than a theory of reading that might be a critique of imperialism' ('Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 230). Spivak's 'alternative narrative of colonialism', through a series of brilliant upheavals of texts which expose the fabrications and exclusions in the writing of the archive, is directed at challenging the authority of the received historical record and restoring the effaced signs of native consciousness, and it is on these grounds that her project should be estimated. Her account, it is claimed, disposes of the old story by dispersing the fixed, unitary categories on which this depended. Thus it is argued that for purposes of administration and exploitation of resources, the native was constructed as a programmed, 'nearly-selved' other of the European and not as its binary opposite. Furthermore, the cartography that became the 'reality' of India was drawn by agents who were themselves of heterogeneous class origin and social status and whose (necessarily) diversified maps distributed the native into differential positions which worked in the interest of the foreign authority – for example, a fantasmatic race-differentiated historical demography restoring 'rightful' Aryan rulers, and a class discourse effecting the proto-proletarianization of the 'aborigines'.

Instead of recounting a struggle between a monolithic, near-deliberative colonial power and an undifferentiated oppressed mass, this reconstruction displays a process more insidious than naked repression, since here the native is prevailed upon to internalize as self-knowledge, the knowledge concocted by the master: 'He (the European agent) is worlding *their own world*, which is far from mere uninscribed earth, anew, by obliging them to domesticate the alien as Master', a process generating the force 'to make the "native" see himself as "other" ' ('The Rani of Sirmur', p. 133). Where military conquest, institutional compulsion and ideological interpellation was, epistemic violence and devious discursive negotiations requiring of the native that he rewrite his position as object of imperialism, is; and in place of recalcitrance and refusal articulated in oppositional discourses and enacted in movements of resistance, a tale is told of the self-consolidating other and the disarticulated subaltern.

This raw and selective summary of what are complex and subtle arguments has tried to draw out the political implications of a theory whose axioms deny to the native the ground from which to utter a reply to colonialism's ideological aggression or to enunciate a different self:

> No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have

> been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self . . . A full literary inscription cannot easily flourish in the imperialist fracture or discontinuity, covered over by an alien legal system masquerading as Law as such, an alien ideology established as only truth, and a set of human sciences busy establishing the native 'as self-consolidating Other'.
>
> ('Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', pp. 253–254)

In bringing this thesis to her reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*[16] as *Jane Eyre*'s reinscription, Spivak demonstrates the pitfalls of a theory postulating that the master discourse preempts the (self) constitution of the historical native subject. When Spivak's notion is juxtaposed to the question Said asks in *Orientalism*, 'how can one study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative perspective?',[17] and Jean Rhys's novel is examined for its enunciation (despite much incidental racism) of just such a perspective which facilitates the transformation of the other into a self, then it is possible to construct a re-reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* iterating many of Spivak's observations while disputing her founding precepts.

Spivak argues that because the construction of an English cultural identity was inseparable from othering the native as its object, the articulation of the female subject within the emerging norm of feminist individualism during the age of imperialism necessarily excluded the native female, who was positioned on the boundary between human and animal as the object of imperialism's social-mission or soul-making. In applying this interactive process to her reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Spivak assigns to Antoinette/Bertha, daughter of slave-owners and heiress to a post-emancipation fortune, the role of the native female sacrificed in the cause of the subject-constitution of the European female individualist. Although Spivak does acknowledge that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a novel which rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white creole rather than the native' ('Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', p. 253), and while she does situate Antoinette/Bertha as caught between the English imperialist and the black Jamaican, her discussion does not pursue the text's representations of a creole culture that is dependent on both yet singular, or its enunciation of a distinctive settler discourse. The dislocations of the creole position are repeatedly spoken by Antoinette, the 'Rochester' figure and Christophine; the nexus of intimacy and hatred between white settler and black servant is written into the text in the mirror imagery of Antoinette and Tia, a trope which for Spivak functions to invoke the other that could not be selved: 'We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her . . . When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but did not see her throw it . . . I looked at her and I saw her face crumble as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 24). But while themselves not English, and indeed outcastes, the creoles are masters to the blacks, and just as Bronte's book invites the reader via Rochester to see the creole Bertha Mason as situated on the human/animal frontier ('One night I had been awakened by her yells . . . It was a fierce West Indian night . . . those are the sounds of a bottomless pit', quoted in 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', pp. 247–248), so does Rhys's novel via Antoinette admit her audience to the regulation settler view of rebellious blacks: 'the same face repeated over and over,

eyes gleaming, mouth half-open', emitting 'a horrible noise . . . like animals howling but worse' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, pp. 32, 35).

The idiosyncrasies of an account where Antoinette plays the part of 'the woman from the colonies' are consequences of Spivak's decree that colonialism's linguistic aggression obliterates the inscription of a native self: thus a black female who in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is most fully selved must be reduced to the status of a tangential figure, and a white creole woman (mis)construed as the native female produced by 'the axiomatics of imperialism', her death interpreted as 'an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer' ('Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', p. 251). While allowing that Christophine is both speaking subject and interpreter to whom Rhys designates some crucial functions, Spivak sees her as marking the limits of the text's discourse, and not, as is here argued, disrupting it.

What Spivak's strategy of reading necessarily blots out is Christophine's inscription as the native, female, individual self who defies the demands of the discriminatory discourses impinging on her person. Although an ex-slave given as a wedding present to Antoinette's mother and subsequently a caring servant, Christophine subverts the creole address that would constitute her as domesticated other, and asserts herself as articulate antagonist of patriarchal, settler and colonialist law. Natural mother to children and surrogate parent to Antoinette, Christophine scorns patriarchal authority in her personal life by discarding her patronymic and refusing her sons' fathers as husbands; as Antoinette's protector she impugns 'Rochester' for his economic and sexual exploitation of her fortune and person, and as female individualist she is eloquently and frequently contemptuous of male conduct, black and white. A native in command of the invaders' language – 'She could speak good English if she wanted to, and French as well as patois' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 18) – Christophine appropriates English to the local idiom and uses this dialect to deride the post-emancipation rhetoric which enabled the English to condemn slavery as unjust while enriching themselves through legitimized forms of exploitation: 'No more slavery! She had to laugh! These new ones have Letter of the Law. Same thing. They got Magistrate. They got fine. They got jail house and chain gang. They got tread machine to mash up people's feet. New ones worse than old ones – more cunning, that's all' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, pp. 22–23). And as an obeah woman, Christophine is mistress of another knowledge dangerous to colonialism's official epistemology and the means of native cultural disobedience.[18]

Christophine's defiance is not enacted in a small and circumscribed space appropriated within the lines of the dominant code, but is a stance from which she delivers a frontal assault against antagonists, and as such constitutes a discourse that answers back. Wise to the limits of post-emancipation justice, she is quick to invoke the protection of its law when 'Rochester' threatens her with retribution: 'This is free country and I am free woman' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 131) – which is exactly how she functions in the text, her retort to him condensing her role as the black, female individualist: 'Read and write I don't know. *Other things I know*' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 133; emphasis added). In Spivak's reconstruction, Christophine's departure from the story after this declaration and well before the novel's end is without narrative and characterological explanation or justice. But if she is read as the possessor and practitioner of an alternative tradition challenging colonialism's authorized cognitive system, then her exit at this point appears both logical and entirely in character:

'England,' said Christophine, who was watching me. 'You think there is such a place?'
'How can you ask that? You know there is.'
'I never see the damn place, how I know?'
'You do not believe that there is a country called England?' . . .
'I don't say I don't *believe*, I say I don't *know*. I know what I see with my eyes and I never see it.'

(*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 92)

This articulation of empiricism's farthest reaches spoken by a black woman who *knows* from experience that her powders, potions and maledictions are effective in the West Indies, undoes through its excess the rationalist version valorized by the English, while at the same time it acknowledges the boundaries to the power of her knowledge. Officially condemned and punishable in Jamaica – 'Rochester' tries to intimidate Christophine with mention of magistrates and police – this wisdom of the black communities is assimilated into creole culture: Antoinette calls on and has faith in its potency. But when the novel transfers to England, Christophine must leave the narrative, for there the writ of her craft does not run, which is why after making her statement, 'She walked away, without looking back' (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p. 133).

Spivak's deliberated deafness to the native voice, where it is to be heard, is at variance with her acute hearing of the unsaid in modes of western feminist criticism which, while dismantling masculinist constructions, reproduce and foreclose colonialist structures and axioms by 'performing the lie of constituting a truth of global sisterhood where the mesmerizing model remains male and female sparring partners of generalizable or universalizable sexuality who are the chief protagonists in that European contest' ('Imperialism and Sexual Difference', p. 226). Demanding of disciplinary standards that 'equal rights of historical, geographical, linguistic specificity' be granted to the 'thoroughly stratified larger theatre of the Third World' (p. 238), Spivak in her own writings severely restricts (eliminates?) the space in which the colonized can be written back into history, even when 'interventionist possibilities' are exploited through the deconstructive strategies devised by the postcolonial intellectual.

Homi Bhabha on the other hand, through recovering how the master discourse was interrogated by the natives in their own accents, produces an autonomous position for the colonial within the confines of the hegemonic discourse, and because of this enunciates a very different 'politics'. The sustained effort of writings which initially concentrated on deconstituting the structure of colonial discourse, and which latterly have engaged with the displacement of this text by the inappropriate utterances of the colonized, has been to contest the notion Bhabha considers to be implicit in Said's *Orientalism*, that power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer.[19] Bhabha reiterates the proposition of anti-colonialist writing that the objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a racially degenerate population in order to justify conquest and rule. However, because he maintains that relations of power and knowledge function ambivalently, he argues that a discursive system split in enunciation constitutes a dispersed and variously positioned native who by (mis)appropriating the terms of the dominant ideology is able to intercede against and resist this mode of construction.

In dissenting from analysis ascribing an intentionality and unidirectionality to colonial power, which, in Said's words, enabled Europe to advance unmetaphorically upon

the Orient, Bhabha insists that this not only ignores representation as a concept articulating both the historical and the fantasmatic, but unifies the subject of colonial enunciation in a fixed position as the passive object of discursive domination. By revealing the multiple and contradictory articulations in colonialism's address, Bhabha as contemporary critic seeks to demonstrate the limits of its discursive power and to countermand its demand 'that its discourse (be) non-dialogic, its enunciation unitary' ('Signs taken for Wonders', p. 100); and by showing the wide range of stereotypes and the shifting subject positions assigned to the colonized in the colonialist text, he sets out to liberate the colonial from its debased inscription as Europe's monolithic and shackled other, and into an autonomous native 'difference'.[20] However, this reappropriation, although effected by the deconstructions of the postcolonial intellectual, is made possible by uncovering how the master-discourse had already been interrogated by the colonized in native accents. For Bhabha, the subaltern has spoken, and his readings of the colonialist text recover a native voice.

Through transferring psychoanalytic propositions on the constitution of the subject to the composition of the text, Bhabha deconstructs the conflictual economy of colonial discourse to expose its recognition and disavowal of racial/historical/cultural difference; and by using Foucault's notion of an apparatus of power within which relations of knowledge and power are always a strategic response to an urgent need at a given historical moment, Bhabha specifies the force of colonial discourse as the need 'to contest singularities of difference and to articulate modes of differentiation' ('Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', p. 201). The production of the colonial as a fixed reality, at once other and knowable, is interpreted as analogous to the Freudian fable of fetishism, while the field of identification within which the stereotype is located as an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation is correlated with the Lacanian schema of the imaginary:

> The construction of colonial discourse is then a complex articulation of the tropes of fetishism – metaphor and metonymy – and the forms of narcissistic and aggressive identification available to the imaginary . . . One has then a repertoire of conflictual positions that constitute the subject in colonial discourse. The taking up of any one position, within a specific discursive form, in a particular historical conjuncture, is then always problematic – the site of both fixity and fantasy.'
>
> ('Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', p. 204)

In this account relations of power are theorized in terms of psychoanalytic categories, and native resistance is limited to its returning the look of surveillance as the displacing gaze of the disciplined. Bhabha has subsequently extended the ground of the discussion to examining the textual production of difference by introducing the notion of 'mimicry' as both 'a strategy of colonial subjection through reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other', and the native's inappropriate imitations of this discourse which have the effect of menacing colonial authority.[21] Here Bhabha reconstructs a twofold process of displacement. In the slippage between the enunciation of the western sign and its colonial significance, the strategies of colonialist knowledge are undermined. As the civil discourse of a culturally cohesive community is mutated into the text of a civilizing mission, its enunciatory assumptions are revealed to be in

conflict with its means of social control, so that the incompatibility of the ideas of English liberty and British imperialism is exposed: 'in "normalizing" the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms' ('Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', p. 126).

The process of deconstructing the text of colonial authority is completed by the product of this discourse. Where Spivak, in inspecting the absence of a text that can answer back after the planned epistemic violence of the imperialist project, finds pockets of non-cooperation in 'the dubious place of the free will of the (female) sexed subject' ('The Rani of Sirmur', p. 144), Bhabha produces for scrutiny a discursive situation making for recurrent instances of transgression performed by the native from within and against colonial discourse. Here the auto-colonization of the native who meets the requirements of colonialist address is coextensive with the evasions and 'sly civility' through which the native refuses to satisfy the demand of the colonizer's narrative. This concept of mimicry has since been further developed in the postulate of 'hybridity' as the problematic of colonial discourse.

Bhabha contends that when rearticulated by the native, the colonialist desire for a reformed, recognizable, nearly similar other is enacted as parody, a dramatization to be distinguished from the exercise of dependent colonial relations through narcissistic identification. For in the 'hybrid moment' what the native rewrites is not a copy of the colonialist original, but a qualitatively different thing-in-itself, where misreadings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence. Thus a textual insurrection against the discourse of colonial authority is located in the natives' interrogation of the English book within the terms of their own system of cultural meanings, a displacement which is read back from the record written by colonialism's agents and ambassadors:

> Through the natives' strange questions it is possible to see, with historical hindsight, what they resisted in questioning the presence of the English – as religious mediation and as cultural and linguistic medium . . . To the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, then mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance. When the words of the master become the site of hybridity – the warlike sign of the native then we may not only read between the lines, but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so lucidly contain.
>
> ('Signs taken for Wonders', pp. 101, 104)

Despite a flagrantly ambivalent presentation which leaves it vulnerable to innocent misconstruction, Bhabha's theorizing succeeds in making visible those moments when colonial discourse, already disturbed at its source by a doubleness of enunciation, is further subverted by the object of its address; when the scenario written by colonialism is given a performance by the native that estranges and undermines the colonialist script. The argument is not that the colonized possesses colonial power, but that its fracturing of the colonialist text by rearticulating it in broken English perverts the meaning and message of the English book ('insignia of colonial authority and signifier of colonial desire and discipline', 'Signs taken for Wonders', p. 89) and therefore makes an absolute exercise of power impossible.

A narrative which delivers the colonized from its discursive status as the illegitimate and refractory foil to Europe, into a position of 'hybridity' from which it is able to circumvent, challenge and refuse colonial authority, has no place for a totalizing notion of epistemic violence. Nor does the conflictual economy of the colonialist text allow for the unimpeded operation of discursive aggression: 'What is articulated in the doubleness of colonial discourse is not the violence of one powerful nation writing out another [but] a mode of contradictory utterance that ambivalently re-inscribes both colonizer and colonized'.[22] The effect of this thesis is to displace the traditional anti-colonialist representation of antagonistic forces locked in struggle with a configuration of discursive transactions: 'The place of difference and otherness, or the space of the adversarial, within such a system of "disposal" as I've proposed, is never entirely on the outside or implacably oppositional' ('Signs taken for Wonders', p. 95). Like Spivak's alternative narrative, Bhabha's interrogation of received historical authority takes place on the territory of colonial discourse itself, and since colonial power is theorized here as a textual function, it follows that the proper form of combat for a politically engaged critical practice is to disclose the construction of the signifying system and thereby deprive it of its mandate to rule:

> If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridisation rather than the hegemonic command of colonial authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. It reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourse and enables a form of subversion founded on that uncertainty, that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention.
>
> ('Signs taken for Wonders', p. 97)

Those who have been or are still engaged in colonial struggles against contemporary forms of neo-colonialism could well read the theorizing of discourse analysts with considerable disbelief at the construction this puts on the situation they are fighting against and the contest in which they are engaged. This is not a charge against the difficulty of the analyses but an observation that these alternative narratives of colonialism obscure the 'murderous and decisive struggle between two protagonists',[23] and discount or write out the counter-discourses which every liberation movement has recorded. The significant differences in the critical practices of Spivak and Bhabha are submerged in a shared programme marked by the exorbitation of discourse and a related incuriosity about the enabling socio-economic and political institutions and other forms of social praxis. Furthermore, because their theses admit of no point outside of discourse from which opposition can be engendered, their project is concerned to place incendiary devices within the dominant structures of representation and not to confront these with a different knowledge. For Spivak, imperialism's epistemic bellicosity decimated the old culture and left the colonized without the ground from which they could utter confrontational words; for Bhabha, the stratagems and subterfuges to which the native resorted, destablized the effectivity of the English book but did not write an alternative text – with whose constitution Bhabha declines to engage, maintaining that an anti-colonialist discourse 'requires an alternative set of questions, techniques and strategies in order to construct it' ('Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', p. 198).

Within another critical mode which also rejects totalizing abstracts of power as falsifying situations of domination and subordination, the notion of hegemony is inseparable from that of a counter-hegemony. In this theory of power and contest, the process of procuring the consent of the oppressed and the marginalized to the existing structure of relationships through ideological inducements necessarily generates dissent and resistance, since the subject is conceived as being constituted by means of incommensurable solicitations and heterogeneous social practices. The outcome of this antagonistic exchange, in which those addressed challenge their interlocutors, is that the dominant discourse is ultimately abandoned as scorched earth when a different discourse, forged in the process of disobedience and combat, occupying new, never-colonized and utopian territory, and prefiguring other relationships, values and aspirations, is enunciated. At a time when dialectical thinking is not the rage amongst colonial discourse theorists, it is instructive to recall how Fanon's interrogation of European power and native insurrection reconstructs a process of cultural resistance *and* cultural disruption, participates in writing a text that *can* answer colonialism back, *and* anticipates a condition beyond imperialism: 'Face to face with the white man, the Negro has a past to legitimate, a vengeance to extract . . . In no way should I dedicate myself to the revival of an unjustly unrecognized Negro civilization. I will not make myself a man of the past . . . I am not a prisoner of history . . . it is only by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom' (*Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 225–226, 229, 231).

The enabling conditions for Fanon's analysis are that an oppositional discourse born in political struggle, and at the outset invoking the past in protest against capitulating to the colonizer's denigrations, supersedes a commitment to archaic native traditions at the same time as it rejects colonialism's system of knowledge:

> The colonialist bourgeoisie . . . had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas and deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. Now it so happens that during the struggle for liberation, at the moment that the native intellectual comes into touch again with his people, this artificial sentinel is turned into dust. All the Mediterranean values, – the triumph of the human individual, of clarity and of beauty – become lifeless, colourless knick-knacks. All those speeches seem like collections of dead words; those values which seemed to uplift the soul are revealed as worthless, simply because they have nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which the people is engaged.
>
> (*The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 37–38)

While conceding the necessity of defending the past in a move away from unqualified assimilation of the occupying power's culture, Fanon recognizes the limitations on the writer and intellectual who utilizes 'techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country'. Such transitional writing, reinterpreting old legends 'in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies', is for Fanon but a prelude to a literature of combat which 'will . . . disrupt literary styles and themes . . . create a completely new public' and mould the

national consciousness, 'giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons'.[24] Fanon's theory projects a development inseparable from a community's engagement in combative social action, during which a native contest initially enunciated in the invaders' language culminates in a rejection of colonialism's signifying system. This is a move which colonial discourse theory has not taken on board, and for such a process to be investigated, a cartography of colonial ideology more extensive than its address in the colonialist space, as well as a conception of the native as historical subject and agent of an oppositional discourse, is needed.

The problem has been recognized by Abdul JanMohamed in his essay 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: the Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', where he argues that because the indigenous peoples during colonialism's dominant period were subjugated by military coercion and bureaucratic control, the ideological function of such writing 'must be understood . . . in terms of the exigencies of domestic, that is European and colonialist politics and culture' (pp. 62–63). If such a perspective condemns the colonized in the age of imperial conquest and consolidation to a condition of passive consent, it does serve as a necessary reminder that colonialism was a protean phenomenon and its discursive violence inseparable from material and institutional force. *Manichean Aesthetics: the Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa*, however, which studies the anglophone fiction of colonial Africa in the hegemonic phase, and is itself open to the charge of failing to specify imperialism as a moment of colonialism, belongs with colonial discourse analysis. As such its contribution to the area study will be discussed as a mode of ideological analysis seeking to make known the relations of the text to the objective conditions within which it is produced, and concerned to demonstrate the generation of counter-hegemonic discourses interrogating European representations. Fanon's account of colonialism's Manichean and conflictual structure provides the theoretical ground on which JanMohamed constructs a thesis of the 'Manichean allegory' as the central trope of the discursive field within which colonialist literature is written and African fiction initiates its antagonistic dialogue. Rejecting the insistence of liberal criticism on parity between English and African writing, JanMohamed maintains that each fulfils a different ideological function, the one 'solving' contradictions in order to secure a coherent colonialist world and thereby justify the established ascendancy, the other making known the conflicts afflicting this world and through realist representations of Africa's cultures, wiping out the negative and derogatory images purveyed by European literature.

Both Spivak and Bhabha have repudiated efforts to rebut colonialist misconstructions with valorizations of native traditions. For Spivak, the 'nativist' attempt driven by 'nostalgia for lost origins' to restore the sovereign self of the colonies, cannot provide grounds for counter-hegemonic ideological production and is not a model for interventionist practice.[25] In a related but different argument Bhabha maintains that a nationalistic criticism which takes over from 'universalist' criticism the mimetic view of the text's transparent relationship to a preconstituted reality, represses the ideological and discursive construction of difference, reducing the problem of representing difference to the demand for different and more favourable representations.[26] Where Spivak and Bhabha deny the radical force of transgressive appropriations in a reverse discourse that contests the master text on its own terrain, JanMohamed argues for the power of positive representations subverting through inversion the received colonialist version.

Thus according to his thesis, the ideological mission of African writing is to retrieve the value and dignity of a past insulted by European representation, and to counter the eternal verities and universalities of a liberal criticism which either deforms colonial difference to make it conform with western notions of intelligibility, or reproves it as deviant. The means of fulfilling this emancipatory role is realism.

For colonized and postcolonial cultures traumatized by colonialism, subjected to a 'peripeteia of values' culminating in 'historical catalepsy', a fiction that recuperates Africa's autonomous resources and reconstitutes the fragmented colonial subject makes an active contribution to the collective aspiration of regaining a sense of direction and identity. Such remembrance does not encourage a passive yearning for reinstalling an unrecoverable past, but is an intercession winning back a zone from colonialist representation: 'Achebe's nostalgia must be distinguished from the romantic ethnology of the Négritude movement, for unlike the latter, he neither portrays an idealized, monolithic, homogenized, and pasteurized "African" past, nor does he valorize indigenous cultures by reversing the old colonial Manichean allegory as, for instance, Leopold Senghor does'.[27] Where European fiction fabricated a traditional Africa (the fabulous and simplified country of Joyce Cary's racial romances, or the natives of Blixen/Dinesen tales who are literally the edenic land in flesh and blood), African writers reacted with realist representations of African existence, thinking, perceptions and values. Where the hegemonic fiction contrived apologias for colonialism, African novels answered with a story of social havoc and psychic damage inflicted by the white invasion. By representing the dialectical relationship between 'man-as-individual' and 'man as social-being' proposed by Lukács in his writings on realism, such fiction restores to the dislocated colonial the image of the collective subject, of the integrated self in vital interactions with an authentic cultural community.

In affirming the radical potential of historical memory to the anti-colonialist struggle, JanMohamed resorts to appropriations of hegemonic values, since he implies that to recover from the assaults of an expansionist and belligerent bourgeois occupation, the colonial and postcolonial cultures must aspire to possess the ideals of bourgeois humanism. Absent from JanMohamed's exposition is Fanon's grasp of the paradoxes and pitfalls of 'rediscovering tradition' and re-presenting it within a western system of meanings. What for Fanon is a transitional process of liberating the consciousness of the oppressed into a new reality, JanMohamed treats as the arrival of the definitive oppositional discourse. His argument is crucially different from Walter Benjamin's construction (also bypassed by Spivak and Bhabha) of the 'fight for the oppressed past . . . nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors' which when reinscribed in the present, 'completes the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden'[28] – a position Julian Roberts describes as positing 'absolute discontinuity between the conditions of our present historical existence and those that will follow after messianic transformation'.[29]

Thus while JanMohamed's reading does validate the significance of authenticating the past in producing a counter-discourse, his account of an alternative is without a 'visionary gaze' that displaces received constructions, a lack that can be attributed both to his chosen material and his method. To argue his case on African writing as a challenge to European representation, he discusses English-language, social/psychological realist novels where the politics is foregrounded in the subject matter. In this sense his model is already self-circumscribing since the area he studies is largely

populated by writings which manipulate but do not break with established fictional forms. All the same, by treating both 'realist' and 'modernist' fictions, both African and European, within a referential mode of criticism as portrayals and interpretations of the existing world, *Manichean Aesthetics* produces readings which neglect textual polyphony when it does operate to enunciate contradictory meanings, and where it is not present, omits to explain its absence.[30] A commitment to mimeticism further constrains the examination of the problems inherent in politically heterodox texts working within the structures and redeploying the procedures of modes that naturalize authorized norms and values. Thus Alex La Guma's books are acknowledged for their graphic portraits of the marginalized worlds of South Africa's 'coloured people', a veracity ascribed to arbitrary and circumstantial plots enacting the characters' inability to control their lives or shape their destinies. What is not discussed is how the recycling of stale or purple language, of received narrative practices and exhausted modes of address, normalizes the fictions' ex-centric material and defuses their confrontational stances.

A declared project of defining 'modes of relationship between a society and its literature' through examining 'the ideological structure which provides the common denominator between socio-economic and literary structures',[31] is one which this study amply realizes in analyses of theme and genre that succeed in giving access to the disjunctive and internally contradictory fictional universes of English and African colonial writing. However, it is also the stated intention of the book to implement that more complex critical mode enunciated and performed by Fredric Jameson's *The Political Unconscious*: 'the rewriting of the literary text in such a way that the latter may itself be seen as the rewriting or restructuration of a prior historical or ideological *subtext*, it being always understood that "subtext" is not immediately present as such, not some common-sense external reality . . . but rather must itself always be (re)constructed after the fact'.[32]

While JanMohamed's work does engage with the 'strategies of containment' inscribed in narrative form and aesthetic convention (the mythic consciousness of the Blixen/Dinesen stories, the preoccupation with messianic emancipation, prophecy and salvation in the early writings of Ngugi wa Thiong'o), there is a tendency to establish one-to-one relationships between text and context. When discussing Nadine Gordimer's novels, JanMohamed reads their enunciation of the white liberal consciousness negotiating the splits of South African society as an authentic articulation of an existential condition, and not as a contrivance bearing an interpretation of a crisis which occludes alternative and emergent discourses of dissent. That there is no significant connection in Gordimer's fiction between the white and black worlds is attributed by JanMohamed to the restraints on a socially formed and positioned author; while the 'objective narration' of African culture is ascribed to the writer's awed refusal to violate its rhythms, meanings and mysteries. Here explanations derived from the author intentionally mediating her own historical situation and social inhibitions are substituted for an examination of the fictional conventions and narrative forms which repress such a dialogue and attenuate what 'African' discourse is enunciated. For whereas the Africans are speaking subjects, the voices of servants, intellectuals and political activists alike are all written as 'heard' by their white interlocutors, so that multiple difference is erased by a generic otherness. Writing information about the author into readings of the texts leads JanMohamed to infer that the fictions disclose a 'liberating rupture between Gordimer and bourgeois culture'.

Gordimer's integrity and courage are abundantly manifest in her personal posture and public statements – how many self-professed white radicals would say, as she did in a television interview with Susan Sontag, that there is nothing of white South Africa she wanted to preserve? But in the face of novelistic practices which make intelligible and celebrate, even while interrogating, the ideology of the personal, and which are bound in their affirmations and aspirations to western systems of meaning, it is difficult to sustain this assertion of an ideological break with the hegemonic culture, or to confirm that the fundamental thrust of her fiction is 'a deliberate dissolution and reconstruction of white consciousness that will allow it to transcend the Manichean bifurcations of the present and to work towards a more integrated and coherent future' (*Manichean Aesthetics*, p. 144).

The importance of JanMohamed's book is that it sets out to study literature as a cultural text and rhetorical practice produced and performed within determinate historical, social and political conditions which enable and constrain the construction of meaning. As such it does read the fictions against the grain, and by bringing to the discussion the story of colonialism's military conquest, coercive institutions and conflictual relationships, marginalized in some analyses of colonialist discourse, it restores to these texts a sense of their historical density and effectivity. But because the argument propounding a symbiotic relationship between discursive and material practices has not been formulated in dialogue with theories which have rendered mimeticism problematic, there are difficulties in assessing the particular mode of ideological analysis brought to *Manichean Aesthetics*. What is missing is an engagement with the manifold and conflicting textual inscriptions – the discontinuities, defensive rhetorical strategies and unorthodox language challenging official thought, the disruptions of structural unity effected by divergent and discordant voices – as the location and source of the text's politics.

When JanMohamed reiterates this critical stance in 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory', the proposition that writing is infused by and implicated in an extrinsic situation is presented as an axiom where the objective condition is the cause of an utterance, and discourse the malleable mediator of its producer's intentions: 'We can . . . understand colonial discourse . . . 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' (p. 61). The causal nexus proposed here returns us to a text/context paradigm where the writing is 'determined' and 'controlled' by political and economic imperatives and changes 'external to the field itself', where the acquiescent discourse, already dictated by ideology, performs the automatic service of 'articulating and justifying' the aims of the colonialist.

'The Economy of Manichean Allegory' situates itself as in dispute with both a liberal criticism and discourse analysis for 'severely bracketing the political context of culture and history' (p. 59), and outlines a programme for restoring the worldly situation of texts. But since writing is theorized as the instrument of material practices, there is no place for emergent discourses initiating new modes of address to construct not-yet-existing conditions, while the notion of a counter-discourse is bound by its role as a defensive, reactive reply to the hegemonic construction delivered within the frontiers of its terms: 'The Third World literary dialogue with western cultures is marked by two broad characteristics: its attempt to negate the prior European negation of colonized

cultures and its adoption and creative modification of western languages and artistic forms in conjunction with indigenous languages and forms' (pp. 84–85). Analysis of this dialogue, it is proposed, will demonstrate that 'the domain of literary and cultural syncretism belongs not to the colonialist and neocolonialist writers but increasingly to Third World artists' (p. 85).

This affirmation of 'syncretism', which I take to be the resolution of colonialism's cultural Manicheanism in the harmonization of alterities, appears to underwrite the goal of a cultural Esperanto assembled out of existing modes, and is one that JanMohamed himself countermands in his important essay, 'Humanism and Minority Literature: Toward a Definition of Counter-Hegemonic Discourse',[33] where the making of an alternative postcolonial tradition is posited as the outcome of a dialectic between the hegemonic culture and 'Third World' writers. Here the argument is that it is the responsibility of a 'minority criticism' to rescue this literature from the ideological ascendancy of western liberal humanism by cultivating and celebrating 'marginality': 'If minority literature repeatedly explores the political, collective and marginal aspects of human experience, then minority criticism must also systematically avoid the temptation of a seductively inclusive, apolitical humanism: it must articulate and help to bring to consciousness those elements of minority literature that oppose, subvert, or negate the power of the hegemonic culture' (pp. 298–299). What this project endorses is not the 'syncretism' which JanMohamed elsewhere commends, but the affirmation of multiple forms of 'difference'.

The perspective on colonial culture as a western system of representation and exclusion devised by the imperial power to police the globe in the name of their values, tradition and civilization, elaborated by Fanon but common to the literature of anti-colonialism, points up the failure of colonial discourse analysis to engage with the range and effectivity of colonialism triumphalist address. This omission is repeated by other radical criticisms, and Said's observation that the literary-cultural establishment has declared the serious study of imperialism and culture off-limits[34] can more readily be accounted for than the neglect by the left in the homeland of empire to produce work on colonialist ideology and discourse – a significant absence which is now being recognized by the left as a suitable case for theoretical enquiry.[35] When wide-ranging projects in cultural materialism addressed the processes by which meanings are socially constructed and historically transformed, socialist theorists paid scant attention to the making and articulation of England's *imperialist* culture.[36] Raymond Williams's influential *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), which spanned the years of colonial conquest and the consolidation of empire, found no place for this narrative,[37] and not until *The Country and the City* (1973) did Williams write of England as the centre of political, economic and cultural power, standing in the same relationship to the peripheries as did the city to the country within the boundaries of the European nation-state. (We will return to the suggestive connection Williams was subsequently to make between imperialist ideology and its mode of production.) More recently, Francis Mulhern has proposed that a 'socialist politics of literature' be constructed from the writings of western women.[38] This exorbitant demand on the work of First World women to effect the subversion of metropolitan cultural hegemony – that Mulhern's schema includes Afro-American women writers does not compensate for what it omits – displays a parochial perspective on the sources of 'alternative' literary modes which

is indifferent to the implosions being made into the traditions of western writing by postcolonial literary cultures, and suggests an insularity that has no place in radical theory.

The eurovision of the metropolitan left has been attributed by critics to the endemic coexistence of 'historicism' and 'universalism' in Marxism's narrative of world history, where the non-synchronous experiences of Europe's others are incorporated into a story of unilinear processes.[39] Certainly the perdurable perspective on colonialism's trajectory as subjugation *and* liberation, dislocation *and* reconstruction, rests on western definitions of meaning and value,[40] and is an instance of what Spivak refers to as 'the willed (auto)biography of the West (masquerading) as disinterested history' ('The Rani of Sirmur', p. 131). However, critiques confronting the problem of constructing alternative analyses, where imperialism no longer features as the 'necessary' catalyst of world history, are being produced from within Marxism. In *Marx and the End of Orientalism*,[41] a study he describes as 'a work of personal decolonisation', Bryan Turner argues the need for new theoretical readings to replace the versions of Marxism which in treating history as a series of invariable stages in modes of production, privilege the western route as the norm and place the colonial world outside of history. Spivak's just rebuke of varieties of radical criticism where 'the narrative of history-as-imperialism' is reduced out is the occasion for her censuring Jameson's project for restoring an 'uninterrupted narrative', a 'fundamental history' as the attempt to rewrite an 'originary text'. This criticism, which is aimed at all legitimizing narratives of progress and liberation, repudiates 'the story of capital logic' for repressing the discontinuous version of colonialism that is yet to be told, while itself repressing how the continuities, constellations and traditions revealed by historical materialism can accommodate plural forms of resistance and insurrection against non-identical systems of power within 'the Unity of a single great collective story . . . sharing a single fundamental theme – for Marxism, the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity' (*The Political Unconscious*, p. 19).

A theory of colonial discourse which refuses both a 'eurocentric' world history underwriting the west's cultural hegemony and nationalist narratives of liberation, has turned in on itself and away from redrawing the map of the world drawn by the texts of colonialism. It is not accidental that whereas projects deconstructing colonialist knowledge have not as yet delivered their promised critiques of the imperial project, they have stimulated studies which by extending 'colonization' as an explanatory notion applicable to all situations of structural domination, are directed at formulating a grand theory valid for each and every discursive system of discrimination and oppression. The announcement of the 1984 Essex Sociology of Literature Conference, 'Europe and its Others', from which 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' are conspicuously absent, stated that the objective of the conference was to produce 'a general archaeology of europocentric discourses' which would identify strategies of discrimination and control and engage with theories of the psychological constitution of the subject. Following this conference, a Group for the Critical Study of Colonial Discourse was formed, with the purpose of linking those whose work critically examines historical and analytic discourses of domination where these address cultural and racial differences: 'while for many of us the focus of our work is primarily the colonial context, others in the network are extending their enquiry to ex-colonial societies, the colonial legacy in the West, and contemporary systems of domination where race, class, ethnicity, gender and/or sexuality

intersect'.[42] This trend towards conflating distinct and specific modes of oppression is one against which Spivak has warned: 'the critique of imperialism is not identical, and cannot be identical, with the critique of racism. Nor is our own effort to see the identification of the constitution of race within First World countries, identical with the problem of capitalist territorial imperialism in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'.[43]

Here Spivak could be seen to be marching under the banner bearing Jameson's slogan: 'Always historicize!', an allegiance which when brought to colonialism would engage in deconstructing an histrionic and hyperbolic rhetoric innovating representations addressed to both the native and the metropolitan subject, and which reached its apotheosis in the moment of imperialism. John Mackenzie's *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880–1960*[44] collates the staggering range and quantity of printed and visual material produced by state institutions and civil agencies to present and promote the imperial project – a body of texts distinct from official writings, 'scientific' discourses, travellers' tales, memoirs and fiction. This study establishes that a vast and complicated machinery operated to solicit the metropolitan individual as subject and agent of imperialism. Through its network of cultural affirmations and denigrations, colonialist discourse offered to the English an imaginary mapping of their situation within the domestic social formation and of their relationship to the peripheries, and it did so in a language of social inclusiveness, linking people to rulers in a faith described by Hugh Cunningham as 'above class, loyal to established institutions and resolute in the defence of the country's honour and interest'.[45] In invoking working-class women as proud mothers of empire and working-class men as natural rulers of lower races, imperialism's address invited the subject simultaneously constituted by class and gender discourses to reposition her/himself within a privileged community, a solicitation inducing social conformity and class deference at home, and racial arrogance and bellicosity abroad. (The resistance to this address is another story yet to be told.)

On a level more fundamental because it seeks to establish 'that deeply symbiotic relationship . . . between modern western imperialism and its culture' and to make connections between colonialist ideology in the centre and the peripheries, Edward Said has pointed the study towards constructing an archaeology for 'knowledge whose actualities lie considerably below the surface hitherto assumed to be the true texture, and textuality, of what we study as literature, history, culture, and philosophy'. As an instance of such work, Said cites the researches of Gauri Viswanathan, which have 'uncovered the political origins of modern English studies, and located them in the system of colonial education imposed on natives in the nineteenth century India . . . what has conventionally been thought of as a discipline created entirely by and for British youth was first created by colonial administrators for the ideological pacification and re-formation of a potentially rebellious Indian population, and then imported into the metropolitan center for a very different but related use there' (*Intellectuals in the Post-Colonial World*, pp. 63–64).

A critical reading of the texts of late nineteenth-century imperialism will reveal the ingenious use and permutation of race, class, sexual, ethical and nationalist discourses in the west's representations of itself as possessing a knowledge and a moral authority that was its entitlement to exercise global power: a race/class/ethical discourse – Europe's right and duty to appropriate the bounty of nature wasted by the natives to

benefit its industrial classes and feed its hungry; a utilitarian discourse joined to a teleological one – Europe's obligation to exploit the world's natural and labour resources in the interests of promoting international progress; a racial/sexual discourse – the natives' unfitness for organizing a rational society and exercising self-government because of their teeming sexual proclivities and unlicensed sexual performance (this representation also provided a sanctioned pornography for metropolitan consumption); a nationalist/utopian discourse – the divinely ordained task of Europeans to rule, guide and elevate backward peoples as a trust for civilization. That the language of ascendancy in these virtuoso texts was shared by the spokesmen of empire and their self-described critics suggests its hegemony; where the utterances of the first declaimed racial power, a conquering nation and a belligerent civilization, the apologias of the liberal anti-imperialists deplored the linguistic excesses of their opponents while conceding that because of its progressive culture, the west was indeed able to offer the colonized the benefits of both its industrial skills and its moral and intellectual qualities. This magniloquent self-representation, with its messianic notions of subjugation and its mystical conception of exploitation, is condensed in Conrad's laconic remark on 'the temperament of a Puritan joined with an insatiable imagination of conquest', and 'the misty idealism of the Northerners, who at the smallest encouragement dream of nothing less than the conquest of the earth' (*Nostromo*).

To analyse the texts of colonialism in its imperialist incarnation is to confront a discourse of triumphalism celebrating gladiatorial skills. Said has drawn attention to Orientalism, with its routine representations of the Orient's feminine penetrability, supine malleability and fertile riches, as 'a praxis of the same sort, albeit in different territories, as male gender dominance, or patriarchy, in metropolitan society' ('Orientalism Reconsidered', p. 23). For Said, this discursive practice, which produces the 'configurations of sexual, racial and political asymmetry underlying mainstream modern western culture', makes it possible to perceive 'the narrow correspondence between suppressed Victorian sexuality at home, its fantasies abroad, and the tightening hold on the male-late nineteenth century imagination of imperialist ideology' (pp. 23–24). This same congruence contextualized within material practices is registered in Raymond Williams's observation that the basic concepts of capitalist and imperialist ideology, 'limitless and conquering expansion, reduction of the labour process to the appropriation and transformation of raw material', repeat the triumphalist version of 'man's conquest of nature', an analogy to which he returns when identifying the capitalist drive to mastery over nature as the foundation of the dominative tendencies pervading bourgeois social relations from labour to sexuality.[46]

In the taxonomy of values enunciated by imperialist discourses – virility, mastery, exploitation, performance, action, leadership, technology, progress – it may be possible to read the strident affirmation of a modernity from which modernism recoiled, a tension that can be studied in the writings of Conrad, that old favourite of literature and empire criticism. Here different languages produce disjunctive ideological sites, as the positivism of fictions registering modernity's thrust to external control and underwriting its freight of moral confidence and certainty (hymned by Kipling as Law, Order, Duty and Restraint, Obedience, Discipline) are disrupted by the ambiguities, doubts, anxieties and alienations of a stylistic modernism. These conflicting inscriptions act to consolidate and disown imperialism's ideological tenets and social

aspirations, and to the extent that such texts are discourses of imperialism, they are also the location of an internal interrogation. The labour of producing a counter-discourse displacing the system of knowledge installed by colonialism and imperialism rests with those engaged in developing a critique from outside its control, and in furthering a contest begun by anti-colonial movements, theorists of colonial discourse will need to pursue the connections between 'epistemic violence' and material aggression, and disclose the relationships between its ideological address to the colonial and metropolitan worlds.

3 Resistance theory/theorizing resistance or two cheers for nativism

> [I]t is not the literal past, the 'facts' of history, that shape us, but images of the past embodied in language . . . we must never cease renewing those images, because once we do, we fossilize.
>
> Brian Friel, *Translations* (1981), p. 66

That the colonized were never successfully pacified is well known to the postcolonial study of colonialism and the long and discontinuous process of decolonization.[1] But proposals on how resistance is to be theorized display faultlines within the discussion that rehearse questions about subjectivity, identity, agency and the status of the reverse-discourse as an oppositional practice, posing problems about the appropriate models for contemporary counter-hegemonic work. An agenda which disdains the objective of restoring the colonized as subject of its own history does so on the grounds that a simple inversion perpetuates the colonizer/colonized opposition within the terms defined by colonial discourse, remaining complicit with its assumptions by retaining undifferentiated identity categories, and failing to contest the conventions of that system of knowledge it supposedly challenges. Instead the project of a postcolonial critique is designated as deconstructing and displacing the eurocentric premises of a discursive apparatus which constructed the Third World not only for the west but also for the cultures so represented.[2]

The performance of such procedures supports Richard Terdiman's contention that 'no discourse is ever a monologue; nor could it ever be analyzed intrinsically . . . everything that constitutes it always presupposes a horizon of competing, contrary utterances against which it asserts its own energies'.[3] However, the statements of the theoretical paradigms, in which it can appear that the efficacy of colonialism's apparatus of social control in effecting strategies of disempowerment is totalized, are liable to be read as producing the colonized as a stable category fixed in a position of subjugation, hence foreclosing on the possibility of theorizing resistance. Even if this is a crass misrepresentation of the project, the colonized's refusals of their assigned positions as subjected and disarticulated are not – and within its terms cannot be – accorded centre stage.

The premise to modes of criticism within the postcolonial critique which are attentive to those moments and processes when the colonized clandestinely or overtly took up countervailing stances is that no system of coercion or hegemony is ever able wholly to determine the range of subject positions. For although the colonial is a product of colonialism's ideological machinery, the formation of its differentiated and

incommensurable subjectivities is the effect of many determinants, numerous interpellations and various social practices.[4] A postcolonial rewriting of past contestation, dependent as it is on a notion of a multiply located native whose positions are provisional, and therefore capable of annulment and transgression, does not restore the foundational, fixed and autonomous individual; what it does resort to is the discourse of the subject inscribed in histories of insubordination produced by anti-colonial movements, deciphered from cryptic cultural forms and redevised from vestiges perpetuated through constant transmutation in popular memory and oral traditions.

There is of course abundant evidence of native disaffection and dissent under colonial rule, of contestation and struggle against diverse forms of institutional and ideological domination. Inscriptions and sign of resistance are discernible in official archives and informal texts, and can be detected in narrativized instances of insurrection and organized political opposition. Traces of popular disobedience can also be recuperated from unwritten symbolic and symptomatic practices which register a rejection or violation of the subject positions assigned by colonialism. Such modes of refusal are not readily accommodated in the anti-colonialist discourses written by the elites of the nationalist and liberation movements since they were not calculated to achieve predetermined political ends or to advance the cause of nation-building, the anarchic and nihilistic energies of defiance and identity-assertion, which were sometimes nurtured by dreams, omens and divination, and could take the form of theatre, violated notions of rational protest.[5]

If we look at the work of contemporary critics recuperating figures of colonial resistance, not from the rhetorical strategies of the dominant discourses but by revisiting dispersed and connotative informal sources, these projects do not appear as preoccupied with victimage, or as enacting a regressive search for an aboriginal and intact condition/tradition from which a proper sense of historicity is occluded – charges which have been made against such undertakings. As an instance of a resistant mode available to the colonized of the Caribbean, Wilson Harris cites limbo dancing, a practice stemming from Africa and reinterpreted on the slave ships of the Middle Passage, and which although indebted to the past – as is voodoo – is not an imitation of that past but rather 'a crucial inner re-creative response to the violations of slavery and indenture and conquest'.[6] Such a strategy 'is not the total recall of an African past since that African past in terms of tribal sovereignty or sovereignties was modified or traumatically eclipsed with the Middle Passage and with generations of change that followed. Limbo was rather the renascence of a new corpus of sensibility that could translate and accommodate African and other legacies within a new architecture of cultures' (*History, Fable and Myth*, p.10).

Does revisiting the repositories of memory and cultural survivals in the cause of postcolonial refashioning have a fixed retrograde valency? Such censure is surely dependent on who is doing the remembering and why. Certainly as Rashmi Bhatnagar suggests, in some situations the mythologizing of beginnings can be suspect 'in that it can unwittingly serve the reactionary forces of revivalism. Nowhere is this danger greater than in the Indian context, where the search for the source of Hindu identity in Vedic times has almost invariably led to a loss of commitment to our contemporary plural/secular identity'.[7] An impulse towards recuperating a very different history marked by discontinuities and erasures is attested by Edouard Glissant, whose repeated references to the Acoma tree intimate that the need to renew or activate memories is

distinct from the uncritical attempt to conserve tradition: 'One of the trees that has disappeared from the Martinican forest. We should not get too attached to the tree, we might then forget the forest. But we should remember it'.[8] In his aphoristic and fragmentary critical writings Glissant urges a postcolonial construction of the past that, far from being a desire to discover a remote paternity, is an imaginative reworking of the process of métissage or an infinite wandering across cultures including those of Africa. Because the slave trade snatched African-Caribbeans from their original matrix, erasing memory and precluding the ability to map a sequence, Glissant contends that it is the function of a contemporary counter-poetics to engender that tormented chronology: 'For history is not only absence for us. It is vertigo. The time that was never ours we must now possess. We do not see it stretch into our past and calmly take us into tomorrow, but it explodes in us as a compact mass, pushing through a dimension of emptiness where we must with difficulty and pain put it all back together' (*Caribbean Discourse*, pp. 161–162).

Since these are definitions of a discursively produced resurgent subjectivity that is volatile, polyglot and unconcerned with discovering the persistence of an original state, it would seem that critics who valorize the identity struggle, and reclaim forms of situated agency asserted in the struggle over representation, do so without returning to the notion of an ahistorical essential and unified self. In this vein Stuart Hall has braved the reprobation directed against ethnic identitarianism, to make a carefully modulated case for decoupling ethnicity from its equivalence with nationalism, imperialism, racism and the state as it functions in the dominant discourse, and appropriating it for a different usage in the current postcolonial discussion: 'The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual'.[9] Now although Hall is wary of postmodernism's 'absolutist discourse', since he considers that 'the politics of absolute dispersal is the politics of no action at all', he defines subjectivity as 'a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found',[10] and identity as an invention 'which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within . . . representation'.[11]

Hall is quite aware of the colonial subject as the product of multiple constitutions, of the contradictions and overdeterminations of postcolonial ideological positions – having written of these as always negotiated and negotiable – and of ethnic and cultural difference as sites of articulation. He has all the same directed attention to the indispensable role played in all colonial struggles by a conception of ' "cultural identity" in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self" . . . which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common'. This, he adds, 'continues to be a very powerful and creative force in emergent forms of representation amongst hitherto marginalized peoples . . . We should not . . . underestimate or neglect . . . the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery which this conception of a rediscovered essential identity entails' ('Cultural Identity and Diaspora', pp. 223–224). And before we pillory Hall for reviving the myth of an organic communality, we should note that he emphasizes the impossibility of its indivisible, homogeneous meaning, recognizing this to be an imaginary reunification, imposing an 'imaginary coherence' on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, and acknowledging that its other side is rupture and discontinuity.

Because in another register Henry Louis Gates, Jr. has reclaimed the ethnos from vilification as false consciousness[12] it could appear that there is a move to restore affect to

the fiction of identity and rather than the toleration extended to its expedient use in political mobilization, we see it embraced as a pleasure, and one that is all the greater because identity is now perceived as multi-located and polysemic – a situation that characterizes postcoloniality and is at its most evident in the diasporic condition. An uninhibited statement of the gratification of inhabiting many cultures and identifying with all oppressions and persecutions, while electing to be affiliated to one's natal community, comes from the artist R. B. Kitaj, in whose paintings Rosa Luxembourg and Walter Benjamin are emblematic figures of that particular and permanent condition of diaspora in which he is at home:

> The compelling destiny of dispersion . . . describes and explains my parable pictures, their dissolutions, repressions, associations, referrals, their text obsessions, the play of difference . . . People are always saying that the meanings in my pictures refuse to be fixed, to be settled, to be stable: that's Diasporism . . . Diasporist art is contradictory at its heart, being both internationalist and particularist . . . The Diasporist's pursuit of a homeless logic of ethnie may be the radical core of a newer art than we can yet imagine . . . the Jews do not own Diaspora, they are not the only Diasporists . . . They are merely mine.[13]

There are moreover critics who testify to the possibility that the identity struggle of one community can serve as a model for other resistant discourses, since the self-definition articulated by, say, the black or the Jew in defiance of received representations can be communicated to different situations of contest against the authority of the dominant by marginals, exiles and subjugated populations.[14]

When we consider the narratives of decolonization, we encounter rhetorics in which 'nativism' in one form or another is evident. Instead of disciplining these, theoretical whip in hand, as a catalogue of epistemological errors, of essentialist mystifications, as a masculinist appropriation of dissent, as no more than an anti-racist racism, etc., I want to consider what is to be gained from an unsententious interrogation of such articulations which, if often driven by negative passion, cannot be reduced to a mere inveighing against iniquities or a repetition of the canonical terms of imperialism's conceptual framework. This of course means affirming the power of the reverse-discourses[15] by arguing that anti-colonialist writings did challenge, subvert and undermine the ruling ideologies, and nowhere more so than in overthrowing the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, the speech and stance of the colonized refusing a position of subjugation and dispensing with the terms of the colonizer's definitions.

The weak and strong forms of oppositional discursive practices have been designated as re/citation and de/citation by Terdiman and counter-identification and disidentification by Michel Pêcheux. For Pêcheux a 'discourse-against' is that in which the subject of enunciation takes up a position of separation 'with respect to what "the universal subject" gives him to think . . . (distantiation, doubt, interrogation, challenge, revolt) . . . a struggle against ideological evidentness on the terrain of that evidentness, an evidentness with a negative sign, reversed on its own terrain'. Disidentification however 'constitutes a working (transformation-displacement) of the subject-form and not just its abolition'.[16] In Terdiman's terms, the technique of re/citation seeks 'to surround the[ir] antagonist and neutralize or explode it'; whereas de/citation, a total withdrawal from

the orbit of the dominant, strives 'to exclude it totally, to expunge it' (*Discourse/Counter Discourse*, pp. 68, 70). Neither writes off the force of the counter-discursive, and Terdiman, who concedes that reverse-discourses are always interlocked with and parasitic on the dominant they contest – working as opposition without effacing the antagonist, inhabiting and struggling with the dominant which inhabits them – maintains that they function to survey the limits and weaknesses of the dominant by mapping the internal incoherences: 'From this dialectic of discursive struggle, truths about the social formation – its characteristic modes of reproduction and its previously hidden vulnerabilities – inevitably emerge' (p. 66).

A recent discussion of nativism condenses many of the current censures of cultural nationalism for its complicity with the terms of colonialism's discourse, with its claims to ancestral purity and inscriptions of monolithic notions of identity cited as evidence of the failure to divest itself of the specific institutional determinations of the west. Although allowing the profound political significance of the decolonized writing themselves as subjects of a literature of their own, Anthony Appiah's critique, which is principally directed against its current forms, extends to older (all?) articulations. In exposing the operation of a 'nativist topology' – inside/outside, indigene/alien, western/traditional – it installs a topology of its own, where the colonizer is dynamic donor and the colonized is docile recipient, where the west initiates and the native imitates. Thus while the reciprocity of the colonial relationship is stressed, all power remains with western discourse. For example: 'the overdetermined course of cultural nationalism in Africa has been to make real the imaginary identities to which Europe has subjected us'; the rhetoric of 'intact indigenous traditions' and the very conception of an African personality and an African past are European inventions; the Third World intellectual is europhone, immersed in the language and literature of the colonial countries.[17] These statements could be modulated without underplaying or obscuring a necessary registration of western discursive power: Europe's fabrications of 'Africa' were deflected and subverted by African, Caribbean and African-American literary discourses; 'African identity' is the product of refusing Europe's gaze and returning its own anti-colonialist look; europhone colonials transgress their immersion in European languages and literatures, seizing and diverting vocabularies, metaphors and literary traditions.

The occasion for Appiah's case against nativism is *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. The authors, Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, invite censure for taking an unqualified position on cultural autonomy, but their object is a critique of cultural nationalism's entrapment in a reverse-discourse:

> Railing against the cultural hegemony of the West, the nativists are of its party without knowing it. Indeed the very arguments, the rhetoric of defiance, that our nationalists muster are . . . canonical, time tested . . . in their ideological inscription, the cultural nationalists remain in a position of counteridentification . . . which is to continue to participate in an institutional configuration – to be subjected to cultural identities they ostensibly decry . . . Time and time again, cultural nationalism followed the route of alternate genealogizing. We end up always in the same place; the achievement is to have invented a different past for it.
>
> ('Out of Africa', pp. 162, 170)

The effect of this argument is to homogenize the varieties of nationalisms and to deny both originality and effectivity to its reverse-discourses. Such a contention is disputed by Partha Chatterjee's study; for despite a subtitle (a derivative discourse) encouraging selective citation in the interest of relegating nationalist thought as mimetic, and while recognizing the inherent contradiction of its reasoning within a framework serving a structure of power it seeks to repudiate, the book is concerned to establish its difference: 'Its politics impel it to open up that framework of knowledge that presumes to dominate it, to displace that framework, to subvert its authority, to challenge its morality'.[18]

Some of the implications of arguments according a totalizing power to colonialist discourses emerge in Rosalind O'Hanlon's discussion of current research concerned to emphasize the British 'invention' of nineteenth-century caste as a challenge to 'the notion of an ageless caste-bound social order', but which maximizes the effectivity of 'colonial conjuring', and by occluding the 'complex and contradictory engagements with colonialist categories . . . often produces a picture of Indian actors who are helpless to do anything but reproduce the structures of their own subordination'.[19] In this connection Ranajit Guha's eloquent inventory establishing the presence of an 'Indian idiom of politics' discernible in the many languages of the subcontinent, demonstrates that the modes of subaltern colonial resistance, far from being determined by forms and vocabularies borrowed from the dominant culture, were rearticulations of pre-colonial traditions of protest.[20]

Mindful of Robert Young's caution that the search for a nativist alternative may simply represent 'the narcissistic desire to find an other that will reflect western assumptions of selfhood' (*White Mythologies*, p. 165), I will argue that something quite different animates those modes of postcolonial critique concerned to reconstruct a story from tales, legends and idioms which are themselves transcriptions and improvisations of dissent that was never formally narrativized, and to produce an uncensorious but critical interrogation of colonial resistance when they were. It will be evident that the interest of such readings is to retain in the discussion that realm of imaginary freedom which these histories prefigured or configured, as well as to register decolonizing struggles as an emancipatory project despite the egregious failures these brought in their wake. Although the assumption here is that the discourses or discursive retracings of past dissidence come to us already encoded with the elements of a counter-narrative (which diminishes the critics' claim to be performing the insurgent act), it is we who by appropriating it to our theoretical purposes alter the material, in the process making visible its erasures, suppressions and marginalizations, evident for example in the foregrounding of male figures of praxis and authority.

Elleke Boehmer's discussion of narratives of nationalist recuperation, identity reconstruction and nation formation shows how images of the female body were used to embody ideals of the wholeness of subjectivity, history and the state. Thus, while reversing colonialist iconography figuring penetration, pillage and dismemberment – 'repression upon the objectified, enslaved, colonised body' – such invocations of the female body 'rest upon the assumption of predominantly masculine authority and historical agency', nationalism's core concepts nesting in the metaphor of the maternal body. Because, Boehmer argues, postcolonial discourses of self-determination 'have a considerable investment in nationalist concepts of "selving" and of retrieving history, the gender specifics of nationalist iconography are accepted, or borne with, or overlooked', the deconstructions of such configurations only now being effected in postcolonial

literatures.[21] In a related register, Ella Shohat writes that 'Anti-colonial intellectuals, though not particularly preoccupied with gender issues, have . . . used gender tropes to discuss colonialism', Césaire and Fanon implicitly subverting representations of rape by violent dark men and cultures, and fantasies of rescuing virginal white and at times dark women, 'while at the same time using gendered discourse to articulate oppositional struggle'.[22] Where Shohat seems to be overstating her case is in suggesting that stories of sexual violence against Third World women are 'relatively privileged' over those of violence towards Third World men.

Such attention to the retention of patriarchal positions in anti-colonialist discourses points up the inadvisability of using the sources to write an optimistic narrative of liberation struggles as 'ideologically correct'. But in order to do justice to their histories – to borrow a phrase from Jonathan Dollimore[23] – it is surely necessary to refrain from a sanctimonious reproof of modes of writing resistance which do not conform to contemporary theoretical rules about discursive radicalism. Instead I would argue that the task is to address the empowering effects of constructing a coherent identity or of cherishing and defending against calumniation altered and mutable indigenous forms, which is not the same as the hopeless attempt to locate and revive pristine and intact pre-colonial cultures.[24] It is an unwillingness to abstract resistance from its moment of performance that informs my discussion of Césaire and Fanon as authors of liberation theories which today could stand accused of an essentialist politics. For, as I read them, both affirm the invention of an insurgent, unified black self, acknowledge the revolutionary energies released by valorizing the cultures denigrated by colonialism and, rather than construing the colonialist relationship in terms of negotiations with the structures of imperialism, privilege coercion over hegemony to project it as a struggle between implacably opposed forces – an irony made all too obvious in enunciations inflected, indeed made possible, by these very negotiations.

These remarks are a prelude to my considering whether those articulations of cultural nationalism I examine can be disposed of as a reverse ethnocentrism which simply reproduces existing categories, performing an identical function and producing the same effects as the system it contests. My route will be to Fanon via Négritude, an unsafe road since, despite its heterogeneous languages and its interrogations of western thought, this body of writing is routinely disparaged as the most exorbitant manifestation of a mystified ethnic essentialism, as an undifferentiated and retrograde discourse installing notions of a foundational and fixed native self, and demagogically asserting the recovery of an immutable past. Perhaps this would account for the current tendency to ignore Fanon's voyage into and then around Négritude or to dismiss it as a detour not mapped onto his theories. However, as the path of his project passed through the thickets of uncertain affiliation and irresolute withholding before emerging as unequivocal denunciation, this suggests that the appointment of Fanon as exemplar of anti-colonialist theory liberated from identitarian thinking should perhaps be qualified.

In his critique of decolonizing discourses Edward Said suggests a progression from nativist through nationalist to liberation theory. While acknowledging the transgressive energies of the former in deranging the discourses of domination ranged against the colonized, and recognizing the achievement of nationalist movements in winning statutory independence for the occupied territories, it is liberation writing which is credited with producing a politics of secular illumination, articulating a transformation of social

consciousness beyond ethnicity and reconceiving the possibilities of human experience in non-imperialist terms.[25] Not only are the stages less disjunct than the periodization suggests – messianic movements and Pan-Africanism were utopian in their goals, Nkrumah's nationalism was not exclusively Africanist, acknowledging as it did the recombinant qualities of a culture which had developed through assimilating Arabic and western features, and so on – but the liberation theory of Fanon and Césaire was more impure than is here indicated, 'nativism' remaining audible despite the strenuous endorsements of a post-European, transnational humanism as the ultimate goal. Négritude's moment of articulation and reception – before the nationalist movements in Africa and the Caribbean had gained momentum, but after Marxist critiques of colonialism had been developed within the Indian independence struggle – may testify both to its originality as a cultural-political position and its limitations as an ideology. Many of the contemporary objections to Négritude came from those who had welcomed its inception, and were delivered from a Marxist standpoint. These can be arranged into the following categories: systemized mystification construing 'black being' as irrational and 'black culture' as genetically determined, unified and transnational, thus fostering the universalizing myth of a unified black identity in the face of its multiplicity and diversity; political error in failing to represent the anti-colonial struggle as the national liberation of all classes, or to acknowledge the specificities of each national culture in the colonized world and, in the case of the Caribbean, in driving a wedge between African and other oppressed communities; theoretical error in distorting African worldviews and overlooking that the synthesizing of indigenous with foreign elements in the colonized world had issued in complex and particularized modes of mestizaje or creolization[26] – sometimes, though rarely, this fusing being differently represented as the reconciliation of the African with the western, or even complete cultural acclimatization to the west.[27]

What is notable is that many critics of Négritude were prepared either to concede its liberating effects in fostering new modes of consciousness[28] or to offer alternative means of constituting reconceived identities. To counter the mystifications of Négritude, the Haitian writer Jacques Stéphen Alexis in the 1950s proposed 'marvellous realism' as a literary practice appropriate to producing the fantastic reality of the Caribbean's broken histories, different temporalities and creolized cultural identities.[29] In another register, René Depestre, who dissociated himself from Négritude's indifference to the diverse material conditions of cultural constitution and national character, emphasized the 'syncretic elaboration of cultural elements taken from Africa and Europe', offering an alternative and not dissimilar programme of ideological 'cimarronaje' as the means for Caribbeans to resist depersonalization: 'This cultural escape is an original form of rebellion which has manifested itself in religion, in folklore, in art and singularly in Caribbean literatures, the people in search of their identity becoming aware of the validity of their African heritage latent in our society'.[30]

The sustained attack on Négritude as an irrational ideology which perpetuated western stereotypes came during the 1960s from a new generation of African philosophers and intellectuals concerned to expose the errors in notions of Africanism and the African personality. Scholars such as Stanislas Adotevi, Marcien Towa and Paulin Hountondji attacked notions of the African as an intuitive being, of a fixed black essence and a static African culture, and dismissed 'ethnophilosophy' for failing to distinguish between cultural anthropology and philosophy's critical activity when

attempting to demonstrate the existence of a distinctive African mode of philosophical thinking. According to Abiola Irele,[31] Hountondji refuses to concede 'any positive significance to the effort to rehabilitate African culture', asserting that the relationship between Négritude and the ideology it intends to combat revealed 'a peculiar ambiguity, a pathetic correspondence between the terms of African affirmation and the opposite system of ideas or representations proposed by the colonial ideology in its image of Africa' (p. 147). The revolutionary socialist Towa, however, despite his repudiation of a cultural nationalism that seeks to resuscitate a heritage of past values irrelevant to the modernizing preoccupations and goals of contemporary Africa, as well as his hostility to the state Négritude of Senegal and the Cameroons, acknowledges the inspiration of Césaire and has referred to him as the prophet of the revolution of black people: 'he announced the freedom of the Black [Négre], he prophesied with his great voice the "Beautiful City", a world in which the Black could be himself, master of his destiny'.[32]

The presence of absolutist denunciations of Négritude makes it necessary to recall its historical juncture and to differentiate between the articulations subsumed under its rubric. As a structure of feeling and a seizure of the means of self-representation by a rebellious elite, Négritude was anticipated by the literary movement of the nineteenth century in Haiti and in the United States by the Back to Africa movements and later by Dubois' Pan-Negroism and Pan-Africanism.[33] The definitive articulations of Négritude are however usually attributed to the activities of students, writers and intellectuals from the French colonies, who were closely associated with African-American expatriates in Paris during the early 1930s, the prime movers being Léopold Sedar Senghor from Senegal, Aimé Césaire from Martinique and Léon Damas from French Guinea. (The subsequent dissemination of the movements was promoted by Alioune Diop's *Présence Africaine* which began publication in 1947.) Irele has characterized Négritude as the francophone equivalent of Pan-Africanism and a distinct current in African national consciousness and cultural nationalism.[34] All the same, the extent to which Négritude was embraced by the African-Caribbean diaspora is significant both to the willed construction of Africa as a country of the mind, rather than a representation of a geohistorical place, to the notion of 'Africa' as the homeland of dispersed populations in search of solidarity, and to the construing of black identity as creolized and dislocated. Here it could be noted that if there were exponents prone to definitions of an intrinsic black nature and a unified black culture centred on an eternal Africa, others deployed 'black' as a multi-accented signifier of oppression and resistance, energizing a discursive stance from which colonialism's most eloquent creatures interrogated the essentializing definitions foisted on peoples of African origins. In this mode, exemplified by Césaire's poetry, Négritude is not a recovery of a pre-existent state, but a textually invented history, an identity effected through figurative operations, and a tropological construction of blackness as a sign of the colonized condition and its refusal.

Commentators on Négritude tend to distinguish between Senghor's biologically determined notion of blackness as a distinctive mode of being and a collective identity in which emotion and intuition are located as the essential attributes of race (though Senghor did insist on the actuality and desirability of cross-cultural fertilization), and Césaire's historical/cultural concept. Arnold, however, suggests that at the outset their views approximated, both having been influenced by the obscurantist ethnological notions of the subsequently discredited Frobenius, and by anti-rational philosophers such as Spengler and Bergson. But by the 1940s Césaire, at the time a member of the

Communist Party, with which he broke in 1958,[35] was concerned in his analysis of colonialism as economic exploitation and cultural aggression to establish a theoretical rather than a metaphysical basis to Négritude, hence rejecting the attempt to define a uniquely African world-view. The perspective in his *Discourse on Colonialism* is resolutely transnational and, while honouring an ante-European past, looks to a post-European future, the dossier on the west's sham humanism anticipating Fanon's execration in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> The Indians massacred, the Moslem world drained of itself, the Chinese world defiled and perverted for a good century; the Negro world disqualified; mighty voices stilled forever; all this wreckage, all this waste, humanity reduced to a monologue, and you think that all this does not have its price? The truth is that this policy *cannot but bring about the ruin of Europe itself*, and that Europe, if it is not careful, will perish from the void it has created around itself . . . what else has bourgeois Europe done? It has undermined civilizations, destroyed countries, ruined nationalities, extirpated 'the root of diversity'.[36]

Where Césaire is sure to be faulted by those who deplore nativist nostalgia is in his lament for what colonialism has destroyed: 'the wonderful Indian civilizations – and neither Deterding nor Royal Dutch nor Standard Oil will ever console me for the Aztecs and the Incas . . . [for] extraordinary possibilities wiped out . . . for my part I make a systematic defence of the non-European civilizations . . . They were communal societies, never societies of the many for the few. They were societies that were not only ante-capitalist . . . but also anti-capitalist . . . I systematically defend our old Negro civilizations, they were courteous civilizations' (*Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 20, 22–23, 31).

An explicit reconstruction of Négritude's beginnings can be found in Césaire's 1967 interview with the Haitian writer and political activist René Depestre, where he speaks of the programme as a collective creation of Africans, North Americans, Antilleans, Guianans and Haitians who came together in Paris during the 1930s to give expression to their struggle against alienation and the politics of assimilation:

> We adopted the word négre as a term of defiance . . . We found a violent affirmation in the words négre and Négritude . . . it is a concrete rather than an abstract coming to consciousness . . . We lived in an atmosphere of rejection, and we developed an inferiority complex . . . I have always thought that the black man was searching for his identity. And . . . if what we want is to establish this identity, then we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are – that is of the first fact of our lives: that we are black; that we were black and have a history . . . [that] there have been beautiful and important black civilizations . . . that its values were values that could still make an important contribution to the world.
>
> (*Discourse on Colonialism*, 1972, pp. 74, 76)

This concrete coming to consciousness was realized by Césaire as a poet; and because many of the writings of Négritude are open to some or all of the charges made against it as an ideological tendency, any argument that as a literary practice it performed a textual struggle for self-representation in which the indeterminacy of language ruptured

fixed configurations, invented a multivalent blackness, and wrenched 'Africa' out of its time-bound naming and into new significations, is most readily made by referring to his overdetermined and polysemic poetry. Although made possible, as he concedes, by surrealism, this exceeded the influence of European modes and violated its forms in what Arnold calls a 'sophisticated hybridization, corrosion and parody' of western traditions.[37]

In an essay on Césaire, James Clifford argues for uncoupling his coinage of Négritude from the 'elaboration of a broad black identity' and attaching it to 'very specific affirmations and negations',[38] citing the passage in *Notebook* beginning 'my Négritude is not . . .' (see below, p. 47). However, Clifford's selective citation of 'The verb "marronner" / for René Depestre, Haitian poet' suggests that the trajectory of his case is directed at dissociating Césaire from Négritude. The poem, written in 1955 and subsequently published in numerous revised versions, was Césaire's response to Depestre's ready compliance with the Communist Party's decree against surrealism and for accessible and committed verse. Clifford's reading is appropriately concerned with how 'Césaire makes rebellion and the remaking of culture – the historical maroon experience – into a . . . necessary new verb [that] names the New World poetics of continuous transgression and cooperative cultural activity' (*The Predicament of Culture*, p. 181). But what is occluded is, as Arnold argues, that the poem appeals to Depestre not to abandon his Négritude – 'Courageous tom tom rider / it true that you mistrust the native forest / is it possible / that the rains of exile / have slackened the drum skin of your voice?' – entreating him to 'escape the shackles of European prosody' (Arnold), just as in the past slaves had escaped from bondage, to this end coining the neologism 'marronner': 'shall we escape like slaves Depestre, like slaves' (in an earlier version this read: 'Let's escape them Depestre let's escape them / As in the past we escaped our whip-wielding masters').[39]

It is possible to disregard Césaire's account of his intentions when he speaks of his poetry as a way to break the stranglehold of accepted French form in order to create a new language, 'an Antillean French, a black French . . . one capable of communicating the African heritage' (*Discourse on Colonialism*, pp. 66–67). However, we cannot overlook that poetry which adapted the structure of some African languages, and drew on African folklore and cosmologies, does effect an identification with Africa – 'from brooding too long on the Congo / I have become a Congo resounding with forests and rivers' (*Collected Poetry*, p. 51) – and does construct an imaginary Africa as signifier of the legacy shared by Africans of the continent and the diaspora. The 'Guinea' of Césaire's 'Ode to Guinea', written before the name was adopted by post-independence territories, is the mythic land of the Caribbean creole languages – the 'Africa' or 'Guinea' that is the heaven of black peoples – and the 'Ethiopia' of 'Ethiopia / for Alioune Diop' embodies what Eshleman and Smith call 'the dignity lost to other African peoples', a location occupying a special place in 'the personal mythology of Négritude writers'.[40] By rewriting the stories of Africa's long oppressions – see 'All the way from Akkad, from Elam, from Sumer' and 'Africa' – Césaire derives an ethos common to all blacks, out of which an anti-colonial and ultimately an anti-capitalist identity can be constituted, as in 'A salute to the Third World / for Leopold Sedar Senghor' where connections between the Caribbean dispersal and the African motherland are forged before gesturing towards a larger and more inclusive solidarity.

Arnold's attention to the shifting values produced by images of blackness in *Notebook of a Return to a Native Land* convinces that this is indeed 'The epic of Négritude' and a

classic in the literature of decolonization. What Arnold traces is how through the creation of a new style, the transformation of black consciousness and the self-construction of an African-Caribbean identity is enacted, the neologism 'Négritude' occurring both to hail past glories in Haiti and to signify abjection before its 'third and decisive statement of Négritude' as reconciled to itself:[41] 'my Négritude is not a stone, its deafness hurled against the clamour of the day . . . / 'my Négritude is neither tower nor cathedral / it takes root in the red flesh of the soil / it takes root in the ardent flesh of the sky' (*Collected Poetry*, pp. 67, 69). As an instance of what Ella Shohat calls the use of gendered discourse in articulating anti-colonialist struggles, she cites Césaire's remark about adventurers violating Africa 'to make the stripping of her easier' ('Imagining Terra Incognita', p. 57). Yet although his poetry does invoke Africa as inscribed on the woman's body (see 'Ode to Guinea', 'Hail to Guinea Africa, 'Ethiopia' and 'A Salute to the Third World'), and while the authoritative voice is masculine, the figure of suffering and endurance is not invariably the woman, and in *Notebook* the trope of Négritude is doubly gendered: 'all our blood aroused by the male heart of the sun / those who know about the femininity of the moon's oily body / the reconciled exultation of antelope and star / those whose survival travels in the germination of grass! / Eia perfect circle of the world, enclosed concordance' (*Collected Poetry*, p. 69).

The multivalencies of Césaire's Négritude pre-empt both closure and fixity, making it available to rearticulations covering other modes of oppression. It has since been reinvoked by national liberation movements and continues to be renewed in unforeseen ways within the postcolonial critique – as when James Snead, while acknowledging the necessity of preserving the specificity of historical experience, commends a 'broad-based, even militant usage of the term black as a unifying metaphor', as an object of cultural identification and ideological bonding;[42] or when Kobena Mercer looks back to the redefinition of black identity in Britain during the early 1980s as 'an empowering signifier of Afro-Asian alliances'.[43] What was it then in Négritude that caused Fanon to recognize it as liberating and resist it as mystifying before launching a concerted attack which was at pains to signal that its hold on his thinking had been relinquished?

Whereas Mudimbe's account of the movement is modulated, his summary of Fanon's relationship to Négritude – namely that an initial affiliation gave way to a position based on situating African ideologies of otherness as the antithesis to colonialist constitution, the synthesis to be realized in political liberation – tends to smooth over the persistent instabilities in Fanon's writings, where proclamations of a future beyond ethnicity continue to be intercepted by affirmations of the immediate need to construct an insurgent black subjectivity. In another register, what Abiola Irele neglects when he claims that Césaire's poetry provided 'the essential ground-plan for Fanon's phenomenological reflection on black existence' in *Black Skin, White Masks* ('Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa', p. 38) is that, despite its many salutations to Césaire's liberating influences and its moments of unstable identification, the study effects the problematization of Négritude. Fanon may well have perceived his mode of thinking as dialectical; however, the language of his flamboyant writing (he wrote a number of plays which he chose not to publish) is witness to the conflicting predications remaining disjunct. Although such incommensurability is especially marked in *Black Skin, White Masks*, where Marxism coexists with existentialism and psychoanalysis, scholarly citation is juxtaposed to anecdote, and the torsions of self-analysis are precariously balanced

against the poised interpretation of a historical condition, none of his writings – with the exception of the last section of *The Wretched of the Earth* – is without the discord of incompatible testimony. Hence I will argue that Fanon's writings function at a point of tension between cultural nationalism and transnationality, without 'resolving' the contradiction and without yielding an attachment to the one or the aspiration to the other.

It is this 'historical Fanon' who never quite abandoned 'all fixity of identity', an ironic figure who resists recuperation as the paradigmatic figure of liberation theory that is recognized by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.[44] Thus when Fanon moved from the many different first-person-singular voices deployed in the psychoautobiography of an assimilated and insulted Martinican tempted by Négritude, to the 'we' of Algerians and unspecified African communities in polemical writings proclaiming a new international community, he continued to concede the importance of valorizing pre-colonial histories and cultures that had been systematically disfigured and devalued by colonialism: 'it was with the greatest delight that they discovered that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity. The claim to a national culture in the past does not only rehabilitate that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture. In the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native'.[45]

As I read it, both an intellectual apprehension of blackness as a construct ('what is often called the black soul is a white man's artefact')[46] and a visceral attachment to the powerful fiction of black identity are always evident in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the language of criticism repeatedly interrupted by articulations of empathy with the impulse. What I will try to trace is how the precise statements of intention as laid down in the introduction – i.e. a clinical study of the attitudes of the modern Antillean Negro and a psychopathological explanation of the state of being an Antillean Negro – mutate into the multi-vocal enunciations of the essays that follow, and where the stated brief is exceeded when specified Negroes are displaced by 'the Negro' in the white world. (All existing translations of Fanon use this term for the black person of African descent.) At the start, Fanon outlines his project as the attempt to effect the disalienation of the depersonalized Negro by offering a psychological analysis of the massive psychoexistential complex produced through the juxtaposition of the white and black races. Although a passage from Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* serves as the epigraph, and the importance of social and economic realities is acknowledged, no further reference is made to colonialism as the specific situation of the pathological juxtaposition. What is given space in an address directed at white and black brothers is the perspective of transcending the present and an insistence that if the existing structure is to be eliminated and the Negro extricated from his universe, then unilateral liberation is insufficient.

So here we find the vision of a condition beyond ethnicity already in place – 'I believe that the individual should tend to take on the universality inherent in the human condition' – while the attempt of blacks 'to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect' (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 12) is designated as a symptom of that vicious circle where whites are sealed in their whiteness and blacks in their blackness. To break out of this entrapment, fervour is eschewed, and digging into one's flesh to find meaning is scorned, the narrative voice in 'The Fact of Blackness' distancing itself from its portrayal of the desperate struggle of the educated Negro, 'slave of the spontaneous and cosmic Negro myth . . . driven to discover the

meaning of black identity', who 'with rage in his mouth and abandon in his heart . . . buries himself in the vast black abyss' (p. 16).

The incommensurable enunciations of *Black Skin, White Masks* produce a dissonance that is something other than ambivalence, for the adoption of heuristic procedures in order to establish Négritude as a pathology involves the speaking subject voicing opposing stances with an equally passionate intensity – the process of discovering a black identity and history registering intimacy with that impulse simultaneously with recoil from the extravagance of its rhetoric and its recourse to the paralogical (see especially pp. 113, 115, 122–127). The graph of this learning process – if this is what it is – continues when the speaker adopts the stance of one who turns to antiquity in order to establish black creativity and achievement. Up to and including this moment, and let us suppose always in forensic mode, the strategies of affirming blackness, embracing unreason and reclaiming the past had been explored and found wanting, every move having been determined and countermanded by the white world's demands and reactions: 'every hand was a losing hand for me' (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 132). But how are we to read the protest against Sartre which is delivered in a register of unalloyed identification when the speaker takes up the position of that black person who had determined 'on the level of ideas and intellectual activity to reclaim my Négritude', only to find that 'it was snatched away from me . . . Proof was presented that my effort was only a term in the dialectic . . . I felt I had been robbed of my last chance' (pp. 132–133).

This is a reference to Sartre's *Black Orpheus*, which Fanon designates as 'a date in the intellectualization of the *experience* of being black' when challenging its mistake not only in seeking 'the source of the source' but in blocking that source (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 134).[47] Sartre's essay applauded the act whereby the oppressed seized a word hurled at them as an insult and turned it into a means of vindication, while at the same time relegating the movement as 'the weak stage of a dialectical progression'. In his schema, the theory and practice of white supremacy is the thesis, and Négritude the moment of negativity and thus dedicated to its own destruction: 'it is passage and not objective, means and not ultimate goal' (*Black Orpheus*, p. 60), this being the passing into the objective, positive, exact notion of the proletariat. Despite this, Sartre commended the fashioning of a black subjectivity and the invention of an 'Africa beyond reach, imaginary continent' (p. 19), grasping as others since have not always done the revolutionary project carried out by poets of Négritude who, in 'degallicizing' the oppressor's language, shattered its customary associations.

Is Fanon wearing one of the many masks he dons for exegetical purposes when he accuses Sartre of attributing Négritude to the forces of history? 'And so it is not I who make a meaning for myself, but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for me' (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 134). This anger appears to be sustained when he censures the born Hegelian for forgetting that to attain consciousness of self, to grasp one one's own being, 'consciousness has to lose itself in the night of the absolute' (p. 133). In destroying black zeal, what Sartre had failed to understand was that 'I needed to lose myself completely in Négritude . . . in terms of consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal . . . My Negro consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It is its own follower' (p. 135).[48]

If this could appear to be a vindication of Négritude's project, then in the last chapters, specified in the introduction as an attempt at 'a psychopathological and

philosophical explanation of the state of being a Negro' (p. 15), Fanon again disavows not only the Antillean Negroes' attempt to be white but the effort to maintain their alterity – 'Alterity of rupture, of conflict, of battle' (p. 222). By the time of the conclusion, the impulse to discover a black past is unequivocally repudiated: 'In no way should I dedicate myself to the revival of an unjustly unrecognized Negro civilization' (p. 226), the denunciations moving towards a lofty detachment – 'I do not have the right to allow myself to be mired in what the past has determined. I am not the slave of the Slavery that dehumanized my ancestors . . . The body of history does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation' (pp. 230–231) – before rising/collapsing into the utopianism of his ultimate desire: 'That it may be possible for me to discover and to love man, wherever he may be. The Negro is not. Any more than the white man' (p. 231).

The drama of consciousness performed in *Black Skin, White Masks* can be read as Fanon directing a scenario in which the players are alienated Antillean blacks learning or being weaned from the errors of both assimilation and Négritude, and hence as charting the move from the reactional, in which there is always resentment, to the actional. But perhaps it traces the path of the author effecting his own cure within the space of its pages – Négritude marking the transgressive moment of emergence from the colonized condition, and the transition from Négritude to universal solidarity signalling disalienation and the transcendence of ethnicity. The problem here is that subsequent writings replay the dilemma of fashioning/disavowing black identity. Some years later in 'West Indians and Africans' Fanon continued to affirm Césaire's positive influence in valorizing what West Indians had rejected, teaching them to look in the direction of Africa, and instead of identifying with and mimicking the white world, recognizing themselves as transplanted children of black slaves. But now, writing in the third person about the West Indian, Fanon detaches himself from what he had proclaimed in the first person as a transformation of consciousness, by denying the existence of a Negro people, deriding the Africa of the West Indian imagination – 'Africa the hard and the beautiful, Africa exploding with anger, tumultuous bustle, splash, Africa land of truth' – and pronouncing: 'It thus seems that the West Indian, after the great white error, is now living in the great black mirage'.[49]

The retreat from a wavering empathy with Négritude becomes an ambiguous critique in Fanon's address to the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956, reprinted as 'Racism and Culture' in *Toward the African Revolution*. In his disobliging account of the meeting, where he intimates that the agenda was incoherent and the platform much given to demagogy, James Baldwin observes that what Césaire left out of his eloquent speech reviling the colonial experience was precisely that it had produced men like himself. Since this is now something of a platitude, it is notable that Fanon did not dwell on his own colonialist formation, concentrating instead on colonialism as expropriation and spoliation matched by 'the sacking of cultural patterns', the natives having been induced by the overwhelming power and authority of the oppressor to repudiate their original forms of existence ('Racism and Culture', p. 33). Having earlier protested at Sartre's relegation of Négritude to a minor term, Fanon now essentially follows his model, and while like Sartre he commends black affirmations in the face of white insult, the negative/positive evaluations of cultural revaluations interrupt each other in a double-voiced critique of the native intellectual's abrupt movement from ardent assimilation to the swooning before tradition: 'This culture, abandoned,

sloughed off, neglected, despised, becomes for the interiorized an object of passionate attachment. . . . The culture put into capsules, which has vegetated since the foreign domination, is revalorized. It is not reconceived, grasped anew, dynamized from within . . . The past, becoming henceforth, a constellation of values, becomes identified with the Truth' (pp. 41, 43). But at the moment when a reader could assume that this predicates a total rejection of Négritude's project, the perspective again shifts when cultural affirmation is marked as a necessary moment in the realization of a combative position: 'This rediscovery, this absolute valorization almost in defiance of reality, objectively indefensible, assumes an incomparable and subjective importance . . . the plunge into the chasm of the past is the condition and source of freedom' (p. 43).

Fanon's argument characterizes native culture under colonialism as inert, rigid and uncreative, with the natives reduced to despising their indigenous modes of existence – assertions for which much countervailing evidence can be adduced. However, for Fanon it was only when the movement for decolonization was set in motion that there occurred a qualitative leap from stagnation to modernity, from passivity to insurgency. It is this 'zone of occult instability where the people dwell . . . that fluctuating movement which they are just giving a shape to' (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 182) that remains unknown to those native writers and artists who, lagging behind the people and going against the current of history by seeking to revive abandoned traditions, forget 'that the forms of thought and what it feeds on, together with modern techniques of information, language and dress have dialectically reorganized the peoples' intelligences' (p. 181). Hence his eloquent defence of the natives' discovery of the past as a means of rehabilitation is countermanded when, and as it were in the same breath, disdain is directed at the recovery of old legends that will be 'interpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies . . . the poetic tom-tom rhythms breaking through the poetry of revolt' (pp. 179–181). In Fanon's argument the condition of possibility for producing a literature of combat is that writers take up arms on the side of the people, since only such writings will mould the national consciousness, 'giving it form and contours and flinging open before it new and boundless horizons' (p. 193). That he could be formulaic in his appreciation of the arts is apparent in his comments on the blues as the black slave's lament, 'offered up for the admiration of the oppressor', and his prophecies that the 'end of racism would sound the knell of great Negro music' (p. 37), or that as soon as the Negro comes to an understanding of himself, the jazz howl that whites perceived as an expression of niggerhood will be replaced by 'his trumpet sound[ing] more clearly and his voice less hoarsely' (p. 195).[50]

Fanon's writings on national culture can be read as a response to Césaire's address to the First Congress in 1956 where, in countering Senghor's metaphysical version of Négritude, he had argued that whereas a culture must be national, a civilization can be supranational, and that whereas specific African cultures had been decimated by enforced dispersal and colonial aggression, important elements of an African civilization had persisted.[51] By this time Fanon's disenchantment with the official cultural nationalism of the newly independent African states had been exacerbated by the apostasy to the cause of the national liberation struggles of its most eloquent exponents. Senghor had underwritten De Gaulle's proposed Franco-African community and withheld Senegal's support for the Algerian liberation struggle; Césaire had backed the

constitutional referendum on the Fifth Republic whereby Martinique would become an overseas department of France, and Jacques Rabemananjara of Malagasy had voted against the Algerian people in the General Assembly of the United Nations (I will evade any questions of whether a theorist's public acts can be held to invalidate the theories he or she espouses). Fanon now took the position that any notion of a continental African culture, of 'Negroism', was a blind alley, stressing instead the heterogeneity of Negro and African-Negro cultures and the different concrete problems confronting specific black populations, and insisting that solidarity was forged not in declamations of a common culture but in political struggle. In his statement to the Second Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Rome in 1959 ('On National Culture', in *The Wretched of the Earth*), Fanon declared that culture is necessarily the expression of the nation, just as the nation is the condition of culture, once again pointing to the error of the native intellectual's ways, whether assimilationist or 'Negroist'. Distinguishing between national consciousness and nationalism, Fanon maintained that the former was the most elaborate form of culture, and declared that the national period was the necessary space for the growth of an international dimension and of universalizing values.[52]

To the end there are signs of Fanon's links with the Négritude movement – the title of his last essays taken from *The Internationale* had previously been adapted by Jacques Roumain in a poem calling for a black revolt against the bourgeois white world, and he remained in touch with the editors of *Présence Africaine*.[53] Yet his repudiation of Négritude in his 1959 address to the Congress is unqualified: like Trotsky, who scorned the notion a proletarian culture since the proletariat would be abolished on the attainment of classless society, Fanon now rejected black culture as an abstract populism: 'To believe that it is possible to create a black culture is to forget that niggers are disappearing, just as those people who brought them into being are seeing the break-up of their economic and cultural supremacy ('On National Culture', pp. 188–189). This optimism of the intellect is what Albert Memmi addresses when he remarks that for Fanon 'the day oppression ceases, the new man is supposed to appear before our eyes immediately',[54] although it should be noted that Fanon predicated this leap into the future, this instant emancipation, on the transformative powers of a principled decolonizing struggle: 'After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of the colonized man . . . This new humanity cannot do otherwise than define a new humanism for itself and others. It is prefigured in the objectives and methods of the conflict' (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 197).

The verso of these epiphanies to a future transcending ethnicity and nationalism is a measured demystification of Europe's 'spiritual adventure' undertaken at the expense of the rest of the world, and a call that the oppressed should slough off enslavement to its values by recognizing the failure of its claims: 'Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth' (*Wretched of the Earth*, p. 253). Here Fanon's writings appear as prematurely postcolonialist and are reminiscent of what Anthony Appiah, in discussing Ouologuem's 'postrealist' novels, describes as writings of delegitimation that inscribe a postnativist politics and a transnational rather than a national solidarity: 'they reject not only the western imperium but also the nationalist project of the postcolonial national bourgeoisie . . . the basis for that project of delegitimation cannot be the postmodernist one: rather it is grounded in an appeal to an ethical universal'.[55] In turning away from Europe as a source and model of

meanings and aspirations, Fanon's last writings look not to the fulfilment of the Enlightenment's ideals within the existing order but to decolonization as the agency of a transfigured social condition; hence holding in place that vision of the anti-colonial struggle as a global emancipatory project and projecting the radical hope of a realized humanism.

4 Signs of the times

Bhabha's essays, written over more than a decade and in circulation for some time before their publication in a collected edition in 1994,[1] are a strong articulation of the linguistic turn in cultural studies. The book which is distinguished by Bhabha's insistence on the absolute primacy of discourse, appeared at a time when there were already signs of a challenge to critical modes predicated on the autonomy of signifying processes and privileging the means of representation as the sole progenitor of meaning. One symptom of this move away from a practice that had been ascendant for some years, although never uncontested, was the growth of interest in Pierre Bourdieu's work on cultural production, where the textual idealism of transferring the Saussurean language model to social and literary analyses is repudiated.[2] Another was Christopher Norris's censure of 'facile textualist thought' which 'contrives to block the appeal to any kind of real-world knowledge or experience', a criticism made on ethical as well as cognitive grounds by one who has been a prominent exponent of deconstruction.[3] There was also reason to anticipate a more widespread and closer attention to Marxist/Marxisant theories of culture and history, since, as any competent clairvoyant could have foretold, Derrida's lectures and writings on Marx[4] were destined to persuade susceptible epigoni that their preparations for the burial of an explanatory system they had declared moribund, too often without observing the protocols of scrupulous examination, should at least be deferred.

As regards Bhabha's stipulations of what constitutes '*the* colonial condition' and '*the* postcolonial experience/perspective/critique' (emphasis added to suggest a totalizing tendency which Bhabha would ordinarily eschew), these have been disputed in discussions which follow other theoretical procedures and are producing different objects of knowledge from the same archival material.[5] Thus when Bhabha buoyantly claims that 'a shift within contemporary critical traditions of postcolonial writing' (p. 241) is heralded by the methodologies which he and like-minded critics have devised, this prediction of a new and unassailable hegemony – whose pre-eminence could already be in the past tense — depends on disregarding alternatives to the methods he espouses; and indeed it is noticeable that while Bhabha militantly combats a putative 'left orthodoxy', he gives scant attention to the often searching questions that have been asked of his own work.[6]

Bhabha's evident scorn for his left detractors makes it all the more imperative for his critics to venture an assessment of his confident, ambitious and influential theoretical programme. This seeks to examine the translation of western discourses from the disjunctive and displacing sites of 'postcolonial' perspectives which, Bhabha maintains,

provide a form of writing cultural difference that is inimical to binary boundaries, and effects the relocation of western modernity (p. 251). Such an undertaking may appear to have affinities with Edward Said's 'contrapuntal' readings of the colonial archives, which in mapping the overlapping territories and intertwined histories of metropolis and colony, and noting the mixtures of cultures and identities on a global scale consolidated by imperialism, claim to restore to the history of modernism 'the massive infusions of non-European cultures into the metropolitan heartland'.[7] It also seems to resemble Paul Gilroy's contention that the doubleness of the black experiences in the west constitutes the counter-culture of modernity.[8]

Bhabha's work however, preoccupied as it is with the generation of meaning within textual forms and functions, is situated within other theoretical spaces and manifests an agenda and trajectory that sets it apart from the writings of theorists such as Fanon, Ranajit Guha, Said and Fredric Jameson whom he generously attempts to enlist as allies in his own project. The substance of this assignment, which is signalled by Bhabha's well-known 'taste for in-between states and moments of hybridity' (p. 208), and exceeds a concern to make known a postcolonial condition of displacement and diaspora, or to narrate a postcolonial transgression of boundaries, is amply evident in his usage of paradoxical and open-ended words: ambivalent, borderline, boundary, contingent, discontinuity, disjunction, dispersal, dissemination, hybridity, in-between, indeterminate, interstitial, liminal, marginal, negotiation, transitional, transnational. This preference for terms which condense the play of difference, the instabilities of enunications or the elements of undecidability within any system of communication, registers Bhabha's affiliation with a critical practice which undertakes to reveal how the uncertainties of textual meaning are produced/undermined as permutations on a chain of signification. It also denotes an adherence to Foucault's recommendation that difference be freed from an oppositional and negative system, to operate as 'thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation'[9] – a stance which brings to mind Fredric Jameson's remark that at stake in such moves 'is the rolling back of Hegel and Marx by way of a conceptual discrediting of contradiction and dialectical opposition'.[10]

The implications of rewriting a historical project of invasion, expropriation and exploitation in the indeterminate and always deferred terms Bhabha proposes and implements are immense, and for me immensely troubling, since his elaborations dispense with the notion of conflict – a concept which certainly does infer antagonism, but contra Bhabha, does not posit a simplistically unitary and closed structure to the adversarial forces. But before I embark on the discussion of Bhabha's work, a word of self-exculpation is necessary: the matter of his wayward style is not one on which I will dwell, other than to observe that an enchantment with troping, punning and riddling all too often sends the signifier into free-fall, rendering arbitrary the link between word and signified. To mean what you say is not the same as to say what you mean, and because for this reader Bhabha's unruly and indeed obfuscatory prose presents the hazard of inadvertent misconstruction, I have taken the precaution of illustrating my gloss with extensive citations from his writing.[11]

Given the difficulty of exegesis replete with the specialized terminology of linguistic and psychoanalytic theory, its density thickened by improbable juxtapositions and innumerable, fleeting allusions to the incommensurable comments of critics, thinkers and writers, it may seem remarkable that Bhabha's writing has been so readily and widely redeployed by others working in cognate areas. The extent of his influence

suggests the importance of Bhabha's rethinking culture 'as an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value' (p. 172), his insights into the hierarchy retained by the liberal ethic of multi-culturalism, his attention to the differential historicities of races, nations and peoples, his innovative work on the inflections of colonialism within western thought, and his contributions to opening up the categories of identity, culture and nation to their heterogeneity. However, it is also apparent that when critics cite his key concepts in order to authorize their own propositions, they do so without necessarily indicating a grasp of, or interest in, the problematics within which Bhabha is writing. I will therefore attempt to discuss his work as generated by multiple determinations in the form of both theoretical modes and social location. In doing so I must declare that while appreciative of the ground Bhabha has broken in asking new questions of old problems, I am uneasy about his disposal of the language model to explain both colonialism's pasts and contemporary 'postcolonial' situations; and what I will be proposing is that Bhabha's many fecund insights into cultural processes are paradoxically denatured by the theoretical modes which inform his work.

In Bhabha's usage 'postcolonialism' does not indicate 'sequentiality', its gestures to a 'beyond' denoting a disjunctive relationship with that anterior condition by which it is indelibly marked, and which, it is claimed, enables a critique displacing the language and precepts of both colonialist and anti-colonialist writing. As is now well known, the problems with the connotations of 'postcolonialism' are legion: Anne McClintock contends that its *singularity* 'effects a re-centering of global history around the single rubric of European time . . . reduces the cultures of peoples beyond colonialism to *prepositional* time [and] signals a reluctance to surrender the privilege of seeing the world in terms of a singular and ahistorical abstraction'. Drawing attention to its 'depoliticising implications', Ella Shohat has observed that by alluding to colonialism as 'a matter of the past', the term shuts out 'colonialism's economic, political, and cultural deformative traces in the present'. For Laura Chrisman, who notes its metropolitan coinage, ' "postcolonial" occludes or erases the overtly political dynamics contained in the term "anti-colonial" ', allowing or implying 'the interchangeability of material with aesthetic and interpretative processes', and liberating those practitioners naming themselves postcolonial 'from the messy business of political alignment and definition'.[12]

Both Masao Miyoshi and Arif Dirlik find that the deployment of the postcolonial serves as a licence for ignoring the contemporary actuality of global politics within a capitalist world-system. Miyoshi views its use as a device to conceal the operation of a continuing and even more active colonialism by transnational corporatism: 'Ours is not an age of *post*colonialism but of intensified colonialism, even though it is under an unfamiliar guise' ('A Borderless World?' pp. 728, 750); while for Dirlik, the word 'mystifies both politically and methodologically a situation that represents not the abolition but the reconfiguration of earlier forms of domination.' ('The Postcolonial Aura', p. 331) Furthermore, Dirlik maintains, those forms of postcolonial criticism which repudiate all master narratives and disclaim foundational historical writing must also reject capitalism as a determinant category, and with it the capitalist constitution of the world, thus occluding the changing structural position within this system of the 'Third World' – which he insists is not an essentialist but a relational category. As against Gyan Prakash, who contends that we cannot thematize colonial history in terms of the development of capitalism, since this would entail accepting the homogenization of the

contemporary world by capitalism,[13] Dirlik argues that while no stark dichotomy of economic and social form between First and Third Worlds can now be asserted,[14] the globalism of capitalism effects the *uneven* insertion of heterogeneous and discrepant histories and *differential* economic formations into a world-system.[15]

The implications of the above strictures are far-reaching for a project which privileges postcoloniality not only as the position from which to deconstruct colonialism's past legitimizing strategies, but also as the unproblematic location of contemporary globalized intellectual and cultural discourses. As if heedful that 'a postcolonial critique', in welcoming the arrival of a 'transnational' culture, could seem to ignore the world-wide material conditions of division and exploitation inhibiting its realization, Bhabha notes the 'conflictual, contradictory locutions of those cultural practices and products that follow the "unequal development" of the tracks of international or multinational capital' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 241). It is true that Bhabha understands postcoloniality to be 'a salutary reminder of the persistent "neo-colonial" relations within the "new" world order and the multi-national division of labour'; moreover he goes on to suggest that 'such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance' (p. 6). All the same, these allusions to a concern with the material conditions, institutions and practices of colonialism and the neo-colonial are not pursued in his efforts to derive social explanation from enunciative modalities, or the 'activity of articulation as embodied in the language metaphor' (p. 177).

Bhabha's agenda is starkly evident in his rewriting of 'radical marronage', that is the guerrilla wars waged by runaway slaves against their erstwhile masters.[16] Here a practice involving tactics and manoeuvres designed and conducted by subjects-as-agents on contested territory, repeated and embellished in folk memory as cherished stories of downtrodden ancestors moved to resistance, and rewritten by contemporary critics recuperating signs of enacted disobedience, is translated into a set of discursive moves: 'From this liminal, minority position where, as Foucault would say, the relations of discourse are of the nature of warfare, the force of the people of an Afro-American nation emerge [sic] in the extended metaphor of marronage. For "warrior" ' read writers or even "signs" ' (p. 145). As I read Bhabha's revision, an endlessly reworked narrative which renders the experiential realities of slave resistance intelligible is overwhelmed by the nominalism of the language metaphor, and in the interests of establishing the autarchy of the signifier, the narrated event is existentially diminished.

This demur does not entail questioning the linguistic turn in all its possible registers; indeed it is now surely impossible to conceive of cultural or historical analyses working within a realist paradigm that do not address the tropological ruses and effects of their archival sources, are unaware that systems of meanings are animated and borne by signs, metaphors and narratives, or are indifferent to the constitutive role of these in articulating social relationships. In its 'weak' form, which does not of course imply weak theory, this disposal of the language model actively reads texts against the grain, alert to silences, gaps, disjunctions, aporia. Recognizing that all language is figurative, such commentaries are attentive to the rhetorical strategies and effects of enunciations, which in the process of naturalizing prevailing precepts and categories in order to create their objects of knowledge, displace meaning and escape or exceed self-conscious intentionality – thus marking the disjunction between programme and performance,

between aspiration and actualization. Amongst the many instances of this mode, Bhabha's deconstructions of the fissures and ruptures in colonial texts are exercises of great subtlety, seeming to share with other studies a recognition of the *instrumentality* of colonialism's utterances.[17]

The elaboration of Bhabha's project has however taken quite other directions; and because his work is situated within that theoretical mode which rather than conceiving language as signifying reality allots ontological priority to the semiotic process, the generation of meaning is located in the enunciative act, and not in the substance of the narrated event:

> The erasure of content in the invisible but insistent structure of linguistic difference does not lead us to some general, formal acknowledgement of the function of the sign. The ill-fitting robe of language alienates content in the sense that it deprives it of an immediate access to a stable or holistic reference 'outside' itself. It suggests that social significations are themselves being constituted in the very act of enunciation, in the disjunctive, non-equivalent split of *énoncé*, and *enunciation*, thereby undermining the division of social meaning into an inside and an outside.
>
> (*The Location of Culture*, p. 64)[18]

Arif Dirlik, who is Bhabha's most disobliging critic, has charged him with 'a reduction of social and political problems to psychological ones', and with 'substituting post-structuralist linguistic manipulation for historical and social explanation' ('The Postcolonial Aura', p. 333, n. 6). Bhabha's claim of course is that his theorizing is providing *different* explanations derived from the premise that social agency is performed, and is therefore recuperable, at the level of enunciation; and since the testimony of history is invested in the *mode* of its writing, 'the social specificity' of the 'productions of meaning' is hence understood as the circulation of 'signs within specific contextual locations and social systems of value' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 172). All the same Bhabha's procedures subordinate the cognition and explication of social forms, institutions and practices, which are ultimately dependent on empirical inquiry, to deconstructions of the signifying process; while the structure of linguistic difference and the vicissitudes in the movement of the signifier are invested with the power to alienate and overwhelm content. These moves register Bhabha's affiliation with the language model in its 'strong' form, one that surpasses a statement of 'the obvious, that there is no knowledge – political or otherwise – outside representation' (p. 23).[19]

For rather than positing the capacity of theories to constitute multiple understandings of reality, and which in turn inform diverse plans for human action, Bhabha's methodology renders this reality dependent on the knowledge produced by critical discourse. Thus although he wittily warns that 'the rule of empire must not be allegorized in the misrule of writing', what he offers us is The World according to The Word:

> Our task remains . . . to show how historical agency is transformed through the signifying process. (p. 12)
>
> . . . history is *happening* – within the pages of theory, within the system and structures we construct to figure the passage of the historical. (p. 25)

> It is the horizon of holism, towards which colonial authority aspires, that is made ambivalent in the colonial signifier. (p. 128)
>
> The people are not simply historical events or parts of a patriotic body politic. They are also a complex rhetorical strategy of social reference. (p. 145)

The distinction Bhabha makes between the 'pedagogical' and the 'performative' in 'writing the nation' could appear to indicate the disjunction between a discursive construct and historical practice, since he notes that the 'performative' interrupts to confront us 'with the nation split within itself, marked by difference and articulating the heterogeneity of its population' (p. 148) – from which observations few would dissent. But the machinery of his argument is geared to other ends, which is to warn against

> the intellectual appropriation of 'the culture of the people' (whatever that may be) within a representational discourse that may become fixed and reified in the annals of History . . . Such a pluralism of the national sign, where difference returns as the same, is contested by the signifier's 'loss of identity' that inscribes the narrative of the people in the ambivalent 'double' writing of the performative and the pedagogical . . . The nation's totality is confronted with, and crossed by, a supplementary movement of writing . . . the heterogeneous structure of Derridean supplementarity in *writing* closely follows the agonistic, ambivalent movement between the pedagogical and the performative that informs the nation's narrative address. (pp. 152, 154)

When language is taken as a paradigm of all meaning-creating or signifying systems,[20] and human practice is consequently perceived as mimicking writing, the definitive disparities between construing the structure of language and explaining the forms of social and cultural practice are collapsed, the inference being that these latter also operate as an hermetic encoding of discursive differentials within a regime of phrases, and also follow the agonistic and ambivalent movement of writing.[21] Lest I have misconstrued the course and consequences of Bhabha's argument, let me cite the gloss of Gyan Prakash, who offers Bhabha's work as an exemplary postcolonial critique. According to Prakash, Bhabha's understanding of how 'colonial discourses operated as a structure of *writing*' and were therefore ambivalent, enables him to reveal that 'the structure of their enunciation remained heterogeneous with the binary oppositions . . . colonialism instituted in ordering the discursive field to serve unequal power relations'. From this premise, Prakash continues, the critic can deduce that 'the implacable logic of oppositionality' in colonialist thought, whose aim was 'to suppress the other as different and inferior', is always and necessarily disrupted, since writing produces a structure of differences and disjunctive meanings which veers away from the given order of priorities, breaking down the violent hierarchy which the discourse installs. Cognition of this immanent movement in writing, according to Prakash, then enables a contemporary critical practice to mark the interstitial space *opened* – note, not registered – by the text, and thus to provide different accounts of how colonialism operated ('Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography', pp. 16–17).

Prakash's commentary seems to me true to the deductive process pursued by Bhabha. In 'the specific "interruption", or the interstices through which the colonial text utters its

interrogations, its contrapuntal critiques' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 174), in the enunciative equivocations displacing the axes of power, Bhabha discerns the spontaneous generation of an auto-critique that disables colonialism's will to power. For, he contends, since the act of colonial enunciation as a text of power is doubly inscribed, split between historicity and fantasy (p. 108) and afflicted by uncertainty (p. 113), the ambivalence of its address is a threat 'to the authority of colonial command' (p. 97). Thus 'the effect of colonial power' can be seen as 'the production of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions' (p. 112). What Bhabha appears to infer from textual indeterminacies is colonialism as a political event in which the *exercise* of authority was rendered uncertain, or as Prakash's gloss has it, where 'the *functioning* of colonial power' was disjunct from its founding oppositions ('Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography', p. 17). If by this is meant that discursive instabilities acted to inhibit colonialism's drive to mastery, undermined its programmes of domination and endangered its magistracy – a claim that is different from the proposition that discursive equivocations *registered* colonialist doubts and unease – then it is an astonishing assertion which contradicts countless narratives of the dispossessions the capitalist nation-states visited on other worlds, is at variance with the audible violence in their many colonialist utterances, and is perversely indifferent to explaining the success and longevity of the regimes they imposed.

'The reason a cultural text or system of meaning cannot be sufficient unto itself is that the act of cultural enunciation – the place of utterance – is crossed by the *difference* of writing' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 36). A reader concerned with the inner coherence of Bhabha's thesis would observe that since the ambiguities of discourse are attributed to the semiotic process, then this is a sufficient condition for *all* inscriptions to be *always* fractured and equivocal,[22] no input of social tension and contradiction being required to render enunciation indeterminate. Yet it is around the doubleness of colonialist inscription and its contradictory belief, that is, around an uncertain writing produced under *specific* conditions, that Bhabha has produced important insights into the anomalous discourse of colonial government where the civil state is continually put under erasure. Moreover if, as Bhabha contends, enunciation as such is rendered discontinuous by an inner dissonance at the core of its own utterance, then this would seem to threaten his thesis on the *particular* circumstances producing what he calls 'a colonial contramodernity at work in the matrices of western modernity': 'My growing conviction has been that the encounters and negotiations of differential meanings and values within "colonial" textuality, its governmental discourses and cultural practices, have anticipated *avant la lettre*, many of the problematics of signification and judgement that have become current in contemporary theory – aporia, ambivalence, indeterminacy, the question of discursive closure, the threat to agency, the status of intentionality, the challenge to "totalizing" concepts' (p. 173).

My interest however is in a theoretical reconstruction which in adhering to the rules of the language model, rewrites, or rather writes over, the inscriptions of conflict within the real world. This is effected by using 'a language of critique' that 'overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation . . . conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention, without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonisms or contradiction' (p. 25). By subsuming social

realities to textual representation, Bhabha represents colonialism as transactional rather than conflictual – a version which should be distinguished from the study of how the colonized *negotiated* colonialism, and which has been investigated by Bhabha in essays on 'mimicry' and 'sly civility', where the 'native's refusal to satisfy colonial command' (p. 99) is revealed in the interstices of the colonial texts. It is also distinct from the recognition that the exercise of power is heterogeneous and never total, that subjugated groups cannot be wholly subordinated, that equivocal exchanges between ruler and ruled do occur, that collaborators always emerge to play a mediatory (often treacherous) role, and that domination and resistance are hostile interlocutors.

The partial qualification Bhabha makes in conceding the legitimacy of using the language of political economy 'to represent the relations of exploitation and domination in the *discursive* division between the First and the Third World, the North and the South' (p. 20) (emphasis added to observe an exclusive attention to the discursive), is eroded by the iteration of 'the ambivalence of the presence of authority, particularly visible in its colonial articulation' (p. 110). For Bhabha's concern is with establishing that the hierarchical division set in place by colonial discourse was unsustainable *because* the loci of inscription, or the dynamics of writing, always display a 'difference' within the signification – a contention distinct from the proposition that colonial discourse *inscribed* the continual transgression of boundaries between colonizer and colonized, the assumption here being that the text *signifies* such traffic.

Integral to Bhabha's revisionist work on colonialism is a concern to effect the 'break-up of a binary sense of political antagonism' (p. 206), thereby replacing the received perception of dichotomies in conflict with the 'in-between' space of negotiation:

> As a mode of analysis [the postcolonial perspective] attempts to revise those nationalist or 'nativist' pedagogies that set up the relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition. The postcolonial perspective resists the attempts at holistic forms of social explanation. It forces a recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the very cusp of these often opposed political spheres. (p. 173)

> The contour of difference is agonistic, shifting, splitting, rather like Freud's description of the system of consciousness which occupies a position in space lying on the borderline between outside and inside. (p. 110)

> The contingent and the liminal become the times and the spaces for the historical representation of the subjects of cultural difference in a postcolonial criticism. (p. 179)

In refusing to replicate the colonizer/colonized divide integral to received accounts of both colonial authority and anti-colonialist opposition, Bhabha seeks to undo a given order of priorities by displacing the system of conceptual oppositions making that order possible. Advising that '[t]he margin of hybridity . . . resists any binary opposition of racial and cultural groups . . . as homogeneous polarized political consciousness' (p. 207), and proffering an 'analysis of ambivalence [which] questions dogmatic and moralistic positions on the meaning of opposition and discrimination' (p. 67), Bhabha undertakes to demonstrate colonialism as 'a mode of authority that is agonistic (rather than antagonistic)' (p. 108). The small difference in these signifiers, marked by three

letters, is incommensurate with the chasm between their significations: whereas 'agonistic' pertains to ancient Greek athletic contests, 'agon' being derived from 'a gathering' and denoting 'A public celebration of games, a contest for the prize at games', 'antagonistic' specifies 'The mutual resistance of two opposing forces, physical or mental; active opposition to a force' (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). I have argued that Bhabha reads social processes according to the rules of writing, refuses the non-discursive specification of subjects, and dismisses notions of determinate relations between different interests. In rejecting 'antagonistic' in favour of 'agonistic', is he then positing colonialism as a competition of peers rather than a hostile struggle between the subjugated and the oppressor?

Theoretical moves directed at erasing inscriptions of inequality and conflict in the material colonial world are evident in Bhabha's disdain for that anti-colonialist tradition which perceived the struggle in terms that were antagonistic rather than agonistic, and construed the colonial relationship as generically – rather than 'often', as Bhabha would have it – one between competing political groups and goals. Consider Aimé Césaire's question and response: 'has colonization really *placed civilizations in contact*? . . . Not human contact but relations of domination and submission',[23] or Fanon's stark definition: 'Decolonisation is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature'.[24] It would seem that the contestation of colonialism's claims in an idiom avowing a struggle between polarized interests, fought against a decidable opponent across binary battlelines, makes present-day postcolonialist theorists embarrassed by anti-colonialist forebears who failed to conform to their rules about discursive radicalism,[25] and who by projecting the making of an insurgent subjectivity committed what Bhabha considers the solecism of introducing 'restrictive notions of cultural identity with which we burden our visions of political change' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 38).[26] Perhaps these perceived errors in the writings of theorists immersed in the struggles against colonialism prompted Bhabha's appropriation of Fanon to his own mode, a procedure whose validity I and others have disputed.[27]

Because Bhabha has written about 'hybrid' cultural articulations when glossing the novels, poetry and films of postcolonial writers and artists, critics have readily interpreted his use of this concept as denoting culture's multiple and incongruous accents, cross-cultural inventions and transnationality – that is, as descriptive of subject positions and social conditions traversed by heterogeneous cultural inflections. Yet an examination of Bhabha's usage belies an easy identification with that notion posited long ago by Caribbean and Latin American writers and intellectuals as creolization, métissage or mestizaje. It is also distinct from both Paul Gilroy's insistence on the inescapable intermixture of ideas and forms in neologistic transitional cultures, or Stuart Hall's account of the disjunctive, displaced and unstable postcolonial identities constituted in representation but which relate to real sets of histories. (I will return to Bhabha's place on the spectrum of concepts around identity posited within black British theory.)

Although familiar with the innovative idioms deployed by such multiply located subjects, Bhabha's concern is with the production of hybridity through the *process* of a colonial and postcolonial relocating and reinscribing, or the translating and transvaluing of cultural difference 'in the Third Space of enunciation', where it is reiterated differently from its prior context:

> Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement and domination . . . For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory.
>
> (*The Location of Culture*, p. 112)

> The hybrid object . . . retains the actual semblance of the authoritative symbol but revalues its presence by resisting it as the signifier of *Entstellung – after the intervention of difference* . . . the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *inter*national culture, based not on exoticism of multiculturalism, or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription of culture's *hybridity*. (pp. 115, 38)

As I read it, Bhabha's 'hybridity' is a twin term for the 'catachrestic reinscription' of 'cultural difference' in the disjunctive postcolonial discursive space – that is, it is descriptive of the textual processes and effects held to constitute social forms and conditions, and not of those forms and conditions as articulated in social practices. For when contesting 'the consensual, ethnocentric notion of the pluralistic existence of cultural diversity' (p. 177) with 'the ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity that marks the identification with culture's difference' (p. 224), Bhabha postulates cultural difference as an analytic strategy and a discursive product:

> Cultural difference . . . is not the acquisition or accumulation of additional cultural knowledge; it is the momentous, if momentary extinction of the recognizable object of culture in the disturbed artifice of its signification, at the edge of experience. (p. 126)

> Cultural difference must not be understood as the free play of polarities and pluralities in the homogeneous empty time of the national community . . . The analytic of cultural difference intervenes to transform the scenario of articulation . . . The aim of cultural difference is to rearticulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying position of the minority that resists totalization . . . producing other spaces of subaltern signification. (p. 162)

This shift from the concept as a context-dependent category deployed to legitimate discriminatory practices, or as a counter-device of political affirmation, subdues the charge immanent in 'difference' as a marker of social inequalities and a sign of resistance to oppression. In Norris's telling phrase when discussing a 'nominalist (or textualist) stance which denies any possible grounds of appeal in the realities of oppression as *known and experienced* by members of the relevant class, community, or interest group', what is ignored is 'the stubborn *facticity* of . . . difference . . . the manifold differences – the real and material (not just "discursive") differences of interest' (*The Truth About Postmodernism*, pp. 23–24).

It is such differences that engender political and ethical collectivities,[28] for while it is now well known that our class subjectivities are crossed and modulated by diverse and competing identifications, the *structural* relations of capitalism-as-transcontinental-

imperialism all the same continue to provoke situations which demand that plurally constituted and positioned subjects, with multiple associations, different proclivities and diverse enthusiasms, mobilize around class conceived either as a socio-economic category or as a community engaged in struggle. This very notion of solidarity is resisted by Bhabha, whose reply to the question he rhetorically poses, 'Do we need to rethink the terms in which we conceive of community, citizenship, nationality, and the ethics of social affiliation?' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 174) must be, given his premises, to posit difference, incommensurability and dispersal as rendering traditional constructions of communality unsatisfactory and unsafe: 'Can such split subjects and differentiated social movements, which display ambivalent and divided forms of identification, be represented in a collective will that distinctively echoes Gramsci's enlightenment inheritance and its rationalism?' (p. 29). Implicit in Bhabha's critique of identitarianism and his valorizing of difference, is a recommendation of coalition politics and rainbow alliances, but one which forgoes the necessary examination of their operations, hazards, consequences and failures.[29]

To question the deployment of 'difference' as a counter to the negatively perceived 'totalization' is not to deny the fecundity of a notion which insists on subjectivity as polymorphous, community as heterogeneous, social formations as mutable and culture as vagrant. It is to recognize that 'difference' has been diverted by a postmodernist criticism as a theoretical ruse to establish a neutral, ideology-free zone from which the social dissension and political contest inscribed in the antagonist pairing of colonizer/colonized have been expelled. A policy statement defining difference in terms of bland variations on a placid continuum, unhinged from the planned inequalities of actually existing social regimes and political struggles, can be found in the writing of the film director and critic, Trinh T. Minh-ha: 'I have often been asked about what viewers call the lack of conflicts in my films . . . Conflicts in western contexts often serve to define identities. My suggestion to the "lack" is: let difference replace conflict. Difference as understood in many feminist and non-western contexts, difference as foregrounded in my film work, is not opposition to sameness, nor synonymous with separateness.'[30] Here 'difference' is used to deny both class contest and anti-imperialism in the thought and practice of 'non-western' histories and societies, while also eliminating the incompatible agendas and goals at work within 'feminist contexts'. Norris has observed how post-structuralism 'operates on an abstract, quasi-systemic model of "opposition" and "difference" whereby those terms are deprived of all specific historical or experiential content, and treated, in effect, as linguistic artefacts or products of discursive definition' (p. 182); and he goes on to insist that '*difference* can only be a fashionable buzzword . . . so long as it is conceived in ideal abstraction from the contexts of real-world experience or the lived actualities of class or gender oppression' (*The Truth about Postmodernism*, pp. 26, 24) – to which can be added 'colonialist and imperialist domination'.

If it is conceded that the structure of colonial power was ordered on difference as a legitimating strategy in the exercise of domination, then it could be argued that the construct of binary oppositions retains its power as a political category. This is repudiated by Bhabha, whose theoretical urge to displace division with interjacency is elaborated in his version of agency and resistance. Directed at exposing 'the myth of the "transparency" of the human agent' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 24), and disposing of the discourse of the intentional subject or collectivity, this narrative is once again predicated

on the performative role of the signifying process, historical agency being located in sign and symbol, while subaltern as well as postcolonial agency is discovered in interrogative, contestatory, catachrestic procedures performed on the prior text through relocation and reinscription: 'My contention, elaborated in my writings on postcolonial discourse in terms of mimicry, hybridity, sly civility, is that the liminal moment of identification – eluding resemblance – produces a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of iterative "unpicking" and incommensurable, insurgent rethinking' (pp. 184–185). Bhabha's notion of agency as enacted at the level of enunciation and discernible in the indeterminate moment of narrating the event, falls outside the long-standing debate between structural explanations which foreground the determinate constraints of ideological construction, and those paradigms privileging the conscious, self-reflexive actor; it is also distinct from that other famous account of how history is made by human subjects, but not under conditions of their own choosing.

When exploring 'the question of agency as it emerges in relation to the indeterminate and the contingent' (p. 183), in 'the negotiation of meaning that is . . . a *time-lag*' or temporal break between the signifier and the signified (p. 184), Bhabha turns his attention to the Indian Mutiny, examining the 'cultural strategy and political confrontation constituted in obscure, enigmatic symbols, the manic repetition of rumour, panic as the uncontrolled, yet strategic effect of political revolt' (p. 199), and specifying 'the politics of agency' as embedded in the rumour transmitted through the circulation of chapatis: 'The indeterminacy of rumour constitutes its importance as a social discourse. Its intersubjective, communal adhesiveness lies in its enunciative aspect. Its performative power of circulation results in the contagious spreading. The chain of communication in the rumour, its semantic content is transformed in transmission . . . the messages syntactically contiguous' (p. 200).

Thus far we have the sign as the bearer of rebel agency – and when Bhabha congratulates the historical agency of the sipahi (sepoy) for succeeding by stratagem and not arms, he somehow omits to recollect that the rebellion issued as an armed struggle, and was disarmed and repressed by exorbitant military force. The effect of moving agency from the subject-as-insurgent-actor to textual performance is to defuse resistance as practice directed at undermining and defeating an oppressive opponent – practice which also effected experiential transformation in the colonized:[31] 'Resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention . . . It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference and reimplicate them within the deferential relations of colonial power – hierarchy, normalization, marginalization and so forth' (pp. 110–111). This construction of resistance as an *effect* of the aporia in the inscriptions of empire which are seized and reinscribed by the subaltern, marks the difference of Bhabha's concept from Said's representations of a culture of resistance (see *Culture and Imperialism*, especially Chapter 3, 'Resistance and Opposition') where a language of the subject is deployed. In attending to written and remembered stories of insubordination and revolt, Said acknowledges the energies of the colonized's self-affirmation, especially commending the work of the *Subaltern Studies* collective for recuperating agency as performed by conscious human subjects, the rebel in Ranajit Guha's work being conceived as 'an entity whose will and reason constituted the praxis called rebellion'.[32]

The consequences of Bhabha's narrative of agency are yet more extensive: by discerning the adhesiveness of 'its enunciative aspect', this contrives to connect subaltern to colonialist in a move that is directed at breaking down the received division between the Indian peasant and the Raj, and displacing the 'binary sense of political antagonism' with a perception of the middle ground between colonial authority and colonial resistance:

> The iterative action of rumour, its *circulation* and *contagion*, links it with panic – as one of the affects of insurgency . . . The indeterminate circulation of meaning as rumour or conspiracy, with its perverse, psychic effects of panic, constitutes the intersubjective realm of revolt and resistance . . . What kind of agency is constituted in the circulation of the chapati? Time, I believe, is of the essence. For it is the *circulation* of the chapati that initiates a politics of agency negotiated in the antagonisms of colonial cultural difference . . . Panic spreads. It does not simply hold together the native people *but binds them affectively, if antagonistically – through the process of projection – with their masters* . . . [my emphasis] the organizing principle of the *sign* of the chapati is constituted in the transmission of fear and anxiety, projection and panic in the form of circulation *in-between* the colonizer and the colonized . . . A contingent borderline experience opens up *in-between* colonizer and colonized . . . The margin of hybridity, where cultural differences 'contingently' and conflictually touch, becomes the moment of panic which reveals the borderline experience. (pp. 200, 203, 206–207)

In Bhabha's rewriting of agency, the deliberated juxtaposition of incommensurable terms is intended to complicate relations between domination and resistance. That transactions between colonizer and colonized occurred and influenced the practices of the parties is not in question. What concerns me is the configuration produced by 'link', 'intersubjective realm', 'bind', in-between' and 'borderline', which I read as reiterating Bhabha's interest in re-presenting the colonial encounter as a complicit relationship. Undoubtedly it was an entangled event; but Bhabha, who brings a psychoanalytical discourse of desire to bear on the realities of colonial power, and speciously ties 'affectively' to 'antagonistically', also claims that the critical operations he exercises on his sources ruin the representation of colonialism as a combat. Yet the interlocution within the 'in-between' he has construed is a conversation scripted by the critic, and is remote from what could properly be described as a dialogue, where a minimum prerequisite is surely that each party perceives the other as an agent of knowledge. That colonialism and now imperialism inhibits such colloquy is graphically evoked by Jameson's comment: 'What the First World thinks and dreams about the Third can have nothing whatsoever in common formally or epistemologically, with what the Third World *has to know* every day about the First. Subalternity carries the possibility of knowledge with it, domination that of forgetfulness and repression'.[33]

To retrieve colonialism's transactions as 'contrapuntal' may be designed to shift the position of the colonized from victim to participant. Christopher Miller has observed that in response to 'the messy history of hegemony and conflict', recent trends in anthropology have turned to a 'far more congenial model of interpretative practice', which by drawing on Bakhtinian criticism is concerned to show how 'dialogue and

polyvocality can be uncovered within apparent hegemonies'. While Miller acknowledges dialogue to be 'the most compelling *ethical model* for the representation of cultures', he cautions that '(s)uch a fantasy depends on a complete rewriting (or ignorance) of the material conditions of history . . . that vitiate dialogism within the substance of history'.[34] The tendency to introduce dialogic paradigms is apparent in contemporary studies of colonialism: consider Sara Suleri's *The Rhetoric of English India*[35] which construes a mutual narrative of complicity, dubiety and guilt linking the imperial power with the disempowered cultures, creating, she argues, a counter-culture not explicable in terms of an allegory of otherness.

It is possible that the Indian materials which are the sources for Suleri and Bhabha offer opportunities for discovering a middle ground, given the long histories of communication between the colonizer and regional and national elites, and the consequent commerce between dominant and marginalized knowledges. Yet although these exchanges should not be allowed to obscure the brutality of colonialism's territorial expropriations in the Indian subcontinent, or the murderous punishments inflicted on opposition, and which persisted until British withdrawal, there is now a vogue for rewriting British rule in India as a hegemony – which I understand as coercion significantly tempered by reciprocity and consent, or consent fortified by coercion. This is a version of the relationship between rulers and subaltern classes disputed by Ranajit Guha, who represents the situation as one of domination and resistance.[36] Furthermore, other contexts such as plantation colonialism and genocidal settler regimes, or the atrocities attendant on violent territorial expropriation in North and sub-Saharan Africa, confront us with narratives of physical force and economic compulsion, from which the elite natives' peaceable colloquies with the invaders' cognitive systems are wholly absent, and where the construing of affective linkages would introduce a grotesque romanticism into annals of physical, institutional and discursive violence.[37] Thus even while Bhabha announces that the 'testimony of colonial dislocation . . . refuses the ambition of any total theory of colonial oppression' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 41), the testimony of colonial oppression renders nugatory Bhabha's construct of a collaborative colonialism.

If for no other reason, colonialism's *differential* histories render suspect the metanarratives being written by critics who otherwise fiercely refuse grand narratives, and whose stories feature mutuality rather than conflict as the *norm* of colonial encounters. That model has, I think, to be distinguished from Said's call for readings of the colonial experience as 'interactive and embroiled'. His own nuanced accounts of these interconnected histories are haunted by visitations of schism, the affirmations of congruence being repeatedly interrupted by the recognition that colonialism installed a radical discontinuity in terms of human space, preserved 'absolute geographical and cultural boundaries' and 'fundamental ontological distinctions' between the west and the native, 'withheld mutuality' and exercised an 'almost total control' which placed the parties to the encounter in 'devastating continuous conflict'. And indeed against the grain of his own optimistic vision, Said in the last pages of *Culture and Imperialism* makes this melancholy observation: 'history . . . teaches us that domination breeds resistance, and that the violence inherent in the imperialist contest – for all its occasional profit and pleasure – is an impoverishment for both sides' (p. 348). The tensions inherent in the working out of Said's lateral strategies may reside in his perception that aggression and supremacy are indeed carved into the colonialist archive, and that the

critical effort to superimpose a tale of complicities will not obliterate the prior inscriptions.

What then is the relationship of Bhabha's theoretical model to the record of colonialism as violent dispossession achieved by military force and sustained by institutional power? Does it succeed in challenging and displacing received perceptions of the quotidian colonial world as a place of economic exploitation, social divisions and political conflict? The perceptions of colonialism as a spatial or geographical enterprise now offered by historical-materialist geographers, brings into view how, in the words of David Harvey, 'the world's spaces were deterritorialized, stripped of their preceding significations, and then reterritorialized according to the convenience of colonial and imperial administration'.[38] As both Edward Soja and Neil Smith have argued,[39] the global spatial integration initiated by colonialism and completed by imperialism entailed the uneven insertion of the colonies into a world economy as the underdeveloped sector, and instituted an international division of labour effecting a transfer of value which flowed from periphery to core. To speak then of metropolis and colony as inhabiting the same in-between, interstitial ground ignores that this territory was differentially occupied, and that it was contested space, being the site of coercion and resistance, and not of civil negotiation between evenly placed contenders. If we follow Harvey in wanting to give 'an account of space and time in social life' that will 'highlight material links between political-economic and cultural processes' (*The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 201), then our readings of colonial texts will seek to uncover those inscriptions of epistemological differentiations which Johannes Fabian has named as the west's 'denial of coevalness' with the colonial worlds.[40] In directing his energies at erasing 'a politics of binary opposition', Bhabha intimates that while theory and the real are not enemies they can be strangers.

I alluded earlier to the determinations of social habitat on theoretical stances, and I want now to bring the resonances of the book's title to a consideration of how Bhabha situates himself, from which position he speaks, and who the implied addressees might be – matters that can be seen to converge in his engagement with questions of identity/subjectivity, a discussion in which black British theorists have actively participated. For all his castigation of binaries, Bhabha posits essentialism or difference, nativism or cosmopolitanism, the claim to a purity of origins or the immersion in transnational cultural flows, as the only possible positions for a postcolonial perspective. During the 1980s it was those critics attesting to the overdetermined nature of identity and eager to repudiate 'essentialism' who made inroads into a totalizing theorization of the heterogeneous. An essay by Kobena Mercer in a collection exemplifying the age of 'the politics of articulation' commended 'the rearticulation of black' as 'a political rather than racial identity among Asian, Caribbean and African people . . . thus creating a new form of symbolic "unity" out of the signifiers of racial difference'.[41] At the same time Stuart Hall proposed 'ethnicity' as the concept which recognizes that the black subject is 'constructed historically, culturally, politically', maintaining that this notion enables 'a new cultural politics which engages rather than suppresses *difference*'.[42] Subsequently Paul Gilroy negotiated a position between 'anti-essentialism' and 'anti-anti-essentialism', not only rejecting exceptionalist and mystical claims to an ethnic essence of blackness, where the inner differentiation of black cultures is overlooked, but also contesting the arguments of radical constructionists which fail to acknowledge

that black identity 'is lived as a coherent (if not always stable) experiential sense of self. Though it is often felt to be natural and spontaneous, it remains the outcome of practical activity: language, gesture, bodily significations, desires' (*The Black Atlantic*, p. 102).

In the pages of *Third Text*, which pointedly identifies itself as providing 'Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture', many and competing understandings of cultural identity have been posited over the years. Amongst these, Rasheed Araeen, who urges the necessity 'of recognising the critical and historical roles of autonomous individuals from non-European cultures', proposes 'cultural identity' as 'both fiction and necessity', finding that it gives 'a cutting edge to question and interrogate many of the assumptions of western culture by which it claims its superiority and supremacy'; while Geeta Kapur has dissented from a postmodernism that 'seems to accommodate otherness as never before in the history of capitalist culture', but does so 'through a process of such infinite differentiation that all questions of identity are destroyed . . . along with the normative function of culture'.[43] It is apparent then that the empowering effects of a placed identity have not been relinquished by the critical community. What is more, there are those who have advised that the cost of the 'hybridization' attendant on colonialism, and accenting the postcolonial, should not remain uncounted. In glossing Edward Brathwaite's definition of creolization 'as one's adaptation to a new environment through the loss of parts of oneself and the gain of parts of the Other', Manthia Diawara – who cautions that the question of hybridity 'as *the* correct way of being Black in the West has enabling elements as well as uncanny moments' – has observed: 'one must be aware of the fact that in fusing Whiteness with the seductiveness of hybridization, one is sacrificing not only a part of Blackness, but certain Black people'.[44]

These 'certain Black people' are too often forgotten in the euphoria of celebrating the arrival of the postcolonial. It is true that Bhabha does eloquently specify 'the demography of the new internationalism' in terms of 'the history of postcolonial migration, the narratives of cultural and political diaspora, the major social displacements of peasant and aboriginal communities, the poetics of exile, the grim prose of political and economic refugees' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 5). This account acknowledges that '(t)he transnational dimension of cultural transformation – migration, diaspora, displacement, relocation – makes the process of cultural translation a complex form of signification' (p. 172). Yet Bhabha's vista emerges as narrower than the above comments promise; for while this does encompass diverse 'narratives where double-lives are led in the postcolonial world, with its journeys of migration and its dwellings of the diasporic' (p. 213), what is foregrounded by Bhabha, in prose that can be translucent but is often purple (see for example pp. 1 and 139), is 'the poetics of relocation and reinscription' (p. 225) known by the cosmopolitan artist, writer, intellectual, professional, financier and entrepreneur in the metropolis, rather than the 'grim prose' of low-waged workers in western capitals and contract labourers in the Gulf states or other centres of capitalist growth within the Third World. Moreover, the claim that '(t)he contingent and the liminal become the times and the spaces for the historical representation of the subjects of cultural difference in a postcolonial criticism' (p. 179) emphasizes the 'affective experience of social marginality' – which by intimating the circulation of emotion and desire, registers the experience as one of unmitigated pleasure. Indeed, assertions about the 'unhomely' as paradigmatic of postcolonial social and cultural displacement, or 'the

liminality of migrant experience', 'the migrant culture of the in-between', and the 'indeterminacy of diasporic identity' (p. 224), now constitute the near-consensual opinion: consider Bruce Robbins's commendation of Bhabha's essay 'DissemiNation' as providing 'a portrait of trans-national hybridity as an increasingly unavoidable condition of emotional and intellectual life'.[45]

It is, I would suggest, a configuration in urgent need of unpacking. In representing the productive tensions of its own situation as normative and desirable, the privileged postcolonial is prone to denigrate affiliations to class, ethnicity and emergent nation-state which continue to fashion the self-understanding and energize the resistances of exploited populations in the hinterlands of late imperialism, as well as of immigrant labourers living on the outskirts of one or other metropolis. The stance of the elite thus further severs their modes of cognition from those of communities which, while themselves also inhabiting cultural spaces that are multiply inflected and impure, do not share in the free-wheeling pleasures of commuting between cultures available to the privileged postcolonial. Such different situations are starkly noted in the inventory compiled by Neil Lazarus: 'In Mozambique, Nigeria, Korea and El Salvador, the question of the nation-state has never before seemed so pressing or so central. In Brazil, Jamaica, Ghana and Malaysia, the concepts of "diversity", "mobility" and "communication" are of practical significance only to foreign elites and indigenous comprador classes' ('Doubting the New World Order', p. 99). In a related register, Masao Miyoshi, who has voiced concern that the new cultural configurations of transnational corporate capitalism threaten the survival of local cultures, is acerbic about those critics who rejoice at the imagined camaraderie of an amalgamated world culture. Remarking that ' "(m)ulticulturalism" is a luxury largely irrelevant to those who live under the most wretched conditions', Miyoshi moves from the preoccupation in cultural studies with 'recognizing different subject-positions from different regions and diverse backgrounds', to finding 'reasons for such differences' and proposing 'ways to erase such "differences", by which I mean political and economic inequalities' ('A Borderless World', p. 752). With this he turns the discussion in the direction of political economy and international class politics, towards which Bhabha's writings, enclosed as they are in a theoretical mode that subdues the continuing exploitation of the Third World and the growing disparities of resources and opportunities within the First, can do no more than gesture.

Although Bhabha situates himself within French critical theory, his translations of an expatriate postcolonial location have been deeply inflected by the particular modulations of the theoretical discussion conducted within Britain during the past two decades. The presence of Marxism as a current in British intellectual and academic life, together with socialism's established place on the political spectrum and the existence of a small but important tradition of anti-colonialism[46] – to both of which colonials living in the metropolis contributed – may have prompted Bhabha to associate his writing with 'the materialist mode' and offer his work as an effort both 'to enhance understanding of political struggle' (p. 208) and to 'historicize the event of the dehistoricized' (p. 198). Perhaps more significantly, the course of his work displays affinities with the particular trajectory of British poststructuralism, which in drawing on French critical theory, redeployed both psychoanalytic writing and Marxism-via-Althusser. Francis Mulhern has suggested that:

> semiotics, developing through a critical ingathering of modern scientific initiatives in poetics and linguistics – Formalist, structuralist and other – offered concepts and taxonomies that bore the promise of a post-aesthetic, materialist analysis of textual forms and functions. Psychoanalysis appeared not merely as a potent analogy but as a decisive contributor to the understanding of subjectivity. Marxism furnished terms of historical understanding and defined the politics of text and subject.[47]

During the 1970s according to Antony Easthope, the film journal *Screen* – to which Bhabha later contributed – 'set out to theorize "the encounter of Marxism and psychoanalysis on the terrain of semiotics" ', the commitment to materialism manifested in the thesis that 'the semiological determination of film was realized in its specific materiality and that this presented itself at the level of the signifier'. For Easthope, the 'intervention of post-structuralism in cultural studies' was exemplified in *Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject* (1977), which its authors, Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, offered as performing the meeting of psychoanalysis with Marxism, and which proposed that 'the subject is an effect constituted in the process of the unconscious, of discourse and of the relatively autonomous practices of the social formation'.[48] Even if Bhabha's implementation of materialist methods could be considered as at least eccentric, it is I think apparent that those traces of a putative materialism that survive in his work conform to the forms devised by British poststructuralism.

The subsequent elaboration of Bhabha's work is further accented by the British version of post-Marxism disseminated during the 1980s. In Bhabha's valorizations of decentring, dispersal and dissemination, although spoken in his own inimitable voice, echoes can be heard of *New Times* celebrating the effects of post-Fordist productive modes in 'flexibility, diversity, differentiation, mobility, communication, decentralization and internationalization'. (Curiously, the thinking of *Marxism Today* closely followed a base/superstructure model, unproblematically deriving perceived shifts in consciousness and ideology from changes in the mode of production.) These processes, as Neil Lazarus points out in 'Doubting the New World Order', were hailed as rendering the old conceptual paradigms, political identities and political strategies obsolete, and heralding the arrival of 'culturalism' – a move tracked in a scathing essay by A. Sivanandum, where he attacked the dissociation of the economic and political from the cultural, and lambasted those intellectuals who located the political struggle in the discursive.[49]

An intellectual environment in which Marxism circulated as an important current, a trend which was subsequently, and it now seems temporarily, diverted by the denigrations of 'post-Marxism', provided Bhabha with targets who without being named are casually assembled as a 'left orthodoxy'. By attaching disqualifying clauses that render suspect the concepts of alternative explanatory categories, Bhabha represents his unspecified antagonists as Manichean dualists, identitarian mystifiers, diverse pedlars of class, people, nation and gender as unified and uniform sets, and dialectical materialists bent on defusing energizing disjunctions through sublation. 'Monolithic category' is joined to 'community', 'essentialist identities' to 'communal', and 'homogenized' to 'national culture'; 'a simplistic sense of intentionality' characterizes notions of 'collective agency'; 'polarities' are 'primordial'; leftist forms of writing history are 'historicist', 'transcendent and teleological'; 'holistic form' deforms 'social explanation'.

Bhabha has produced work opening up the categories of culture and nation to reveal their inner differentiations and disjunctions, and his case surely does not require that he traduce those who insist on the political and experiential uses of constructing insurgent identities around notions of communalities, and of retaining class as a primary conceptual category.[50] Indeed his polemic against 'the left' is marred by a levity only available to that generation who arrived at post-Marxism without ever having occupied the anterior position, and whose ignorance permits the disdainful misidentification of 'an anti-imperialist or black nationalist tradition "in itself" ' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 241). 'Political positions', Bhabha pronounces, 'are not simply identifiable as progressive or reactionary, bourgeois or radical, prior to the act of *critique engagée*, or outside the terms and conditions of their discursive address. It is in this sense that the historical moment of political action must be thought of as part of the history of the form of its writing' (p. 22). Instead of 'identikit political idealism' demanding that critical discourse produce 'a pure ideology of analysis whereby the prior principle is simply augmented . . . its identity as socialist or materialist . . . consistently confirmed in each oppositional stage of the argument', Bhabha insists on the fully historical and discursive *différance* between them; instead of 'a primordial and previsionary division of right or left, progressive or reactionary', Bhabha argues for a 'language of critique . . . which . . . overcomes the given grounds of opposition and opens up a space of translation' (p. 25) – thus returning us to his abhorrence of political concepts of conflict and his undertheorized notions of an ubiquitous middle ground and coalition.

Bhabha's theories mark his distance from a black British legacy that is still manifest in the continuing significance of *Race and Class* as a forum for discussions in the Marxist mode. In his chapter on 'C. L. R. James and the Black Radical Tradition', Cedric Robinson[51] places James amongst a community of expatriate intellectuals from the British empire who as internationalists participated in the communist and labour politics of the metropolis and who, as Tim Brennan notes, were subsequently written out of the history of the British left by the British New Left.[52] It was in Britain too that many of the programmes for the anti-colonial struggle were devised, and it was from its capital cities that countless students from all corners of the then empire returned to their native lands as doctors, lawyers and teachers – and as Marxists of one or other denomination who went on to participate in the liberation struggles of their communities. That *this* vibrant narrative of transnational intellectual exchange is now being forgotten in the annals of postcoloniality can only impoverish its revisionist chronicles.

There are numerous critics who for long have urged as a moral imperative that theory engage in the struggle against the arrogance of capitalism's international power; and if rather than citing their compelling arguments, I choose Derrida's words on 'the foreign debt', it is because these (despite their author's continuing distance from Marxism) articulate the calculated absence in the utterances of so many of his followers: 'With this name or with this emblematic figure, it is a matter of *interest* and first of all of the interest of capital in general, an interest that, in the order of the world today, namely the worldwide market, holds a mass of humanity under its yoke and in a new form of slavery . . . Now, these problems of the foreign debt – and everything that is metonymized by this concept – will not be treated without at least the spirit of the Marxist critique, the critique of the market, of the multiple logics of capital' (*Spectres of Marx*, pp. 93–94). Derrida's disparagement of those who evangelize in the name of the ideal of liberal democracy is made on the firm grounds of specifying actually existing

conditions, and may disturb the convictions of those who reprove the error of representing facts as transparent and outside the form of their writing: 'never have violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression affected as many human beings in the history of the Earth and of humanity'. His reluctance to celebrate ' "the end of ideologies" and the end of the great emancipatory discourses' will make the postmodern scorn for meta-narratives appear as yesterday's argot, and could even persuade some critics that it is fitting to associate their work with the still unfinished global emancipatory project. Above all, Derrida's appeal to the principle of hope animating political action in the interest of constructing a different future, must surely reveal the poverty of theories which, by refusing a Marxist eschatology, turn and turn in the gyre of an eternal present: 'Now, if there is a spirit of Marxism which I will never be ready to renounce, it is not only the critical idea or the questioning stance . . . It is rather a certain emancipatory and *messianic* affirmation, a certain experience of the promise that one can try to liberate from any dogmatics and even from any metaphysico-religious determination, from any *messianism*. And a promise must promise to be kept, that is, not to remain "spiritual" or "abstract", but to produce events, new effective forms of action, practice, organization' (p. 89).

5 Liberation theory: variations on themes of Marxism and modernity

It must initially appear improbable that disciplinary fields constituted around critiques of capitalism and colonialism have given a meagre reception to liberation theory. I will return to a tendency amongst postcolonial critics to disown liberation discourses and practices, and indeed all forms of anti-colonialist rhetoric and organization.[1] But first I want to consider why so few of the major Marxist meta-theorists in Europe undertook to examine the roads taken by Marxism on colonial terrains. Even if we allow that analyses inspired by Leninist strategies for class and anti-imperialist struggles diverged from the epistemological and aesthetic concerns of Marxisms in the advanced capitalist countries, this indifference takes its place within the wider and long-standing exclusion of non-western knowledge from the canons compiled by metropolitan scholars.[2] Nor is the propensity amongst European scholars to overlook or underestimate unfamiliar modes of thought, especially when these come out of Africa, limited to the mainstream. In a wide-ranging and provocative essay Göran Therborn acknowledges that Marxism became 'the main intellectual culture of two major movements of the dialectics of modernity: the labour movement and the anti-colonial movement'.[3] Yet when considering 'Marxism in the New Worlds', he underestimates the creativity and innovations of Latin American and Asian Marxisms, makes remarkably flimsy allusions to its Chinese form, and joins a larger constituency in rejecting Africa as a player in the discourses of Marxism and modernity. Thus while singling out Fanon, a francophone Martinican, for capturing the violent traumata of modernity in the colonial zone, he goes on to assert that most important Marxist intellectuals of Africa tend to be non-black: 'Black African culture very different from the Marxist dialectic of modernity, has not (yet) been able to sustain any significant Marxist intelligentsia' (p. 78).

The circumstances overdetermining the inadequate recognition of liberation theory within western Marxism during the decades preceding and subsequent to the second European war include but are not exhausted by 'eurocentrism'. As is well known, the main support for anti-colonial movements in the imperial homelands came from the political left, who hailed the Cuban revolution, supported the struggles in Vietnam, Latin and Central America, and Africa, were attentive to the case for guerrilla warfare in predominantly agrarian societies, and registered their respect for Che Guevara's intellect, his intelligence as a strategist and his undimmed revolutionary consciousness. Moreover the Marxist perspectives of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions excited considerable interest amongst many prominent left-wing scholars (Robin Blackburn in Britain, Leo Huberman, Paul Sweezy, Andre Gunder Frank, Fredric Jameson, Arif Dirlik in North America, Sartre, Althusser and Régis Debray in France). For as long a

time-span a small number of Marxist or Marxisant social theorists, political economists and historians (Basil Davidson, Peter Worsley, Immanuel Wallerstein, John Saul, Jack Woddis, Thomas Hodgkin) greeted the writings and speeches of insurgent intellectuals in Africa as significant analyses of colonialism and imperialism. It seems then that in order to understand why so few of the metropolitan meta-theoreticians were aware of and interested in liberation theory, we need to consider both the shift away from the political within the European Marxist discussion, and those rearticulations of philosophy with practice predisposing some thinkers to the serious consideration of alternative Marxisms.

Some decades ago Perry Anderson inadvertently provided some insights into the metropolitan disregard of Third-World Marxisms. Describing the 'critical theory' initiated by the Frankfurt School in the 1930s as marking a divorce of revolutionary theory from revolutionary practice within western Marxism, Anderson attributed the Institute's 'overwhelming concentration on study of superstructures' to the failure of mass revolts in Europe.[4] Anderson was to return to this proposition during the 1980s when he found further evidence of Marxism's changing centres of gravity from politics and economics to philosophy and aesthetics, in the virtual disappearance of the 'strategic discussion of the roads to a realizable socialism' amongst Marxists of 'Latin Europe'. This concern, he continued, was replaced by 'a revival of *philosophical* discourse proper, itself centred on questions of method – that is, more epistemological than substantive . . . the major exponents of western Marxism also typically pioneered studies of *cultural* processes – in the higher ranges of superstructures – as if in glittering compensation for their neglect of the structures and infrastructures of politics and economics'.[5] Where Anderson did detect the re-emergence of interest in the operations of contemporary capitalism, he found this 'new appetite for the concrete' in the English-speaking worlds of Europe and North America, although he ruefully conceded that his optimism about the 'reunification of Marxist theory and popular practice in a mass revolutionary movement signally failed to materialize' (p. 27). Anderson's overview astutely mapped the circumscribed horizons of European Marxism. At the same time his own field of vision reproduced this truncated view by omitting to recognize that anti-colonialist insurrections, which at the very moments he examines were expanding exponentially, had indeed joined Marxist theory with revolutionary practice – a blind-spot more remarkable in a British Marxist scholar than the myopia of metropolitan theorists in environments where signs of overseas empire were not as ubiquitous.

Anderson's generalized account of the turn from politics within western Marxism was questioned by Michael Sprinker, who recalled Sartre's theoretical concern with the structures and infrastructures of politics and economics, and traced Althusser's move from an earlier and self-confessed 'theoreticism', where philosophy was conceived as the 'theory of theoretical practice', to an understanding of philosophy as 'the class struggle carried forward at the level of theory'.[6] As glossed by Sprinker, the dispute between Althusser and Sartre hinged on the problem of theorizing agency in historical materialist terms: whereas Althusser's theory of historical structures and their transformation through a variety of social practices both retained the primacy of objective conditions in relations of production, and situated the subject as the effect and the bearer of structures, Sartre accommodated voluntarism and intentionality by grounding the intelligibility of history in praxis, an argument which attempted 'to capture the essence of all the different social practices . . . in a single philosophical concept of human nature'

(p. 232). Despite these and other fundamental differences between Althusser and Sartre, Sprinker sought for affinities and found that together the two thinkers had reformulated a mode of articulation between philosophy and political practice distinct from the traditional philosophical problematic (pp. 181–183).[7] This reasoning, which refused to counterpose 'Sartre's manifest political activity to the supposed mandarism of Althusser's theoretical project' (p. 204), was applied by Sprinker to exonerating the theoretical work of both Althusser and Sartre from charges of complicity with Stalinism.

Moreover, in view of Anderson's observation of the pessimism about metropolitan class struggle which had overtaken so many of the Marxist intelligentsia in Europe, Sprinker's contention also provides an insight into why those who did retain a commitment to the interlocking of philosophy and political practice, should look to the manifest making of revolutions in the non- or nascent capitalist worlds. All the same when it comes to considering the anti-colonialism of the two thinkers, Sartre's unequivocal and very public stance is not matched by the dispersed testimony of Althusser, Algerian-born and a long-term Communist Party member. Nevertheless, Gregory Elliot has found in Althusser's unpublished papers both criticism of a party leadership for whom anti-colonialism was a taboo subject, and strong support for colonial struggles.[8] Elliot also suggests that in logical conformity with the Althusserian revolt against the economism of orthodox historical materialism, and the turn to the historical-materialist concept of social *practice*, Althusser had endorsed the revolutions in Cuba and China, regarding the latter as a 'concrete critique' of Stalinism and undertaking to theorize it as such.[9] The obvious place then to seek Althusser's anti-colonial concerns is in his Maoism. In a review of Elliot's study, *Althusser: the Detour of Theory*, Joseph McCarney situates Althusser's Maoism in the context of the crisis in Marxism 'precipitated by the apparent loss or absence of the historical subject identified by Marx, the revolutionary proletariat of advanced capitalism'. Contesting Elliot's negative critique of this turn, McCarney perceives it as the final phase in his career as a Marxist philosopher: 'Althusser was, at the very least, setting an example to western Marxist theorists of taking seriously the "outlying" regions of the world-system. In doing so he could be said to be counteracting in some measure one of the weakest features of the tradition, its Eurocentricity and preoccupation with things "western" in a provincial sense'.[10]

McCarney's remark points to an aspect of Althusser's thinking that has seldom been adequately addressed in the context of European Marxism's restricted horizons. Certainly Althusser paid due regard to Mao's writings, citing his pamphlet 'On Contradiction' (1937) as the inspiration for his own essay 'Contradiction and Overdetermination'. It was, according to Althusser, Mao's observation that all contradictions are under the sway of the law of unevenness, and his distinction between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions, or principal and secondary contradictions, which generated his own notion of contradiction, not as univocal but as 'complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined . . . Only overdetermination enables us to understand the concrete variations and mutations of a structured complexity such as a social formation'.[11] Althusser went on to observe affinities between Mao's premise on development as necessarily asymmetrical, and Lenin's view that the discontinuity of capitalist growth and the gigantic historical contradictions in Russia constituted *the objective conditions* for revolution – the subjective conditions to be forged by a Communist Party. This understanding of combined and uneven development together with the necessity of a political vanguard, resonates in earlier and concurrent analyses of colonial situations made by

liberation theorists who although probably familiar with Third and in some cases perhaps even Fourth International writings on colonialism and anti-colonial struggles, were unlikely to be acquainted with Althusser's work.[12]

An exception was Althusser's pupil and follower Régis Debray, who had collaborated with Guevara and was imprisoned for his participation in the abortive Bolivian uprising. In extensive studies on revolution in Latin America, Debray challenged the orthodoxy designating communist parties as the sole bearers of revolutionary legitimacy, advocating instead that in Latin America, guerrilla *foco* linking an organized military force with a political vanguard were the appropriate vehicles for politicizing the masses and preparing them for insurrection. His essays written between 1967 and 1969 were warmly welcomed by the British New Left's Robin Blackburn, who admired their 'relentlessly Leninist focus on making a revolution, as a political, technical and military problem', and was reminded by 'their inner unity and unmistakable tone . . . of burning urgency' of 'the insurrectionary debates and manifestos of 1917'. Blackburn also commended Debray's move to end the disabling rupture between revolutionary experience and Marxist analysis in Latin America and elsewhere, applauded his linking of revolutionary ethics with technics, and endorsed *foco* theory, which instead of awaiting the maturation of 'objectively given social contradictions', prescribed the means for creating the conditions for revolution: 'Modern revolutions do not *happen*; they are *made*'.[13] But while defending the essence of Debray's ideas against his detractors, Blackburn did concede that 'an aura of adventurism does surround many of his tactical formulae, especially in *Revolution in the Revolution?*' (p. 21).

Because this treatize elevated the military over the political and situated the agrarian struggle as primary, it was repudiated by left-wing thinkers, who accused Debray of liquidating the role of Marxist theory and omitting to analyse the specific class structures and distribution of forces in Latin America societies, where extensive industrialization and urbanization were prevalent.[14] It also received comradely criticism from Althusser: congratulating Debray for providing 'negative demonstrations' of wrong political lines by revealing their internal contradictions, Althusser admonished his failure to produce concrete historical analysis specific to Latin America, and essential for determining the appropriate forms of political organization and armed struggle.[15] If this discussion suggests, as Sprinker argued, that there is no structural incompatibility between Althusserian theory and the pursuit of revolutionary practice, then a very different convergence, this time of Marxist humanism with political praxis, emerges in Sartre's idiosyncratic commentaries on anti-colonial discourses and decolonizing struggles. Together these constitute a 'poetics' and a politics of colonial revolution.[16] An oftentimes fellow-traveller of a Communist Party which had withheld sanction from the anti-colonial wars being fought during the 1950s and 1960s in French Indo-China and the Maghreb, Sartre defied the party line by publicly supporting the anti-colonial struggles in Algeria, Vietnam and sub-Saharan Africa, while also writing polemical articles and including a study of colonialism's ideological practices in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. In the essay 'Black Orpheus' prefacing a collection of black poetry, and published in 1948, Sartre gave a critical appreciation of Négritude, arguing that while blacks, like white workers, are victims of 'the capitalist structure of our society', black populations are also racially oppressed. Hence the negative moment of separation, or an anti-racist racism, must inevitably precede the goal of internationalism. Such qualified esteem for its finite value in combating racism is exceeded by enthusiasm for

Négritude as a way of 'being-in-the-world', as 'a certain affective attitude in regard to the world'.[17] Using language with the same brio as do his subjects, Sartre hailed the poetry as neither designating nor representing Négritude, but as 'making it' (p. 39). 'Destruction, auto-da-fé of the language, magical symbolism, ambivalence of all concepts, all of modern poetry is there under its negative sign' (p. 30). In this 'sole great revolutionary poetry' (p. 11) Sartre recognized 'the old surrealist method' of those Caribbean cultural movements of the 1930s such as *Légitime Défense*, which had begun with a Marxist analysis of Caribbean societies and went on to affirm surrealism as 'a miraculous weapon' for the struggles of subjugated colonial populations. For Sartre, Césaire had reconfigured a concern for the world's oppressed into 'the freest and most metaphysical poetry', with this condensing the achievement and self-immolation of the great surrealist tradition: having been rejected by the European proletariat and hence divorced from its revolutionary beginnings, this mode is stolen by a West Indian and grafted onto another branch of the universal revolution. Thus whereas Sartre did position Négritude as 'the subjective, existential, ethnic' stage to be sublated in the formation of a proletariat, he also maintained that it is 'not by hazard that the most ardent apostles of Négritude were at the same time militant Marxists' (p. 59).

Sartre's essay is both literary criticism which locates the politics in the poetry's vitalizing transgressions of received French language and syntax, and cultural critique sensitive to the dynamics and transience of Négritude. In this last he anticipated Fanon, who, having earlier protested at Sartre's relegation of Négritude to a minor term,[18] came to acknowledge that the moment of revalorizing native cultures was both essential and transitional. The affinities between the two thinkers are again apparent in Sartre's introduction to *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he hailed 'an ex-native' who bends the French language 'to new requirements' so as to speak *to* the colonized, and not as before, to entreat the colonizer: 'In short, the Third World finds itself and speaks to itself through his voice'.[19] Sartre reiterated Fanon's contempt for the sham, tin-pot native bourgeoisie, and his insistence on the urgency of going beyond national independence. He also confirmed the necessity of combating the violence launched by colonizing powers and settler communities with the violent overthrow of colonial regimes, arguing that this alone would enable the re-creation of subjugated peoples and the existential liberation of *all* parties locked in the diseased colonial relationship. What Sartre brings to the critique is a dissident European's understanding of a colonialism which suspends the 'universality' of the mother country when pursuing its predatory overseas ventures: 'we must face that unexpected revelation, the strip-tease of our humanism. There you can see it quite naked . . . It was nothing but an ideology of lies, a perfect justification for pillage' (pp. 24–25).

In concurring with Fanon's understanding of the rural masses as a 'veritable reservoir of a national revolutionary army' (p. 11), Sartre rehearsed the class analysis of African societies he was to make in a subsequent commentary on Patrice Lumumba's speeches and writings.[20] Here he examines the energies and limits of the anti-colonialism practized by an assimilated colonial elite, while never overlooking the emancipatory energies of these movements or the radical effects of anti-colonial insurgency, even when revolutionary policies and goals are absent. Thus he contends that the separatist Abako organization which preceded Lumumba's movement and which was 'at once obscurantist and revolutionary . . . had done more than any other party to bring Congo its freedom . . . by demanding independence and the nationalization of the big companies'

(pp. 13–14) – although after independence Abako was to ruin the work of nationalists for the benefit of foreign powers.

Although aware of the dilemmas afflicting an assimilated colonial elite, Sartre pointed to those circumstances which had enabled Lumumba's political role in the fight against the colonizing power of the then Belgian Congo. Other separatist organizations had initiated the struggle for independence, but it is Lumumba 'who will seize upon revolution as it passes by . . . giving it direction' (p. 15). Because he knew of life in the bush, in urban settlements, in large provincial cities and the capital; because he had received a Christian education and had gained some knowledge of class struggles in European history, Lumumba was able 'to attain universality', to speak 'a basic humanism'. Access to such concepts placed him above the sectarianism of ethnic and tribal groups, and allowed him 'to grasp the unity of needs, interests, sufferings' (p. 15). But paradoxically and injuriously this same access doomed a person of purity and integrity, an incorruptible black Robespierre, to be a leader of a nationalist movement dominated by a petty bourgeoisie cut off from their natal community and marginalized by the colonial government and big companies they served, a segment who took themselves to be the universal class but discovered only their own class ideology – a use of categories from European history that can no more be faulted than C. L. R. James's similar appropriations in *Black Jacobins*.

Lumumba emerges as a tragic figure in Sartre's narrative: equipped by colonialism to oversee an independence virtually granted to the Congo by Belgian and other foreign interests, he is prohibited by his class affiliations from devising, let alone implementing, a radical social and economic programme commensurate with the demands of the disaffected masse; he is 'a revolutionary without a revolution' (p. 34), a leader lacking a liberation army; a student of colonialism's cunning who could naively proclaim that independence for the Congo was being achieved 'through mutual agreement with Belgium, a friendly country with which we are dealing as one equal deals with another' (cited p. 30); a seer with imperfect vision dimly aware that 'Congolese independence is not the end but the beginning of a struggle to the death to win national sovereignty' (p. 22), yet unable to recognize that the nominal power handed to his own class meant 'governing so as to secure foreign investments and property and further colonial interests' (p. 24). Still for Sartre the incomplete struggle *had* situated the Congo 'as a subject of history' (p. 45), and had been *experienced* by participants, in Lumumba's phrase, as an independence won through 'a passionate and idealistic fight' (cited p. 3). It was because Lumumba perceived himself and was perceived by the colonialists as an enemy of colonialism that he was pitilessly fought and ultimately assassinated 'by the great capitalists and banks' (p. 5); and for the same reasons, 'the leader of the Congolese National Movement was regarded as a brother-in-arms by Fanon the revolutionary' (p. 5) – a regard etched into Fanon's sober retrospect on Lumumba's grievous defeat: 'no one knows the name of the next Lumumba. There is in Africa a certain tendency represented by certain men. It is this tendency, dangerous for imperialism, which is at issue'.[21]

If Sartre's chronicle of Lumumba's downfall laments the inevitable failure of a petty-bourgeois leadership to transform the fight for independence into the overthrow of the colonial state, his critical retrospect is simultaneously a celebration of what an oppressed population, even when handcuffed to a native bourgeoisie, dared to do in the face of international capitalism's remorseless colonialist interventions. Tracing a very different trajectory, his earlier book on the 1959 armed insurrection in Cuba[22] acclaimed 'a

movement which began in the form of a "putsch" ' (p. 116) and came to surpass its own goals when the insurgents were propelled towards revolution by the demands of the people – an assessment alert to the generative interaction between people and party. Not until embarking on agrarian reform did the rebels come to know the poverty and exploitation of the agricultural workers; but once radicalized by the masses, they went on to expropriate the largely absentee plantation-owners, an attack on the system of property which Sartre welcomed as more significant than any socialist proclamation. This dispassionate view extends to his stark opinion that in Cuba 'human abstract problems (honesty, sovereignty) lead to the concrete problems of production and of social structures . . . [and] must be solved in terms of production'.[23] All the same he is moved by the revolution's 'sacred anger' against injustice, and gratified by Castro's description of the new regime as 'humanist' (p. 159).

Despite his failure to support the Palestinian cause, Sartre's idiosyncratic and compassionate commentaries on anti-colonialism and reflections on colonialism remain a testament to the political, ethical and affective affiliation of a metropolitan intellectual with the aspirations of the colonial oppressed – a unique achievement acknowledged by Edward Said[24] in a disappointed and just account of a silence that can be explained, if not justified, by Sartre's anguish over the fate of Jews in Europe. Sprinker has suggested that Sartre's theory of history as possessing 'a plot which the actors of the drama suffer and come to know' is best described as a 'poetics' of history (*Imaginary Relations*, p. 202); and Sartre's respect for liberation struggles where the intelligibility of human agency was manifest[25] is surely inseparable from an existential Marxism reaffirming subjectivity in the face of its dissolution by structuralism. His *Critique of Dialectical Reason* has been called a historical and phenomenological analysis of the lived realities of both worker and colonial subject;[26] while Fredric Jameson observed that it registered 'a subjective writing of history reinstating the entire complex of reified relationships in terms of that first and basic reality of human actions and human relations', in this offering 'a reworking of the economistic model in that terminology of praxis and overt class conflict which seems now most consistent with the day to day lived experience [of] a new period of revolutionary ferment', evident in the Algerian and Cuban revolutions and the intensification of the war in Vietnam.[27]

The section on 'Racism and Colonialism as *Praxis* and Process' in the *Critique* recapitulates in theoretical language the themes Sartre articulated in his polemical anti-colonial writings, and by mapping the practices installing and perpetuating the demoralizing embrace into which colonizer and colonialist were locked, Sartre configured a conflictual and debased connection:

> I discussed the practice and system of colonialism because I wanted to show . . . the possible importance of substituting History for economic and sociological interpretations, or generally for all determinisms . . . the colonialists constantly actualize the practices of extermination, robbery and exploitation which have been established by previous generations and transcend them towards *a system of other values*, [racism] entirely governed by alterity . . . the colonialist and the native are a couple, produced by an antagonistic situation and by each other . . . even if he [the native] sees his *colonised-being* as a negative determination . . . and even if he tries to get closer to his conquerors, and to resemble them (in short, if he seeks to be assimilated), he does not cease to experience this condition, this ontological statute, as the

> inexorable and unforgivable violence done to him by a hard-hearted enemy . . . Thus in their practical, everyday life the exploited experience oppression through all their activities, not as alienation, but as a straightforward deliberate constraint of men by men . . . the point of application for counter-violence is really everywhere *here* . . . The violence of the rebel *was* the violence of the colonialist . . . The struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor ultimately became the reciprocal interiorisation of a single oppression.
>
> (*Critique of Dialectical Reason*, pp. 720–733; emphases in original)

Sartre inveighed against the abuse of humanism and universalism when mendaciously invoked to disguise capitalist exploitation and colonial malpractices, but he did not disown the ethical potential of these ideas or abandon their liberatory usages, a stance shared by theorists in colonized worlds who aspired to realize the *unfulfilled* enlightenment notions of reason, justice and egalitarianism. As Fanon wrote: 'It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget its crimes'.[28] In this and other respects, Sartre's kinship with another independent Marxist should be observed. C. L. R. James, a sometime Trotskyist, also recognized the colonial peasantry as a revolutionary force in colonial conditions, acknowledged the significance of insurgent anti-colonialisms sustained by various forms of cultural nationalism, warned that bourgeois leaderships remained wedded to retaining the apparatus of the colonial state, and urged the necessity of continuing struggles against a newly installed comprador class committed to pursuing its own aspirations and protecting foreign interests.[29] Nor was James averse to the making of an oppositional, insurgent black identity, arguing that where racism was integral to capitalism, the category of class must be re-examined. 'Négritude', he wrote, referring to Césaire's poem, 'is what one race brings to the common rendezvous where all will strive for the new world of the poet's vision', a sentiment which he reads as rearticulating Marx's famous sentence, 'The real history of humanity will begin'.[30] It is therefore not surprising that the varieties of post-Marxists now populating the field of postcolonial studies should look askance – when they look at all – at anti-colonial discourses producing materialist accounts of class conditions under colonialism, grounded in a Marxist humanism, seeking to install an ethical universality and a universal ethic, inspired by communism's grand narrative of emancipation and signposting utopia on their map of the world.

A Marxist presence in the intellectual cultures of the colonized worlds is ubiquitous and long-standing, having begun just before and during the 1920s, when communist parties were formed – to mention only some locations – in India, China, Turkey, Thailand, Indonesia and South Africa, in Latin and Central America (Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Cuba, Nicaragua and Mexico) where Gramsci's theses on the pursuit of communism in predominantly agrarian societies was a powerful influence. During the 1930s and 1940s Trotskyist organizations in places as diverse as Ceylon (as it then was), Mexico and South Africa compiled alternatives to Third International perspectives on colonial struggles. At this time too, and in a quite different register, writers and intellectuals from the francophone Caribbean – Jacques Stéphen Alexis and René Depestre from Haiti, Aimé Césaire and René Menil from Martinque – joined active participation in anti-colonial struggles with a heady mixture of surrealism and Marxism in their poetic and

polemical writings, a confluence since described as constituting 'an important moment in the anti-colonial struggle in the French speaking world'.[31] In other contexts, a Marxist vocabulary was adopted, adapted and attenuated in the political discussions and rhetorics of movements pursuing the limited goals of national self-determination and the moderate redistribution of resources.[32]

It has been suggested that there are two Marxisms inherent in the classical tradition, one a science of revolutionary practice, the other a philosophical critique of capitalist modernity written punctually and from within its space.[33] A further breakdown is offered by Göran Therborn, who distinguishes between a critique of capitalism and a reflection on modernity; the thinking of communist parties affiliated to the Third International; the dissident analyses of Trotskyism, and the Marxisms of the non-European worlds ('Dialectics of Modernity', p. 67). Writing in the early 1970s, Fredric Jameson remarked that it was 'consistent with the spirit of Marxism that there should exist several different Marxisms in the world of today, each answering the special needs and problems of its own socio-economic system'. Of these he named 'a kind of peasant' Marxism as corresponding to the situations in Cuba, China and the Third World (*Marxism and Form*, p. xviii), conditions which he subsequently and more appropriately described as structured by the coexistence of non-synchronous historical temporalities.

My discussion here is limited to anti-colonial movements in sub-Saharan Africa, and for heuristic purposes the focus is on those popular struggles distinguished by a commitment to Marxism. Although the writings considered are singularly inflected by their location and moment, they belong with a larger body of materialist analyses of nation, class and existential conditions distinct from those in advanced capitalist societies.[34] To assume that such situations were common to colonial worlds (and these include the nation-states of Latin America which despite independence from European powers, remained subjected to metropolitan capitalism and their native compradors) is not to overlook that colonial regimes and policies varied, that significant differences existed between territories annexed by an imperial power and states penetrated by foreign capitalism, or between settler and distantly administered societies, and so on. Still, and despite distinctive historical formations, differing levels of indigenous capitalist development, and variable extents of incorporation into the capitalist world-system, it is possible to map the complex structural disjunctures prevalent in the colonies and dependencies: racial domination as an intrinsic although not exclusive component of colonial capitalism; cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in territories joined by the colonizers for administrative purposes; peripheral economies undergoing a volatile but uneven and incomplete process of modernization; simultaneous but discrete historical modes of production; the persistence of pre-modern practices and archaic social forms, discontinuous but coexistent with mechanization, industrialization and urbanization; class formations distinguished by a vast and unpoliticized peasantry, still influential traditional authorities, a weak native bourgeoisie unable to carry out the revolutionary role performed by that class in Europe, the scarcity of intellectuals, the dearth of a revolutionary intelligentsia and the absence of a sizeable proletariat.

Amongst the Bolshevik generation, Lenin and Trotsky had recognized the particular and enormous contradictions within societies undergoing partial conscription into capitalism's world-system, and to their analysis of these worlds they brought the theory of permanent revolution. Designating all anti-imperialist struggles, irrespective of their national-democratic agendas and bourgeois leaderships, as revolutionary in the world

context, they urged unconditional international support for the right of peoples to self-determination – a right enshrined in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, drafted by Lenin in 1913 but published under Stalin's name.[35] Both Lenin and Trotsky recognized the limitations of an independence won through popular alliances, and presupposed that already existing and autonomous political organisations of workers and peasants would proceed to overthrow the colonial state inherited and perpetuated by the native bourgeoisie.[36] Although not necessarily acknowledged, these perspectives inform the programmes of liberation movements.

Writing after his deposition in 1966, his Marxism concentrated by his fall from power, Nkrumah produced a case study of the dire consequences to the arrest of permanent revolution:

> Class divisions in modern African society became blurred to some extent during the pre-independence period, when it seemed there was national unity and all classes joined forces to eject the colonial power . . . the African bourgeoisie, the class which thrived under colonialism, is the same class which is benefiting under the post-independence, neo-colonial period. Its basic interest lies in preserving capitalist social and economic structures . . . in Africa, the bourgeoisie as a whole cannot be seen in isolation from imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism . . . It is only peasantry and proletariat working together who are able to subscribe to policies of all-out socialism . . . It is the task of the African urban proletariat to win the peasantry to revolution by taking the revolution to the countryside.[37]

So too Thomas Sankara considered independence as a transitional phase, and although sympathetic to the masses' perception of national sovereignty in Upper Volta as 'a victory of our people over the forces of foreign oppression and exploitation', he cautioned that for the imperialists this meant 'a change in the forms of domination and exploitation', which now included 'the petty-bourgeoisie and the backward forces of traditional society'.[38] Hence he urged that the primary task of the 'democratic and popular revolution' (p. 40) which had wrested power from this former class alliance in 1983 and established Burkina Faso, was to construct a new machinery in place of the old colonial state so as to 'transform all social and economic and cultural relations in society' (p. 45).[39]

The pursuit of revolutionary goals by liberation movements rested on a firm belief in the necessity of vanguard parties. The MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, formed in 1956) presented itself as '*representing* the Angolan people as a whole . . . *fighting for* the realisation of the deepest aspirations of the Angolan people and particularly of the most exploited sections of the people, the peasants and workers', and claimed that it derived its strength 'from *the support it receives* from the masses of the people' (my italics).[40] In Mozambique, when 'the politics of people's power' was confronting that of petty-bourgeoisie nationalism within the ranks of Frelimo (the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) and elements within both traditional hierarchies and new comprador elites were ready to reach a compromise with the colonial power, Samora Machel stated: 'Today our fight has reached a stage where national unity [essential for combating archaic traditions] is no longer enough, because the fundamental question has now become the triumph of the Revolution and not just national

independence'.[41] 'To "Africanize" colonialist and capitalist power would be to negate the meaning of our struggle'.[42] Prompted by the impossibility of reconciling 'our interests with those of the enemy through any purported "autonomy" or "independence" safeguarding the colonial capitalist State', and the recognition that 'the conflict between us and the enemy is so antagonistic that only war can resolve it', Machel urged establishing the hegemony of a *new class* distinct from the broad spectrum of nationalists (*Establishing People's Power to Serve the Masses*, p. 17).

The contemporary critique of written representation as the misrecognition or appropriation of another's consciousness, and political representation as the displacement of the people's aspirations by an elite, suggests that the argument for vanguard parties claiming to represent the people in both senses must rest on something other than a hermeneutics of representation. And indeed with Amilcar Cabral, an unrepentant advocate of vanguardism, the argument departs from representation as written interpretation or delegated authority, and moves to the category of political practice performed through a symbiosis of party and people. Had Cabral wanted to impress sceptical metropolitan intellectuals (a community he regarded as a plentiful waste of time) he could have sought validation in Gramsci's 'The Modern Prince', written in the 1930s, in which the Italian Marxist proposed a dialectical relationship between the political party and the spontaneous actions of the people: 'The leaders themselves spoke of the "spontaneity" of the movement . . . This assertion was a stimulus, a tonic, an element of unification in depth . . . It gave the masses a "theoretical" consciousness of being creators of *historical* and institutional values, of being founders of a state.'[43]

In his many addresses, Cabral, who repeatedly pointed to an ideological deficiency as the greatest weakness of liberation movements,[44] undertook rigorously materialist examinations of colonialism's impact on local economies, social structures and class formations, defining the *nationalist* and the *revolutionary* capacity of the indigenous elite, the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, the urban wage-earners and the déclassé, none of whom were situated as homogeneous in their material interests or their relationships to national liberation. The need to forge national anti-colonial unity was for Cabral unarguable in a society divided by ethnic, religious, tribal, linguistic and regional differences, and where disjunctive social forms were superimposed, mingled and came into conflict. But he also understood that popular anti-colonialism in itself did not constitute revolutionary consciousness, warning that independence attained through alliance politics was an insufficient condition for revolutionary transformation: 'we must try and unite everybody in the national liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonialists: this is where our main contradiction lies, but it is also imperative to organize things so that we always have an instrument available which can solve all the other contradictions. That is what convinced us of the absolute necessity of creating a party during the national liberation struggle'.[45]

Insisting that '*the liberation struggle is a revolution* that does not finish at the moment when the national flag is raised and the national anthem played', and aware that 'with rare exceptions the colonial situation neither permits nor needs the existence of a significant vanguard class (a working class conscious of its existence and a rural proletariat)', Cabral argued that 'only a revolutionary vanguard, generally an active minority', can distinguish between fictitious political independence, where power passes to a native elite in alliance with imperialism, and the destruction of the capitalist state and colonial

social structures.[46] For liberation theorists, the necessity of vanguardism was dictated by the strength of the colonial apparatus and the unpropitious distribution of indigenous class forces. Far from excluding or manipulating the people, the party *depended* on their voluntary and autonomous agency: as Basil Davidson has shown, conditions in the Portuguese colonies 'demanded absolutely that the peasants, with the few townsmen who joined them, participate out of their own will and understanding'. It was, Davidson continues, this policy of *participação popular*, defined by Cabral as the practice of democracy, criticism, self-criticism and the responsibility of populations to govern their own lives, that brought the masses into the struggle as armed militants, and gave liberation movements 'their true place in history'.[47]

The resistance to class analysis and vanguardism in the current postcolonial discussion is evident in the introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*,[48] where the editors set out to dethrone class antagonism and political mobilization from their commanding places in the revolutionary canon. The charges Lowe and Lloyd make against Marxism as practised both in the west and non-western spaces seem to me unsustainable. Do western Marxists when arguing for recognizing a capitalist world-system really insist that capitalism has proceeded through global *homogenization*, and is there a tendency in their 'discourses on transnational capitalism . . . to view capitalist penetration as *complete and pervasive*' (p. 15)? Indeed the notion of combined and uneven development is older than Trotsky's phrase, and has been reiterated in terms of the disjunction between modes of production and the intersection of different temporalities within colonial and postcolonial locations. Challenging those movements which prescribe political and state-oriented goals, and advocating the dispersal of resistance amongst the alternative rationalities of cultural, feminist and anti-racial opposition, Lowe and Lloyd circumvent the argument that some structures and social phenomena are more powerful and 'determining' than others. Moreover they accuse all anti-colonial movements of seeking 'to absorb subaltern struggles into uniformity with the terms of the political sphere', while contests fought by Marxists are accused of ignoring 'subaltern' rebellions and 'different social imaginaries' (p. 6). This situates the so-called subaltern – I prefer the urban and rural working classes of both genders, who were doubly dispossessed by native oligarchs and compradors on the one hand and modern colonial capitalism on the other – as a social category fixed in its perceptions, perspectives and insurrectionary capacities. Yet – and contra Lloyd and Lowe's dictum that under colonialism 'class relations . . . are always already predicated upon racialization' (p. 14) – it was with the development of *class consciousness* that the 'subalterns' came to understand that their interests and aspirations were incommensurable with those of an elite who had fought foreign domination under the banner of nationalism and 'anti-racism' in order to inherit/share the power held by colonial capitalism. With this, in Gramsci's usage, the subalterns ceased to be subalterns. If any claim by a leadership to know the desires and wishes of 'the people' requires the closest scrutiny, a compelling case has been made by liberation theorists for the indispensability of 'the political' in transforming local, dispersed and sporadic rebellion animated by disparate goals into coordinated, participatory, revolutionary activity directed at the overthrow of a coercive state apparatus.

There are postcolonial critics who even when patently unacquainted with their writings, reproach liberation movements for inscribing regressive and anti-modernist nativisms –

a charge only applicable to revivalist tendencies within anti-colonialism which were wedded to indurated custom and hostile to socialism. In large theorists promoted the merging of intelligible, still viable and always mutable indigenous forms with modern cultural practices,[49] although Samora Machel, unusually, focused entirely on the harm of antiquated and negative habits which had been deliberately perpetuated under colonialism: 'Science, and the objective understanding of our country and the world acquired through the practice of class struggle and production are the basis of our thinking . . . [and] . . . will be the instrument to liquidate tribalism, regionalism and racism, the mentality inculcated by capitalism, which still make us consider indispensable to our personality all that which is decadent, degrading and outmoded'.[50] Nkrumah on the other hand, who rejected Léopold Sédar Senghor's notion of an 'African socialism' based on metaphysical notions of the African 'as a field of pure sensation',[51] and recognized the coexistence of the traditional, the western and the Islamic in Africa, argued that socialist thought should reassert in a modern context the principles of materialism, communalism and egalitarianism in which pre-colonial societies were grounded.[52] Similarly Sankara urged the simultaneity of renewal and innovation: 'We must be able to take from our past – from our traditions – all that is good, as well as all that is positive in foreign cultures, so as to give a new dimension to our culture. The inexhaustible fountainhead of the masses' creative inspiration lies in the popular masses themselves' (*Thomas Sankara Speaks*, p. 52).

The value of protean autochthonous cognitive forms in effecting an indigenous modernity enters into the discussion of culture's political role.[53] For Mondlane, there was no doubt that a long history of cultural resistance in Mozambique was a precursor to militant anti-colonialism; while with the onset of the armed struggle the new styles of defiance initiated by peasants and workers in song, dance and carving expressed a deep-seated hostility to the alien culture, came to influence the art of professionals and engendered political defiance. 'In the carvings of the Makonde peoples, a madonna is given a demon to hold instead of the Christ child; a priest is represented with the feet of a wild animal, a pieta becomes a study not of sorrow but of revenge, with the mother raising a spear over the body of her dead son. In specific areas at specific times, these attitudes, ingrained in popular culture, crystallized into action of one kind or another.'[54] Far from being consigned to the 'detritus of history', as has been claimed by participants in the postcolonial discussion,[55] liberation writing does indeed invoke different social imaginaries and alternative rationalities – and it is as well to remember that even the bourgeois-led Indian National Congress called on, appropriated and redirected popular forms of protest and disobedience invented by agrarian populations, renaming one of these as passive resistance.

Amongst the heroes of the Angolan Liberation Front were those intellectuals who at the turn of the nineteenth century, and in protest against the colonizers' attempt to suppress the literate use of native languages, for the first time used the written word to contest colonialism (*MPLA: Revolution in Angola*, pp. 7–11). In her introduction to Angostinho Neto's poems, Margaret Holness observes that writers and musicians contributed significantly to the ferment of rebellion in Angola during the 1940s, when at a time of intensified institutional repression they eschewed assimilation, identified with the people, addressed them in their own idioms, and advocated a restoration of cultural traditions as a means to galvanize a united struggle against foreign occupation.[56] Thus

for Holness the cultural struggle of the intelligentsia facilitated the growth of a modern national movement, beginning with the African National League (1929), and after 1945, the formation of clandestine political parties.

A more guarded estimate of such cultural interventions was made by Cabral, although he was amongst those intellectuals and students from the colonies then living in Lisbon, who during the early 1960s had founded a Centre for African Studies 'to rationalize the feelings belonging to a world of oppression and to awaken national consciousness through an analysis of the [African] continent's cultural foundations' (*Sacred Hope* p. xviii). If Cabral was later to question the significance of elite cultural resistance, the discriminations of his materialist understanding of culture as inseparable from socio-economic structures cannot be dismissed as merely instrumental. In 'The Role of Culture in the Liberation Struggle', Cabral argued for recognizing the class character of culture within the vertical structure of colonized society, distinguishing between the 'masses who preserve their culture' and the restricted phenomenon of 'native elites created by the colonizing process', or a colonial diaspora in a metropolis who were 'more-or-less assimilated, uprooted and culturally alienated'. The desire of this minority to 'return to the source' by denying foreign culture its superiority and expressing the discovery of their own identity was dismissed by Cabral as influencing only metropolitan intellectuals and some backward members of their own class, and could not therefore be considered as an act of struggle against foreign rule.[57]

In the case of 'the people', however, culture was 'the dynamic synthesis of the society's material and spiritual reality', serving as a source of physical and psychic energy and enacting indestructible resistance (p. 44). Cabral also urged the importance of opposing 'without violence, all prejudicial customs, the negative aspects of the beliefs and traditions of our people', towards which he all the same shows admirable pedagogic tact: 'We are proud of not having forbidden our people to use fetishes, amulets and things of this sort, which we call *mezinhas* . . . We let our people find out for themselves, through the struggle, that their fetishes are of no use' (pp. 71, 129). Cabral's perception of a vibrant people's culture differs from that of Fanon, who saw it as irretrievably debased by colonization; yet both converge in proposing that a revolutionary culture can only emerge through the struggle for liberation. Thus in Cabral's view, as the contradictions between the colonial power and the exploited masses sharpened during the prelude to an independence movement, the return recommended by the elite could be 'historically important *only* if it involved both a genuine commitment to the fight for independence, and a total, definitive identification with the aspirations of the masses who contested not merely the foreigner's culture, but foreign rule altogether' (pp. 40–42).

For Cabral the negation by imperialist rule of a dominated society's historical process, is also a negation of its cultural process, both of which must be repossessed:

> A people who free themselves from foreign domination will not be culturally free unless, without underestimating the importance of positive contributions from the oppressor's culture and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture. The latter is nourished by the living reality of the environment and rejects harmful influences as much as any kind of subjection to foreign cultures. We see

> therefore, that, if imperialist domination has the vital need to practize cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an *act of culture*.[58]

When Cabral speaks of 'a return to our history', his advocacy of new directions and expectations of still unimagined futures should not and cannot be misconstrued as retrograde. Colonialism, he wrote, 'can be considered as the paralysis or deviation or even the halting of the history of the people in favour of the acceleration of the historical development of other peoples . . . The colonialists usually say that it was they who brought us into history: today we show that this was not so. They made us leave history, our history, to follow the progress of their history. Today in taking up arms to liberate ourselves . . . we want to return to our history' (*Toward Final Victory*, p. 63). To observe the arrest of a community's historical trajectory and celebrate its resumption in the context of a burgeoning modernity, registers neither a nostalgic infatuation with the past nor mimicry of western notions of progress. As Thomas Sankara said after leading the coup in Upper Volta which overthrew the formal independence earlier granted by France, and resulted in the establishment of Burkina Faso: 'You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future' (*Thomas Sankara Speaks*, p. 144).

The recuperation of liberation theory as an articulation of a distinctive modernity is urgent in an intellectual climate where there are postcolonial critics who disavow its prior anti-colonial critique, traduce its positions and trivialize its achievements. Consider the preposterous accusation that anti-colonialism drew on conceptions of 'tradition and cultural anti-modernity' in opposing foreign domination and proposing 'alternatives to capitalist development', or Homi Bhabha's censure of anti-colonialism as 'an anti-imperialist or black nationalist tradition "in itself" ',[59] an assessment which insouciantly overlooks the socialist goals and *internationalism* of Marxist-inspired movements. It was after all an Indian who participated in establishing the Communist Party of Mexico in 1919; from George Padmore, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Nkrumah and Cabral came repeated messages of solidarity with the black struggles in North America and anti-colonial movements in Africa, Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Palestine and Nicaragua; socialist countries were spoken of as allies; Machel and Neto stressed that the Portuguese people were not the enemy, and expressed support for the anti-fascist struggle in the colonial homeland that had been precipitated by the defeats of the Portuguese armies in the colonies; Sankara declared, 'we must define the place of the Voltaic revolution in the world revolutionary process' (*Thomas Sankara Speaks*, p. 53).

In a different vein, Gayatri Spivak has attributed *all* articulations and practices of anti-colonialism to 'that class in the colonies' who ignored the subaltern and betrayed the 'genuinely disenfranchized', while negotiating with the structures of violence imposed by the colonialists 'in order to emerge as the so-called colonial subject'.[60] If this account is true of independence movements controlled by an entrenched and powerful native bourgeoisie who manipulated the insurrectionary energies of the poor in achieving their own, minority ends, it dismisses the experiential transformation of the 'subalterns' through their participation, and disregards situations where an organic relationship was forged between masses and a leadership sharing the same class interests and revolutionary goals – there is after all no essential and invariable correlation

between objective class position and ideological belief or political stance. For Stuart Hall, serenely defying the logic of colonialism's theory and practice, the consequence of the move from difference to *différance* demands that the oppositional form in which the colonial struggle has been represented in anti-colonial discourse must be reread in terms of negotiation, 'as forms of transculturation, of cultural translation, destined to trouble the here/there cultural binaries for ever'.[61]

A sceptic has remarked of 'reconciliatory postcolonial thought' that it 'fuse[s] postcolonialism with postmodernism in [its] rejection of resistance along with any form of binarism, hierarchy or telos';[62] and it is now impossible to overlook a strong impulse in the contemporary postcolonial discussion to find a middle ground between the terms 'domination' and 'oppression', to define colonial relationships as generically ambivalent, and to represent colonial locations as always and necessarily the site of dialogue. A tendency to privilege the cultural assimilation sought and achieved by colonial elites over popular resistance to colonial violence[63] is both ahistorical and morally vacant in its detachment from the outrages visited on the dispossessed. A more fitting recognition of the adversities they endured and the courage they displayed can be found in Fanon's pledge: 'As for us who have decided to break the back of colonialism, our historic mission is to sanction all revolts, all desperate actions, all those abortive attempts drowned in rivers of blood' (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 168); while Basil Davidson's remembrance of the insult delivered by colonialism brings a necessary ethical dimension to its critique: 'This has been the missing factor in all European-centred histories of Africa; the deep and lasting sense of injury, that colonial dispossession was felt to have done to the way that people had lived and should live. It is the factor of moral legitimacy' (*The Black Man's Burden*, p. 297).

The inadequate reasons advanced by critics cited above cannot account for the devastating retreats from the revolutions inaugurated by liberation struggles. Curiously, the thesis on the impossibility of building socialism in one country is not amongst the more persuasive if still insufficient explanations for the reversals which do include a 'basic contradiction . . . between an economic strategy of modernisation and industrialisation, and a political strategy of popular mobilisation and democracy' (cited by Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*, p. 305). Other factors adduced by Davidson are social and economic emergencies arising from pre-existing and disastrous colonial policies and the consequent halting of revolutionary momentum, the adoption of a command economy on Soviet lines and advice, the assassination of politically competent literates, and the fostering of destructive factions by hostile states. At the heart of Davidson's interpretation, as glossed by Lazarus, is colonialism's legacy: what the newly independent nation-states inherited from the colonial powers 'were states of a particular kind, scored and configured both "internally" and "externally" by their specific history as colonial dependencies in the capitalist world-system . . . occup[ying] dependent and cruelly circumscribed positions as peripheral formations in the global economy' (*National and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World*, p. 106). But these bleak accounts neither disparage the revolutionary energies and ethical impulses of those who made national liberation possible, nor do they pre-empt the possibilities of renewed mass participation in a political process that has been arrested but not defeated: where the conditions making for anti-capitalist colonial struggles have not disappeared, the conditions making for guerrilla insurgencies remain, as is evident in Africa, South Asia, the Philippines and Latin America.

A very different and negative assessment of the inevitable, because structural, setbacks to national liberation has been made by Arif Dirlik when examining the contradictions of a modernist Marxism 'brought face to face with the pre-modern cultures of agrarian societies', where 'unprecedented historical forces' had displaced societies from earlier historical conditions and relocated them 'irretrievably within a new global economic, political, and ideological process'. The *problems* identified by Dirlik in his writings on Chinese Marxism are relevant to other national or cultural spaces where disjunctive social forms and modes of production were in the process of transformation by global capitalist forces. However, the *consequences* Dirlik extrapolates from these historical encounters, namely the impossibility of translating Marxism into another idiom or implementing an indigenous modernity, are less certain. His focus on a contradiction between the anti-capitalist aspirations of national liberation movements and their commitment 'to the developmentalism of EuroAmerican modernity' is premised on interpreting Marxism as a theory informed 'by the spatial and temporal assumptions of a Eurocentric capitalism',[64] whose 'particular historical trajectory' assisted by the complicity of Marxism, 'end[ed] up as a teleology world-wide in marking time'.[65] But did not liberation thinkers reassured by the alternative systems still standing in the way of capitalism's accelerating global reach anticipate the immanent possibility of harnessing 'development' to the construction of socialist societies, where modernity would mean the fostering of an anti-capitalist ethos and the implementation of anti-capitalist policies? And is censure of Marxism's collusion with this or any other teleology sustainable, given a theory of continuing sublation and a world-view where the supersession of capitalism signals the beginning of 'real history' and not its closure?

An argument which situates contradiction as intrinsically disabling and dooms overdetermined projects to certain failure, forecloses on the originality and autonomy of differently articulated projects of modernity. In Dirlik's view, colonial societies were 'compelled into modernity not as its subject but as its object', because of which Third World modernity, 'irrevocably alienated from its origins in Europe', was 'experienced not as an internal development but as an alien hegemony'.[66] Yet on the evidence of liberation writings, modernity was apprehended as neither imposed by a foreign power, nor the gift of a predatory colonialism which had institutionalized retardation in pursuit of its own immediate interests, and in a vain attempt to deny the colonial people the status of modern subjects. Where the discontinuities in structural, cultural and existential conditions were egregious, as in sub-Saharan Africa, those few with access to a larger cognitive field afforded by a secular education, and aware of living in chronologically simultaneous but non-synchronous moments, transcribed the experience of modernity as ontological dilemma, political problem and promise of emancipation.

Fredric Jameson has proposed that if 'modernization is something that happens to the base, and modernism the form the superstructure takes in reaction to that ambivalent development, then perhaps modernity characterizes the attempt to make something coherent out of their relationships'.[67] Because the alterations to 'base' and the innovations in 'superstructure' were uneven and unfinished in colonial worlds, the modes of cognition and structures of feeling inscribed by those conscious of inhabiting multiple locations and temporalities do not duplicate the turbulent European articulations of modernity, suffused as these were with the seismic effects of accelerated capitalist transformation, and graphically invoked in the *Communist Manifesto*: 'Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting

uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient prejudices and opinions are swept aside, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify'.[68] Rather, the utterances of the small but not insignificant revolutionary intelligentsia of sub-Saharan Africa register an affection for *and* a dislocation from tradition, a propulsion towards but not an integration into the modern as received via colonialist intervention. If colonialism was the messenger of modernity's transformative capacities and emancipatory potential in colonial spaces, its message installing exploitation, inequalities and injustice was refused. These disjunctions suggest a particular sensibility to modernity on colonial terrains, its intellectual and imaginative horizons extending from indigenous cultural and cognitive forms to premonitions, not blueprints, of the *post-capitalist*. As Samir Amin has suggested, we should think of modernity as an unfinished project in which human beings make their own history, its failures the results of capitalism, but its manifestations not restricted to its capitalist forms, and its furtherance possible only by going beyond capitalism.[69]

Curiously it is Dirlik who, having asserted that '[t]he rewriting of history after the Eurocentric teleology of capitalist modernity, ruled out the possibility of looking into the past as a source of possible future alternatives to this teleology',[70] elsewhere provides an eloquent counter-argument to this indictment:

> the goal of socialist revolution for the last two centuries has been to transcend capitalist modernity to create an alternative modernity closer in its constitution to the Enlightenment vision of human liberation. It is noteworthy that socialism, and not just "utopian socialism", retained in its vision of the future memories of the premodern community, but only in the form reworked by reason and the subjective goals of modernity; the contradiction endowed socialism with a revolutionary dynamism
>
> ('Mao Zedong and "Chinese Marxism" ', p. 62).

This I read as implying that narratives of modernity's expectations are not predestined to reiterate capitalism's inspiration or aspiration. Nor were modernity's pasts wholly entrapped by capitalism's ideology, its aesthetic including jazz, the Harlem Renaissance, the avant-garde of the Russian Revolution, and the florescence of politically inspired art and writing in the Caribbean. It was after all in pursuit of a condition which colonialism sought to withhold from subjugated peoples, and which capitalism was generically incapable of fulfilling, that liberation movements initiated struggles invoking resilient and constantly reinvented indigenous traditions in envisaging alternatives to the existing social order, not as ends but as beginnings. When the urbane narrator of Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps* recalls a tavern on the edge of the South American jungle called 'Memories of the Future', he delivers an epithet appropriate to liberation theory's variations on modernity.

6 Internationalism revisited or in praise of internationalism

Although proceeding from very particular theoretical premises, the Hardt/Negri thesis on the epochal shift from imperialism to the decentred and deterritorialized terrain of 'empire' impinges on contemporary debates about globalization. Whether this is conceived as a break with capitalism's pre-existing forms or an intensification of its inherent contradictions and conflicts will determine the deductions made by theorists about prevailing modes and relations of production, the location and dissemination of power, the actual or potential oppositional energies of classes, and the sites, shapes and goals of revolutionary projects. On these issues the positions of *Empire*[1] reiterate and countermand those advanced by both Marxist and postmodernist theorists, rendering the book's variable perspectives consistent and discrepant with its declared ambitions as a manifesto of political insurrection.

A decade ago Michael Sprinker observed that with the demise of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of the socialist bloc and the end of the heroic era of liberation struggles, there had been a retreat of traditional left intellectualism and the development of other intellectual formations situated on the left but disengaged from Marxism.[2] Were Sprinker alive and writing now he would have had the pleasure of noting the many signs of Marxism's return to intellectual life, and amongst the numerous glosses on *Empire* are those which consider whether a study that situates itself as preserving/transcending Marxism can be received as part of this trend. Stephen Shapiro, for example, while welcoming *Empire* for 'inaugurating a long-overdue confrontation between contemporary strands of neo-Anarchist thought . . . and a reconstituted Marxism', has observed that by 'refusing the geography of uneven development, Hardt and Negri's work cannot align itself, in any meaningful sense, with Marx's diagnosis on capitalism's need to appropriate new zones of labour-power, the primitive accumulation that results in core/periphery differences'.[3] In a less forgiving critique, Tim Brennan, who traces the book's conceptual provenance to the *autonomia* movements of the Italian far left, council communism, the theoreticism of continental philosophy and 1960s' counter-culturalism, maintains that this cognitive apparatus is translated into 'a gathering together of positions that are substantively incompatible', the 'pattern of reverential borrowings from Marxism' involving 'simultaneously, its rejection and diminishment'.[4]

But if *Empire* is not recognizably Marxist in its methodology, eschewing as it does the necessity of confronting state power, neither is it post-Marxist since it has not relinquished economic and political explanations for cultural ones, or subordinated class, however radically this is redefined, to ethnicity, gender and sexuality, nor discarded class struggle, even if this is abstracted from its accustomed usage. Moreover the authors

declare an idiosyncratically articulated allegiance to communism. In this, *Empire* remains outside of the current consensual ideology, retaining as it does a commitment to a revolutionary transformation that is *beyond* capitalism.[5] A mode suggesting an *aufheben* rather than an abandonment of Marxism may predispose some on the left to give *Empire* a cordial reception, and I for one am able to sign up to much of the book's recapitulation of capitalism's historical development, its indignation at the system's iniquities and its undimmed hope in an emancipatory politics. All the same there remain for me problems with a dizzying conceptual promiscuity induced by the heady cocktail of Marxist, autonomist and postmodern paradigms. In particular because the Deleuzian notion of lines or paths of flight, of flows and borderless continuums is used as a trope of thinking processes and invoked as a template of real-world conditions, these disposals converge in an insouciant disregard of the actually existing circumstances in what the authors insist is a post-imperialist era. A mismatch between a retrospect resting on received Marxist narratives and delivered with sober mien, and the fantastical prospect on the present and future enunciated in an euphoric rhetoric, makes the reading of this book a lesson in the difference between intimations of a reasoned utopia, and wish-fulfilment presented as imminent event.

Equally troubling are the consequences of transposing the localized theoretical heritage of the *autonomia* movement onto a world arena. Elsewhere Hardt had written that 'Laboratory Italy refers no longer to a geographic location, but . . . to a specific modality now available to us all of us, of experimenting in revolution'; and having surveyed the economic and political shifts unique to western Europe, and more particularly as these were played out in workers' struggles in Italy during the 1970s,[6] he goes on to insist that 'Italian revolutionary thought . . . can now be recognized as relevant to an increasingly wide portion of the globe in a new and important way'.[7] So insular a vision of spaces that once constituted the empires of Europe is, I suggest, contingent on the authors' neglect of the heterogeneous socio-economic formations existing within capitalism's global system, and it is salutary to contrast the indiscrimination of the fuzzy world-outlook pervading *Empire* with the close analyses of geographical terrains, institutional structures, modes of production and class forces undertaken by Marxist theorists in the colonized world when devising their own experiments in revolution.

There are moments when it could appear that it is an extravagance of style which distinguishes *Empire* from previous attempts to detect a radical rupture within capitalism's forms, and in this sense the book has received proleptic replies. For some time now Neil Lazarus has argued against 'discontinuist historico-philosophical assumptions' and 'endist' logic, insisting that 'the intensification and reconfiguration of capitalist social relations do not represent a new era of capitalist development'.[8] Also writing prior to the appearance of *Empire*, David Harvey had asked whether the quantitative changes that have occurred within capitalism's global process did indeed constitute a qualitatively 'new era of capitalist development', to which self-posed question he initially answered a qualified 'yes', which was immediately contradicted by the assertion that because globalization entailed the profound and uneven temporal and geographical reorganization of capitalism, 'there has not been any fundamental revolution in the mode of production and its associated social relations'.[9]

This unevenness, according to Samir Amin, intensifies capitalist social relations on a world scale even though the south is now being differentiated between those peripheral societies that are undergoing industrialization (East Asia, Latin America, India and

South East Asia')[10] and those (Africa and parts of Arab world) which are not – these last including nation-states where in world terms the whole nation is the active and reserve army of labour.[11] Amin goes on to observe that with the erosion of the great divide between industrialized centre and non-industrialized periphery, there have emerged 'new dimensions of polarization' defined by a country's capacity to compete in the world market.[12] The result has been 'a new hierarchy' with increased inequality in the distribution of income on a world scale, 'the subordination of the industries of the peripheries' and the reduction of these to 'the role of subcontracting'.[13] We can also consider the case made by the sociologist Michael Mann, who while acknowledging that 'north' and 'south' are not strictly geographical designations, finds that the north continues to widen inequalities, the most important divide being what he calls an 'ostracizing imperialism', whereby 'one part of the world both avoids and dominates the economy of the other', since 'most of the world's poorest countries are not being significantly integrated into transnational capitalism', being considered 'too risky for investment and trade'.[14]

Thus although an enthusiast of *Empire* has claimed that Hardt and Negri 'do insist on the unevenness of capitalist development'[15], it would seem that the 'rhizomatic method' which they favour, together with their passion for decentring, contrive to inhibit adequate attention to the structural hierarchy and polarization endemic to contemporary capitalism.[16] And where inequalities persist, so do borders remain in place and so are flows of populations, cultures and socialities distorted.

At stake in the argument advanced by Hardt and Negri is the question of whether autonomous struggles that have dispensed with class organization and party formations can mobilize an effective 'counter-globalization'. To doubt the efficacy of spontaneity is not to dismiss the significance of the proliferating 'New Social Movements',[17] or what John Holloway, who is sympathetic towards autonomist or *operaismo*/workerist theories, has called the lived struggles against invisibility, 'the hidden world of insubordination' and anti-power – even if, as he concedes, these remain in the absence of class consciousness and interconnectedness, harmless to capital.[18] Nor is it to minimize the importance of anti-capitalist protest directed at the regulation rather than the transcendence of the global system. Such movements command the critical support of Ray Kiely, who in refusing a 'reform-revolution' dichotomy, advocates a position 'somewhere between on the one hand Leninist vanguardism, where struggles are subordinated to the will of the Party that holds the "correct knowledge", and on the other direct action and autonomist perspectives that uncritically celebrate struggle without attempting to analyse the efficacy and progressiveness of such struggles'.[19]

But this too, I suggest, rests on a false dichotomy since it misconstrues the Marxist conception of a dialectical interaction between revolutionary spontaneity, or the voluntary and active agency of the masses, and a central vanguard party. As Ernest Mandel has written, it was understood by the theorists of the Russian Revolution that the leading role of the party 'had to be continuously fought for politically and won democratically; the majority of the workers have to be convinced, they have to give their consent . . . the party is an accompaniment to the self-activity of the masses'.[20] In Gramsci's exposition the relationship is posited as an institutional dialogue with the subaltern classes where the work of the party must be structured by 'the formation of a national-popular collective will, of which the modern Prince [Gramsci's coded word for

the Communist Party] is at one and the same time the organiser and the active, operative expression'.[21] Rejecting the twin errors of intellectuals who either display contempt for spontaneous struggles or extol spontaneity as a political method, Gramsci endorsed as exemplary those movements where the leadership set out to mediate, organize, educate and direct spontaneity rather than to lead it: 'This unity between "spontaneity" and "conscious leadership" or "discipline" is precisely the real political action of the subaltern classes, in so far as this is mass politics and not merely an adventure by groups claiming to represent the masses'.[22]

We could also consider Georg Lukács' gloss on Lenin's concept of party organization: 'the group of professional revolutionaries does not for a moment have the task of either "making" the revolution or – by their own independent, bold actions – of sweeping the inactive masses along to confront them with a revolutionary *fait accompli. Lenin's concept of party organization presupposes the fact – the actuality – of the revolution*' (italics in original).[23] Thus, Lukács maintains, when Lenin urged that the role of revolutionary intellectuals was to bring socialist consciousness to the workers' movement 'from the outside', this should be understood as providing theoretical knowledge about the regime as a totality. The relevance of this perception surely persists, for without understanding capitalism as a system, spontaneous struggles are limited in their capacity to challenge its institutions, threaten it globally, or offer the prospect of a different social order.

How then does *Empire* conceive a project of 'counter-globalization' that in ideology, composition and method is distinct from the traditions which envisaged nation-based proletarian movements joined within a socialist international? Post-Marxists appear to be agreed that proletarian class analysis is exhausted, received notions of class agency and organization anachronistic, and the nation-state no longer an adequate framework for opposition to contemporary capitalism. As a consequence all declare internationalism obsolescent. One such instance is a blunt rejection: 'Proletarian and socialist internationalism . . . have become embarrassments to contemporary socialists . . . if the old internationalism is dead, then the internationalisms of the new social movements (women, ecology, peace, human rights) are alive and kicking'.[24]

A less blatant case for 'rethinking . . . the older Marxist notion of internationalism' within the current global restructuring and heterogeneity of contemporary capitalism has been made by Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd who challenge 'class antagonism as the exclusive site of contradiction' and propose instead the equal importance of struggles 'that do not privilege the nation and are not necessarily defined by class consciousness'.[25] But the most elaborate obituary of proletarian internationalism is to be found in *Empire*.

Proceeding from the supposition that the supranational operations of capitalism have rendered an international proletarian formation inconceivable, Hardt and Negri are able to pay their retrospective respects to proletarian internationalism for having 'constructed a paradoxical and powerful political machine that pushed against the boundaries and hierarchies of the nation-state', while pronouncing that its time 'is over'.[26] For, according to the authors, 'the restructuring and global expansion of capitalist production' has in 'the absence of a recognition of a common enemy against which struggles are directed' (p. 55) caused the death of class solidarity and given birth to a new proletariat which 'is not *a new industrial working class*' but 'the general concept that defines all those whose labor is exploited by capital, the entire cooperating multitude' (p. 402,

italics in original). If the categories of 'a new proletariat' and 'the multitude' here appear to be conflated, they are elsewhere differentiated. Concerning the new proletariat, the authors relegate industrial, artisanal and agrarian labour on the grounds that 'the figure of immaterial labor power (involved in communication, cooperation, and the production and reproduction of affects) occupies an increasingly central position in both the schema of capitalist production and the composition of the proletariat'(p. 53).[27] This paradigm, dubious even when restricted in its application to western Europe and North America[28] – where manual labour, wherever its operations are located, remains the ground on which communicative and affective labour can exist and flourish[29] – is offered as a universal model and therefore relevant to those parts of the world subject to combined and uneven development where pre-, nascent and 'classical' capitalist conditions are prevalent.

Having redefined the composition of the proletariat, the authors then implicitly differentiate this constituency from 'the multitude' – the dispossessed masses who while certainly exploited by capital, are not coterminous with those 'involved in communication, cooperation, and the production and reproduction of affects'. This introduces a category that could be appear to be pre- or non-Marxist – a subset akin to populist notions of the people or the poor, classifications from which class self-understanding is absent – but which claims to supersede Marxism. As used by Hardt and Negri, the multitude, now exceeding its original Italian connotation,[30] signifies all who by engaging in fragmented and dispersed forms of resistance are the actual and potential agents of global revolution. It is they who moved by deterritorializing desires had dismantled imperialism's structures and called empire into being; and it is they who by '[p]roducing and reproducing autonomously', construct both 'a new ontological reality'[31] and a new historical moment. Where international cycle of struggles 'based on the communication and translation of the common desire of labor in revolt seem[s] no longer to exist', and communicable solidarity in struggle is impossible, it is the multitude who inaugurate 'local, specific and immediate events' which 'blocked from travelling horizontally in the form of a cycle . . . are forced to leap vertically and touch immediately on the global level' (p. 54). Thus through spontaneous struggles without programmes, strategies and party, the always mobile multitude is destined to construct 'a counter-Empire, an alternative political organization of global flows and exchanges' (p. xv).

That this assertion is repeated does not mean that it is substantiated or even elucidated.[32] Consider the labyrinthine enunciation of an elusive case premised on a perception of globalization as a depthless body invisibly undermined by the microscopic and poisonous circulation of disaffection: because 'Empire presents a superficial world, the virtual centers of which can be accessed immediately from any point across the surface', the multitudes, by 'focusing their own powers, concentrating their own powers in a tense and compact coil', initiate 'serpentine struggles' which 'slither silently across[the] superficial imperial landscape . . . [and] strike directly at the highest articulation of imperial order'.[33] Although conceding that political alternatives to empire do not yet exist, Hardt and Negri confidently proclaim, and in the present tense, that '[d]esertion and exodus are a powerful form of class struggle within and against imperial post-modernity' (p. 213) – exodus as Hardt is party to explaining elsewhere, is a term 'that might be understood . . . as an extension of "the refusal to work" to the whole of capitalist social relations, as a generalized strategy of refusal or defection'.[34] And they go on to prefigure a luminous future: 'A new nomad horde, a new race of barbarians, will arise to invade

or evacuate Empire . . . The new barbarians destroy with an affirmative violence and trace new paths of life through their own material existence'.[35] Gone is the political and economic battle of organized revolutionary subjects against the state power vested in a ruling class. And given Hardt and Negri's modest proposals for the Right to a Social Wage and Global Citizenship, gone is a real politics of insurrection.[36]

The sheer academicism of the Hardt/Negri pronouncements on appropriate forms of struggle against what they refuse to name as imperialism emerges when two articles, one by Hardt, the other by an activist in the Brazilian landless movement, are juxtaposed. In his report on the World Social Forum at Port Alegre in Brazil, Hardt identifies the political differences cutting across the forum: the anti-globalization position which 'poses neoliberalism as the primary analytical category' and looks to 'national sovereignties, even if linked by international solidarity . . . to limit and regulate the forces of capitalist globalization'; the other position which 'is more clearly posed against capital itself . . . opposes any national solutions and seeks instead a democratic globalization'.[37] For Hardt both stances identify the same sources of the crisis; however each implies a different form of political organization, the one adhering to traditional parties and centralized campaigns, the other working via horizontal networks of the multitude in a global democratic movement.

If we look at how the fight against global capitalism is narrated by an activist in the land occupations taking place in Brazil, the Hardt/Negri strictures on the limitations to an anti-globalization position appear inconsequential, for in this account the perspective of centrally organized local struggles of agrarian labour conducted within and against the regime of a nation-state *is* one directed 'against capital itself'. Nor does usage of the term 'neo-liberal' suggest anything but an understanding of and a will to counter and overcome the capitalist system. The story of the Movimento Sem Terra told by João Pedro Stedile is about a planned and organized mass social movement, independent of but not detached from left political parties; a movement acknowledging that 'the comrades with the greatest ideological clarity' have played an indispensable role in organizing, educating and promoting class consciousness; a movement which has forged relations of solidarity with the Zapatistas – despite considering that this remains a national struggle not yet able to broaden into a class struggle; a movement perceiving its own activities as part of an international network of farmers' movements with a presence in eighty-seven countries.[38]

In response to his interlocutor's question on the help that groups in North America and Europe could give, Stedile, reiterating the axiom that internationalism begins at home, replied: 'The first thing is to bring down your neo-liberal governments. Second, help us to get rid of foreign debt . . . Third, fight – build mass struggles. Don't delude yourself that because you have a higher living standard than us, you can build a better world. It's impossible for you to maintain your current patterns of consumption without exploiting us'.[39] What emerges from Stedile's revisions of the analysis and strategies of the older communist movements and his sophisticated political grasp of what internationalism might mean today, is that his stance is more insurrectionary in fact and revolutionary in prospect than Hardt's nebulous 'horizontal networks of the multitude' destined to build 'a democratic globalization'.

Hardt and Negri's theoretical aversion to nation-based struggles replicates that of the postnationalists for whom all nationalism, at all times, is a tainted form of oppositional

consciousness, and the nation-state always a doomed site of resistance.[40] This tendency chooses to overlook that in traditions which gave theoretical and political sustenance to socialist and internationalist anti-colonial movements, the nation was regarded, as Neil Larsen puts it when describing Lenin's position, 'from a consciously historico-political, even strategic perspective'.[41] I will not here rehearse the powerful arguments made by Neil Lazarus and Tim Brennan on the need to distinguish between the different historical forms of nationalism. And in response to the assertion that the nation-state has effectively been superseded, I will do no more than refer to those who, writing from various vantage points, observe that 'although contemporary globalization has complicated the nation-state form, it has not rendered it obsolete as a form of political organization';[42] or maintain that the nation-state remains 'the only concrete terrain and framework for political struggle',[43] or locate it as the singular site on which international solidarity can grow and the one way under modern conditions 'to secure respect for weaker societies or peoples'.[44]

Despite conceding the historical role played by what they call 'subaltern' nationalism, and even while saluting 'the freedom fighters of all the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist wars',[45] Hardt and Negri strongly castigate the outcome of the struggles:

> The very concept of a liberatory national sovereignty is ambiguous if not completely contradictory. While this nationalism seeks to liberate the multitudes from foreign domination, it erects domestic structures of domination that are equally severe . . . The postcolonial nation-state functions as an essential and subordinated element in the global organization of the capitalist market . . . From India to Algeria and Cuba to Vietnam, *the state is the poisoned gift of national liberation.*
>
> (pp. 133, 134; italics in original)

This adamantine stance disregards the distinctions between the programmes of bourgeois and Marxist currents within liberation movements, the first seeking to inherit an intact colonial state and appropriate it to promote their own class interests, the other aspiring to abolish the state apparatus and replace it with democratic institutions.[46] Furthermore, not only do Hardt and Negri appear uninterested in the circumstances that have culminated in the retreats of almost all left post-independence regimes, but they overlook that where the postcolonial nation-state is complicit with the capitalist market, this is a consequence not only of capitalism's universal power but of an ideological choice made by the comprador leaderships of many/most new nation-states who refuse any moves towards delinking the local economies from the global system.

Within postcolonial studies, the postnationalist recoil from nation-based political struggles is accompanied by an affection for dispersal, transit and the unhomely.[47] Although *Empire* does not situate itself within this particular discussion, where 'diaspora' is a privileged term, the authors' discovery of new figures and new forms of international resistance in the non-systemic mode of perpetual and irrepressible subjective movement will be congenial to many postcolonial critics. And indeed it is in the Hardt/Negri book that acclaim of dislocation and dissemination takes manic form: 'Nomadism and miscegenation', Hardt and Negri announce, 'appear here as figures of virtue, as the first ethical practice on the terrain of Empire . . . The real heroes of the liberation of the Third World may really have been the emigrants and the flows of population that have

destroyed old and new boundaries.'[48] It is sobering at this point to be reminded by Nigel Harris that 'Most people are fundamentally rooted at home, and only the margin of the most energetic, talented and ambitious move – if they can afford the high costs . . . And when they move, they do so specifically to earn money with which they can then return home, not to go into exile.'[49]

If those who concentrate on physical movement and cultural volatility do draw a necessary attention to the acceleration of 'transnational circuits,[50] their embrace of geographical displacements as the desirable norm pays little heed to the punitive barriers hindering the passage of populations from south and east to north and west – restrictions that are structural to an uneven capitalist world-system. Moreover, those infatuated by the liberatory effects of dispersion do not address the material and existential conditions of the relocated communities which include economic migrants, undocumented immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of ethnic cleansing, and whose mobility, far from being an elective ethical practice, is in large coerced.[51] Most significantly, the focus on diaspora leaves in obscurity the vast and vastly impoverished populations who cannot and might not choose to migrate, who are not part of the reservoir of cheap labour in either the home cities, the Gulf States or the old and new metropolitan centres; who still engage in subsistence farming, or in extracting raw materials and producing goods under pre-capitalist conditions for consumption in the north, or who are economically redundant and constitute an underclass.

Without suggesting that such populations inhabit a timeless world, or that their material and psychic lives, not to speak of the commodities they produce as labourers, peasants and artisans, are invariably unaffected by the penetration of the world-market,[52] I am proposing that these communities do not have access to the pleasures of the multiple consciousness available to those émigrés who occupy an agreeably liminal location within a cosmopolitan environment. If such reservations should not pre-empt recognition of the new energies that can be generated amongst migrant populations, especially when relocated in protean urban environments, the Hardt/Negri description of the multitudes in perpetual and life-enhancing motion must all the same appear illusory rather than visionary: 'In effect what pushes from behind is, negatively, desertion from the miserable cultural and material conditions of imperial reproduction; but positively what pulls forward is the wealth of desire and the accumulation of expressive and productive forces that the processes of globalization have determined in the consciousness of every individual and social group'.[53] Such optimistic projections are a reminder of *Empire*'s spectacular failure to address the substantive and experiential situations of the settled populations of the nation-states of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Paul Smith has drawn attention to theorists and critics seduced by '[m]agical notions such as that of fully global space replete with an ecstatic buzz of cyber communication, or of an instantaneous mobility of people, goods and services, or of a global market place hooked up by immaterial money that flashes round the globe many times a minute'.[54] Whereas Hardt and Negri do not advance this facile case, the delivery of their thesis on 'perpetual motion' and 'the processes of mixture and hybridization' generated by empire[55] is all the same as resonant of a specious exhilaration:

> The passage to Empire emerges from the twilight of modern sovereignty. In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not

> rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentred* and *deterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow. (pp. xii–xiii)

Empire's own proposals for a reconceived internationalism are a reminder that at a time when the scale of immiseration within both metropolitan and more recently constituted nation-states has accelerated, and the gap between core and peripheral economies has widened, left intellectuals are not visibly engaged in recuperating the power of internationalism as the primary coalescent force in the fight against capitalism. Instead what we find are a proliferation of proposals which even when emanating from the left, are designed to dispense with notions of class politics, class solidarities and class struggles. Amongst the alternatives to internationalism, with its historical resonances of militancy and struggle, cosmopolitanism is the most widely canvassed. Discussing an ideological tendency distinct from proposals for world government advanced in the interest of stabilizing international capitalism, Peter Gowan distinguishes between new liberal cosmopolitanism and democratic cosmopolitanism: the first seeks 'to overcome the limits of national sovereignty by constructing a global order that will govern important political as well as economic aspects of both the internal and external behaviour of states; the other, exemplified by Daniele Archibugi's notion of 'Cosmopolitical Democracy', proposes a global civil society with enforceable legal powers to monitor and manage the system of states according to the principles of international democracy.[56]

Given the proliferation of blueprints for a new world order, Derrida's 'New International', a phrase that forms part of the subtitle to *Specters of Marx*, appears all too familiar, for despite the unique syntax, his notion of an international legal dispensation conforms with the liberal-democratic consensus. Having eloquently condemned the monstrous inequalities maintained by 'the law of the market, the foreign debt, the inequality of techno-scientific, military and economic development', and having observed that '[t]his supposedly universal international law, remains in its application, largely dominated by particular nation-states', Derrida proposes a superstate to oversee a new international law which 'should extend and diversify its field to include . . . the worldwide economic and social field, beyond the sovereignty of states' and 'may always be able to limit the appropriations and the violence of certain private socio-economic forces'. Accompanying this design for statutory reform, Derrida elaborates the New International as an alternative to internationalism, describing this as 'a link of affinity, suffering and hope, a still discreet almost secret link . . . without status, without title, and without name . . . without coordination, without party, without country, without national community . . . without common belonging to a class'.[57]

When his critics understood him as recommending an 'anti-politics' from which the concepts of class, party and national community are eliminated and replaced by 'an abstract concern for human rights',[58] Derrida in a subsequent essay, 'Marx and Sons', denied any adherence to 'the abstract concept of "human rights" ', while re-emphasizing that 'solidarity or alliance should not depend fundamentally and in the final analysis on class affiliation' – a recommendation, he points out, that does not

signify 'the "disappearance of classes or the attenuation of conflicts connected with "class" differences or oppositions (or, at least, differences of oppositions based on the new configurations of social forces for which I do in fact believe that we need new concepts and therefore, perhaps, new names as well)'. This circumlocution recurs when Derrida recommends 'another dimension of analysis and political commitment, one that cuts across social differences and oppositions of social forces (what one used to call simplifying, "classes")', adding that 'the point is not to eliminate or deny class affiliation any more than citizenship or parties, bur rather to make an appeal for an international whose essential basis or motivating force would not be class, citizenship or party'.[59] Thus is class power, class agency, class conflict and class struggle put under erasure as a prelude to being erased.

Although Derrida writes with evident passion about the terrible ills afflicting the contemporary world,[60] the perpetrators are not identified nor are the holes left by the many negatives of this new dispensation, which Derrida insists 'is already a reality',[61] filled with references to those constituencies which are to undertake its implementation. How within the prevailing distribution of political, economic and indeed national power, is Derrida's envisaged 'superstate' to arise? what will it look like, and by what means would it oversee the law of the New International, given the existence of an all too solid megapower underpinned by a massive military structure, whose writ runs or is forcibly imposed from the Chinese straits across Asia and Africa to Latin America, and which is the power base for the imposition of its political will (via the United Nations and NATO) and the world-wide operation of free-market ideology and practice (via the IMF, the WTO, the World Bank)?

In the context of the consensual ideology of cosmopolitanism or New Internationalism, the Hardt/Negri definition of 'empire' as decentred and deterritorialized coincides with others that also circumvent the might of an actually existing colossus which has aptly been described as 'an empire . . . predicated, like past empires, on political control for the purpose of economic control, and resource and surplus extraction'.[62] For as Peter Gowan argues, 'any prospect of bringing humanity towards genuine unity on a global scale would have to confront the social and political relations of capitalism with a clarity and trenchancy from which most representatives of this current shrink; and any hope of altering these can only be nullified by evasion or edulcoration of the realities of the sole superpower'.[63]

Significantly, when Samir Amin urges the building of a global political system that is not in the service of the global market, he looks to the creation of anti-comprador fronts within the old and new nation-states that would be capable of preparing 'the ground for a people's international, robust enough to deal with the world-devouring appetite of capital'.[64] Far from being an embarrassment to socialists, Old Internationalism offers an inspiration to those engaged in reinventing programmes, structures and strategies in the fight against contemporary global capitalism. The backing of institutionalized internationals is no longer available; nor are the histories of past internationals invariably edifying. But those who regard themselves as anti-imperialist should surely acknowledge the urge towards and the practice of a borderless resistance to capitalism's unbounded oppression. It therefore seems imperative that internationalism and the internationals, for long objects of study in the social and political sciences,[65] become part of a broader interdisciplinary discussion – a process that has already begun.[66] If this happens, then the concrete and refined historical analysis of Lenin and Trotsky on the national ques-

tion and internationalism is essential reading; as is the need to become acquainted with the paradoxical programmes and strategic interventions of the Third International under the Stalin regime, during which the project of building socialism in one country and the immediate interests of the Soviet Union deformed the commitment to international solidarity.[67] This is not to deny that for whatever byzantine reasons, the USSR did render military and financial assistance to embattled colonial populations, and did by its very presence stay the armed fist of the United States.

For some time Marxists had anticipated that the most immediate prospects for organized mass class struggles against capitalism's dominance lay in the once-colonized world where the urban and rural poor are experiencing exploitation at the hands of recently empowered native ruling classes and popular dissent is endemic. Writing more recently, David Harvey claims that '[t]here is not a region in the world where manifestations of anger and discontent with the capitalist system cannot be found', and he goes on to urge the necessity of systematically coordinated struggles against capitalism, arguing that because local and broad-based movements lack coherence, direction and a vision of an anti-capitalist alternative, it is urgent that dispersed popular resistances which do not immediately appear to be proletarian in the traditional sense are brought together. And although Harvey is not committed to an old-style vanguard party 'that imposes a singular goal', he insists that '[w]e still badly need a socialist avant-garde . . . We need not only to understand but also to create organizations, institutions, doctrines, programs, formalized structures and the like.'[68] To embark on such work presupposes that globalization is recognized as yet another reconfiguration of systemic capitalism, that the theoretical repudiation of internationalist anti-capitalist movements is dispelled, that the concept of the party is restored in a form disentangled from its Stalinist distortions, and that the notion of the engaged intellectual is again in place. If this perspective makes sense, then the Hardt/Negri insistence on 'empire' as a paradigm shift from capitalism-as-imperialism will appear mistaken, and their trust in the autonomous and spontaneous creative capacity of the multitudes to deliver communism must seem a mirage.

Part Two

The imperial imaginary

7 Reading the signs of empire in metropolitan fiction

Whether by direct influence or osmosis the work of postcolonial studies has prompted the wider community of literary critics to recognize that signs of overseas empire, conspicuous or ghostly, were written across the body of both the canonical and popular British literature.[1] This is an area more extensive than 'the fictions of empire', a subgenre for long regarded as the sole repository of colonialism's imprint on the metropolitan novel. In the aftermath of decolonization these writings attracted a singular form of criticism offering retrospects on empire that were sometimes infected by apologetics and often permeated by nostalgia. Notably lacking in scepticism about representation, and in large indifferent to stylistic considerations, the studies assumed the fictions to be a form of apprehending and reproducing already existing realities.[2] The move from a misconceived quest for the fictions' truths to consideration of their invention, reiteration or estrangement of colonialist perceptions and misconceptions has since enabled the discussion of these writings as culturally constrained and ideologically inflected fabrications that were overwhelmingly received in the imperial homeland as authentic renderings of both distant geographical locations and social forms, and of the colonizer's deportment.

However, to understand the imperial imaginary of British literature, enquiry must extend beyond the manifest representation of empire to those novels where it impinges in cryptic or oblique or encoded ways, and which hitherto had been read as narratives of an English condition sealed from and largely indifferent to the external world. Students of British history have for long acknowledged that the making of the mainland economy, society and state was inseparable from its colonial ventures.[3] Despite this, there was a delay in examining its centrality to the consciousness and culture of the imperial homeland. As far back as the 1980s Edward Said had noted that British empire figured in English cultural life 'as a fact and a source or subject of knowledge', and he went on to question 'why so few "great" novelists deal directly with the major social and economic outside facts of their existence – colonialism and imperialism – and why, too, critics of the novel have continued to honour this remarkable silence'.[4] Since then and to some considerable extent in the wake of Said's subsequent writings about the determinant effects of empire on a range of metropolitan cultural forms,[5] critics have come to hear this 'silence' as resonating with sounds and echoes of empire – how to intercept and interpret cadences that changed in timbre over time is a matter of controversy.

Here a caveat about terminology is necessary: within literary and cultural studies 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' are used interchangeably to cover the many centuries of

Europe's overseas ventures – from mercantile and plantation colonialism, to territorial conquest and authoritarian rule by a metropolitan nation-state, to the subsequent industrial–military–economic interventions implemented by the expansionist social orders of the imperial powers.[6] Despite the entrenched disposal of the terms, I will be retaining the word 'imperialism' to designate the radically altered forms to capitalism's accelerated penetration of the non-capitalist zones, a process that gained momentum in the late nineteenth century, consolidated the interdependence between metropole and colony and issued in the creation of a world economic system. I do so because a cavalier stance towards the different historicities of empire overlooks the ways in which perceptions of the imperial project changed, and impedes study of how the imperial imaginary moved from the margins to the centre of literary consciousness.[7] The effect of *imperialism* on novelistic practice is a matter to which I will return when suggesting an intensification of cognition and affect. This is not to overlook that news and rumour about empire were in wide circulation throughout the nineteenth century, and that mainstream literature had for long had been haunted by tropes associated with the slave trade, slave plantations, indentured labour, colonialist invasions and colonial rule, while diverse textual and iconic celebrations of a magnificent Raj and the beginnings of a Darkest Africa mythology were already expanding the horizons of British literature.

This metaphoric imprint of overseas ventures is now increasingly addressed in criticism. Hence images of death-laden ship and disease in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* have been traced to the debates on the slave trade with which Coleridge as an active abolitionist was acquainted, and the poem has been read as an indictment of British maritime expansion.[8] Concerning nineteenth-century fictions, commentary has observed that the colonial worlds served as symptoms of mystery and exoticism, disturbance, fear and corruption: in Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* an opium den managed by a renegade Englishwoman and frequented by a Chinese man and a Lascar can be seen as marking a degraded space within the imperial homeland; the lethal Indian serpent ('The Speckled Band') and a jewel stolen from India (*The Sign of Four*) in Conan Doyle's stories are situated as figures of malevolent visitations from faraway imperial possessions; a gem rifled from an Indian holy place is read as invading and despoiling the serenity of a country house in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*, and the opium habit of a character, Blake, is taken to represent 'the global penetration and ontological contamination of a modern imperial economy';[9] anxieties about colonial infection in *Dracula* are understood to be displaced into intrusions of evil from a terrible locale beyond Europe; in the science fiction of H. G. Wells a preoccupation with time-travel and exploring extra-terrestrial space is interpreted as transcribing Rhodes's imperial dream of annexing the planets.

Although these observations – some flimsy, others more substantial – are not, as Laura Chrisman has warned, a warrant for arguing that 'the true psyche of the west can only be mapped, and identified, in its colonial operations',[10] this does not invalidate the proposition that 'if the imperial experience of the nineteenth century had a truly profound impact on English culture, "the domestic novel" ought to carry some traces of its cultural imprint'.[11] Notwithstanding the questions asked of the assertion that 'it would be impossible for culture *not* to register its connections with the empire, however deviously',[12] the case for uncovering the signs of empire in British writing, whether as fact, fallacy or phantom, can be sustained deductively. It has moreover been empirically demonstrated in work that is productively attentive to the farther reaches of fictions'

fields of vision, but risks producing reductive analysis neglectful of the texts' perceptual constraints and conceptual limitations. If we think of literature as saying 'what a period thinks about itself'[13] this requires a theoretical model of art as permeated by prevailing, dissident and emergent cognitive modes.[14] So we can expect that the critic interested in identifying empire's fingerprints on writing will look for political and ideological inflections in the codes of literary signification. But what we find instead is a plethora of discussion that gives scant attention to the asymmetrical relationships between the social and the literary, shows little suspicion about the craft of representation and is largely confined to the observation of tropological transpositions.

It is noticeable that the authors of such readings are predominantly women whose principal interest appears to be in gender domination within the metropolis. In discussing *Daniel Deronda* one such critic situates Gwendolen's social representativeness within 'a scheme of political *allegory*' which constitutes 'an urgently topical piece of social criticism' where the social drama of private life is symbolically and *actually* connected to Britain's involvement in the rise of a racist nationalism.[15] Of *The Moonstone* another has proposed that a novel in which the plots of courtship and colonialism are aligned comes to inscribe 'an *analogy* between sexual and imperial domination', the interpenetrated representations of empire and the domestic scene demonstrating 'how the hierarchies of gender and class that undergird British culture *replicate* the politics of colonialism'.[16] In related mode discussion of *Mansfield Park* has noted the affinities between patriarchal domination of women in the homeland and plantocratic power over slaves. For one commentator the novel is a 'eurocentric post-abolition narrative' which displays the degradations of both the colonial situation and domestic gender relationships by *re-enacting* the conditions of an Antiguan estate in the social intercourse of an English country-house;[17] for another the slave trade offers a convenient *metaphor* for class and gender wrongs at home, the confluence of abolitionist and emergent feminist discourses providing the space for a 'critique of the moral blight underlying Mansfield's beauty' which extends to interrogating the ethical basis for Sir Thomas's authority overseas.[18]

Similar analyses are reiterated in discussion of *Jane Eyre*, the classic that has generated the greatest number of studies alert to its formerly disregarded or unnoticed colonial allusions and implications. For one critic 'Jane's struggle to overcome the class and gender restrictions placed on her is articulated though colonial tropes of bondage and liberation', and her progress is seen to follow 'the itinerary of colonialism from the abolition of slavery in the West Indies to the civilizing mission in India';[19] while another sees *Jane Eyre* as one of those key nineteenth-century novels which in presenting metropolitan feminist interests, deploys 'a vocabulary and imagery of oppressed oriental womanhood'.[20] Stretching the analogy, Susan Meyer – who remarks that colonialism features figuratively in all of Charlotte Bronte's novels – finds that *Jane Eyre* condenses the *historical alliance* between the ideology of male domination and the ideology of colonial domination, men's relationships with colonized people standing in for their relationships with white women, and racial otherness functioning to signify gender oppression.[21] Moreover, having observed the fiction's deployment of colonial tropes, Meyer goes on to infer that women novelists who were resistant to patriarchy were therefore *predisposed* to oppose colonialism (*Imperialism at Home*, p. 11). Not only does this argument imply that all oppressions are congruent, even equivalent, but it neglects evidence of the *conformity* with the ideology of empire displayed both by women writers and feminist movements in the late nineteenth century: as Sally Ledger points out, 'the

middle-class feminists of the 1890s themselves had a considerable ideological investment in notions of empire'; and Laura Chrisman has shown that 'for many nineteenth-century white English women writers, it was precisely through collusion with, and not opposition to, hierarchical notions of ethnic and cultural difference, that feminist identity was articulated'.[22] Such willing participation in the dominant ethos points to fissures in the interrelationship between gender, class and imperial politics, rather than to their integration[23] – disjunctions also apparent in working-class complicity with the ideology of empire and participation in its practice.

The critic may be aware that 'the women novelists who use race as a metaphor are in some sense emptying out the vehicle "enslaved Jamaican blacks" . . . of its full significance', or diverting 'our attention away from all the other things we might think about were we to think, say, of the peoples of India without the guidance and restraint of metaphor'.[24] All the same, the yoking of the terms is justified on the grounds that such tropological transference opens the door to the way the history of British colonialism finds its way into the fictions.[25] And this way, it seems, is by suturing gender subordination at home with the conditions of slavery and colonialism abroad. In 'Race and Gender: the Role of Analogy in Science', Nancy Stepan has argued that because interactive metaphors shape our perceptions and actions while neglecting or suppressing information that does not fit the similarity, 'they tend to lose their metaphoric nature and be taken literally'.[26] Indeed the commentaries I have mentioned actively collude with the work of interactive metaphors: for even though the expositions reveal that the colonial tropes used to dramatize metropolitan dominations are without coordinating connectives within the fictions, the critics undertake to rearticulate the *unsecured metaphoric* linkages between the juxtapositions of colonial and gender oppressions as if these constituted *conceptual knowledge* about both the systematic operation of sexism and imperialism, and the ideological coalescence of gender, race and class discourses as 'intertwined subsets' and 'mutually reinforcing categories'.

I suggest that those who seek to install parity between the egregious oppressions legitimated by a politics of empire and the subordination of middle-class Englishwomen by a male-dominated bourgeois society are committing a category error by linking two distinct social realities. As a consequence they occlude the historical, ideological, experiential and discursive specificity of slavery, colonial rule and British class society. A caution against this careless conflation can be found in the ironic distinction made by Jane Fairfax in *Emma*: having assured the importunate Mrs Elton of her confidence in finding employment – 'There are places in town, offices, where inquiry would soon produce something – offices for the sale, not quite of human flesh, but of human intellect' – Jane Fairfax has then to reassure her obtuse interlocutor ('Oh! my dear! human flesh! You quite shock me; if you mean a fling at the slave trade . . .!') that she is referring not to the slave trade but 'the governess-trade . . . widely different, certainly, as to the guilt of those who carry it on; but as to the greater misery of the victims, I do not know where it lies' (*Emma*, 1816, Chapter 35).[27]

To enunciate the enactment of metropolitan gender relations in an abolitionist vocabulary does not ensure that this will emerge as 'anti-colonialist', as is evident in the rhetorical and narrative strategies of *Jane Eyre*, where a simultaneity of identification with and disassociation from the conditions of slavery, colonialism and domestic class relationships is revealed.[28] Neither do the analogies used by the fiction necessarily produce a coherent critique of a social order simultaneously sustaining patriarchal, colonial

and class inequalities. Yet so certain are the critics of the fiction's concerted opposition to all oppressions, including the domestic class system, that they neglect to remark on the novels' silence about the long process of violent indigenous expropriation which had enabled the establishment of a Mansfield Park and a Thornfield Hall. Hence when observing the novels' critical view of Sir Thomas Bertram and Mr Rochester as patriarchal figures and beneficiaries of colonial estates, the commentators do not attend to the writings' stance on the legitimacy of these figures as hereditary English landowners. Not every large landowner was implicated in colonial ventures, but the fortunes of all were built on one or another process of dispossession and increased through one or another system of exploitation. Perhaps then tropological correlatives between the domestic and the colonial are a symptom of cognitive blind spots rather than cognitive insight about the exercise and effects of both class and imperial power.

This is not to overlook the exceptional case of *Wuthering Heights*, where the drama of a metropolitan class conflict also enacts the wrath and revenge of the colonial dispossessed against English class power. Paradoxically it is Terry Eagleton's essay, where slavery is *not* a subject of discussion,[29] that tells us most about a colonial invasion of domestic space and consciousness. In Eagleton's version it is Heathcliff as an embodiment of the Irish who is ascribed the role of the threatening colonial presence inserting itself 'into the shapely schemas of historical chronology' as 'the disruptive temporality of Nature' (p. 14). While conceding that Heathcliff may be either a Gypsy or a Creole, 'or any kind of alien' (pp. 3, 11), Eagleton identifies 'the dirty, ragged black-haired child' brought by Earnshaw from Liverpool, who speaks a kind of 'gibberish', and 'who will later be variously labelled beast, savage, lunatic and demon', as 'quite possibly Irish' – in the course of the discussion the 'possibly' is eroded and Heathcliff emerges as a figure of Ireland. It is certain that impoverished Irish made their way to Liverpool long before those afflicted by the great famine arrived in their multitudes. All the same, by the 1770s a harbour already at the apex of the Atlantic trade had become the principal slaving port in Britain, and hence carried other deafening resonances. To the registers of the slave trade Eagleton is insensible and the 'raging *ressentiment*' of the famished Irish labourer who is feared and loathed by the entrenched ruling class whom he contrives to expropriate is perceived in class terms. Yet it is Eagleton's gloss which enables a reading of the novel's bitter class animosities and insurrectionary energies as also condensing a colonial struggle performed on a metropolitan stage – a reading that fills what Peter Hulme has called the hole in 'the vast critical enterprise . . . which produced the novels of the Brontes as works of genius unconnected with the conditions of their production and sheered from the materials which went into the making of them, materials already shot through with colonial colours'.[30] Against this trend Christopher Heywood had shown that the models for the landed gentry of the Brontes' novels were aristocratic families in Yorkshire and Lancashire exposed by the abolitionists as having plantation links or whose revenues derived from the Atlantic trade; and he went on to situate Heathcliff as the personification of slavery who protests his condition in the idiom of the anti-slavery movements.[31]

I do not want to suggest that all glosses on the colonial dimensions or inflections of fiction are inattentive to novelistic practice beyond the metaphoric and metonymic, or are naive about the text's ideological stances. As long ago as 1985 Gayatri Spivak in a pioneering reading of *Jane Eyre* noted that the novel was implicated in colonialism not just in terms of economic wealth – Thornfield flourishing on the proceeds of a

Jamaican income – but at levels of narrative, its story of proto-feminist liberation registering the congruity, even complicity, of metropolitan female individualism and colonial ideology.[32] In a different register, Edward Said's nuanced reading of *Mansfield Park* in *Culture and Imperialism*, without claiming too much for the novel's inscriptions of empire, reconstructs the articulations of relationships between metropolis and colony as registering Austen's understanding of historically produced spatial and social connections. A commentary observing the synchronization of 'domestic with international authority' in narrative form enhances an appreciation of the novel's larger intelligence about how colonial exploitation nourished metropolitan class privilege, but without making this historically overdetermined intelligence conform with contemporary expectations of an integrated gender-class-colonial critique. In yet another reading of *Mansfield Park*, one that disputes Said's view of Austen's cool – even complicit – neutrality and finds instead that the novel inscribes a critique of slavery, Marcus Wood also draws attention to a narrative structured by a poisonous nexus between the domestic and the colonial:

> *Mansfield Park* contains a caustic assault on the moral basis of British colonial slavery and lays bare the terrible complicities and deceptions which enable the economic relationship between the . . . estate and the Antiguan plantation . . . Far from separating the idea of 'abroad' from an intimate upper class domestic milieu, Austen explains that the economic, moral, social and philosophic assumptions which make possible the Bertram relationship with Antigua, also inform their relationship with Fanny and with each other.[33]

Critics who deduce disavowals of colonialism from a fiction's allegorical strategies do not question whether the figurative recasting of *affinities* between colonial and metropolitan conditions might act to *familiarize* the institutions, ideologies, violence and violations of empire. What could shock the reader into a troubled awareness of gender relations is the comparison of middle-class Englishwomen with female slaves, ladies of a harem or widows destined for burning. I want then to consider how we can read the internalization of the imperial project in those fictions which by transgressing the boundaries of the real and estranging received versions of the historical event, open the imperial project to ethical scrutiny. And for this we need to look at the turn of the nineteenth century when yet more baroque idioms were devised to underwrite increasingly aggressive expansion and secure the place of the northern hemisphere at the political and moral summit of a world-order.

This has not been the path taken by the contemporary discussion, where critics concerned to make known empire's ubiquity in the mainstream of metropolitan literature eschew periodization in the interest of tracing patterns of rhetorical and tropological repetition,[34] or identifying the recapitulation of a finite set of discursive strategies and topoi[35] – as if conceiving of the imperial experience as one discernibly continuous event, presumably begetting recurrent cultural articulations. This is evident in a study like Sara Suleri's *The Rhetoric of English India*, where texts distant in time (from Edmund Burke to Naipaul via Kipling and Forster) are discussed as sharing 'an idiom of dubiety . . . inherent in any narrative of colonial possession'[36] – a predication where discursive form is in advance disconnected from its inconstant social conditions of possibility. This is not to deny repetitions in the construction of difference and reiterations of legitimating devices; nor is it to overlook metaphoric continuities in the vast library of empire.

The loss, however, is the possibility of studying the inventions of particular figures, themes and idioms underwriting the apotheosis of imperialism's triumphalist project.

Recent work on this moment has examined the exponential increase in the material and psychic dispersal of empire within the everyday social and cultural life of British society. By the last decades of the nineteenth century Britain's renowned rule over a quarter of the globe was everywhere visible within the domestic space, whether in the shape of luxurious carpets, furniture, ceramics, shawls and jewellery, or in the rubber and copper widely used in manufacturing industries, or in the form of ordinary household goods such as foods, textiles and soaps containing raw materials from the West Indies, Asia and Africa, and often bearing names and logos associated with overseas ventures. With the development in the means of communicating information and misinformation, there also appeared a staggering quantity of ideologically saturated printed and visual materials promising to validate the many rumours about faraway places and peoples summarily incorporated into empire. Produced by both state institutions, civil agencies and the purveyors of a growing mass culture, these widely circulated textual and iconic representations ranged from popular and juvenile fiction, illustrated newspapers and magazines, paintings, drawings, prints and photographs, school textbooks, religious tracts, to exhibitions in ethnographical museums – which included live bodies on display – art galleries, magic lantern shows, music-hall turns and theatrical spectacles.[37]

The dissemination of such materials suggests how facts and fantasies of vast overseas possessions could have entered the perceptions and enlarged the imaginative landscape of significant numbers in the imperial homeland, while at the same time instilling suppositions about the colonized's unwholesome nature and proclivities, and forming or confirming an elevated self-image in the reader/viewer. These enquiries have rewritten the story of metropolitan development as inseparable from an imperial ascendancy and have gone some way to adjusting the imbalance in versions of the imperial relationship which addressed only Europe's instrumentality in shaping the economies, social forms and cultures of the colonized territories. This recognition has, however, brought its own problems: for where the traffic is represented as free-flowing and mutual, the systemic inequalities of imperial power relationships tend to get lost, and it is forgotten that the ready acceptance of commodities and artefacts was joined to the refusal of the cognitive and cultural traditions of the foreign lands as authentic systems of knowledge.

Within the higher reaches of print culture, countless books on the imperial project were written by politicians, political scientists, social commentators and men of letters, and there appeared innumerable memoirs of travellers, including women, and members of the colonial services and their wives. The latter also produced a prodigious quantity of light fiction about life in the colonies which invariably foregrounded the excellence of colonial rule and especially its agents, and revealed the wicked ways of their charges. At this time too broadsheet newspapers and journals were awash with articles, essays and treatizes on empire. This body of writing in large commended colonial policies and ambitions, by this contributing to the making of colonialist ideology and abetting the construction of a national imperial identity. Yet it was the very abundance of popular writing, earnest disquisitions, blatant propaganda and often grotesque pictorial representation that stimulated more focused and informed criticisms of the imperial venture and its official version. In the public sphere were those few – and I am not suggesting that they were root-and-branch anti-imperialists – like Charles

Dilke, E. D. Morel, Roger Casement, R. Cunninghame Graham and J. A. Hobson, who exposed imperialism's atrocities, especially in Africa, censured imperial jubilation and refused to endorse its inflated rhetoric.

Not until the late nineteenth century and the massive land expropriations in Africa, intensified capitalist interventions in Asia and the incorporation of Latin American republics as economic dependencies of western capital, did imperialism's spokespersons and propagandists invent an exorbitant and anomalous idiom of messianic utilitarianism and bellicose mysticism: here the positivist and aggressive phraseology of national self-interest, territorial acquisition, the aggressive appropriation of the material and labour resources of other continents and compulsory universal modernization are combined with the anachronistic and chimerical lexicon of chivalry, 'a mandate of destiny' and 'a high and holy mission' serving as ideological pillars of imperial ambitions. The work of materialist geographers like David Harvey, Neil Smith and Edward Soja, where imperialism is understood as a complex and differential temporal order vitalized by the dynamics of industrial capitalism and implementing a transcontinental programme of reterritorialization, has drawn attention to imperialism's self-presentation as a rational and progressive project.[38] Consider the treatize of Frederick Lord Lugard defending the appropriation of food supplies and raw materials which 'lay wasted and ungarnered in Africa because the natives did not know their use and value . . . Who can deny the right of the hungry people of Europe to utilize the wasted bounties of nature, or that the task of developing these resources was . . . a "trust for civilization" and for the benefit of mankind?'[39]

If this mitigation recalls the warrant devised by Locke and reiterated by successive colonizers for appropriating the territories of peoples amongst whom there was no system of private property and who did not intensively use the land, then contemporary registers are brought to the old recital. As Lugard explained to a British audience: 'Europe benefited by the wonderful increase in the amenities of life for the mass of her people which followed the opening up of Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. Africa benefited by the influx of manufactured goods, and the substitution of law and order for the methods of barbarism' (*The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, p. 615). Since a programme to render Africa productive by force and constraint was shared by those who expressed grave doubts about British rule in India – even while regretfully observing that the once great civilizations of Asia had alas fallen into decay – this suggests the extent of the consensus amongst articulate sections of British society. It is significant that J. A. Hobson, whose reputation is as Britain's foremost anti-imperialist, had recourse to the same phraseology as his opponents when advocating responsible imperial policies in Africa.

Thus while he vigorously attacked the wanton excesses of private enterprise in the colonies and roundly castigated the economic, social and moral damage inflicted by imperialism on the homeland, he also proferred notions of 'a sane imperialism' under the aegis of 'a genuine international council', whose composition is not specified but can readily be inferred.[40] Arguing that the maintenance and improvement of western standards was dependent on the tropics, and that these regions were incapable of autonomous advancement, Hobson maintained that such a body would serve the material and moral requirements of the lower or non-adult races, while reclaiming the wasted and grossly mismanaged riches of tropical and exotic regions in the interest of ameliorating the condition of societies in the temperate zones and promoting international social

utility and efficiency (p. 226). The case for the necessity of colonial resources to the well-being and development of the metropolis had earlier and with greater assertiveness been made by Benjamin Kidd: declaring that 'the complex life of the modern world rests upon the production of the tropics to the extent which is scarcely realized by the average mind', he goes on to advocate European government in the tropics 'by a permanently resident European caste which would undertake responsibility to weaker races who belong to the very childhood of the world and who are incapable of developing their resources'. Hence because the tropics 'can only be governed as a trust for civilization and with a full sense of the responsibility which such a trust involves' they must be ruled from the temperate zone, the success of the enterprise requiring 'a clearly defined conception of moral necessity'.[41]

Yet despite conformity with prevailing opinion on racial inadequacy and the ethical duties of civilized nations, Hobson deplored Europe's acquisitiveness and reviled the deceiving 'masked words', the 'arduous chivalry', and the 'ethical and religious finery' of imperialist propaganda (*Imperialism*, pp. 368, 157, 207). In the speeches and writings of the arch-imperialist Joseph Chamberlain, the pursuit of national advantage at home is coupled with claims to disinterested philanthropy in the colonies, greed is joined with godliness, pragmatism with principle, utilitarianism with utopianism:

> If [the British Empire] be a dream, it is dream that appeals to the highest sentiments of our patriotism, as well as to our material interests . . . I have now to propose to you the toast of the evening, 'Commerce and the Empire', and, gentlemen . . . this is a toast of infinite scope which appeals to our imagination as well as to our material interest . . . The unity of the Empire is recommended to us by sentiment, and sentiment is one of the greatest forces in human affairs, but it is recommended to us no less by our material interests, and it is the duty of every statesman, whether in this country or in the colonies, to make permanent and to secure this union by basing it upon material interests.[42]

It is well known that Lenin's writings enlisted Hobson's model of imperialism as a stage of capitalism where the export of European capital exceeded that of goods. The structural explanation of Marxists attributes imperialism's aetiology to the dynamics of a system which in the epoch of advanced capitalist production was under pressure to find further sources of raw material and new world markets in order to sustain its continued growth:[43] in the words of Rosa Luxemburg, '[i]mperialism is the political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment'.[44] Hobson however blamed imperialism's expansionist momentum on the agency of base elements within metropolitan society, who rather than invest the surplus generated by capitalist production at home, thereby raising domestic living standards, chose to transfer capital abroad in pursuit of profit. Both Hobson's moral critique of imperialism as a social and ethical pathology afflicting the imperial homeland, and reverberations of imperialism's urge to possess and exploit space and exercise physical and discursive power over conquered territories and cultures, were to enter the novel.

Studies on the literature of this era draw attention to the enunciations of metropolitan disappointment in the project at a time of imperialist ascendency, observing too

representations of empire as deleterious to the social and moral fabric of British society.[45] For Stephen Arata, whose subject is the stories of loss and decadence written at the turn of the century, 'the turn outward to the frontiers' visible in the engagement with issues of empire in late-Victorian male romance is entangled 'with anxieties about domestic decay', an unease given form in 'reverse colonization narratives' such as *Dracula*, *She* and *The War of the Worlds* whose fantasies 'are products of the geopolitical fears of a troubled imperial society'.[46] In Chris Bongie's account, the malaise of the fin de siècle can be attributed to the dissolution of exotic horizons, since with the ending of the age of exploration by the 1880s, nothing remained beyond European control and knowledge[47] – a dubious proposition contradicted by those fictions of empire which narrate their own failure to represent colonial worlds. Pursuing a different thesis, Michael Valdez Moses argues that novelists of the period such as Hardy and Conrad should be considered together with postcolonial writers like Achebe and Vargas Llosa, all of whom contemplated the value of archaic societies when exploring the violent and tragic political and social disruptions caused by 'modernization and the globalization of history' within both the metropolis and the colonial world.[48] Such articulations or traces of imperial fears and guilt,[49] even of imperialism as a disease infecting British society, should be read as disquiet about Britain as an imperial nation, but not as attesting to the fragility of imperial rule. When Conrad wrote his dystopian novels of empire, colonial regimes were energetically pursuing aggressively expansionist policies in Africa and Asia; when Kipling cryptically contemplated the insecurity of the Raj, British rule was extending its bureaucratic apparatus in India and flexing its military muscle to deal with organized opposition; when Graham Greene later discerned a loss of imperial will, the British regime was fighting colonial wars in Malaya and forcibly repressing independence movements in Africa.

The most compelling explanations of the determinant ways in which imperialism entered into the turn of the century novel are offered by the non-identical readings of Fredric Jameson and Edward Said, both of whom associate the emergence of an aesthetic modernism pervaded by anomie with recoil from the belligerent project. For Said, who sees overseas empire as engraved in the very entrails of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century realist novel *form* – 'conventional narrative is . . . central to imperialism's appropriative and dominative attributes. Narrative itself is the representation of power, and its teleology is associated with the global role of the West' (*Culture and Imperialism*, p. 330) – the moderation or relinquishment of narrative authority is inseparable from an enlargement of metropolitan consciousness to include the difference and *agency* of colonial worlds. Thus the formal displacements and dislocations in the novels of late colonialism are connected to that moment when the colonial peoples' manifest opposition to imperial rule acted to heighten domestic consciousness of colonized cultures, expanding but also fracturing metropolitan horizons, eroding confidence in the west's undisputed and indisputable cognitive power and engendering disillusion in the ethos of an imperialist ascendency:

> Conrad, Forster, Malraux, T. E. Lawrence take narrative from the triumphalist experience of imperialism into the extremes of self-consciousness, discontinuity, self-referentiality and corrosive irony, whose formal patterns we have come to recognize as hallmarks of modernist culture, a culture that also embraces the major works of Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Proust, Mann and Yeats. I would like to suggest

> that many of the most prominent characteristics of modernist culture, which we have tended to derive from purely internal dynamics in western culture and society, include a response to the external pressures on culture from the imperium.
>
> (*Culture and Imperialism*, p. 227)

One such evocation of disorientation can be found in *A Passage to India*, where a modernist sensibility about the impasse of representation is brought to the impossibility of configuring a distant, alien culture invaded by empire, and its story of an unconsummated journey mimics the arrest of imperialism's vaunting trajectory.[50]

Within the discussion of culture and imperialism, Fredric Jameson – who denotes imperialism as the 'dynamic of capitalism proper' rather than defining it as coextensive with empire's long and changing duration – is singular in associating transformations in novelistic practice at the turn of the nineteenth century, with the cognitive effects of expansionism on metropolitan social forms and experiential modes.[51] Jameson has traced the novel from its beginnings as a privileged form of an individualist capitalist society, to a crisis within bourgeois society and subjectivity intensified by the expansion of imperialism, citing Conrad's novels as providing 'key articulations of the increased fragmentation of individual consciousness in an age of growing commodification and brutal colonization'.[52] In a later essay, 'Modernism and Imperialism', Jameson attributes the generic shift to modernism in metropolitan literary form to 'the representational dilemma of the new imperial world-system'. Because, as Jameson proposed in another essay, 'those structural coordinates' binding the 'quality of the (metropolitan) individual's subjective life' to empire 'are no longer accessible to immediate lived experience' within the new global situation,[53] this provoked the invention of 'forms that inscribe a new sense of the absent global colonial system on the very syntax of poetic language itself' ('Modernism and Imperialism', p. 18).

The object of study in 'Modernism and Imperialism' is thus the mediated and symptomatic mapping of an absent and unrepresentable imperial totality onto fiction, and since Jameson's interest is in the formal innovations of those texts 'which scarcely evoke imperialism as such at all; that seem to have no specifically political content in the first place; that offer purely stylistic or linguistic peculiarities' (p. 7), his chosen text is a 'condition of England novel'. In *Howards End* he detects how the spatial consciousness of far-flung empire is brought to the altered cognition of the socially produced local geography, a reading that offers the possibility of finding similar refractions of imperialism's global reach in other contemporaneous fictions.[54] All the same, by proposing that because a 'significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis', distant empire must remain 'unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of the imperial power' (p. 11), Jameson chooses to overlook the extent to which, as Laura Chrisman has shown, 'the metropole was flooded during the period of modernism with representations of imperialism itself as a system and a totality, with representations of its contestation by colonized peoples and with examples of colonized culture and knowledge-systems'.[55] Not only was imperialism as a global system beginning to pervade metropolitan consciousness – as Leonard Woolf was to write in the 1920s, 'we cannot isolate the question of what we desire to get in Africa and Asia from what we desire to get in London, Paris, and Berlin'[56] – but it was transforming the imperial imaginary of literature.

Although some critics have perceived modernism as 'the means for a diagnostic understanding of the colonial mentality',[57] others have cautioned that modernism's stylistic ambiguity and irony do not in themselves constitute a negative critique of imperialism or act to disempower its ideology. For despite the recent claim that Kipling's covertly unconventional writing modes served to alienate an imperial vision,[58] self-reflexive narrative form and the accomplished playing of language-games in his hands do not subvert imperialism's ethos and practice; nor were his imperial anxieties moved by recoil from an imperialist ethos, while his requiems for empire intoned the failure of the nation's will to pursue an austere aspiration and sublime mission.[59] These reservations do not mean that critical evocations of an imperial imagination and ethical critiques of imperialism have not inflected the modernist and proto-modernist novel, and in the chapters which follow I have attempted to consider how the new social experience of imperialism was stylistically translated and estranged. My inspiration has been Leon Trotsky: when contesting the Russian Formalists' claim that Futurist urban poetry originated arbitrarily, obliging the poets to seek appropriate material for the new form, Trotsky maintained that through a process of transcoding, the poetry internalized and represented the volatile culture of the city: 'Of course Futurism felt the suggestions of the city – of the tram-car, of electricity, of the telegraph, of the automobile, of the propeller, of the night cabaret (especially of the night cabaret) much before it found its new form. Urbanism (city culture) sits deep in the subconsciousness of Futurism, and the epithets, the etymology, the syntax and the rhythm of Futurism are only an attempt to give artistic form to the new spirit of the cities which has conquered consciousness'.[60] The correlative to a Marxist criticism which understands literature as interacting with and internally marked by other social practices, is then an insistence that textual signification cannot be properly experienced or adequately explained without engaging with narrative structure, diction and linguistic usage; nor can a fiction's critique of the objective social world, or its 'politics', be discovered outside of its literary strategies.[61]

8 The content and discontents of Kipling's imperialism

In 1939 when Auden wrote his wry lines, Time that 'Worships language and forgives / Everyone by whom it lives' had not yet 'Pardoned Kipling and his views',[1] nor was exoneration imminent. Despite the patriotic fervour of the ensuing war years, liberals continued to regret colonialism's excesses, the anti-colonialist struggle was a left-wing cause, and intellectuals were sceptical about the British empire. T. S. Eliot's praise for Kipling's vision of imperial responsibility in a 1941 essay met with opposition from prominent writers and critics who considered Kipling's view of life to be incompatible with the principles of civility and were repelled by the bullying self-righteousness and racial vanity of his imperialism.[2] The reactions to Eliot's apologia secured Kipling's reputation as 'the prophet of British imperialism in its expansionist phase' (Orwell). During the following decades those who argued for his recognition as a major artist – although he had long since achieved popular acclaim as a 'classic', he had not been admitted to the canon – did so by pronouncing his social and political ideas irrelevant to evaluating his complex techniques and explorations of 'permanent human and moral themes'.[3]

By the mid-1960s, western scholars whose discomfort at European aggression and conceit was receding in the aftermath of statutory decolonization had compiled a balance-sheet of colonialism which provided critics with a permit for expressing sober satisfaction at empire's achievements. Contributors to the concerted reappraisal around Kipling's centenary year freely infused their 'disinterested literary assessments' with esteem for his idealistic commitment to empire and firm grasp of political realities.[4] Now that the ideological right is on the offensive in the west, an even more favourable climate exists for Kipling's rehabilitation, and the ending of copyright on his works in 1987 produced a plethora of paperback editions with new introductions and appreciations which are frequently buttressed with exculpations of his imperialist vision.

Such readings draw on and abet the anti-anti-imperialism fostered by western ideologues eager to impugn postcolonial regimes, honour the colonialist legacy bequeathed by Europe and justify the continuing asymmetry between the hemispheres.[5] At a time when politicians, journalists, and entertainers have joined in the 'refurbishment of the empire's tarnished image',[6] the vindication of Kipling's textual affirmations and denigrations has been completed. When the British prime minister announces that she is a faithful student of Rudyard Kipling, she is not deferring to his literary virtuosity. When critics proffer a gloss which underwrites Kipling's views on a patriotism enjoining obedience to a hierarchical status quo at home and bellicosity abroad, on the conservation of England's ancestral culture, and on Europe's title to global leadership, they are

giving comfort to a domestic politics of social conformity and class deference, invoking an identity of race with nation, and sustaining the values that had prompted imperial expansion.

Whether a revisionist criticism erases, commends or reconstrues Kipling's imperialism, its various practices circumvent a critique of the texts' deliberated ideological enunciations and inadvertent registering of contradictory meanings. One devotee has summarily disposed of a body of historical utterances and their subsequent reinscriptions in critical discussion: 'Kipling the imperialist is dead and gone; it is Kipling the verbal prophet who commands attention now'.[7] From an opposite position, another champion embraces Kipling as the poet of empire, praising him for expressing that sense of imperial destiny which had formed a whole phase of national existence: 'That age is one about which many Britons – and to a lesser extent Americans and Europeans – now feel an exaggerated sense of guilt . . . Whereas if we approach him more historically, less hysterically, we shall find in this very relation to his age a cultural phenomenon of absorbing interest.' Andrew Rutherford directs this commentary to a British audience perceived as an undifferentiated communality: for Britons 'of all social classes and cultural groups', he declares, the writings afford the gratifications of identifying with 'our shared inheritance', the natives being rewarded with 'sensitive, sympathetic vignettes of Indian life and character'.[8] As a defence which so egregiously concurs with the writings' overt stance, this exposition lacks the ingenuity of that much favoured reconstruction where an alternative set of meanings is substituted for Kipling's narratives of empire.

In this interpretation, Kipling is rediscovered as 'a student of alienation and the moral and spiritual predicament of industrial man'. To a historian of the British empire who is comfortable with designating the colonial world as the raw and Europe as the cooked, Kipling's imperialism appears a means of curing modern anomie and restoring a balance to overurbanized society, 'linking it in service with the underdeveloped world and renewing it spiritually by fresh contact there with Nature and "otherness" '.[9] For western critics and the literary journalists who communicate their opinions, a reading which amplifies Kipling's address to the crisis of contemporary western civilization, while muting the strident colonialist register of his thematic and rhetorical predications, has the advantage of allowing a renegotiation of his status as a serious thinker/artist.

The foremost exponent of this view is Alan Sandison, who argues that empire for Kipling was simply a 'Place des Signes', his real concern being with 'man's essential estrangement, illumined with such clarity in the imperial alien's relationship to his hostile environment'.[10] Because for Sandison, as for Kipling, India is 'a very powerful symbol of a nature intrinsically hostile to man', the figure of 'a world inimical to his physical and moral survival', a potent image of 'the forces of persecution ranged against the individual in his struggle to sustain his identity',[11] his commentary colludes with Kipling's specification of India as the negative pole in that ubiquitous structure of oppositions – mind/body, reason/passion, order/chaos, intelligibility/incoherence – deployed by dominant orders to legitimate relationships of power. On this basis, Sandison's exposition proceeds to reproduce the textual inscription of an imperialist discursive practice – the construction of an identity that is dependent on the conquest of another's self – as a description of 'the human condition'. Since, within this discourse, the places of subject and object are allotted to Europe and its

others, and these others are denied agency, the colonized are by definition excluded from it. A gloss which recuperates Kipling's intended meanings in ontological terms could appear calculated to drain the writings of historical specificity; yet it also attests to the authenticity of his 'portraits', and it does so through extrapolating the 'historical realities' from the do-it-yourself hagiography of the Raj, among which Kipling's fabrications were pre-eminent. The outcome is a criticism which, by reiterating Kipling's ideological assumptions, naturalizes the principles of the master culture as universal forms of thought and projects its authorized representations as truths.

The terms of Kipling's rehabilitation have been virtually uncontested, with only a few of the new studies situating the writings within a discursive field and reading the texts as ambivalent enunciations of an imperialist world-outlook.[12] What has not yet emerged is a left critique of Kipling. It may be common knowledge on the left that, as Tom Nairn has written, Britain is the 'most profoundly and unalterably imperialist of societies', its state forms 'inwardly modelled and conditioned by prolonged external depredations', its national consciousness and culture subjectively marked by imperialist myths.[13] Yet this generalized awareness has not produced studies on the making and components of imperialism's discourses or on the imperialist determinants of the metropolitan culture, and the indifference to Kipling repeats the larger neglect of a project to which his work is indispensable. For in writings where the discursive aggression of the referential project is interrupted by utterances of uncertainty, desire and fear, the precepts of imperialist ideology are reassembled and its deceptively unitary structure broken open.

The recognition of such tensions and contradictions does not, however, remove the inherent restraints on reading fictions which are indelibly etched by thematic assertions and rhetorical coercions that make known and consolidate an imperialist triumphalism. Neither the influence of Kipling's demotic verse on Brecht nor his popularity in the Soviet Union, which are routinely cited as evidence of his universal appeal and ecumenical sympathies, can obliterate these inscriptions. What criticism can recover, through dismantling the plural discourses and reconstructing the displacements and erasures, is the effaced historical contest and unrehearsed enunciations of the anxieties in the conquering imagination, both necessarily repressed by the exigencies of ideological representation. Kipling did set out to be the bard of empire, and although the ambition was abundantly realized, this is not all that he became.

Kipling's writings moved empire from the margins of English fiction to its centre without interrogating the official metropolitan culture. In cataloguing a lifelong devotion to dominant beliefs and values in *Something of Myself*, an autobiography written in old age, he had no occasion to repent youthful indiscretions of opinion. The Club, the Mess and the Freemasons Lodge are prized, while the 'perversions' and 'unclean microbes' infecting exclusively male communities are deplored; there is hostility to liberals, socialists and the labour movement, xenophobia towards Jews and contempt for blacks. Such predilections would be a matter for biography, were it not that they are written into the authoritative discourses of the texts, put there by a writer who conceived his function as teacher, prophet and public voice.

Pointing out that both his grandfathers had been Wesleyan ministers, Kipling recalls an early ambition to tell the English 'something of the whole sweep and meaning of

things and effort and origins throughout the Empire'. Later, when an established author and a pillar of the establishment, political conviction inspired him to write his Boer War verses and tributes to Joseph Chamberlain, Cecil John Rhodes and Lord Milner. It was passion for the expansion of empire which moved him to offer his gift with language to Rhodes, the architect of a plan for territorial aggrandizement whose imagination of conquest encompassed annexing the planets to England: 'he said to me apropos of nothing in particular: "What's your dream?" I answered that he was part of it . . . My use to him was mainly as a purveyor of words, for he was largely inarticulate.'[14] In the story 'On the City Wall', Kipling has the narrator, himself a *word-wallah*, decry the uselessness of books and scorn the lying proverb which says that the pen is mightier than the sword.[15] This is the stratagem of a dissembling writer who, having committed his own books and pen to political causes, feigns disbelief in the power of writing and directs attention instead to 'the line of guns that could pound the City to powder'.

Kipling's writings were not confined to fictions 'about empire', but it was his fiction of empire which, aided by the enthusiasm of the popular periodical press, made him the uncrowned laureate.[16] To gauge his role in the invention of an imperialist English identity requires the study of how reader responses were catalysed over many decades as forms of consciousness, social conduct and political behaviour. What is immediately available to critical attention is the address of instructional and inspirational writing delivered from the heartland of an imperialist culture. Directed at a readership positioned as a racially homogeneous and masculine community, unfissured by class allegiances, Kipling's imperialist writings articulate a new patriotism purged of the radicalism in its earlier forms, and fabricate a linear narrative of England's 'undefiled heritage' beginning with the inheritance of the imperial flame as it passed from their conquerors into English hands, and consummated in the British empire. Through blandishment and prophecy the cautionary verses urge the English to curb the unruly in themselves (as in 'The Children's Song' and 'If') if they are to realize their natural aptitude for ruling others. In 'A Song of the English' (1893), he wrote:

> Fair is our lot – o goodly is our heritage!
> (Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in your mirth!) For the Lord our God Most High
> He hath made the deep as dry,
> He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends of all the Earth!
>
> Hold ye the Faith – the Faith our Fathers sealed us; Whoring not with visions – overwise and overstale.
>
> Keep ye the Law – be swift in all obedience –
> Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.

Here the syntax of the sermon and the metre of the hymn regenerate the terms of imperialist propaganda into the notion of empire as a divinely appointed duty devolving on the English. Even as the mode shifts from the declamatory to the lyrical, and the stern call to imperial expansion and recall to ancestral belief is replaced by an indulgent longing to voyage beyond the constraints of metropolitan existence, utopia is made instantly manifest in the colonial venture:

> We were dreamers, dreaming greatly, in the man-stifled town;
> We yearned beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down.
> Came the Whisper, came the Vision, came the Power with the Need,
> Till the Soul that is not man's soul was lent us to lead.

Although Kipling has been hailed as a visionary, his mystique of empire more properly belongs to that worldly imperialist aspiration which imbued a predatory project with a revelational quality. In *Nostromo*, Conrad identified this compound as 'the misty idealism of the Northerners who at the smallest encouragement dream of nothing less than the conquest of the earth'.

Where the address of the imperialist verse is solemn and portentous, that of the stories idolizing the British as colonial rulers joins the briskly exegetical with the gallantly sentimental. Since the language of European ascendancy and Anglo-Indian conceit remains uncontradicted, the narrative structure of such tales is sealed against any interrogation of the Raj's self-presentation. On those occasions when the Indians do appear to speak, they are the mouthpieces of a ventriloquist who, using a facile idiom that alternates between the artless and the ornate, projects his own account of grateful native dependency. The monologism of these fictions is not Kipling's only mode, however. In those texts which call attention to their own fictional nature and stage the multivalencies of language, the pretence to authentic representation and the imparting of truths is caricatured.

The playful posture towards words and writing of the narrator in 'On the City Wall', who even as he presents himself in the process of composing his chronicle, distinguishes between 'living the story' and 'writing it', produces uncertainties in the proffered report of events. This ambiguity is sustained when the regulation reiteration of British discipline, fortitude and devotion to duty, delivered in a diction which values social order and the exercise of stern political control, is undercut by the flamboyance of metaphor and the banter of puns:

> Lalun has not yet been described. She would need, so Wali Dad says, a thousand pens of gold and ink scented with musk. She has been variously compared to the Moon, the Dil Sagar Lake, a spotted quail, a gazelle, the Sun on the Desert of Kutch, the Dawn, the Stars, and the young bamboo. One song . . . says the beauty of Lalun was so great that it troubled the hearts of the British Government and caused them to lose their peace of mind. That is the way the song is sung in the streets; but, if you examine it carefully and know the key to the explanation, you will find that there are three puns in it – on 'beauty', 'heart', and 'peace of mind' – so that it runs 'By the subtlety of Lalun the administration was troubled and it lost such and such a man'. (pp. 326, 323, order of passages reversed)

When Kipling sports with the referential mode which he so ably used to prescribe codes of conduct and instil ways of seeing, he puts in question the very predications which elsewhere he so aggressively articulated. The absent subject of 'To be Filed for Reference' (*Plain Tales from the Hills*, 1890) is 'The Book' compiled by an educated English drunkard gone native, and reputed to contain the truths about the people of the country concealed from the British. Allusions to its substance suggest the sensational ethnography of an excited western imagination – it is coyly referred to by the Anglo-Indian

narrator as in need of expurgation, an opinion proudly shared by its author – and not the text of an alternative system of meanings. Nevertheless, 'The Book' does function to contest the colonialist claim of 'knowing the Real India', a boast made sometimes archly and sometimes not in other stories. Here the reader is invited to believe that the official British version is indeed faulty, even though the potential counter-knowledge is strategically suppressed. In these self-reflexive tales, the univocal pronouncements of the polemical writings are undermined or countermanded, and these departures from the dominant mode are a reminder of just how firmly such doubts are elsewhere quelled.

If 'To be Filed for Reference' both intimates and averts a challenge to British knowledge, then *Kim* (1901) confidently reaffirms its validity. It is the English curator of a museum, 'with his mound of books – French, and German, with photographs and reproductions' and his acquaintance with 'the labours of European scholars', who communicates new learning about his own heritage to the amazed lama. It is through collecting and collating information about India's roads, rivers, plants, stones and customs that the Ethnological Survey makes available to the government that intelligence which is essential to the proper exercise of British power. And it is Kim, the sahib who can pass as any one of India's many peoples, who has access to the secrets of all India and puts these at the disposal of a benevolent Raj.

Kipling's India raises the problem posed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* as to 'how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative perspective'.[17] More specific questions are: can a writer immersed in and owing allegiance to a master culture construe the radical difference of another and subordinated culture as yet another conceptual order within a multiverse of diverse meanings? Are Kipling's fabrications of India, as has been claimed, testimony to the possibility of such ideologically unfettered constructions? It is *Kim* which critics call upon to argue that in his representation of India's uniquely multiple being, Kipling did indeed transcend the boundaries of his own ethnocentric vision.[18] While this is not the position taken by Edward Said, who criticizes Kipling's fiction of an immutable and immobile India, he does in his generous essay on *Kim* credit Kipling with giving India a positive identity: 'We can watch a great artist blinded in a sense by his own insights about India, confusing the reality before him, which he saw with such colour and ingenuity, with the notion that these realities were permanent and essential'.[19] The implication is that despite a crucial flaw in its composition, this India is the product of a non-coercive perspective. It could be argued, however, that because Kipling's India is reified under western eyes as a frieze or a pageant, and romanticized as an object of sensuous and voluptuous pleasure to be enjoyed by Europe, it is an invention which colonizes the space of India's own significations with western fantasies. Moreover, this 'Orientalized India of the imagination . . . an ideal India, unchanging and attractive, full of bustle and activity, but also restful . . . even idyllic' is not Kipling's only India[20] and within this larger, heterogeneous configuration, India can signify nullity as well as plenty, and its difference can be variously constituted as deviant, menacing or magnetic.

Kipling's journalism made a major contribution to the text of the Raj, working within and extending existing representations by vilifying the customs and manners of contemporary India and ridiculing its ancient literary heritages.[21] A glorious past had been reconstructed by nineteenth-century European Indologists, who like their

predecessors saw their role as making India's traditional learning known to the west and returning a noble legacy to peoples whose religious life had fallen into debased practices. This project was anathema to the architects of an absolute government in the metropolis and their agents in India. Their scorn was eagerly reiterated by an Anglo-Indian community outraged at Max Müller's postulate of an Indo-European family of languages and cultures – this was the source of the witticisms about 'our Aryan brothers', who so clearly were not. In 1886 Kipling wrote an article for the *Civil and Military Gazette* on *The Mahabharata*, then being translated into English by Pratap Chandra Roy, in which his disparagement of the epic echoed the contempt for the Sanskrit classics earlier and famously expressed by Macaulay in his 1839 *Minute on Education*:

> section after section – with its monstrous array of nightmare-like incidents, where armies are slain, and worlds swallowed with monotonous frequency, its records of impossible combats, its lengthy catalogues of female charms, and its nebulous digressions on points of morality – gives but the scantiest return for the labour expended on its production . . . The fantastic creations of the Hindu mythology have as much reality in their composition and coherence in their action, as the wind-driven clouds of sunset. They are monstrous, painted in all the crude colours that a barbaric hand can apply; moved by machinery that would be colossal were it not absurd, and placed in all their doings beyond the remotest pale of human sympathy. The demi-god who is slain and disembowelled at dusk rises again whole and unharmed at dawn. As with the *Mahabharnta* so with the *Ramayana* . . . Boars like purple mountains, maidens with lotus feet and the gait of she-elephants, giants with removable and renewable heads . . . are scattered broadcast through its pages. The working world of today has no place for these ponderous records of nothingness.[22]

The utilitarian rage of a relentless literalism that uses the vocabulary of commerce to castigate the extravagance of tropes could appear an aberration in one whose own trade was in literary language. Certainly in his capacity as licensed scribe of Anglo-India, Kipling is here reiterating an accredited means of insulting India's difference. But the derision that places articulations of the Indian imagination beyond human comprehension was not merely the expediency of a hack deferring to his readers' prejudices – this is clear in a letter he wrote at the same time mocking William Morris's high regard for 'that monstrous midden'.[23] Yet the fictions can tell another story: in 'The Bridge-Builders' (*The Day's Work*, 1898) a cosmology of becoming, dissolution and re-emergence is juxtaposed to the western notion of linear time.

Enunciations of India's otherness are never absent, but in those writings which project India as the incarnation of what a European self is constrained to exclude, alienation is intercepted by identification. A regret at the necessary ending of intimacy is registered in 'The native born' where India is characterized as the lost object of desire that must be relinquished for entry into the patriarchal law:

> To our dear dark foster mothers,
> To the heathen songs they sung –
> To the heathen speech we babbled,
> Ere we came to the white man's tongue.

A different specification of lack is inscribed in those fictions which, reproducing colonialist fantasy, transfigure India as the provider of libidinal excitation.

The embrace of that which the European self denies becomes enmeshed with the colonialist appetite for possession and control. Such multiple exigencies are dramatized in the love stories 'Beyond the Pale' (*Plain Tales*) and 'Without Benefit of Clergy' (*Life's Handicap*, 1891), where native subordination and Oriental passion, those staples of colonial discourse, come together in the ecstatic and ceremonial yielding of the native as female to the dominating presence of a masculine west. In the battle between creative man and castrating woman fought on English ground in *The Light That Failed* (1890), the figure of a hybrid alien is invoked to represent a notion of woman's Manichean nature: 'she was a sort of Negroid-Jewess-Cuban – with morals to match [serving] as a model for the devils and the angels both' (p. 155). In the tales of the white man's sexual encounters with the native woman, however, the Indian female, who must enact a double subjugation, is all innocence and ardent acquiescence. Ameera's obeisance to her English lover in 'Without Benefit of Clergy' stages the total abjection of India as colonized and female, the abasement of her address to the white man, 'My king, for all thy sweet words, well I know that I am thy servant and thy slave and the dust under thy feet' (p. 163), culminating in a deathbed blasphemy of her Islamic faith: 'I bear witness – I bear witness that there is no God – but – thee – beloved' (p. 178).

Michael O'Pray has argued for recovering Kipling as a key figure in a marginalized English tradition 'where romanticism merges with nostalgia . . . and an exoticism and quasi-mysticism that have a complex relationship to the British Empire'.[24] But because, as O'Pray recognizes, the fantastical is condensed with the colonizing spirit, the effect is to invest domination with libidinal intensities – Conrad's 'insatiable imagination of conquest'. A central trope of Kipling's other Indian novel, *The Naulahka* (1892), is an erotically charged urge for colonialist acquisition. The necklace of the title joins a sign of the east's fabled wealth with a symbol of woman's body, and the narration of the quest for the priceless and sacred jewel mimics a bellicose act that is both an imperialist invasion and a sexual assault. A desolate landscape is transformed into a meaningless social space, giving the west a moral right to usurp its wasted resources: 'miles of profitless, rolling ground . . . studded with unthrifty trees . . . this abyss of oblivion . . . The silence of the place and the insolent nakedness of its empty ways . . . the vast, sleeping land' (pp. 59, 78, 164).

But an overweening white confidence enunciated in disdain for India – 'Standing there, he recognized . . . how entirely the life, habits and traditions of this strange people alienated them from all that seemed good and right to him' (p. 212) – is undermined by articulations of the panic afflicting the conquering imagination. The holy well where the jewel is secreted has an intolerable smell of musk and is 'fringed to the lips with rank vegetation'; the surrounding rock is 'rotten with moisture'; from the stagnant waters rears 'the head of a sunken stone pillar, carved with monstrous and obscene gods'; the pool, overhung by a fig tree buttressing the rock 'with snake-like roots', is inhabited by an alligator, 'a long welt of filth and slime' (pp. 155–156, 165–166). From these signs of a corrupting sexuality and of original sin, the white assailant flees in horror.

Sometimes a source of guilty lust, India elsewhere is constructed as the negation of reason, order and coherence, so that the anxiety induced by difference is dispelled by

moral censure. At its crudest, as in 'The Enlightenments of Pagett M.P.'[25] this is articulated as an uninterrupted calumniation of Indian social existence: 'the foundations of their life are rotten – utterly and bestially rotten . . . In effect, native habits and beliefs are an organized conspiracy against the laws of healthy and happy life.' Contempt for custom can be conflated with anger at India's climate, both standing in the way of implementing British purpose: 'storm, sudden freshets, death in every manner and shape . . . drought, sanitation . . . birth, wedding, burial, and riot in the village of twenty warring castes' ('The Bridge-Builders', p. 5). Where disquiet at India's otherness is not allayed by reproof, its particularities are perceived as a hostile presence threatening to overwhelm the white community:

> There was neither sky, sun, nor horizon – nothing but a brown purple haze of heat. It was as though the earth was dying of apoplexy . . . The atmosphere within was only 104° . . . and heavy with the foul smell of badly-trimmed kerosene lamps; and this stench, combined with that of native tobacco, baked brick, and dried earth, sends the heart of many a strong man down to his boots, for it is the smell of the Great Indian Empire when it turns itself for six months into a house of torment . . . a tom-tom in the coolie-lines began to beat with the steady throb of a swollen artery inside some brain-fevered skull.
>
> ('At the End of the Passage', *Life's Handicap*, pp. 183, 198)

India's incomprehensible menace serves also to displace the colonialist nightmare of native vengeance, itself the verso of that fantasy where the country and its people are willingly held in the Raj's embrace. 'The Mark of the Beast' (*Life's Handicap*) uses the conventions of the horror story to narrate an act of native retribution that is 'beyond any human and rational experience' (p. 251), the lurid circumstances effectively screening the import of colonial resentment. 'The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes' (*The Phantom Rickshaw*, 1892), Kipling's most potent tale of European dread, veils this secular fright in the incertitude of hallucination. In detailing the ride of a delirious engineer with a head for plans but without imagination, 'over what seemed a limitless expanse of moonlit sands', the narration transforms the physical terrain into a metaphysical landscape. Accidentally plunged by his horse into a crater, Jukes finds himself trapped in a grotesque community of pariah Indians who, having recovered from trance or catalepsy after being presumed dead, have been confined to conditions of appalling deprivation and degradation. Here Jukes, who no longer commands the deference due to a sahib, suffers the 'nervous terror' of being immured amongst hostile Indians. His rescue by a loyal servant both mimics the relief of awakening from a bad dream, and acts therapeutically to restore British confidence in the invulnerability of a position undermined by the central narrative event.

Within the specification of India as other, the figures of the alluring exotic and the minatory alien stand out, on the one hand, as the signs of the sensual temptations impeding the exercise of British rule and, on the other, of an unintelligible danger to its hegemony. Notably absent is India incarnate as political opponent to the Raj. Edward Said has proposed that Kipling studiously avoided giving us two worlds in conflict because for him '*there was no conflict* . . . it was India's best destiny to be ruled by England'. This confidence Said attributes to the defining context in which he wrote: 'There *were* no

appreciable deterrents to the imperialist world-view held by Kipling. Hence he remained untroubled'.[26] But potent counters *did* exist both in India's traditional system of knowledge and in emergent nationalist discourses, and if Kipling was serenely unaware that these transgressed imperialist principles, then his writings were not, as attention to those strategies which silence voices able to interrogate the British empire as cultural text and political concept will show.

Parataxis is a favoured procedure for organizing incommensurable discourses in ways that conceal an antagonism of ideas. The road, the river and the wheel in *Kim* serve dual and opposing functions within the narrative. While Kim 'flung himself whole-heartedly upon the next turn of the wheel', the lama strives to free himself 'from the Wheel of Things' (pp. 210, 13). Whereas for Kim the Grand Trunk Road is a river of life, to the lama it is a hard path to be trodden in his search for a mythic river that will cleanse him from the sin of material being. Between Kim's pursuit of action, the life of the senses and personal identity, and the lama's quest for quietism, asceticism and the annihilation of self, there is no dialogue. Hence disjunctive goals, the one valued and the other denounced by imperialism's tenets, easily cohere as the mutual venture defined by the lama, who in his studied indifference to the temporal, accepts Kim's recruitment into the Secret Service as yet another insignificant action: 'he aided me in my Search. I aided him in his . . . Let him be a teacher, let him be a scribe – what matter? He will have attained Freedom at the end. The rest is illusion' (p. 407). This happy end, which allows Kim to have his nirvana and eat it, prompts another agent, the pragmatic Mahbub Ali, to say, 'Now I understand that the boy, sure of Paradise, can yet enter Government Service, my mind is easier' (p. 407). There is a reprise of this expedient ending in the ceremonial healing of the crisis precipitated by the irreconcilable roles Kim must play as apprentice spy and *chela* to a holy man, his recovery effected without any engagement with the competing commitments and acting to abolish conflict.

The contradictory ideological imperatives of etching the division between imperialist self and native other at the same time as representing colonialist/colonized hostility as British/Indian collaboration, engenders the invention of boundary situations inscribing both exigencies. In a territory signalled in the titles – 'Beyond the Pale', 'Without Benefit of Clergy', 'On the City Wall' – and which is literally out of bounds to the English, the frontiers drawn up by the imperial power can be crossed without endangering the relationship dependent on the policing of borders. This liminal space thus neither constitutes a zone liberated from the Raj, nor is the positioning of master/native displaced. Instead it is construed as a peripheral district licensed by the centre for the episodic transgression of colonialist interdicts. The movement between the languages of Law and Desire, the one enunciating the light of Anglo-India, the other the dark of India, reinstalls the chasm even as the protagonists from across the divide meet in intimacy. 'By day Holden did his work . . . At nightfall he returned to Ameera' ('Without Benefit of Clergy', p. 165). 'In the daytime Trejago drove through his routine of office work . . . At night when all the City was still came the . . . walk [to] Bisesa' ('Beyond the Pale', p. 175). When Holden has performed 'the birth-sacrifice' to protect the son born to Ameera, by slaughtering goats and 'muttering the Mahomedan prayer', he is eager to get to the light of the company of his fellows' ('Without Benefit of Clergy', p. 157); and if Trejago's passion is an endless delight, it is also a folly and a madness.

The exclusions of the colonialist code are thus ambivalently displayed as necessary deprivation. The ecstasy which Englishmen find in Bisesa's room and Ameera's house, or the pleasures afforded by Lalun's salon on the city wall, none of which is available in the bungalow or the Club, are articulated in rhapsodic vein. But if the lucid world of Anglo-India inhibits sensual gratification, it also preserves reason and order. This demands that the poesy of the illicit crossings is disrupted by the prose of censure: in one case disobedience is punished by disease and death, in another by mutilation. After Ameera and her son have died, the house which Holden had taken for her is torn down 'so that no man may say where [it] stood', presaging her mother's prophecy that 'He will go back to his own people in time' ('Without Benefit of Clergy', pp. 182, 137). 'Beyond the Pale' opens with an ironic admonition: 'A man should, whatever happens, keep to his own caste, race and breed. Let the White go to the White, and the Black to the Black. Then, whatever trouble falls is in the ordinary course of things – neither sudden, alien, nor unexpected' (p. 171).

Although this is contradicted by the 'Hindu Proverb' which serves as the story's epigram ('Love heeds not caste nor sleep a broken bed. I went in search of love and lost myself' (p. 171)), its wisdom is confirmed by the ending. If the love stories are both eulogistic and censorious about the transgression of frontiers, the allegorical 'The Bridge-Builders' whole-heartedly applauds that passage through which the British donate and the Indians receive technological progress, for there is no encroachment on colonialist divisions. The gulf between the British doctrine on the conquest of nature and a deferential Indian stance towards the integrity of the physical environment is momentarily traversed by the British engineer's opium-induced vision of the gods in conclave. On awakening, however, he banishes all memory of what he has seen: 'in that clear light there was no room for a man to think dreams of the dark' (p. 41). An alien perspective on the universe and time is made known and dispelled; once again the status quo is entrenched.

Representations which neutralize or elide the challenge to the British world-view, and which ensure that the positioning of master and native is not disturbed, close the space for a counter-discourse authored by the colonized as historical subject and agent. Yet in the act of muting these utterances, the texts reveal a knowledge of their existence and their danger. If we follow Fredric Jameson's proposition that the hegemonic discourse implies a dialogue with a dissenting voice even when this is disarticulated,[27] then Kipling's imperialist writings can be read as a pre-emptive reply to Indian opposition. What is heard instead is the idiom of grateful dependence from villagers and servants, of proud compliance from sepoys and war-like tribesmen, and of insolent malcontent from western-educated 'babus'. When the language of legend or religion is spoken, this is not permitted to contest imperialist teaching; nor does it confront European ascendancy on the political ground staked out by the text of the British empire.

It is such suppressions which make the interlocution of voices in 'On the City Wall' noteworthy, for in this fiction the Indians *are* autonomous and oppositional speaking subjects. Characteristically, the story moves between disjunctive modes. The Indian scene is represented in a vocabulary of parodic romanticism, its ironic effusions alternating with the pompous diction of British rule: 'Year by year England sends out fresh drafts for the first fighting-line, which is officially called the Indian Civil Service. These die, or kill themselves by overwork, or are worried to death, or broken in health and hope in order that the land may be protected from death and sickness, famine and war,

and may eventually become capable of standing alone. It will never stand alone, but the idea is a pretty one, and men are willing to die for it, and yearly the work of pushing and coaxing and scolding and petting the country into good living goes forward' (p. 324).

But there is another and uncharacteristic arrangement of discourses. As always the might of the Raj is proclaimed loud and clear: 'Hugonin, the Assistant District Superintendent of Police, a boy of twenty, had got together thirty constables and was forcing the crowd through the streets . . . The dog-whip cracked across the writhing backs, and the constables smote afresh with baton and gun-butt' (pp. 343–344). Now, however, Britain's right to rule, whether projected as benevolent tutelage or brute force, is contested. Indian refusal is here spoken both in English, which was commonly used in the emergent nationalist writings and speeches, and also in the vernaculars, for once transcribed without coy and cloying archaisms. Opposition to colonialist claims thus joins Hindu, Muslim and Sikh in a chorus of dissident voices. The western-educated Wali Dad, exceptionally speaking an impeccable 'standard' English, recounts the consistent anti-British record of the unrepentant old Sikh warrior, Khem Singh, and also spurns on his own account the rewards offered by the Raj to the subaltern Indian: 'I might wear an English coat and trouser. I might be a leading Mohammedan pleader. I might be received even at the Commissioner's tennis parties where the English stand on one side and the natives on the other, in order to promote social intercourse throughout the Empire' (p. 338).

In a quite different style, Lalun, the courtesan from whose house a rebellion is being planned, voices her disaffection in a song which joins the memory of war against the Moghul invaders with the hope of a present struggle against the British. This is intended for, and heard by, the imprisoned Khem Singh; he in turn speaks of his old hatred against the government and his wish to engage in further battle. Such utterances of enmity against the Raj are ironically compounded by the reversion of the agnostic Wali Dad to his ancestral religion during the Mohurran festival. Represented by the English narrator as proof of Indian fanaticism, communalism and traditionalism, his action can also be read as a gesture of cultural resistance. This story imposes no formal rapprochement of opposites. The seditious plot is of course foiled, but without the instigators becoming reconciled to their subjugated condition – at the end Khem Singh is to be heard suggesting plans for the escape of other fighters jailed by the British administration. Still inchoate as an insurgent discourse, the speech of Indians confronting and rejecting British authority points up what Kipling's writings elsewhere effaced.

Kipling is an exemplary artist of imperialism. The fabrications of England's mysterious imperialist identity and destiny, reiterated in the Indian writings and carried over into the later English fictions; homilies on the development of character in the metropolitan population (hymned in one of the verses as adherence to a code of Law, Order, Duty and Restraint, Obedience, Discipline); the celebrations of a triumphalism extending from the conquest of the physical environment to autocratic relationships within the domestic society and between Britain and the colonies; the projection of the white race as the natural rulers of a global space created and divided by imperialism; the positioning of the other hemisphere as peripheral to a western centre – these inscriptions of an outlook constructed in a historical moment continue to offer rich pickings to a militant conservatism seeking sanctions for authoritarianism social conformity, patriotism and

Britain's commanding world role derived from a splendid imperial past. To a criticism concerned with mapping the exclusions and affirmations of an imperialist culture whose legacy has still not been spent, these same texts can be made to reveal both imperialism's grandiloquent self-presentation and those inadmissible desires, misgivings and perceptions concealed in its discourses.

9 Narrating imperialism: beyond Conrad's dystopias

> [T]he radical qualities of art, that is to say, its indictment of established realities and its invocation of the beautiful image . . . of liberation are grounded precisely in the dimensions where art *transcends* its social determination and emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence . . . The aesthetic transformation becomes a vehicle of recognition and indictment . . . only as estrangement does art fulfil a *cognitive* function: it communicates truths not communicable in any other language; *it contradicts*.
>
> Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*[1]

I. *Heart of Darkness*

It is in the spirit of Marcuse's remarks on the radical qualities of art that I want to look at *Heart of Darkness*,[2] a fiction in touch with and alienated from the consciousness and unconscious of imperialism, a book that is saturated in contemporary notions about cultural hierarchy *and* 'emancipates itself from the given universe of discourse and behaviour while preserving its overwhelming presence'. For by telling a story of catastrophe and about nescience, *Heart of Darkness* subverts imperialism's claim to be the agent of universal progress and in possession of all knowledge. Both Marlow's recourse to mismatched terms when sardonically speaking of the imperial venture as 'the forerunner of change, of conquest, of trade, of massacres, of blessings' (p. 98), and the metonyms of menace in the apparent tribute made by the primary narrator to Britain's long and glorious history of imperial endeavours, render the celebratory idiom of imperialist self-representation suspect: 'The old river . . . had borne all the ships whose names are like jewels flashing in the night of time, from the *Golden Hind* returning with its round flanks full of treasure . . . to the *Erebus* and *Terror*, bound on other conquests – and that never returned' (pp. 6–7). More explicitly the reiteration of received phrases such as the heavenly mission to civilize, the noble, exalted cause, just proceedings and magnificent dependencies, serve to mock imperialism's grandiloquence, as does the description of Kurtz by a company agent hostile to the 'gang of virtue' as 'an emissary of pity and science and progress' (p. 36). Instead Marlow's recollections are of an abject colonialism: 'I foresaw that in the blinding sunshine I would become acquainted with a flabby, pretending, weak-eyed devil of a rapacious and pitiless folly' (p. 23).

Because narrative, syntax and imagery rehearse and refuse the official version of imperialism's advent and itinerary, the effect is to engage the reader in the existential dilemmas of the moment in which the novel was conceived and delivered; and because

the novella inhabits history and alludes to the proleptic, a space is opened for meanings beyond the time of its writing and reception. Perhaps the book's singular afterlife is due to this multiplicity of connotation, present and yet to come: coarsely appropriated by Wells in *Tono-Bungay*, and echoed in the unease of Andre Gide's journal, Graham Greene's *Journey Without Maps* and *A Burnt Out Case*, it has in V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* been commandeered by an author interested in denigrating an entire continent; while the unintelligibility of the novel's 'Africa' has been demystified in the fictions of Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa'Thiongo and Tayeb Salih, where invocations of vibrant cognitive traditions and volatile cultural forms annul images of vacancy and immobility. Also looking back to *Heart of Darkness* are two recent novels set in the Congo at the time of independence, Ronan Bennett's *The Catastrophist* (1997) and Barbara Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998) – written respectively by an Irish and a North American writer – where conscience-stricken white protagonists confront colonialism's legacies, and the voice of a people flagrantly disarticulated by Conrad can be heard off-stage speaking the language of resistance to the colonialist invaders; while films claiming descent from the novel, *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and Nicholas Roeg's *Heart of Darkness* (1993) are infused with a contemporary revulsion at imperialism's ambitions and alarmed at the havoc it wreaked on victims and perpetrators.

The text has also accreted an immense critical literature, and in those commentaries concerned with the text as a fiction of imperialism[3] it has been received both as a critique of colonialism and as deformed by complicity with colonialist racism – this last position most passionately argued by Achebe.[4] It is self-evident that the book's racist idiom cannot be overlooked or wished away: not only does the fiction draw on and elaborate images already familiar to a western readership from prior ideologically saturated texts (an immense, matted jungle, an impenetrable forest, spears, assegais, naked black bodies, warlike yells, populations given to cannibalism), but the black figures in this unearthly landscape are described as belonging to the beginning of time, their speech a savage discord and their souls vestigial. Moreover, because Marlow perceives the people as uncanny and repugnant doubles, he is unnerved by a sense of their 'distant kinship', provoking him to deliver a testimony that acknowledges but disavows consanguinity, affirms his own inviolable identity and asserts his cultural authority and autonomy: 'An appeal to me in this fiendish row – is there? Very well; I hear; I admit, but I have a voice too, and for good or evil, mine is the speech that cannot be silenced' (p. 52). All the same, Achebe's charge is as inadequate to comprehending the novella's plural registers as is Naipaul's claim that Conrad's writing constitutes 'totally accurate reportage' about 'the world's half-made societies' lacking in any goal and which 'seemed doomed to remain half-made', a world immutable and epistemologically empty: 'To arrive at this sense of country trapped and static, eternally vulnerable, is to begin to have something of the African sense of the void'.[5] By reading the book as a realist account of a specific location, as a mimetic transcription of an existent reality, both Achebe and Naipaul close off an understanding of a fiction that reflects on its own misrecognitions, its obfuscatory language inscribing the struggle and failure to know a world which Europe sought to dominate physically and possess discursively.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century the European powers had divided Africa amongst themselves, the lion's share going to England while France, Germany, Portugal and Belgium either initiated or enlarged their overseas empires. Following the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 the vast area of the Congo came under Belgian rule,

to be administered as the personal property of King Leopold II, whose appetite for an African empire had been stimulated by Henry Morton Stanley's sensational story of his adventures, later published as *Through the Dark Continent* (1878). Stanley's reports of the continent's immeasurable and untapped wealth was supported by other reports, and in 1876 an article appeared in *The Times* referring to the 'unspeakable riches' potentially available in the Congo basin regions, a phrase that is echoed with yet more sinister implications in *Heart of Darkness* when Marlow cryptically refers to the 'unspeakable rites' performed for Kurtz's gratification. Leopold's regime in the Congo attracted attention in Europe for a rapacity in excess of normative imperialist practice in Africa, the methods of agents engaged in collecting rubber and ivory from the local people including mutilation for recalcitrance and disobedience. When news of Belgian atrocities reached England, public figures – Roger Casement, E. D. Morel, R. Cunninghame Graham and Charles Dilke – exposed these practices in print and public meetings, and although the attacks were in large directed at the intemperance of Belgian exploitation, some of the protesters were vigorous in denouncing the entire imperialist project in Africa. On 17 December 1898 the *Saturday Review*, a newspaper which Conrad admired, carried a speech by the Chairman of the Royal Statistical Society which read: 'Of what certain Belgians can do in the way of barbarity (while claiming to promote civilization in the Congo), Englishmen are painfully aware. Mr. Courtney mentions an instance of a Captain Rom, who ornamented his flower-beds with the heads of twenty-one natives killed in a punitive expedition'.[6]

When Conrad embarked on *Heart of Darkness*, he was acquainted with the European colonial enterprise in Africa both through his own experience in the Congo, and because of the wide coverage given to Stanley's expedition in the Sudan in 1889, published as *In Darkest Africa* (1890), the Ashanti War of 1896, and Kitchener's vengeful victory at Omdurman in 1898 – all ventures involving the promiscuous killing of Africans and which had prompted criticisms in journals such as *Cosmopolis*, where *An Outpost of Progress* had first appeared.[7] This is not to suggest that Conrad set out either to write or produce a tract devoted to exposing the iniquities of colonialism in Africa. The book was first serialized in the pro-imperialist *Blackwoods Magazine*, a publication (as Conrad commented) read in every club, messroom and man of war in the British Seas and the dominions, and not noted for carrying elitist modernist writings. When communicating with the editor Conrad did so diplomatically, the terms of his letter suggesting approval of empire but deprecation of Belgian rule in the Congo, and intimating an intention of writing a fiction with realist dimensions: 'The criminality of inefficiency and pure selfishness when tackling the civilizing work in Africa is a justifiable idea. The subject is of our time distinctly – though not topically treated'.[8] To Conrad's anti-imperialist friends the first episode appeared to be an endorsement of their own outrage at colonialist malpractice, and when Cunninghame Graham communicated his enthusiasm, Conrad was at pains to distance his ambiguous writing from the conviction of the radicals' cause. This he did by indicating the doubleness of the text's articulation, or in the words of the first narrator when remarking on Marlow's narrative style, by alluding to meanings secreted in the misty halo surrounding the kernel of the tale: 'I am simply in the seventh heaven to find you like the Heart of Darkness so far. You bless me indeed. Mind you don't curse me by and bye for the very same thing. There are two more instalments in which the idea is so wrapped up in secondary notions that You – even You! – may miss it . . . So far the note struck chimes in with your conviction – but after? There is an

after'[9]. Significantly the provisional title, '*The* Heart of Darkness' was subsequently abandoned, the absence of the definite article freeing the fiction of spatial and temporal constraints.

Yet geography and history do everywhere inform the book's tropological design and formal structure, the ornamentation embedded in a narrative architecture supported by an arc between the Thames and a distant, unnamed river, between London and a remote, nameless forest.[10] Through figurations of asymmetrical interdependence between metropole and colony, the dispersed and divided imperial system is brought into representation: grass sprouting through stones in a European city reappears as vegetation growing through a dead man's ribs in a jungle; the bones of the domino-set laid out on the deck of a ship anchored off an English coast recur in the ribs of emaciated black labourers; a piece of white worsted manufactured in England is seen around the neck of a ragged black man; the brooding gloom of English waters reappears in the tenebrous darkness of the river in the interior of a faraway continent; the marmoreal Intended and the barbaric black woman make identical gestures of despair at losing Kurtz. Moreover, in its diction *Heart of Darkness* parodies the new accents brought to colonial discourse by imperialism, its engorging ambition evoked in Marlow's recall of Kurtz opening his mouth 'voraciously . . . as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him' (p. 85). This same historically concrete imagination is brought to Kurtz's Report for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs, a document that rehearses imperialism's high-flown verbiage on its mission to rescue populations from their depravities.

As saturated in a historiographical revisionism is the juxtaposition of opposites in the fiction's iconography of light and dark, a chiaroscuro which maps colonialist perceptions and simultaneously reiterates and countermands the customary evaluation attaching to white and black, light and dark in colonial discourse. In the case of white the text repeats its traditional associations with truth, probity and purity: one of many such examples can be found in Kurtz's Intended, her fair hair and white brow serving as visible signs of a 'soul as translucently pure as a cliff of crystal' (p. 102). However, white/light also come to denote lies, greed, confusion and corruption – the clean city of Brussels, the heart of Belgium's heartless imperialism, is a whited sepulchre; white fog is more blinding than the night and sunlight can be made to lie; the eyes of the avaricious traders are mica discs; ivory is the object of the invader's desire, and the psychotic footnote to Kurtz's Report ('Exterminate all the brutes!') 'blazed at you, luminous and terrifying, like a flash of lightning in a serene sky' (p. 72).[11]

But if on the other hand the novel deployment of black/dark does reiterate the entrenched associations of the terms with death, the obscure, the sinister, the inauspicious, the evil, the savage, the abominable and the incomprehensible (the dark jungle is hopeless and impenetrable; Kurtz is 'a shadow darker than the shadow of night'; Marlow withholds the story of Kurtz's life and death from his Intended because 'it would have been too dark'), it also effects a significant realignment of the positive meanings attached to the empire of light. Now it is Europe which is plunged into darkness by its own imperialist project, invading the house of the Intended, casting the biggest and greatest town on earth in mournful shades, and swathing the tranquil and luminous waters of the Thames in a brooding gloom. Moored with his companions on a 'waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth', Marlow suddenly says: 'And this also . . . has been one of the dark places of the earth' (p. 7). Thus a journey to the benighted

continent of the imperial imagination begins in England's shadowed shores, its own darkness carried into the remote destination. Such inversions of received usage and deliberated disturbance of established significations serve to alienate the inflated language of imperialist rhetoric, especially so when light and dark are joined in one image: Kurtz's sketch of a blindfolded women is posed against a sombre ground and the torch she carries casts a sinister light on her face; when pondering accounts of Kurtz's gorgeous eloquence, Marlow contemplates 'the gift of expression' as 'the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness' (p. 68).

In a novel characterized by the play of contradiction, similar strategies are at work in the making of Conrad's 'Africa'. By the time Conrad was writing his book sub-Saharan Africa had impinged on Europe's awareness as a source of untold and untapped resources, as an undisturbed treasure trove. But Africa also occupied another place in the European imagination. Travellers, explorers and adventurers were scouts for imperialism, mapping the terrain, signposting potential sources of wealth, marking physical hazards and warning of unfriendly natives. They were also prolific authors,[12] and from their writings Africa had emerged as a place of mystery and degradation – the representations being neither amenable to nor ever subjected to scrutiny of their truth. Hence cannibalism was assumed to be commonplace: in a drawing he called *Approach to a Chief's Hut Decorated with Human Heads*, Sir Harry Johnston, British consul, explorer, geographer, ethnographer and enthusiastic imperialist, joins atrocity with normalcy in both title and configuration, the tidiness of the squat dwellings in the background, the tame and pretty vultures in the foreground and the tranquil expressions on the faces of the dismembered heads nicely registering a view of how Africa has domesticated the monstrous. Interestingly and as a measure of how close Conrad was to received opinion and rumour, Marlow is not shocked by Kurtz's garden of severed heads, it being 'only a savage sight' with 'a right to exist – obviously in the sunshine', whereas intelligence of the primitive ceremonies instituted in his own honour by the civilized Kurtz transported him 'into some lightless region of subtle horror' (p. 83).

Christopher Miller has observed that the unnamed and phantasmagoric Africa of a fiction which was to become the consummate text of Africanist discourse[13] drew on and embellished the images already familiar to a western readership. Certainly the language of the novel's mythopeoic journey does signify a primordial physical landscape and a menacing metaphysical presence, a world without history or culture, a depraved Eden emanating 'the unseen presence of victorious corruption'. Consider: 'Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world . . . An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest' (p. 48); 'We were wanderers on prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet . . . We were cut off from comprehension of our surroundings . . . We could not understand because we were too far and could not remember . . . we were travelling in the night of first ages (p. 51); 'never before did this land, this river, this jungle, the very arch of this blazing sky, appear to me so hopeless and so dark, so impenetrable to human thought, so pitiless to human weakness' (pp. 79–80). As this last phrase implies, the narration ascribes a symbiotic relationship between the baseness of imperialism's agents and the moral dangers emanating from the land: 'I saw him [a company manager] extend his short flipper of an arm for a gesture that took in the forest, the creek, the mud, the river – seemed to beckon with a dishonouring flourish before the sunlit face of the land a

treacherous appeal to the lurking death, to the hidden evil, to the profound darkness of its heart' (p. 47).

Its most significant recruit is Kurtz: 'how many powers of darkness claimed him for their own . . . the wilderness had found him out, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know . . . till he took counsel with this great solitude . . . It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow at the core' (p. 83). As witness to Kurtz's fall, Marlow is assailed by 'something altogether monstrous, intolerable to thought and odious to the soul' (p. 92), impelling him to fight for Kurtz's redemption: 'I tried to break the spell – the heavy mute spell of the wilderness – that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions . . . this alone had beguiled his unlawful soul beyond the bounds of permitted aspirations' (pp. 94–95). If Kurtz's degradation is initiated by the appeal of the dumb and immobile earth, then it is completed by his interactions with its people, a lakeside tribe amongst whom 'he forgot himself', whom he had subdued and subjected with his guns, and before whom they were compelled to crawl as if in an act of worship.

In Lindqvist's book are two illustrations relating to the second Ashanti War of 1896, one from *The Illustrated London News* of 26 February 1896 entitled 'The Submission of King Prempeh', the other 'The Submission of King Prempeh, the Final Humiliation' in *The Graphic* of 29 February 1896, both depicting the king (in one case with his mother) crawling to the presumably sane and healthy British officers seated on a platform of biscuit tins (*Exterminate the Brutes*, pp. 55–56). This reminder of colonialism's conquering imagination returns us to the novel's perception of Kurtz as a dedicated agent of imperialism who is eloquent in declaiming notions of an entrusted cause and high purpose and has a voracious appetite for possession – ' "My Intended, my ivory, my station, my river, my" – everything belonged to him' (p. 70), and whose psychic and moral disorder is inextricably linked with the licence accruing to him as a colonialist. Thus the ideologically saturated representation of the European deformed by malevolent forces immanent in an inhabited geo-metaphysical space is offset by the perspective on man whose perversion inheres in his colonialist practice, the excesses he displays abundantly documented in other situations by those serving and denouncing the imperial cause.

The same paradox of immersion in and transcendence of prevailing thought is evident in the fiction's 'Africa', where recoil from the primal and the primitive coexists with the inchoate apprehensions of what lies beyond the text's own cognitive compass and cultural constraints. In this, *Heart of Darkness* gestures to another semantic universe. Not only is Marlow unable to tell what the roll of drums might signify (p. 50) or whether the 'prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us' (p. 51), but his chronicle repeatedly alludes to unfamiliar realities he looks upon but cannot fathom:

> And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding the cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion . . . the silence of the land went home to one's very heart – its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life . . . the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence . . . The woods were unmoved, like a mask . . . they looked with their air of

> hidden knowledge, of patient expectation, of unapproachable silence . . . the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life.
>
> (pp. 33, 37, 48, 81, 87)[14]

Marlow repeatedly laments his impotence as a communicator, and even as he undertakes to make his audience *see*, he protests the impossibility of making the import of his meeting with Kurtz known to his audience: 'Do you see him? Do you see the story? . . . It seems to me that I am trying to tell you a dream – making a vain attempt, because no relation of a dream can convey the dream sensation . . . that notion of being captured by the incredible which is of the very essence of dreams . . . No it is impossible, it is impossible to convey the lie-sensation of any given epoch of one's existence – that which makes its truth, its meaning' (p. 39). This admission extends to the tale of his journey into a continent of uncomprehended meanings. Just as physical obstacles impede the progress of a steamboat making its way up river into the interior, so does 'Africa' resist Marlow's discursive invasion, the very obscurity of his ornate and enigmatic language – 'It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention' – a confession of imperfect understanding and hermeneutic failure. Fredric Jameson has observed that Conrad's fictions inhabit different cultural spaces, and this is spectacularly true of *Heart of Darkness*, where the materials of Marlow's adventure belong with the colonial Gothic, while the narrative voice is ironic and self-reflective. The dialectic between content and style is played out in a narrative performance during which Marlow's rhetorical extravagances open up a chasm between words denoting a referent and registering an urge to inform, and words connoting that which resists interpretation,[15] between the attempt at signification and the defeat of his conceptual vocabulary to render 'Africa' intelligible.

I have suggested that *Heart of Darkness* condenses an 'indictment of the established reality' and estranges the 'repressed and distorted potentialities' of a society;[16] but what of its 'invocation of the beautiful image of liberation'? If this is attributed to the saving idea, the Intention, which Marlow offers as a conscience clause for an undertaking which the text shows to be without conscience, then it works negatively to screen those very imperial stances and dispositions that the fiction imputes as irredeemable:[17] 'The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing . . . What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to . . .' (p. 10) – the act of obeisance subverted by an image of the traders praying to the ivory, and the description of acolytes prostrating themselves before Kurtz. Thus in the absence of a vision beyond the degraded present, the novel's intimation of the future can perhaps be found in its incipient significations of what may yet come out of an Africa that in the novel cannot speak its name.

This Africa whose age-old voice had for long remained unheard by Europe was to acquire new accents which Conrad could not have imagined when hinting at those indiscernible possibilities which it seemed to him the continent held in abeyance. There is then a paradoxical connection between what can appear disjunctive, between a turn-of-the-nineteenth-century novel that concedes it *cannot* articulate a world that is its subject, and the Congo which some fifty years later spoke for itself by rejecting Belgian rule. At the Independence ceremony in 1960 and in response to King Baudouin's

arrogant and patently false declamation that 'The independence of the Congo is the result of the undertaking conceived by the genius of King Leopold II' (and this in 1960), Patrice Lumumba, the elected prime minister, addressed himself not to the former masters but to 'Congolese men and women, fighters for independence', recalling that the people had seen their lands despoiled and had witnessed terrible punishments meted out to those who would not submit 'to a rule where justice meant oppression and exploitation', reminding them that 'no Congolese worthy of the name can ever forget that it is by struggle we have won . . . a passionate and idealistic struggle'.[18] Lumumba was to be assassinated and the short-lived regime destroyed at the behest of the imperialist powers of Europe and North America who continue to covet the Congo's diamonds, copper, zinc and cobalt with the same ruthless passion as their predecessors had once desired its rubber and ivory. In *Heart of Darkness* Conrad saw, understood and reconfigured imperialism's lust after power and possession; he was unable to foresee and configure the forces that were to confront its dominion – as he was to do, even if with misgiving, in *Nostromo*. All the same, because the novel inscribes and transcends the ideological determination of the milieu within which it was written; because it alienates imperialism's conceit by reconfiguring the actuality physically and psychically in its exorbitant violence and egregious ethical violations;[19] because it produces a negative knowledge of a real world, it seems appropriate to describe Conrad, in words borrowed from Walter Benjamin when writing about Baudelaire, as 'a secret agent, an agent of the secret discontent of his class with its own rule'.[20]

II. *Nostromo*

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Edward Said has written, the foreign, which had for long been incorporated into European cultural texts, was used to convey an ironic sense of Europe's vulnerability: 'To deal with this, a new encyclopaedic form became necessary . . . a circularity of structure, inclusive and open at the same time . . . a novelty . . . drawn self-consciously from disparate locations, sources, cultures . . . the strange juxtaposition of comic and tragic, high and low, commonplace and exotic, familiar and alien . . . the irony of a form that draws attention to itself as substituting art and its creations for the once-possible synthesis of the world empires' (*Culture and Imperialism*, p. 229). This move is exemplified in *Nostromo's* ingenious and discrete narrative.[21] If the circumstances and events recounted by the fiction are reminiscent of stories already told about the 'incorrigible' subcontinent, the telling astonishes with its distancing of the familiar and the disturbance it causes to the credibility of the established account. For by mixing ideological representation, moral treatize and social prophecy in narrating imperialism as historical event, social aspiration and ethic, the novel spurns the authority of received historiographical and fictional reconstructions exalting the north's beneficent intrusion into Latin America.

Rather than articulate the consensual consciousness of the upward development in history exemplified and implemented by the nation-states of Europe and North America, the novel's storyline goes against the grain of convention to follow an errant path that circumvents the constraints of sequence and refuses the demand of imperialist ideology to map an itinerary of orderly ascent and splendid achievement. Hence the retardations, deferrals, digressions and temporal displacements, where significant effects

precede any credible explanation of the generative circumstances to the phenomena recounted, and countermand the official recitation of continuous progress and regeneration.[22] Moreover Conrad, who had scant regard for Latin American societies and eschewed enacting any mind-altering encounter with their cultural forms, apprehended and tracked a different order of time engendered by the turbulent history of what he scornfully names 'the revolutionary continent'; and although he dismisses endemic political upheaval and social disorder as a tragic farce, his writing admits the impossibility of accommodating so aberrant an experience within a linearly ordered, continuous chronicle.

Nostromo is a novel preoccupied with historiographical constructions of temporal orders and transitions in historical consciousness. This does not imply that the author brings to fiction nothing but a copyist's skill in producing variations on existing designs; and because I am discussing a book by Conrad, it seems appropriate to cite his views on the novel as a privileged mode of conceptualizing and reconfiguring the social world: 'Fiction is history, human history, or it is nothing. But it is also more than that; it stands on firmer ground, being based on the reality of forms and the observation of social phenomena, whereas history is based on documents, and the reading of print and handwriting – on second-hand impression. Thus fiction is nearer truth'.[23] Here Conrad is claiming the novelist's unique faculty for inaugurating representations composed through an unprecedented experience of already interpreted existential circumstances. The notion of fiction as the performance of an author's subjective vision will be frowned upon in an intellectual environment where critics insist that the excess of connotative meaning engendered by writing inhibits any text from reaching its intended destination. All the same, and to the extent that Conrad's fictions, whether earnestly or as pastiche, reiterate received versions of historical worlds *and* critically estrange the social modes and events which the novels narrate, I will read these as the fruits of a sensibility nurtured and constrained by the social codes from within which it emerges – as well as by a position of cultural and political authority – *and* as the 'free spiritual production' (which is Marx's term) of an imagination animated by singular persuasions and desires and inspired to vagrancy by unconformable cognitive and sensory perceptions. This, I must emphasize, is not to maintain that the writing is without unconscious signification or ambiguity and contradiction, and my discussion seeks to address that which is unrehearsed and inadvertent in the novel.

Because I read *Nostromo* as unfolding the arrival of industrial and finance capitalism in Latin America, an apt point of entry is an understanding of imperialism as the expansion of capitalism into what remains still open of the non-capitalist zones. Said, who now includes *Nostromo* in the canon of 'great imperialist narratives' (*Culture and Imperialism*, p. 132), once read it as a fiction which although masquerading 'as an ordinary political or historical novel', overturns 'the confident edifice that novels normally construct' to reveal itself as 'no more than a *record* of novelistic self-reflection'.[24] As I see it, the two aspects are inseparable, since the ostentatious disarrangement of the novel form which Conrad inherited, together with the visible dispersal of narrative authority, constitute the fiction's historiographical demystification and produce its uncertain politics. Conrad's problem, I suggest, was how to tell *this* story, the substance of which is the precipitate and uneven transformation of a pre-modern world through foreign intervention – and which although disingenuously subtitled *A Tale of the Seaboard* could have been called 'Capitalism Comes to Costaguana' – without underwriting the process as the

enactment of the north's ordained historical destiny to rule over the world. But whereas I argue that the novel's deliberated narrative performance subverts received reconstructions of the western imperial mission, my discussion will also consider how the direction of this critique is circumvented by Conrad's meditations on imperialism's 'saving ideas' and diverted by his mistrust of those revolutionary energies that would expropriate the expropriators.

A narration withholding endorsement of the imperial enterprise is reiterated in the irony with which both the optimistic remembrances of Captain Mitchell and the teleological annals of Don Avellanos are disclosed. Moreover, it is configured by the Golfo Placido, an estuary that for long had 'repelled modern enterprise' (p. 37), and which despite the breaching of its natural barriers by modern steam-powered clipper ships able to cross its windless waters, remains a space that an expansionist west is unable to master, as it does the land and mountains of Costaguana. Absolutely silent and dark, motionless and veiled in tremendous obscurity, this sea represents both an unnegotiable physical obstacle to imperialism's world-conquering aspiration and a metaphysical presence that escapes incorporation into imperialism's cognitive system: 'No intelligence could penetrate the darkness of the Placid Gulf' (p. 231). For the urbane and intellectually self-confident Decoud, the translated Latin American with pretensions to European refinement and sensibility, the passage across the Gulf's dark and silent waters acts on 'his senses like a powerful drug' (pp. 219–220). Alone on an uninhabited island in the vast and motionless lake, oppressed with 'a bizarre sense of unreality affecting the very ground upon which he walked' (p. 253), Decoud 'caught himself entertaining a doubt of his own individuality. It had merged into the world of cloud and water, of natural forces and forms of nature' (p. 409).

Despite his cynicism and levity, Decoud as the accidental architect of Sulaco Province's secession and the formation of the Occidental Republic, had become an agent of imperialism's hold on Latin America. Thus because his existential anguish and emotional disintegration are precipitated by a symbolic geography signifying 'the immense indifference of things' (p. 412), and his self-inflicted death occurs 'in this glory of merciless solitude and silence . . . whose glittering surface remained untroubled by the fall of his body' (p. 411), the Gulf, a figure of an insurmountable impediment to a triumphalist social and ideological project, acts in the narrative as the destroyer of the sovereign self cherished by an ascendant west: 'In our activity alone do we find the sustaining illusion of an independent existence as against the whole scheme of things of which we form a helpless part' (p. 409). It is perhaps significant that Nostromo, the Italian sailor whose element is the sea and who is a mere servitor of imperialism's purpose, is not defeated by the Gulf, undergoing instead a dual transformation when he re-emerges from its waters in the guise of one reborn, but mutated in schizoid fashion as the thief who mimics imperialism's immorality, and the dubious dissident resentful of its rule and plotting its demise.

A notoriously devious chronology, together with the dramatization of the barriers to imperialism's supremacist goals, can thus be read as devices serving to distinguish *Nostromo*'s narration from the modes of previous and contemporaneous texts celebrating the advent of capitalism. These defamiliarizing strategies also confute the fiction's own pretence to mimetism. Jean Franco has suggested that because 'contemporary critics tended to judge his work according to his ability to create plausible characters and

situations', Conrad was obliged to work under the constraint of verisimilitude.[25] This restriction is always trespassed, even though the novel's representation of Latin America and the attendant gloss are blatantly tendentious in reiterating Europe's disobliging opinion of a mestizo subcontinent whose habits of depravity and perennial disorder inhibit 'the success of anything rational'. Such ideologically saturated 'realism' displays a lawless and incontinent population passively tolerant of venal dictators given to Ruritanian dress, the extravagant address of pronunciemientos and arbitrary rule underwritten by plebiscites – a scenario which functions to validate the west's rational intervention. It is however interrupted by other representations, and in the glances at the old Costaguana with its pristine ravines and waterfalls (p. 98), its 'simple and picturesque' scenes (p. 109) and its popular festivals (p. 112), the fiction invokes an environment destroyed by imperialism and gestures towards the authenticity of the foreign which it also disparages.

A more profound disruption of the fiction's realist mode, and with it the case for western intrusion, issues from the fiction's scrutiny of the imperialist idea. This is elaborated around the notion of 'material interests', an oxymoronic contraction of the substantial and the abstract identified by more than one critic as a coded phrase for commodity fetishism as described in a famous passage of *Capital*:

> A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour . . . To find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world, the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings, endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This is what I call the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities.[26]

The silver, the fiction's overarching trope and 'the symbol of the supreme importance of material interests' (p. 219), is both a corporeal, indeed an incorruptible substance – as well as being the physical incarnation of the profits yielded by the exploitation of labour – and an abstraction. Its paradox is thus condensed not only in the tropological movement between the tangible and the imperceptible, but in the ascription of purposive life and affect to an inanimate object: the mine is perceived by Mrs Gould as 'feared, hated, wealthy; more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government' (pp. 427–428); while Nostromo imbues the 'treasure' with the power to fasten upon a man's mind (p. 379), appearing to him as 'shining spectre . . . claiming his allegiance' (p. 435). It is the wealth-producing silver mine as an 'idea' that Mrs Gould sees turn into a 'fetish', and in which the mine-owner, Charles Gould, had indeed invested not only capital but desire, holding to it 'as some men do to the idea of love' (p. 207). The critique of reification extends to the perception of persons as commodities: Nostromo's name is both the Italian word for boatswain/bo'sun, which is his occupation, and a contraction of 'nostro uomo' or 'our man'; the president-dictator, Ribiera, candidate of the Spanish oligarchs and the foreign investors, is regarded by the British chairman of the Railway Board as 'their own creature' (p. 44), and in backing

the project of the Englishman Gould to reopen the family mine, the American millionaire Holroyd exults in 'running a man!' (p. 79).

Yet although the novel enunciates recoil from the ethos of Material Interest, its recourse to other anomalous constructions – 'inspired by an idealistic view of success' (p. 68), 'prosperity without a strain on its real, on its immaterial side' (p. 73) and 'unselfish ambition' (p. 81) – suggests that Conrad, as in other novels, is again circling around the notion of a saving 'idea'. Hence while the invocations of probity and moral commitment as legitimizing strategies for the west's pursuit of a utilitarian and self-aggrandizing project are derided, the promise of redemption through adherence to visionary goals is, even if tentatively, tendered. Consider the much-cited scene of Mrs Gould ceremonially receiving the silver, which although yet another performance of commodity fetishism, is infused with affect: 'She laid her unmercenary hands . . . upon the first ingot turned out still warm from the mould, and by her imaginative estimate of its power, she endowed that lump of metal with a justificative conception' (p. 99).

On the one hand there is a surfeit of irony calculated to deflate the pretensions to righteousness and idealism of those pursuing pragmatic and self-interested purposes: 'the only solid thing . . . is the spiritual value which everybody discovers in his own form of activity', is the British chief-engineer's sceptical remark (p. 266); while the sentimentalist Holroyd, 'the millionaire endower of churches' (p. 74), is ridiculed for combining devotion to the accumulation of profits with the idea of 'introducing not only justice, industry, peace, to the benighted continents, but also . . . a purer form of Christianity' (p. 203). All the same, the sentimental, the other-worldly and the chivalric *are* revalued, and no more so than in the slippage of the original meaning attached to 'material interest': initially offered as a conflation of base and superstructure, the two are disjoined when the term comes to signify 'the moral degradation of the idea' and the enemy of 'disinterestedness', 'rectitude' and 'moral principle' (p. 419).

The exposure of 'material interests' as 'materialism', the gainful development of material resources, material prosperity and material advantage, conforms with its usage in contemporary public discussion, where it unequivocally denoted projects for the accumulation of capital. In his frequent pronouncements on imperialist themes, Joseph Chamberlain, a vigorous exponent of Britain's expansion, reiterated precisely this phrase as a synonym for the acquisition of territory, overseas commercial enterprise, returns on investment in the colonies, the garnering of natural and mineral wealth in imperial possessions, and the exploitation of the empire's labour. Here the incongruity is located not within the term, but in the misalliance between mercenary ambition and economic gain, since the boast was that these constituted devotion to 'national duty', 'high ideals', 'dreams', 'high sentiment', 'imagination', 'mission', 'responsibility' and 'honour'.[27] There was much to hand in the contemporary rhetoric for Conrad to parody, and whereas the ideologically conformist representations of Latin America, the sentimentalism of allegorizing women as keepers of fine conscience, and the dramatization of ethical dilemmas are brought into being by languages that remain within the conventions of polemic, romance, melodrama and moral drama, another and dissonant idiom is invoked when the text alludes to the perfidious objects of imperialist desire. Consider Mrs Gould's derision of Holroyd's preoccupation as '[T]he religion on silver and iron' (p. 71), the narrative's scorn when reiterating the version of Sulaco's secession as 'the struggle for Right and Justice at the Dawn of a New Era' (p. 393), the acerbity in attributing to Holroyd 'the temperament of a puritan' joined with an 'insatiable

imagination of conquest' (p. 75), and the sardonic characterization of the imperialist ambition as 'the misty idealism of the Northerners, who at the smallest encouragement dream of nothing less than the conquest of the earth' (p. 278).

The disgrace of honourable aspirations tied to acquisitive purposes is performed by the gracious figure of Mrs Gould, a reincarnation of the Intended in *Heart of Darkness*, who like her predecessor embodies the immaculate 'Intentions' Conrad sought to ascribe to the imperialist project – European women in Conrad's fictional universe being allotted the primary function of limiting and symbolically atoning for the brutalism of the secular world. (Hence Gould, as if claiming absolution for the ruthlessness and moral compromise required to secure the successful operation of the mine, tells his wife, 'The best of my feelings are in your keeping'.) But in contrast to the austerity of that other icon, Mrs Gould's representation lapses into the clichés of popular romance and the literature of upliftment when the impeccable heroine is associated with the blue-robed Madonna in the niche of her elegant Spanish House (pp. 68, 414). That the text should secretly, or perhaps unconsciously, and through the indirection of tropes, come to strip the decorative and decorous Mrs Gould of the garments of virtue in which it has dressed her – once she herself is symbolically clothed in a blue cloak (p. 210) – is a sign of Conrad's uncertainty about the noble motivation which he contemplated as a possible exoneration of imperialism's will to ascendancy. This double vision is registered when the 'unmercenary hands' of Mrs Gould, in whose character the text insists 'even the most legitimate touch of materialism' is wanting (p. 73), are seen 'flashing with the gold and stones of many rings' (p. 419), the jewels already designated as 'the hidden treasures of the earth . . . torn out by the labouring hands of the people' (p. 413). And it is rehearsed in the cryptic estimates of her fallibility offered by Decoud and Nostromo.

When Decoud derides the idealization of self-interest, he invokes the very words used to represent Mrs Gould's goodness and grace – images of the fairy-like lady in shining robes of silk and jewels being replicated but now with negative import in his scorn for self-aggrandizing undertakings that are clothed in the fair robes of an idea and resort to fairy-tale vindications (pp. 103, 187). Even more disturbing than the disbelief of the disillusioned Decoud in Mrs Gould as a figure of redeeming ideas is the clandestine censure of her ethically suspect position spoken by Nostromo, who in conversation with Viola invariably and ironically refers to her as 'Thy rich Benefactress'. On his deathbed he responds to her confession that she too hated the silver with the words, 'Marvellous! – that one of you should hate the wealth that you know so well how to take from the hands of the poor' (p. 458); while in addressing her in the image of the silver as 'Shining! Incorruptible!', he ties her inextricably to the Material Interests which she disavows but before which she had bowed.

Fredric Jameson has remarked of *Nostromo* that 'it is not a political novel in the sense in which it would allow these two political ideals [the aristocratic Blanco Party and the populist mestizo Monterists] to fight it out on their own term's' (*The Political Unconscious*, p. 270). It is all the same a profoundly political book, its ambiguous politics performed on a stage densely peopled by contenders within the newly created dependency of western capitalism. Hence the alignment of competing forces, which differs from the western model of class formation and contest, signifies the contiguity of non-synchronous modes of production and disjunctive social forms coexisting within the

uneven process of modernization: the relics of a pre-capitalist Spanish oligarchy, some of whom are resistant to the changes implemented by the foreign investors; the feudal structures of the hacienda whose gracious hospitality Mrs Gould so appreciates; dispossessed Indians and peasants migrating to the new centre of capitalist growth stimulated by the mines, and the nascent working-class, largely European immigrants, employed in the ports, railways and telegraph system. With the secession of the Occidental Republic and the integration of Sulaco Province into the world capitalist system, the populace, which during the civil war with the Monterists had supported the Ribiera regime of the indigenous aristocrats and foreign investors, turn against their masters; and as 'quite serious, organized labour troubles' occur (p. 89), the astute Dr Monygham remarks to Mrs Gould that the mine would not now march on the town to save their Señor Administrador (p. 419).

In this turbulent situation, disaffection and opposition draws in the clergy, the landless agrarian populations and the incipient proletariat. Father Corbelàn, elevated to Cardinal-Archbishop of Sulaco, abandons the Church Militant to participate in building a Church of the Poor, warning the representatives of 'material interests': 'Let them beware . . . lest the people, prevented from their aspirations, should rise and claim their share of the wealth and their share of the power' (p. 418); Italian and Basque workers join forces with the Indian miners in the socialist Democratic Party, and secret societies conspire to reunite Costaguana and redistribute the wealth of Sulaco amongst the population of the republic. In Dr Monygham's remark, 'There is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests' (p. 419), we have a moralist's view of the permanent revolution set in train by capitalism's dynamics. This is noted by the novel with melancholy as the inevitable consequence of a historical process of modernization: 'Material changes swept along in the train of material interests. And other changes more subtle, outwardly unmarked, affected the minds and hearts of the workers' (p. 413).

What *Nostromo* narrates is a passage not from edenic nature to a fallen world of culture, but from Spanish colonialism via the regimes of countless unstable and tyrannical republics and endemic civil wars to a new Anglo-American imperialism. The beginning and end of this process is imaged in the arched gate to the old town of Sulaco, above whose apex is 'a grey, heavily scrolled armorial shield of stone . . . with the arms of Spain nearly smoothed out as if in readiness for some new device typical of the impending progress' (pp. 150–151). In the novel's purview there is neither nostalgia for a colonial past, confidence in an imperialist present, nor hope in the future envisioned by imperialism's opponents. The old order is deprived of all legitimacy by the living witnesses to the afflictions visited on the native peoples by the rapacity of the conquistadores: 'The trudging file of burdened Indians . . . would lift sad, mute, eyes to the cavalcade raising the dust of the *camino real* made by the hands of their enslaved forefathers . . . The heavy stonework of bridges and churches left by the conquerors proclaimed the disregard of human labour, the tribute-labour of vanished nations' (pp. 83, 85). But nor is capitalism's success-story endorsed, Captain Mitchell's upbeat recital of how '[T]he Treasure House of the World' . . . was saved intact for civilization (p. 397) serving as a sardonic repudiation of its affirmations; while Holroyd's confident prediction of his nation's future as the world leader (pp. 75–76) inauspiciously signals the arrival of a later imperialism under the hegemony of the United States.

However, *Nostromo*'s disdain for Spanish colonialism and modern imperialism is matched by a negative perception of those seeking its overthrow. This is focused on the ambiguous figure of Nostromo, subaltern, proto-proletarian and renegade. His is a language of *ressentiment* characteristic of populist discourse and shared, by the venal Montero brothers and the principled Viola. Nostromo castigates the rich, to whom 'everything is permitted' (p. 359), who betray the poor (pp. 374, 386), keep 'the people in poverty and subjection' (p. 342) and live 'on the wealth stolen from the people' (p. 443). But in the ranks of the socialist Democratic Party he learns to speak a new language of opposition to 'capitalists, oppressors of the two hemispheres'. This, the text tells us, would have been incomprehensible to the 'heroic old Viola, old revolutionist' (p. 432), who is unacquainted with the taxonomy of class and admits only the category of 'the people' oppressed by kings, ministers, aristocrats and the rich (p. 342). In both Viola, a man of the people, and Mrs Gould's aunt, the widow of an Italian aristocrat who lives in the 'ruined and degraded grandeur of a decaying palace' (pp. 61–63), the fiction reflects on the nobility of austere republicans distinguished by a puritanism of conduct and severity of soul, persons selflessly devoted to the cause of Italy's independence and unification, and in the case of Viola, a veteran of Italian armies which had fought for Latin America's liberation from the Hispanic empires (pp. 39 and 385).

If these backward glances at the ideals of 1848 are in the spirit of regret for a time that cannot be recovered, they also serve to deprecate a new vocabulary of class struggle which is further mocked because spoken by Nostromo. Thus when Nostromo comes to inveigh against his masters whom he had served as overseer of unruly labourers, as intrepid escort to the beleaguered Ribiera, and courier summoning troops to the defence of Sulaco and foreign capitalism, no authority is allowed to an anti-capitalist rhetoric uttered by one who by expropriating the silver has emulated his enemies. Yet even when Nostromo's deeds contradict his rhetoric, positioning him as a lackey of class enemies he despises and who misname him as 'their' man, his deportment is never subservient or deferential, manifesting an estimate of his independence, and confirming Viola's perception of him as a man *of* the people, as 'their Great Man . . . the incarnation of the courage, the fidelity, the honour of "the people" ' (p. 423). That the text should impale Nostromo on the cross of incommensurable positions and desires – the hireling who aspires to be his own man, the orator who publicly castigates the rich but who loves riches, the thief whose loyalty is to the dispossessed and who is possessed by his stolen treasure – suggests that the irreconcilable demands made on him by the fiction are a symptom of Conrad's unease about affirming a figure associated with socialist aspirations.

It could seem that Dr Monygham's perception of Nostromo, not as thief corrupted by an icon of capitalism, but as a socialist-conspirator with 'genius . . . continuity and force', is testimony to his status as a figurehead of the struggle against the dominion of 'material interests': 'Nothing', says the doctor, 'will put an end to him'. But this allusion to the reach after another condition coexists with a fear that this new time will be dystopian, and because the political opposition to capitalism is manifest in the misshapen form of a fanatical communist, 'small, frail, bloodthirsty, the hater of capitalists' (p. 459), this serves as a malignant augury of what may come to pass with the victory of a left revolution. Hence a novel which inscribes disillusion in the ethos of a triumphant capitalism also refuses to endorse the aspirations of those seeking its transcendence,

unfolding instead as a narrative which sets symbolic limits to the west's expansionist urge, denies the totalizing power of which imperialism boasted, and in its last pages invokes only to annul the 'beautiful image' of a light 'beaming into far horizons' by blighting 'the bright light' with 'a big white cloud shining like a mass of solid silver' (pp. 462–463).

10 *Tono-Bungay*: the failed electrification of the empire of light

To recall how theorists have observed the impact of imperialism on the emergence of metropolitan modernism is not a prelude to hailing *Tono-Bungay*[1] as one such modernist novel. For within the shifting boundaries of the mappings offered by scholars, the modernism of a fiction written by a writer renowned for naturalist fictions and Futurist fantasies must appear uncertain. All the same, David Harvey's dictum on modernism as 'a troubled and fluctuating aesthetic response to conditions of modernity produced by a particular process of modernization'[2] may lead a reader acquainted with the novel's storyline to anticipate just such a move, the subject of *Tono-Bungay* and the occasion for its ethical critique being the impact of late nineteenth-century capitalist modernization on the imperial homeland. Not only does the imperialist dynamic of this process form the fiction's spatial and temporal coordinates and inflect its topological structure, but the narrative traces the seismic effects of accelerated socio-economic transformation on social arrangements in the domestic society; while one of the novel's themes is the making of the cosmopolitan capital city, womb and progeny of capitalism's expansion, and acknowledged as one of the distinguishing preoccupations of the modernist movement.

These narrative features, together with Jon Thompson's understanding of modernism as a plural literary phenomenon subsuming referential as well as autotelic writing – both of which problematize representation and share as a common objective 'the critical evaluation of modernity'[3] – make it more feasible to include this book within a literary modernism. This is a case already made by those critics who dispute Wells' relegation as a novelist uninterested in form, and have singled out *Tono-Bungay* as marking a break with nineteenth-century fictional tradition.[4] However, doubts about the novel's generic status return when we follow Raymond Williams's argument: while observing an 'internal diversity of methods and emphases', and remarking on its 'range of basic cultural positions', Williams designates aesthetic modernism as 'a distinctive movement in its deliberate distance from and challenge to more traditional forms of thought and art'.[5] Definitions of modernism which foreground ideological subversion, whether effected by radical technical experimentation and conspicuous virtuosity of style or by defamiliarizing the process of fictional representation, suggest the difficulty of placing a novel in which the critical thrust in narrating an epoch of specified volatility is reliant on verisimilitude, and the reading experience offered derives on the one hand from the fidelity of spatial landscape and on the other from the charting of social itineraries.[6] Furthermore, if we consider David Harvey's description of modernist writing and art in the period before the First European War as saturated in a 'sense of

anarchy, disorder and despair' and pervaded by the 'articulation of erotic, psychological, and irrational needs' (*The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 30), then Wells's novel, published in 1909, will appear as a relic of another era.

In a novel relayed by a narrator practised in the arts of broad satire but a stranger to irony, the protagonists are conceived as coherent selves and represented as transparent in their urges and ambitions, their sexual identities and characters fixed, even where the mobility of their social positions is minutely observed. Both Wells's acute understanding of the intractable chasms in class manners and deportment which survive upheavals in England's hierarchical social order, and the limitations on his perceptions of the instabilities of subjectivity are manifest in the narrator's version of his fraught relationships with women. This reveals sexual desire as arrested by class snobbery and infused with the mystique of class difference: a short-lived marriage to the beautiful, commonplace and lower-middle-class Marion, who is 'anxious to overstate or conceal her real social status', and whose talk is 'shallow, pretensious, evasive' (p. 126), is driven by an urgency of the body that is soon dissipated; a brief affair with the typist Effie, 'his glad and pretty slave and handmaid' (p. 213), is marked by transitory lust; whereas the Honourable Beatrice Normandy, moving in an orbit for which her lover has no data, and possessed of 'a mystical quality' (p. 327), inspires in him an insatiable and doomed Romantic Love. Yet because the novel does not anticipate and register transformations in gender roles and relationships, nor allude to emergent feminine experiences and expectations, the women are consigned to a position in the fiction where they are explained, interpreted and judged within a narrow range of persona and destinies by a masculine intelligence imprisoned in received notions of female functions and capacities.

A similar constraint is evident in the novel's prospect on alterations in the distribution of class power. In a story of capitalist consolidation and crisis, the conflict is played out between aristocracy and bourgeoisie, and within the bourgeoisie, between the established and arriviste factions – the narration of radical changes within the networks of social authority being principally concerned with the exploits and machinations of parvenu entrepreneurs. There are some casual allusions to socialism, but because the workers are relegated as the exploited and inert toiling masses, the proletariat is rendered invisible, and the struggle of capital and labour is consequently occluded. Thus 'the proximity of social revolution', which for Perry Anderson constitutes one of the coordinates of the modernist conjuncture, falls outside the fiction's imaginative range, a circumscription confirmed by an ending that foretells the destruction of a corrupt system but gives no role to social contest in its demise.[7]

I have suggested that the writing practices of the novel are resistant to vitalizing those shifts in cognitive modes and structures of feeling that mark modernity as an existential condition, which to cite a phrase from Adorno, is 'a qualitative, not a chronological category'.[8] According to Fredric Jameson, modernity 'can be taken to mean something specific and distinct from either modernism and modernization. Indeed our old friends base and superstructure seem fatally to reimpose themselves: if modernization is something that happens to the base, and modernism the form the superstructure takes in reaction to that ambivalent development, then perhaps modernity characterizes the attempt to make something coherent out of their relationships. Modernity would then in that case describe the way "modern people feel about themselves".'[9] This map of the connections between modernization, modernism and modernity can assist in understanding the generic peculiarities of a novel which writes what happens at the base, but

without evoking that sense of experiential fermentation which persisted into the era that is the book's moment, and had been summoned more than half a century earlier by Marx and Engels: 'Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones'.[10]

Because the book is 'about' a historically specific era of accelerated material transformation and social excitation, the expectation is that what will follow is an animation of an experience which Marshall Berman identifies as 'a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity, and anguish'.[11] Such social and psychic turbulence is described rather than syntactically inscribed in *Tono-Bungay*, where the annals of flux and unpredictability are moderated by the assured delivery of a narrator whose normative idiom tames the vortex which is his subject. Hence Wells's novel of England's rapidly changing turn-of-the-century world tells a story of the new in old ways, its recital of cataclysmic events reiterating habituated structures of feeling, its linguistic range incapable of producing the altered landscapes of interior worlds, or opening doors onto hitherto unexamined states of being, or dislocating the given spectrum of existential registers.

Perhaps then the most appropriate designation of the novel is that offered by Bryan Cheyette, who understands it as 'transitional', its deployment of different literary genres refusing firm distinctions between the two supposedly 'hermetically distinct' traditions of realism and modernism.[12] Despite the extent to which the book belongs both stylistically and ideologically with another and earlier current, signs of a literary modernism do circulate in its chronicle of an England reordered and unsettled by capitalism-as-imperialism. These marks can be detected in, and are inseparable from, a narrative where the positivistic, technocratic and rationalistic remaking of Europe is structurally linked to the exploitation of the colonial world, which dramatizes the ways in which the expansion of overseas empire inflected prevailing perceptions of a socially produced native landscape, and itself travels to the distant and dislocating site of a colonial territory on whose resources western modernization was dependent.

As a manifestly 'condition of England' novel set in the 1880s, *Tono-Bungay* has justifiably been read as a parable and critique of investment capitalism's disintegrative effects on England's social structure.[13] By extending the understanding of finance capitalism to include its integral *imperialist* dynamic, the book's conceptual and imaginative horizons encompass the connections between imperial homeland and overseas territories, and stretch to incorporate hazy sightings of a vast and amorphous hinterland sustaining a metropolitan centre. Nor are these facets contingently juxtaposed, since the skein of allusions and references to empire, as well as displaced spatial perceptions and representations of distant worlds, are woven into conjuring a moment in the life of an England internally transformed by imperialism.

Frederic Jameson's observation of the ways expansionism affected the cognitive vistas of metropolitan novels written at the century's turn[14] are abundantly confirmed in a book where domestic space is reconceived on an imperial scale, and the prospect on the local and familiar is infused by imaginings of the distant and exotic. What is unknown about an alien colonial world is conjectured in the narrator's encounters with the capital city whose visible perimeters are suggestive of yet farther and inconceivable boundaries:

'I made explorations, taking omnibus rides east and west and north and south, and so enlarging and broadening the sense of great swarming hinterlands of humanity with whom I had no dealings, of whom I knew nothing . . . The whole illimitable place teemed with suggestions of indefinite and sometimes outrageous possibility, of hidden but magnificent meanings' (p. 113). Where George Ponderevo transposes inchoate notions of distant empire to his discoveries of an immediate environment, such connections are subsequently made explicit in his uncle's more literal translation of this same map: 'threads, wires, stretching out and out . . . from this little office of ours, out to west Africa, out to Egypt, out to Inja, out east, west, north and south' (p. 282).

A narrator who makes known that his view of the proximate scene is infiltrated by dreams of far-away places, also asserts that his world is England; and it is from this insular position that he finds his field of vision enlarged by the adventurer Gordon-Nasmyth whose tales make real and intimate those places he had previously situated as 'remote as fairyland', even though they were the 'origin of half the raw material of the goods' sold by the Ponderevo enterprises:

> He talked of the Dutch East Indies and of the Congo, of Portuguese East Africa and Paraguay, of Malays and rich Chinese merchants, Dyaks and negroes . . . Our cosey inner office became a little place, and all our business cold and lifeless exploits beside his glimpses of strange minglings of men, of slayings unavenged and curious customs, of trade where no writs run, and the dark treacheries of eastern posts and uncharted tunnels . . . Nasmyth's story had laid hold of my imagination like one small, intense picture of tropical sunshine hung on a wall of grey business affairs. (p. 243)

Thus do tidings of remote scenes – attributed to Nasmyth and derived from Conrad – reach the English stage; while the revisualizations of a near landscape situate England within a 'Greater Britain' that includes the colonial dependencies.[15] Indeed the text is pervaded by signifiers and metonyms of Britain's adventures abroad, some of which predate the age of formal empire and all of which intimate a long history of British forays on foreign soil: country houses redolent with the 'romantic' quests of the Crusaders to Palestine, the cricket pavilion painted red, the London and African Investment Company, the Imperial Cosmic Club, the *Empire Review*, the pensioned-off retainers of a country house recalling their employment with retired colonial governors, members of the Indian Civil Service and missionaries to China.

These allusions connote the multiple ways in which empire was disseminated in the domestic imagination and inflected British self-representation of its stature as an imperial nation.[16] More overtly, Edward Ponderevo, using a Conradian language that is drained of the ambiguities in the original, beholds London as the powerhouse of empire: 'The richest town in the world, the biggest port, the greatest manufacturing town, the Imperial City – the centre of civilisation, the heart of the world' (p. 96). The implications of this triumphalist declamation are inverted when reiterated at the novel's close by the now disenchanted narrator. He too borrows from Conrad, but in summoning 'a world of accident and nature . . . beyond all law, order and precedence' (p. 417), his view retains a prospect both ominous and valedictory on the global reach emanating from London's seaport: 'the tall ships behind the tugs, are all wrought of wet gold . . . They stand out bound on strange missions of life and

death, to the killing of men in unfamiliar lands' (p. 419). This detachment from imperial vainglory is the key to a critique that protests at an England deformed by imperialism, while remaining circumspect in castigating empire's depredations. For whereas colonialist rapacity is disclosed in the story of a reckless venture in Africa, during which the narrator becomes an unrepentant killer of a man in an unfamiliar land, it is England's moral health and destiny which occupies the novel's ethical terrain.

To the narrator, the '[c]omplex laws, intricate social necessities, disturbing insatiable suggestions' attendant on Britain's rule over 'an adventitious and miscellaneous empire of a quarter of this daedal earth' (p. 110) are a cause for alarm, and one that reiterates a contemporary anxiety about the imperialist ethos as deleterious to British society. In this it belongs with that strain of British 'anti-imperialism' which condemned the malignant effects of imperial expansion on the metropolitan population and refused to acclaim empire's mission, but did not on principle oppose all forms of overseas conquest and rule, pleading the protection and advancement of the 'non-adult races' while giving primacy to the need for colonies in furthering the progress of a 'civilized world'.[17] Because the novel abstains from imperialist enthusiasm but naturalizes Europe's right to appropriate colonial resources, its stance suggests affinities with the renowned polemic of J. A. Hobson, the man posthumously hailed as England's most eminent critic of imperialism.[18]

In Hobson's view the new imperialism, from which he recoiled as a disease of the social system, differed 'in no vital point' from the old example of a decadent Rome: 'the laws which, operative throughout nature, doom the parasite to atrophy, decay, and final extinction, are not evaded by nations any more than by individual organisms'.[19] Hence the metaphors of morbid growth in *Tono-Bungay* – remarked on by critics and which Thomas Richards in his discussion of the novel perceives as a trope of entropy transformation[20] – can be read as sharing in the figurative language of an anti-imperialist rhetoric where territorial aggrandizement and exploitation overseas is condemned as contaminating the imperial homeland. It is in this spirit that *Tono-Bungay* animates the connection between the corruption of the domestic society and the expansionist impulses of a system deformed by those sinister interests named by Hobson as the plutocratic capitalists, speculators and financial dealers, and who are the principal players in the novel.

The received wisdom iterated by contemporary critics of empire was that the Jews were largely responsible for an unnecessary and baneful imperialism. According to Stephen Howe:

> [i]t has sometimes been suggested that identification of the profiteers as, supposedly, predominantly Jewish led some of these writers, notably Hobson and H. N. Brailsford, to employ a markedly anti-semitic tone. The assertion is still contested, and Hobson himself claimed to deprecate 'the ignominious passion of Judenhetze'. Yet unquestionably the assimilation of a strain of populist nationalism to anti-imperialist rhetoric could lead to a form of radical xenophobia, of which an apparently anti-semitic vocabulary was one of the most unpleasant facts. With or without such racist undertones, the financial conspiracy theory persisted in the Radical and even the later Marxist critique of imperialism.
>
> (*Anticolonialism in British Politics*, p. 38)[21]

Notwithstanding his disclaimers, Hobson displays the paranoia of the anti-semite in asserting that the 'businesses of banking, broking, bill discounting, loan floating, and company promoting' which formed 'the central ganglion of international capitalism' were 'controlled, as far as Europe is concerned, chiefly by men of a single and peculiar race, who have behind them many centuries of financial experience . . . [and] are in a unique position to manipulate the policy of nations' (*Imperialism*, pp. 56–57).

In identical vein, the excoriation of a financial oligarchy by Wells's narrator is permeated by an anti-semitism that is surplus to an ethical critique of a socio-economic system. The clever Jews such as 'the Lichentsteins' are despised for having 'saprophytically' [(in the manner of an organism parasitically living off decaying matter)] displaced the rentiers (p. 70), the new class being 'not so much a new British gentry as "pseudodomorphous" [having the outward form of another species and hence connoting deformity and deception] after the gentry' (p. 16).[22] Such is the narrator's acrimony against Jews that although the newly enriched Edward Ponderevo is egregiously manifest as the consummate conspicuous consumer – 'he shopped like a mind seeking expression, he shopped to astonish and dismay; shopped *crescendo*, shopped *fortissimo, con molto expressione*' (pp. 265–266) – it is the Jewish females stinking of money, Oriental types '[l]ike a burst hareem! . . . Bragging of possessions' (p. 266), who incite his wife's fastidious disgust: 'It's the old pawnshop in their blood' (p. 266). And because Susan Ponderevo is a protagonist whom the narrator invests with a fine sensibility and sound judgment, her aversion alerts him to the odious sight of acquisitive and ostentatiously affluent Jewish women handling, appraising, envying and testing the furs, lace and jewellery worn by others, prompting the reflection, 'I wonder if it *is* the old pawnshop in the blood' (p. 267).[23]

But despite utterances which speak a resentful anti-semitism,[24] the Jews are not located by George Ponderevo as the only despoilers of England's stable and organic social system; and when he laments the passing of power from an aristocracy which had subsisted on Rent, to the new breed of financiers possessing 'no more than a disorderly instinct of acquisition' (p. 70), his condemnation is focused on his uncle, whose every enterprise he censures as parasitical: 'he created nothing, he invested nothing, he economised nothing. I cannot claim that a single one of the great businesses we organized added any real value to human life at all' (p. 237). This disparagement extends to an impeachment of the entire structure generated by capitalism in its imperialist stage, the narrator's 'near view of the machinery by which our astonishing Empire is run', his acquaintance with bishops and statesmen, physicians and soldiers, artists, journalists, editors, philanthropists and other eminent, significant people, convincing him that their system was 'the most unpremeditated, subtle, successful and aimless plutocracy that ever encumbered the destinies of mankind' (pp. 277–278).

Imperialism's global project is the frame within which the novel charts the deleterious effects on the metropolis of a modernizing process generated and implemented by capitalism-as-imperialism. With a radical remodelling of the system, the hierarchical arrangement of Bladesover – the country house which the narrator as a boy took to be 'a complete authentic microcosm' and 'a little working model . . . of the whole world' (p. 13) and which he had perceived as declaring itself the essential England (p. 49) – is no longer an appropriate model for a society where the entropic operations of Finance have displaced the fixed scheme of place, rank and precedence sustained by Rent. This is not to suggest that the fiction produces a coherent critique of the turbulent era which

is its ostensible subject, since the remaking of England is communicated by a narrator who applauds technological advance – the newly fashioned specialist vocabulary of the second industrial revolution is throughout confidently iterated – while lamenting the consequent disintegration of traditional social forms. Thus although George Ponderevo concedes that the aristocracy did not necessarily breed 'honourable men', and admits that the corollary to the serenity of Bladesover was 'cramped deprivation' elsewhere, he is nostalgic about the decay 'of the great social organism of England' which once had embodied 'all that is spacious, dignified, pretentious, and truly conservative in English life' (pp. 68–69). But at the same time as images and metonyms of deformation pervade his configurations of the new regime and its architects, these enunciations of distaste coexist with a celebration of the drive to modernization – the bolting of the horse ridden by the aristocratic Beatrice into George Ponderevo's flying-machine condensing both a conflict of class fractions and the clash of tradition with technological innovation.

The inconsistencies in the language of the narrator's chronicle show him to be commuting between what Matei Calinescu names as 'two conflicting and interdependent modernities – one socially progressive, rationalistic, competitive, technological; the other culturally critical and self-critical, bent on demystifying the basic values of the first'.[25] Although himself an agent of the dissolving forces attendant on modernization, and a beneficiary of the upward mobility afforded to the lower middle class by success in commercial and financial enterprise, his demysification of modernity's values is informed by retrograde preferences. From this position he rages at the passing of influence from the entrenched aristocracy to the newly enriched whom he considers unfit to wield power. As a child of the servant classes and a provincial he exults in the 'vast impression of space and multitudes and opportunity' offered by London (p. 113). Yet despite a name which resonates foreign extraction and a boast that had been 'a native in many social countries' (p. 9), he deplores the mongrelization of the population while also demonstrating a xenophobic antipathy to a cosmopolitan capital city:

> parasitically occupied, insidiously replaced by alien and unsympathetic and irresponsible elements . . . that have never understood and never will understand the great tradition, wedges of foreign settlement embedded in the heart of this yeasty English expansion. One day I remember . . . discovering a shabbily bright foreign quarter, shops displaying Hebrew placards and weird unfamiliar commodities, and a concourse of bright-eyed, eagle-nosed people talking some incomprehensible gibberish between the shops and the barrows. (pp. 109–110)

The unease in George Ponderevo's parochial response to the new era is not shared by his uncle, small-town pharmacist turned big-time swindler, in whose excited vocabulary the appetite for growth, development and expansion mimics an imperialist mind-set that is indifferent to the erosions of 'Englishness': 'much of his waking life was triumphal and all his dreams . . . It's a big time we're in, George. It's a big Progressive On-Coming Imperial Time . . . There are millions . . . There's the millions over seas, hundreds of millions . . . Well, here we are, with power, with leisure, picked out – because we've been energetic. Because we've seized opportunities' (pp. 236, 281–282). Infatuated by the romance of commerce – 'Trade makes the world go round! Argosies!

Venice! Empire!' (p. 146) – Edward Ponderevo's jubilant fancies are of cutting water sluices, tunnels and canals in new countries, of making the desert bloom, of '[r]unning the world practically' (p. 282). His notion of commerce as akin to imperial expansion is ridiculed by the nephew-narrator George, who parodies the idiom of conquest and mocks the commonplace symbols of empire when recounting the success of their firms in 'settling territories' with their products: 'My uncle had in his inner office a big map of England, and as . . . our consignments invaded new areas, flags for advertisements and pink underlines for orders showed our progress' (p. 162).

In his social advance from Trade to Finance, Edward Ponderevo moves from a series of dingy lodgings to fine country residences haunted by aristocratic ancestors, before in the custom of the new rich undertaking to build a 'mammoth' and 'mo'dun' house, '[f]our square to the winds of heaven' (p. 291), 'an imperial place' that is not 'living in the Past' and 'choked with old memories' (p. 290). The scale of his appetite for the gigantic and the original echoes imperialism's rhetoric of expansion and progress, and the site of his stupendous and never completed mansion – described by George as 'that despoiled hillside, that colossal litter of bricks and mortar and crude roads and paths, the scaffolding and sheds, the general quality of unforeseeing outrage upon the peace of nature' (p. 294) – protests at the defilement of the landscape by wanton enterprise.

About the pursuit of aggressive reterritorialization on home ground which mimics the reordering of distant space appropriated by colonialism the narrator is scathing, contrasting this mode of rapacious modernization with his arduous theoretical and experimental work on developing prototypes of airships. Such undertakings (which the narrator's co-worker maintains the state should foster so as to keep the research independent of finance and advertising) are also inspired by the desire to conquer nature and remake the physical environment. To this extent the dreams of both uncle and nephew belong with what David Harvey describes as that 'wing of modernism [which] appealed to the image of rationality incorporated in the machine, the factory, the power of contemporary technology, or the city as a "living machine" ' (*The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 31).[26] But whereas scientific endeavours are offered by the narrator as the means of authentic and socially beneficial amelioration, the marketing of an intoxicating remedy containing well-known ingredients copied from an old recipe book and spiked with a newer substance is derided as a dishonest proceeding masquerading as invention. Yet it is 'Tono-Bungay', variously described by the narrator as slightly injurious rubbish, mischievous trash and 'mitigated water', which brings to the Ponderevos the 'wealth, influence, respect . . . that no life of scientific research, no . . . service of humanity could ever have given us' (p. 157).

A quack medicine promising to relieve fatigue, strain and boredom, enhance health, beauty and strength, cure a multitude of ailments and induce diverse sensations of well-being serves as an emblem of commodity fetishism, assuming a mystical quality for the consumer from whose perceptions economic exchange is occluded: ' "We mint Faith, George," said my uncle one day . . . "We be making human confidence ever since I drove the first cork of Tono-Bungay" ' (p. 238).[27] The success of the mixture, which is promoted by a 'string of lies' and distributed through seductive marketing, furthers the burgeoning culture of domestic consumption; and with the acquisition of polish and soap factories, 'the Napoleon of Domestic Conveniences' launches a campaign to extend the Ponderevo empire of household commodities and services:

> So it came about that in designing and writing those Moggs' Soap Advertisements . . . my uncle was brought to realize . . . the enormous field for invention and enterprise that lurked among the little articles . . . that fringe the shops of the oilman and domestic ironmonger. He was recalled to one of the dreams of his youth, to his conception of the Ponderevo Patent Flat . . . 'We've got to bring the Home Up to Date . . . We got to make a civilized d'mestic machine out of these relics of barbarism . . . then after conveniences – beauty . . . All these new things ought to be made fit to look at'. (pp. 230–231)

The novel dwells on the minutiae of enhancing domestic space, and both Edward Ponderevo's dictum joining aesthetics with utility and his conception of the home as 'a civilized domestic machine', which in turn rehearses the aspiration of the socialist-inspired arts and crafts movement[28] and anticipates Le Corbusier's vision of the house as a machine for modern living, are directed at designing buildings and interiors fit for the English.

The material and psychic place of empire in 'the cult of domesticity' remarked on by Anne McClintock[29] is elaborated in a story of commercial enterprise where to fulfil the ambition of improved living standards within the metropolis, the Ponderevos must look outwards to colonial resources: among the trading firms they establish, one is the African Investment Company. Essential to Edward Ponderevo's radical vision of perfecting domestic space is electricity.[30] In her gloss on an advertisement for Pears Soap which includes the legend 'The first step towards lightening The White Man's Burden', McClintock comments: 'On the wall, an electric light bulb signifies scientific rationality and spiritual advance. In this way, the household commodity spells the lesson of imperial progress and capitalist civilization' (*Imperial Leather*, p. 32). These observations are relevant to Wells's cautionary tale of a plan to steal organic matter from Africa in order to disseminate light in the imperial homeland. From its first grudging mention by the uncle as the means through which his scientifically trained nephew will make his fortune, and his subsequent use of 'electrifying' as a metaphor for entrepreneurial daring, electricity circulates in the text as a trope of modernization and the symbol of an enlightened era.[31]

On analysing a luminous sample – which the adventurer Gordon-Nasymth under the pretence of botanizing had illegally acquired from an African territory in the hands of a European competitor – the narrator had quickly discerned the potential value of 'quap' for use in gas mantles. With the discovery of 'Capern's filament', the Ponderevos foresee that access to unlimited supplies of the radioactive substance will enable them to utilize their option on the light fitting, giving them a monopoly on electric lamps and making them the equals of Edison. It is this prospect of controlling an industry with unlimited potential which takes the narrator on a hazardous journey to Africa. The novel blandly positions Africa as a cornucopia of raw materials for appropriation by Europe, and the tale recounting the acquisition of a substance which is abundant and unutilized in Africa refrains from disowning imperialism's predatory ambitions. Yet in a story to which the illumination of England is integral, and which reiterates the racist tropes of an Africanist discourse, it is out of a tenebrous Africa that the electrification of the Empire of Light is anticipated. Thus not only is the traditional representation of Europe as charged with a mission to enlighten the benighted colonial world cynically absent, but the secured connotations of dark and light in imperialist rhetoric are inadvertently dislodged.[32]

Jameson has distinguished between the meaning-loss in the metropolis engendered by internal industrialization and commodification, and the truncation of intelligible horizons in a situation where invisibility of the colonized frustrates the mapping of the imperial world-system (*Modernism and Imperialism*). Since an *imperialist* England is the stage on which the cognitive and ethical crises of *Tono-Bungay* are enacted, both forms of alienation are written into the script. But here it is the *visibility* of the colonized world which transports the narrator to a state of anomie. Described as an expedition which 'stands apart from the all the rest of my life', and consigned to 'an episode' in his book (p. 344), 'the wild adventure in Africa' is intrinsic to a narrative which accommodates the global reach of an imperial England. In travelling to the west coast of Africa, the novel moves from the realm of actuality to a fairy-tale world, and the verisimilitude of the scenery against which a tragi-comedy of England's social transformation and English class manners is performed, is replaced by a phantasmagoric set where the narrator lives 'a strange concentrated life' and disengages himself from the norms governing civil society.

On the novel's first page George Ponderevo introduces the reader to happenings which will constitute a story joining the 'social trajectory' of the protagonists with 'unmanageable realities': 'And once (though it is the most incidental thing in my life) I murdered a man . . .' (p. 10). Later, when he embarks on detailing what he had previously described as 'the most irrelevant adventure in my life' (p. 240), he recapitulates the occurrence in the same spirit of calculated neutrality: 'It is remarkable how little it troubles my conscience and how much it stirs my imagination, that particular memory of the life I took' (p. 240). By this time it has emerged that the slain man was an African who appeared to threaten the haphazard theft of quap from a territory appropriated by a European rival and protected by gunboats. And it is this circumstance alone, namely an infringement of the rules devised by European nations in the scramble for Africa, which is, albeit with levity, acknowledged as illegal: '[a]fter all its stealing, and in a way its an international outrage' (p. 334).

The narrator's unstable retrospect on a killing which he is loath to acknowledge as a crime moves between recognition of a wrongdoing and diminution of its enormity. The first meeting between the armed white intruder and the African carrying a musket and powder flask is recollected as one between two sentient strangers: 'each of us was essentially a teeming vivid brain, tensely excited by the encounter, quite unaware of the other's mental content or what to do with him' (pp. 259–260). But whereas the narrator at the outset introduces his confrontation with his victim as one between contemporaries momentarily occupying the same contested space, this recall of mutuality is immediately cancelled when he recounts how moments later the soiled but 'still rather elaborately civilized human being . . . aimed quite coolly, drew the trigger carefully and shot him neatly in the back' (p. 360). Although afterwards this all seemed to him 'most horrible', the concealment of the body in the mud is prosaically remembered by George Ponderevo as being at the time 'a matter-of-fact transaction. I looked round for any other visible evidence of his fate, looked round as one does when one packs one's portmanteau in an hotel bedroom' (p. 361). Only on nearing the ship, he recalls, did 'the business' begin 'to assume proper proportions . . . to seem any other kind of thing than the killing of a bird or rabbit . . . In the night, however, it took on enormous and portentous forms. "By God!", I cried suddenly . . . "but it was murder!" ' (p. 361).

Unable to dismiss the 'horrible obsession' from his mind, he next day revisited the scene of the murder to find that the 'ugly creature' had been disinterred by a beast. After reburying the 'swollen and mangled carcass' he again returned, this time to discover the corpse gone and 'human footmarks and ugly stains round the muddy hole from which he had been dragged' (p. 362) – an indication that the man whom he is concerned to relegate as a beast without name, society or history, had been claimed by kinsfolk. This allusion to the dead man's membership of a community cannot be expanded within the text's purview; nor it is possible to elaborate the fleeting sight of a distant canoe peopled by three Africans and a 'half-breed' dressed in white, all of whom returned the gaze of the intruders: 'They watched us for some time very quietly and then paddled off into some channel in the forest shadows' (p. 358).

Anticipating the more famous killing by Camus' Meursault of an unnamed Arab, also committed without premeditation or anger by a narrator who in the aftermath is neither visited by guilt nor troubled by remorse, the chronicler of this death, although admitting to both initial 'exultation' at its success and subsequent discomposure, chooses detachment as the key appropriate to his reconstruction of the event: 'I looked about me and then went forward cautiously in a mood between curiosity and astonishment to look at this man whose soul I had flung so unceremoniously out of our common world. I went to him not as one goes to something one has made or done, but as one approaches something found' (p. 360). The disjunctions in the narrator's reminiscence, where admissions of distress are cancelled by boasts of indifference, allow the murder of the African to be situated as something other than an ethical violation; and the condition for this evacuation of moral content can be found in what Johannes Fabian calls 'the denial of coevalness' in the discourse of anthropology, a discipline which exerted a profound influence on colonialist representation, and where the chronologically simultaneous times of geographically diverse peoples were relegated as non-synchronous.[33] Such a nullification of contemporaneity permits an *ex post facto* representation of a homicide to be drained of both affect and moral connotation: 'It was the most unmeaning and purposeless murder imaginable . . . I did this thing and I want to tell of my doing it, but why I did it and particularly why I should be held responsible for it I cannot explain' (p. 359).

If the novel's dramatization of existential detachment may appear as a sign of a modernist sensibility, it should rather be seen as consequent on the text's impulse to exculpate a European assailant who had casually killed an inconsequential African. For the narration contrives to cushion the reader from shock and block compassion by lingering on the grotesque figure of the victim whose physical features reproduce the images of contemporary racist iconography: 'He was very black and naked except for a dirty loin-cloth, his legs were ill-shaped and his toes spread wide, and the upper edge of his cloth and a girdle of string cut his clumsy abdomen into folds. His forehead was low, his nose very flat, and his lower lip swollen and purplish red. His hair was short and fuzzy' (p. 359).[34] Both the murdered man and his locale are derived from an already well-established Africanist discourse: the landscape inflames the imagination with its great heaps of decaying, festering matter lying undiscovered on a beach 'among white dead mangroves and the black ooze of brackish water' (p. 240). It is a place of 'dense tangled vegetation' with a 'perpetual reek of vegetable decay' (pp. 241–242), of impenetrable jungle, 'frantic rain and incandescent sunshine' (p. 350), of crocodiles and a thousand swampy things; of forests with huge trees and tangled creeper ropes and roots,

from which issue screamings, howlings and yells: 'All these African memories stand by themselves. It was for me an expedition into undisciplined nature out of the world that is ruled by men . . . They are memories woven upon a fabric of sunshine and heat and a constant warm smell of decay' (p. 350). Because Wells's malevolent continent is fashioned from the topoi of received representations, it bears the hallmarks of a reproduction and thus lacks the aura that would attach to an original configuration prompted by the sighting of an alien world. Despite this, the figure of Africa is not only indispensable to the novel's map of an imperialist world-system, but is also the occasion of a protagonist's entry into a moral vacuum hollowed out of European racism, and the unconscious, passive but inimical source of the disaster visited on those doing imperialism's will.

In a fiction which refrains from repudiating the west's assumption of its right to colonial resources, the failure of a squalid adventure does all the same come to signify a frustration of imperialism's ambitions. These ethical resonances resound in the pathological properties attributed to the irradiated cargo which causes the disreputable crew to sicken and sinks the rotted homeward-bound ship: 'To my mind radioactivity is a real disease of matter. Moreover it is a contagious disease' (p. 355). By comparing 'the elemental stirring and disarrangement' internal to the cancerous stuff with 'the decay of our old culture in society, a loss of traditions and distinctions and assured reactions', the fiction brings together 'the inexplicable dissolvent centres' put in place by imperialism within the metropolis[35] with a 'maleficent and diseased' substance incubated in a miasmal Africa, and in which the hope of dispelling metropolitan darkness had mistakenly been invested.

At the novel's close the narrator elaborates his deprecations of a social order with which he had been complicit: 'it was open and manifest that I and my uncle were no more than specimens of a modern species of brigand, wasting the savings of a public out of sheer wantonness of enterprise' (p. 399); and his denunciations are of a competitive system promoting the dissipation of human and material resources: 'As I turn over the big pile of manuscript before me . . . I see now that I have it all before me, a story of activity and urgency and sterility. I have called it *Tono-Bungay*, but I had far better have called it *Waste* . . . I think of all the energy I have given to vain things . . . It is all one spectacle of forces running to waste, of people who use and do not replace, the story of a country hectic with a wasting aimless fever of trade and money-making and pleasure seeking' (p. 412). This censure echoes Hobson's contempt for the luxury indulged in by moneyed interests benefitting from imperialism (*Imperialism*, pp. 367–368); it was also to be reiterated in the recriminations of another once-prominent contemporary critic of English society who when citing Wells's novel in his own attack on 'the huge apparatus of waste', conspicuous spending, ostentation and extravagance threatening English society with degeneration and collapse, praised the writer's vision 'of the coming end of an age'.[36]

One of the titles which Wells had considered during the book's long gestation was 'The End of an Age'.[37] Its aptitude is confirmed by the dystopian sentiments of the last pages which join distress at his uncle's bankruptcy, disgrace and death, grief at the ending of a doomed love affair, disappointment in empire and hatred of an England disfigured by the false values of a commodity culture: 'greedy trade, base profit-seeking, bold advertisement' (p. 415). By now the narrator, who has moved from designing airships to building warships, anticipates the death of a moribund contemporary society

as a prelude to a future for which he offers no model, and to which he ascribes no ethos and no fulfilment of aspiration: 'And now I build destroyers! Other people may see this country in other terms . . . Perhaps I see wrongly. It may be I see decay all about me because I am, in a sense, decay. To others it may be a scene of achievement and construction radiant with hope. I too have a sort of hope, but it is a remote hope, a hope that finds no promise in this Empire, or in any of the great things of out time' (pp. 412–413).

An urge to extinguish the existing civilization is articulated in the narrator's derision of steamboats called *Caxton, Pepys* and *Shakespear*, the sight of which incites in George Ponderevo a wish 'to take them out and wipe them and put them back in some English gentleman's library' (p. 418). By contrast to his contempt for England's named cultural icons, the narrator is lyrical about the nameless destroyer as a figure of austere beauty, 'stark and swift' and tearing 'into the great spaces of the future' (p. 419). Evasive about its possible uses – 'X2 isn't intended for the empire, or indeed for the hands of any European power' (p. 420) – an alienated George Ponderevo, who refuses to respect entrenched and venerated institutions, presents himself as the avenging angel detached from patriotic filiations and destined to cleanse England of a corruption attendant on a misbegotten modernization: 'I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside – without illusions . . . We make and we pass. We are all things that make and pass, striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea' (p. 421).[38] The novel regrets the social and moral consequences of the technological revolution, but it does not repudiate industrialization, and is itself propelled by the transformative power of the process. If the prophecy of cataclysm could appear as a negation of the preceding dynamism, then it too is invested with an energy, this time in the destructive drive to purify a degraded social order. For having disabled Africa as an agent of imperialism's overthrow and having excluded the prospect of a proletarian revolution in the metropolis, the narrator heralds deliverance through the most modern means of warfare. Here the obscurity of the language intimates the obscurantism of his desire: 'I do not know what it is, this something, except that it is supreme. It is a something, a quality, an element . . . but the how and why of it are all beyond the compass of my mind . . .' (p. 420). In the midst of such prolix incertitude, 'a squadron of warships waving white swords of light about the sky' (p. 420) is a clear herald of armageddon.

Perry Anderson has drawn attention to 'the protean variety of relations to capitalist modernity . . . in the broad grouping of movements typically assembled under the common rubric of modernism', noting the 'antithetical nature of the doctrines and practices' peculiar to these different currents.[39] Such fluctuations in the responses to capitalist modernization are condensed in the disjunctions of the novel's representations of the process and its ambiguous evaluation of modernity. So too the nihilistic prospect on a post-imperialist future offered by the ending of *Tono-Bungay* conforms with what Stephen Arata calls 'the decidedly eschatological impulse pervading so much late-Victorian fiction' in whose re-enactment of 'patterns of apocalyptic yearning' narratives of foundation 'give way to stories of the end of time' (*Fictions of Loss*, p. 1).[40] By undermining its vibrant chronicle of rationalist technocratic transformation with a reactionary vision of modernization's destiny as the violent arrest of its project, the novel closes by condemning an imperialist Britain to annihilation, and with it engulfing in terminal darkness the imperial homeland to which light had been promised: 'I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. We tear into the great

spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass – pass' (p. 419).

The representational structure of the novel is saturated by the contemporary realities of a specific social upheaval and bathed in the preoccupations of the times: social disruption, shifts in class power, the making of a commodity culture, the reterritorialization of physical space and the redesigning of domestic space, discourses of race and social pathologies, disillusion and pessimism at a time of imperialist ascendency, obsessions with the ending of an era. But if the book's apocalyptic close appears as a reprise of the Futurist fantasies with which Wells is associated, and if the meticulous charting of a changing social landscape resembles his naturalist fictions, then *Tono-Bungay* stands apart for narrating the injurious effects of imperialist modernization on the moral and psychic health of the imperial homeland.

11 Materiality and mystification in *A Passage to India*

In the light of critical work that has sought to make connections between the emergence of a literary modernism and imperialism in narrative form and stylistic practice, how should we place a proto-modernist fiction where another and distant world is manifestly present and the disjoined spheres are brought into uneasy proximity, and which also, *pace* Said, undermines imperial grandiloquence and offers a disenchanted perspective on empire, registers a dispersed consciousness, and by reflecting ironically and critically on its own project, manifests a waning of narrative power? The reputation of *A Passage to India*[1] as conventional in form, language and attested value[2] has inhibited discussion on an emergent modernism that is inseparable from the novel's failure to reach the destination intimated in its title. Said has remarked that for him the most interesting thing about the book is the use of India 'to represent material that according to the canons of the novel form cannot in fact be represented – vastness, incomprehensible creeds, secret motions, histories and social forms'.[3] This judicious comment recognizes that Forster's innovations were induced by an attempt to render India legible within western fictional modes. It could be extended to observe that in the process *A Passage to India* construes the subcontinent's material world, cultural forms and systems of thought as resistant to discursive appropriation by its conquerors: 'How can the mind take hold of such a country? Generations of invaders have tried, but they remain in exile' (p. 148). This meditation serves to alienate the Raj's belligerent claim to discursive power over the subcontinent, and it discloses the inevitable frustration of the novel's own narrative ambition.

Neither stylistically nor syntactically does *A Passage to India* display that 'constitutive sense of creation through rupture and crisis' which has been described as the vocation of an aesthetic modernism.[4] All the same, a fiction which moves between the mundane and the arcane, gives voice to the contingency of the material world and is haunted by the transcendent, exists at the limits of realist writing, the affinities with modernism evident in the prominence of its anti-referential registers. On the one hand as an architecturally composed text exhibiting that 'vital harmony' Forster believed essential to works of art – described by him as 'the only objects in the material universe to possess internal order'[5] – the book augurs both the pleasures afforded by an elegant design and the reassurance of lucidity. On the other, the perplexity with which the novel reconfigures the distant, alien complex of cultures that is its ostensible subject signals an anxiety about the impasse of representation. Thus the aesthetic closure, once hailed by critics as instigated by a rage for order that issued in a coherent and integrated text, can be seen as a formal resolution to the historical conflicts, cultural chasms, social

dissension, cognitive uncertainties and experiential enigmas elaborated by a structurally, intellectually and discursively fractured fiction.

By the time Forster wrote his novel, the romantic India of the eighteenth-century western imagination was dead and gone, buried under a library of subsequent books itemizing the defects of a chaotic and degenerate subcontinent mired in irrational beliefs and incapable of self-determination.[6] Recent studies have emphasized the contradictions and tensions within British Indian texts.[7] But while such discursive instabilities are apparent to contemporary critics, the writings were delivered in a declarative mode to the literate colonized as a pre-emptive reply to dissent, and received in their own time by a metropolitan audience as a warrant for British rule. If this literature included mythologizing a land of secret delights, hidden truths, static and organic village communities, and intrepid 'martial races', it also construed a degraded population ruled by despots and given to thuggee, sati, child marriage, zenanas, idolatry, temple prostitution, male debauchery and effeminacy, female concupiscence, insensate violence and pathetic contentment. At stake was the creation and ordering of India's difference as deviations from western norms of historical development, aesthetics, civil society and sexuality.[8]

Despite its emergence from within a literary tradition already sated with prior configurations, Forster's fiction eschews both 'the scented East of tradition' (p. 233) and the corrupt land of a febrile British imagination. Such a proposition does not advance truth claims for an invention which remains wedded to the sensibilities of the Mediterranean, never abandons its moorings in western structures of feeling, and reiterates rumours of a recondite 'India'. Indeed the use of India as an icon of the metaphysical derives from what has been described as a 'scholarship . . . replete with preferences for the speculative, religious-minded, idealist and/or Orientalist kind'.[9] Hence alongside its many material and sentient Indias, which act to estrange the time-honoured topos of a mysterious land, the novel also construes an obfuscated realm where the secular is scanted, and in which India's long traditions of mathematics, science and technology, history, linguistics and jurisprudence have no place.

Since its publication in 1924, *A Passage to India* has been variously received in the west as an existential meditation and a liberal criticism of politics and life in British India. Its crafted thematic composition and polysemous symbolic resonances once prompted critics preoccupied with literature's animations of the timeless to explain the book as mythopoeic and wholly detached from history; while its performance of a temporally situated social drama was cherished as a humanist affirmation of the sanctity of human relationships egregiously violated by colonialism. If the first construct is indifferent to the specificity of the novel's moment, the other overestimates its grasp of colonialism's charged interactions during that moment. More recently the fiction's place in the rhetoric of empire has been examined, and the novel read as yet another exercise in Orientalism. Consequently praise for *A Passage to India* as a poised and sympathetic account of the subcontinent's landscape, history and culture which Indian critics of older generations had offered, has since been repudiated by their descendants as 'emanating from a colonized consciousness'.[10]

Prominent amongst new glosses is a particular interest in demonstrating that the book's sexual and gender representations are implicated in colonialist discourses, and are determinant in the novel's version of a colonial relationship.[11] I will be offering my own understanding of how gender and the erotic are disposed within a larger cultural,

geopolitical and epistemological canvas – and one on which, contra Joseph Bristow and unlike Forster's private memoir,[12] sexual desire is uncoloured by fantasies of imperial domination. Meanwhile I want to remark that ingenious commentaries preoccupied with the sexualizing of race and the racializing of sexuality, contract an orchestration of dissonant themes to a single strain, by this overlooking that amongst the novel's many Indias is one whose topography evades colonialism's physical invasion, and whose cognitive modes elude incorporation within normative western explanatory systems. Were a case for the novel's radicalism to be made, this would need to rest on the recalcitrance of this 'India', and not on its manifestly inadequate critique of a colonial encounter.

The novel's cosmic reach and non-realist registers are inspired by an imagined India whose infinite embrace offers vistas of a sphere more comprehensive than the time–space world, and intimates an ecumenical ethic admitting all animal, vegetable and mineral forms to its prospect. Such allusions to an atemporal, ahistorical universe are underwritten by non-linear narrative movements which interrupt the sequential recitation of quotidian events. Not only is the fiction's itinerary spatial – from Mosque to Caves to Temple – but images recur in unrelated situations: a wasp, flies, a stone, a pattern traced in the dust of Chandrapore and repeated on the footholds of a distantly located rock in the Marabars; marginal characters who make aleatory appearances at critical moments – Miss Derek's providential arrivals, the presence of a young army officer on the maidan and in the Club; and phrases which are echoed in unlike circumstances – the reiteration of Godbole's petition to Krishna, his demurral 'Oh no', and the reprise of invitations, both earthly and divine.

But as Forster noted elsewhere and with regret, a novel tells a story, and in this respect *A Passage to India* uses the language of realism to chronicle a tragi-comedy of cultural discord and political conflict, observing shifts within the fabric of Indian societies and the power relationships of British India. Youths are seen 'training' (p. 75); with Aziz's arrest, the sweepers stop work in protest, and Muslim women, perceived by the Anglo-Indians as invisible, go on hunger strike, inducing in the European community the fear that a 'new spirit seemed abroad, a rearrangement, which no one in the stern little band of whites could explain' (p. 218); a Hindu–Muslim entente is forged, and in the association between Aziz, the descendant of the Moghuls who had fought the British invaders, and Godbole, whose Mahratta ancestors had defended an independent Deccan against the foreign onslaught, the novel alludes to the growth of an Indian nationalism attracting protagonists who share different memories of armed struggles against the British conquest.

A Passage to India, then, remains of interest for its evocations of a phase in the Raj, registering the growing disaffection of a population increasingly disinclined to collude in its own domination, and commenting on the demeaning effects which complicity with their rulers had on India's hegemonized elite. But although the indirections of its aversion to empire separate Forster's book from the self-justifying contemporaneous 'problem novels' which set out to account for Indian discontent while reinstalling the British ideal of disinterested service,[13] as a novel of manners performed in a colonial context, *A Passage to India* now appears circumscribed. The alternately gentle and irascible reprimands of Indian unreliability, obsequiousness and evasiveness, as well as the mimicry of Anglo-India's ignorant beliefs and foolish self-regard, are dependent on sardonic reiterations and parodies of the stereotypes and clichés that were the stuff of

British writing about India. Nor is the version of a colonial relationship played out in a low key between British officials and members of an Indian middle class adequate to the fraught transactions of an encounter which initially met with military resistance, subsequently generated widespread and continuous insurgency from peasants and labourers, and incurred the militant opposition of both the educated and the illiterate.[14]

To observe the limits on the novel's heterodox version of life and politics in the closing decades of the Raj is not to ignore that the novel also sabotages recurrent themes in Anglo-Indian and British writings about India. These subversive reworkings, which include ruining the notion of empire's functionaries as ethical and altruistic Stoics, focus on Adela Quested's misprision of rape. In this event, where an Englishwoman already disquieted by India is infected by a nervous community's fantasies of cultures charged with erotic intensities and dangers,[15] there still persists a heterosexual model of the colonial relationship, which is elsewhere displaced. To the Anglo-Indians, Miss Quested is the victim of the infamous lust of Indian men; and in the story of her derangement, the Indian landscape figures as a violent male principle – the rocks of the Marabar Hills appearing to rise 'abruptly, insanely', and her body pierced by the spines of cactuses growing on the hillside (p. 137). Much that is important to the understanding of the novel has been written about the articulations of sexualities in an imperial situation, and I will be returning to the many meanings adhering to the circulation of homoerotic affect in the text. What concerns me at present is another aspect of the fiction's sexual and gender politics as this intersects with an ingrained political liberalism and deflects from an overt censure of the Raj.

Kenneth Burke has suggested that the social and political relationships which the novel draws into its texture are expressible in terms of personal associations dramatized either as sexual and filial bonds or as friendships.[16] Of these the only one to be consummated across the colonial divide, and that ceremonially, is between Aziz and Mrs Moore. This nexus traverses generations and comes to imitate the never-existing but idealized union of benign imperial motherland with grateful colonial dependency fabricated by empire's ideologues. The figure of this imagined parent–child symbiosis was Queen Victoria, empress of India, of whom Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali speak affectionately when lamenting the impossibility of friendship with the chilly Anglo-Indians. Such an exemplary imperial matriarch is incarnate in the elderly Mrs Moore. Mrs Moore has many avatars in the novel: she is a tolerant but commonplace middle-class Englishwoman well disposed to the national anthem and a banal West End play performed at the Club; a sibyl and seer, and a spokesperson for an idea of empire which, unlike a Raj that rests on fear, would be based on 'goodwill' (p. 71). It is her displeasure at the uncivil conduct of Anglo-Indians which is the occasion for the fatuous narrative comment, '[o]ne touch of regret – not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart – would have made him [Ronny Heaslop] a different man, and the British Empire a different institution' (p. 70). Furthermore a sentiment absurdly inappropriate to a colonial situation is, without benefit of irony, ascribed to Aziz before he turns his back on British India and ceases to conduct himself as a toady: 'Mr. Fielding, no one can ever realize how much kindness we Indians need . . . Kindness, more kindness, and even after that more kindness. I assure you it is the only hope' (p. 128).

Mrs Moore enters India through *Mosque*, passes into accidie in *Caves*; she is redeemed by the enactment of universal salvation in *Temple*, buried in the Indian Ocean, transmigrates into a demi-goddess, and bequeaths her benign powers to her children, Stella

and Ralph, whose presence moves the now disaffected Aziz to 'want to do kind actions all round and wipe out the wretched business of the Marabar forever' (p. 312). Thus does a mother-figure of 'good empire' permit the staging of an act of formal reconciliation within the unreconciled and irreconcilable conflicts of an imperial relationship. Perhaps a symbolic accord which simulates the sceptically narrated ritual of universal harmony performed during the Hindu Gokal Ashtami Festival is similarly calculated to invite disbelief, since it is countermanded by the parting of Aziz and Fielding, for whom 'no meeting-place' exists in British India. Yet the gesture to a rapprochement effected within the conflictual conditions of the Raj undermines an already attenuated criticism of empire, its admonition of colonialism addressing the cruelties large and small inflicted by Anglo-Indians, but omitting to summon for explication and demystification either the western impulses to colonialist dispossession or the ideology of imperial domination. In this respect, the silences in *A Passage to India* rehearse the lacunae of British Indian texts, from which all traces of base interests – India as a source of raw materials, cheap labour, markets and investment opportunities, and India as a lynchpin of Britain's wider imperial ambitions – were erased.

The novel's dissident place within British writing about India does not reside in its meagre critique of a colonial situation, however, but in configuring India's natural terrain and cognitive traditions as inimical to the British imperial presence. When discussing Georges Bataille's text on 'the language of flowers', Macherey explains that it served as 'a starting point for his reflections on the natural logic of existence, which he terms "the obscure intelligence of things". The principle behind this logic is a fundamental clash of values governed by a polarity of above and below which testifies to "an obscure decision on the part of the plant world". The decision is expressed in a sort of pre-linguistic language: the language of "aspect", which exists prior to the language of words, introduces "values that decide things" '.[17]

The notion of evaluations which are 'the judgements of reality itself as it asserts, primitively and immediately, its basic tendencies', is suggestive for reading the semiotically saturated physical landscape of Forster's India as 'a direct expression' of 'the truth of things' which exists 'prior to symbolization'.[18] The eloquent stones, boulders, rocks and caves of an awesome and ancient geological formation, the animate fields and ambulant hills, the inhospitable soil, the importunities of a prominent inarticulate world, the creaturely power of the sun, these speak a defiant *material* presence which is both a scandal to the invaders' epistemological categories and a threat to their boast of possessing India: 'The triumphant machine of civilization may suddenly hitch and be immobilized into a car of stone, and at such moments the destiny of the English seems to resemble their predecessors', who also entered the country with intent to refashion it, but were in the end worked into its pattern and covered with its dust' (p. 215).

As a novel which orbits around a space which is unrepresentable within its perceptual boundaries, *A Passage to India* is impelled to obfuscate that of which it *cannot* speak, a self-declared incomprehension that issues in fabrications of contradictory Indias. Hence the evocation of India's pre-linguistic language of obduracy towards the conquerors spoken by its physical structures must compete with intimations of India as a civilization hospitable to the unseen; while its fluency in the meta-linguistic could signify either an intelligence of things obscure, or that which the novel is unable to render intelligible. In

response to a question about what had happened in the Caves, Forster indicated that India had enabled his venture into the realms of the unfathomable:

> My writing mind is . . . a blur here – i.e. I will it to remain a blur, and to be uncertain, as I am of many facts of daily life. This isn't a philosophy of aesthetics. *Its a particular trick I feel justified in trying because my theme was India* [emphasis in original]. It sprang straight from my subject matter. I wouldn't have attempted it in other countries, which though they contain mysteries or muddles, manage to draw rings round them. Without this trick I doubt I could have got the spiritual reverberation going. I call it 'trick': but 'voluntary surrender to infection' better expresses my state.[19]

It is therefore not accidental that disquiet about the limits of syntactic language are explored on a fabricated *Indian* space that is simultaneously rendered as palpable and emblematic. On approaching the Marabar Hills, 'a new quality occurred, a spiritual silence which invaded more senses than the ear . . . Everything seemed cut off at its root and therefore infected with illusion . . . sounds did not echo or thoughts develop' (p. 152). This sensory and intellectual detachment from the empirical world is translated into the severing of words from their referent: 'What were these mounds – graves, breasts of the goddess Parvati? The villagers . . . gave both replies. Again there was confusion about a snake which was never cleared up. Miss Quested saw a thin, dark object . . . and said, "A snake!" The villagers agreed and Aziz explained: yes, a black cobra . . . But when she looked though Ronny's field-glasses she found it wasn't a snake, but the withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm. So she said, "It isn't a snake". The villagers contradicted her. She had put the word into their minds and they refused to abandon it . . . Nothing was explained' (pp. 152–153).

On arriving at Caves, the narrative encounters meanings, sensations and events that escape exegesis in its available language. Their reputation 'does not depend upon human speech' (p. 138), and their echo – 'Boum is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it' (p. 159) – is not the resound of any utterance the fiction can identify. This untranslatable murmur deprives Mrs Moore, accustomed to 'poor little talkative Christianity' (p. 161), of a trust in language: ' "Say, say, say . . . As if anything can be said" . . . in the twilight of the double vision a spiritual muddledom is set up for which no high-sounding words can be found' (pp. 205, 212). Thus a novel which cherishes the names of the marvellous places 'that had sometimes shone through men's speech', and which discerns in 'the bilingual rock of Girnar' (p. 214) the transformation through language of a physical object into a cultural artefact, also contemplates things both benign and ominous which cannot be spoken, or of which it cannot speak. When trying to communicate the attraction Hinduism holds for Stella and Ralph Moore, the rationalist Fielding confesses, 'I can't explain, because it isn't in words at all' (p. 313); and in attempting to render comprehensible the unexplained or inexplicable significance of the imitations, impersonations, symbols and images invoked during the all-embracing Hindu festival of Gokal Ashtamti, the narrative admits its inability to transcribe an event which cannot 'be expressed in anything but itself' (p. 285).

Such allusions to the aphonic must be distinguished from the book's many hints of the supernatural,[20] which reiterate a predilection for mysteries also evident in Forster's other novels. Perhaps we are invited to understand experiences of the meta-linguistic as

emanating from 'the part of the mind that seldom speaks' (p. 111), and therefore as an existential condition: on undertaking to describe the caves, Godbole retreats into silence, just as Aziz's mind had sometimes been silenced by 'a power he couldn't control' (p. 92). On the other hand the many and diverse inscriptions of the unspoken and the inexpressible can also be read as echoes of the 'spiritual reverberation' induced by an India whose religious pursuits and eloquent landscapes provoke intellectual doubt and promote noumenal anxieties in the novel's western protagonists: Fielding, who is a 'blank, frank atheist' (p. 254), muses that '[t]here is something in religion that may not be true, but that has not yet been sung . . . Something that the Hindus have perhaps found' (p. 274); while the Indian scene troubles both him and the logical Adela Quested with rumours of things they did not know, and a universe they had 'missed or rejected' (p. 272).

Forster's title is borrowed from Walt Whitman's visionary poem, 'Passage to India' (1871) and the contemplation of an esoteric India may have been further influenced by his friend Edward Carpenter,[21] who had known Whitman and shared the poet's conviction in India's spiritual vocation. But although Forster does juxtapose a mystified to a material and historical India, he did not follow the utopian writers in affirming India as the Wisdom-land of Carpenter's expectations,[22] or in designating it as that farthest destination 'where mariner has not yet dared to go'.[23] For when the novel invokes the quest after transcendence, this is for its psychological truthfulness, rather than its arrival at Truth, for the passion of its aspiration, and not its always deferred achievement: the calls to Krishna or the Friend who never Comes; the longing for 'the eternal promise, the never withdrawn suggestion that haunts our consciousness' (p. 127); the faith that confers grace on the believer during 'the moment of its indwelling' (p. 282); the substitutions, imitations, scapegoats and husks of the Gokal Ashtami Festival, which are signs of 'a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable' (p. 309); the hope that will persist 'despite fulfilment' (p. 299). If the novel transfigures the religious sensibility as desire born of discontent, what it does not validate is the victory of 'the human spirit' in 'ravish[ing] the unknown': 'Books written afterwards say "Yes". But how, if there is such an event, can it be remembered afterwards? How can it be expressed in anything but itself? Not only from the unbeliever are mysteries hid, but the adept himself cannot retain them. He may think, if he chooses, that he has been with God, but, as soon as he thinks it, it becomes history, and falls under the rules of time' (p. 285). Such scepticism about India's access to gnosis registers an agnosticism that abates the novel's modulated and questioning iterations of an Orientalism spellbound by the fabled east.

Amongst the many resonances of the title is a reference to cartography, and consequently to the colonial topos of a voyage into unknown territory. About the book's map of India's geography, we can ask: does *A Passage to India* reproduce what John Barrell has described as the east's entry into the western European imagination 'as an unknown, empty space – empty of everything . . . except its appropriable resources, imaginative as well as material', its objects 'covered with decoration and imagery not understood and not thought worth understanding', discerned as 'blank screens on which could be projected whatever it was that the inhabitants of Europe, individually or collectively, wanted to displace, and to represent as other to themselves'?[24] Is the major source of friction in the novel, as Bristow argues, 'the enduring contradiction between

the thematics of "friendship" . . . and the sexual violence that we find at its centre, a form of violence that does everything it can to sever East from West' ('Passage to E.M. Forster', p. 147)? Can Forster's India be received as yet another textual act inflected by imperial and/or sexual aggression and reiterating, as Edward Said has written of Orientalism, the will 'to control, manipulate, even to incorporate what is manifestly a different (or alternative and novel) world'?[25] Said was subsequently to ask 'how one can study other cultures and people from a libertarian, or a non-repressive and non-manipulative perspective . . . how knowledge that is non-dominative and non-coercive . . . [can] be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power'.[26]

Despite misgivings about Forster's reified India, I want to suggest that the novel approaches Indian forms of knowledge with uncertainty, without asserting the authority of its representations,[27] and unaccented by a will to enforce an ontological schism. The book's triadic structure has been variously glossed as corresponding to the Indian seasonal cycle (cold weather, hot weather and monsoon), the movements of a musical score, the Hegelian dialectic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, the recurrent process of birth, destruction and rebirth recited in Hindu mythology, and as metonyms of Muslim India, Anglo-India and Hindu India. In the reading I am proposing Mosque, Caves and Temple are perceived as figures of three Indian philosophical-religious systems. The association of Mosque with Islam in India, and Temple with a particular performance of Hindu devotions (*bhakti*), presents fewer problems than the polysemous connotations of Caves. When the magistrate Mr Das points out that '[a]ll the Marabar caves are Jain' (p. 225),[28] he is disputing their official identification as Buddhist, his disagreement having earlier been confirmed in the narrative commentary which dissociates Caves from this tradition: 'even Buddha, who must have passed this way down to the Bo Tree of Gaya, shunned a renunciation more complete than his own, and has left no legend of struggle or victory in the Marabar' (p. 138). If we take Das's designation seriously, then Caves, although rejected by Buddhists, can be understood as inhabited by and signifying the world-rejecting precepts of the Jain's non-deistic cosmology, its uncompromising atheism and asceticism surpassing the austerities of Buddhism, a related system also rooted in ancient India.[29]

Since the route of the novel's attempted journey becomes more arduous as it moves from Islam through India's more speculative traditions, a puzzled version of Hinduism's ecstatic spiritual observances is invoked, and the tenets of the Jain's quietist stance are obliquely enunciated. If aligned with ontological goals that are respectively daring and awesome, the monotheistic system of Islam necessarily appears as limited: ' "There is no God but God" doesn't carry us far through the complexities of matter and spirit; it is only a game with words, really, a religious pun, not a religious truth' (p. 272). Instead Islam, by way of an elite segment of the Muslim community, is manifest as a culture rather than a profound creed. When its religious temperament does feature, it is in a mode transformed through long residence in India, where its misshapen shrines appear as 'a strange outcome of the protests of Arabia' (p. 293), its 'symmetrical injunction melts in the mild air', and mystical Sufi tendencies are privileged over theological severities: just as the ragas of the Hindu Godbole invite a Krishna who always fails to arrive, so do the adherents of Islam voice 'our need for the Friend who never comes yet is not entirely disproved' (p. 119).[30]

Without asserting that the ontologies and theisms enunciated by the novel should be

read as authoritative expositions of Indian knowledge, I am suggesting that the fiction, far from rendering India as epistemologically vacant, reconfigures the subcontinent as a geographical space and social realm abundantly occupied by diverse intellectual modes, cultural forms and sensibilities. This perception is not shared by critics who find that Forster's India is an empty space and the symptom of an amorphous state of mind, its principal landmarks Mosque, Caves and Temple functioning primarily as cavities to contain western perceptions of that which is missing from the east, its symbolic terrain a hollow site which the narrative, parodying an act of rape, violently penetrates.[31] Nor does it conform with the inference of Kazan's rhetorical question: does not Forster in his ambitious task of representing the Orient, also seek to control it by fixing it and rendering it mute?[32]

When Forster is charged with representing India as null and void, Caves are invariably offered in evidence. For Suleri the novel should be read 'as an allegory in which the category of "Marabar Cave" roughly translates into the anus of imperialism' – an infelicitous choice of imagery when conducting a discussion of the novel's 'engagement with and denial of a colonial homoerotic imperative' (*The Rhetoric of English India*, pp. 132, 147). In Kazan's view Caves are a figure of absence and silence which replicates the inscrutability of the east within the western structure of the surrounding text; while Pathak, Sengupta and Purkayastha, who contend that caves are described as without a history, jointly undertake to disperse their 'primordial miasma':

> What *we* read into the representation of the caves is not the absence of history, but the *suppression* of history which marks the paranoid response of the Orientalists to processes which they could not understand, since . . . this knowledge was withheld from them by the natives. 'Primal', 'dark', 'fists and fingers', 'unspeakable', fearsomely advancing to the town with the sunset – these phrases signal the fear and insecurity the imperialists experienced, confronted with what they could not master; to reduce it to stasis was to contain that fear and hold it at bay. (p. 200)

That Caves are a symptom of what the novel is unable to comprehend intellectually, accommodate within its preferred sensibility or possess in its available language, is abundantly inscribed in a fiction which adumbrates both the non-verbal expression of a physical space and the doctrines of an exorbitantly transcendental philosophy, circuitously, elliptically and with perplexity. But as the site of a cosmology incommensurable with positivism, humanism or theism, and as the most potent figure of an India which challenges the west with its irreducible and insubordinate difference, the representation of Caves is neither circumscribed by dread of a maleficent essence ('Nothing evil had been in the Caves', p. 159), nor is their 'history' suppressed.

To accept Mrs Moore's reception of Caves as a primordial miasma, and as the dissolution of ethical meaning, is to be deaf to the valencies of the 'Nothing' emanating from Caves. Elsewhere the reiteration of negatives – no, not yet, never, without, meagre, mean, abased, ineffective, indifferent, renunciation, relinquish, refuse – invokes a diversity of connotations reverberating themes elaborated by the novel. In configurations of the Indian landscape, negatives mark a deviation from English and Mediterranean scenes, and with this a disturbance of western perceptions; when brought to events that do not happen, invitations that are neglected, omissions which are social solecisms ('it's nothing I've said, I never even spoke to him' (p. 94), is Ronny Heaslop's obtuse reassur-

ance to a Fielding concerned about Aziz's evident discomfiture in the company of his English guests), they register the poverty of colonial relationships. But with Caves, negatives take on affirmative resonances whose import is anticipated by the circumlocutions of the opening paragraph: 'Except for the Marabar Caves . . . the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary . . . There are no bathing places on the river front, as the Ganges happens not to be holy here; indeed there is no river front . . . In the bazaars there is no painting and scarcely any carving' (p. 31). Thus to learn that there are neither sculptures in the Marabar Caves nor ornamentation (p. 92), that they are not large and contain no stalactites, and that the Brahmin Godbole necessarily refrains from describing the site of another belief-system as 'immensely holy' (p. 92), is to be alerted to the possibility that negation has alternative significations: 'Nothing, nothing attaches to them . . . Nothing is inside them . . . if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good and evil' (pp. 138–139).

In Burke's reading, the use of negatives in the novel is a 'partly secular variant of what we encounter in "negative theology" ' where God is described as '*in*comprehensible, *un*bounded, *un*ending, etc.' (p. 224). This understanding conforms with the tenets embraced by Godbole, for whom good and evil 'are different, as their names imply. But . . . they are both of them aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one absent in the other . . . Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence' (p. 186). But it is the Jain tradition, which unlike Islam and Hinduism has no sentient protagonists in the book, that has written its antique Indian philosophy of renunciation over a material space already in possession of a language without syntax and expressive of abnegation. As the incarnation of Nothing doubly charged with semantic content, Caves engender the epigram 'Everything exists, nothing has value' (p. 160), a gnomic phrase compressing the Jain recognition of the physical world as abundantly corporeal and verifiable, and its assignment of merit to detachment from all things secular – a construction in which nothing *has* value. This paradox is condensed in the mismatch between the adamantine concreteness of the stone, rock granite, boulder and bald precipice of a looming and grotesque landmass, and the 'internal perfection' to a cave's sublime emptiness.[33]

Neither Godbole's nuanced understanding of negatives, nor the Jain version of negation as a deliberated abrogation of the all too solid and degraded empirical universe, is available to Mrs Moore. After (mis)recognizing the voice of Caves as speaking of nullity, and (mis)translating the echo which she hears as 'entirely devoid of distinction' (pp. 158–159) into a proclamation effacing discriminations, she subsides into moral and psychic torpor: 'Pathos, piety, courage – they exist, but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value' (p. 160). To an Englishwoman familiar with the landscape of 'dearest Grasmere' everywhere domesticated by human labour, a geological stratum that is 'older than anything in the world . . . without the proportion that is kept by the wildest hills elsewhere . . . bear[ing] no relation to anything dreamt or seen' (p. 137) intensifies her dislocation within an epistemologically inscribed physical environment that infringes her expectations and escapes her comprehension.

Since Fielding, the only other English person present, is uninterested in and 'unimpressed' by Caves, the phantasmagoric experiences known by Adela Quested and Mrs Moore appear as a gendered vulnerability to India's difference, manifest to them in different registers as an assailant. A related but different event is restaged in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, Peter Weir's 1975 film of a novel by Joan Lindsay (published in 1967) set in

late nineteenth-century Australia, where four European women – three of them virginal schoolgirls and one a teacher possessed of a 'masculine mind' – are mesmerized into offering themselves up to the phallic rock of a land in which they are colonizers and strangers. As with their disappearance, the catastrophic entry of Mrs Moore and Adela Quested into an untranslatable sphere is inseparable from the cultural constraints on their capacity to confront the otherness of meanings both immanent in and attached to India's material spaces and forms. That these same restrictions are also apparent in a rhetoric both convoluted, ambiguous and opaque, is testimony to the novel's admission of its own incapacity to bring this alien realm into representation.

In referring to those studies concerned with recuperating the novel's hitherto hidden 'sexual politics', I suggested that representations of gender and the erotic should be understood as written across the multiply inscribed script of Forster's India. This proviso is not unmindful of the extent to which homoeroticism circulates within the text, inverting the contempt for an androgynous and pederastic India prominent in British Indian writing.[34] The novel's overt homophilia is apparent in the presence of three superb and marginal Indian male figures: the naked gatherer of water chestnuts, who as he listens to Godbole's song, parts his lips with delight, 'disclosing a scarlet tongue' (p. 95); the splendidly formed, physically perfect punkah-wallah, viewed as a 'beautiful naked god' (p. 233); and the broad-shouldered, thin-waisted, naked servitor officiating at the Gokal Ashtami Festival, exhibited as an icon of 'the Indian body again triumphant' (p. 309).[35] All who are of 'low-birth' and unlike the loquacious elite Indians, have no lines to speak, are offered as sources of a voyeuristic excitation to be surveyed as captive objects of desire without the expectation of a gaze returned. But although their muteness *does* signify the exercise of a homoeroticized cultural power by the narrative's seeing eye, the novel's language registers not violence but affect, and the silence ascribed the figures has resonances other than the scopophiliac – to which I will return.

Because the libidinal is woven into an intricate narrative web, a discourse in the tradition of homosexual Orientalism is inseparable from the fiction's meditations on friendships within colonial conditions. In what Sara Suleri calls 'the most notoriously oblique homoerotic exchange in the literature of English India' (*The Rhetoric of English India*, p. 138), a multivalent transaction within a relationship overdetermined by colonialism is staged when Aziz inserts his stud into Fielding's collar. If, as Suleri maintains, this scene belongs with a discourse where 'colonial sexuality' is reconfigured into 'a homoeroticization of race' (p. 135),[36] then it also meets with other stagings of homosociality which impinge on both the novel's performance of cross-cultural interactions and its contemplation of other cultural modes. It is noticeable that in a memoir published after his death, Forster recorded his reluctance to use the sexual services available from Muslims in the princely state where he was employed, because of their 'general air of dirt and degradation' ('Kanaya' in *The Hill of Devi*, p. 311). But fiction does not imitate life, and the Muslims in the novel are gracious figures whose cultivated sociality is suffused by the homoerotic. The accounts of easeful male associations to which Fielding is admitted resonate the courtly same-sex eroticism of the Arab-Persian-Islamic literary tradition[37] and fulfil a fantasy of unconcealed homosexual associations still forced into secrecy in Britain. At such gatherings, where guests recite the poetry of the Muslim-Indian Ghalib alluding to intimacy amongst men, the homosocial shades into the homoerotic. As certainly, intonations of homophilia pervade Forster's wistful glances at

his Muslim protagonists, who accomplish 'something beautiful' when they stretch out their hands for food or applaud a song (pp. 250–251). But in celebrating a society which accommodates homoerotic love, the novel, which also observes the refined deportment of Aziz's wife and the Begum Hamidullah, registers a romanticized appreciation of a cultural sensibility:

> The banquet though riotous, had been agreeable, and now the blessings of leisure – unknown to the west, which either works or idles – descended on the motley company. Civilization strays about like a ghost here, revisiting the ruins of empire, and is to be found not in great works of art or mighty deeds, but in the gestures well-bred Indians make when they sit or lie down . . . This restfulness of gesture – it is the Peace that passeth Understanding, after all, it is the social equivalent of Yoga. When the whirling of action ceases, it becomes visible, and reveals a civilization which the West can disturb but will never acquire. (pp. 250–251)

A similarly coded display of sensual desire situated in the context of a stranger's bemused esteem for Indian cultural forms also marks the representation of the Gokal Ashtami Festival. Although described as '[n]ot an orgy of the body' (p. 285), the ceremonies are invoked in a scarcely veiled vocabulary soliciting the presence of a homoerotic content. Amongst the celebrations of Krishna's birth, which also include enactments of the merry and polymorphous God sporting with milk-maidens, are 'performances of great beauty in the private apartments of the Rajah . . . [who] owned a consecrated troupe of men and boys whose duty it was to dance various actions and meditations of his faith before him . . . The Rajah and his guests would then forget that this was a dramatic performance, and would worship the actors' (p. 299). But this yearning to discover an untroubled absorption of homosexual love into religious devotions does not exhaust a narration which, albeit from a distance of disbelief, also animates a hunger for the sacred.

Hence I suggest that both the evocations of the homoerotic, and the heterosexual disturbance assailing an Englishwoman, should be read as scenes within the fiction's larger drama. This returns me to the further significance of the naked and voiceless figures who although the objects of western libidinal surveillance, elude its narrative grasp. To the authors of a radical critique of the book's complicity with Orientalist discourse, it is Godbole's silence when asked about the Caves that registers a refusal on the part of the colonized to impart knowledge to their rulers, thereby constituting an instance of resistance.[38] As it turns out, this provocative contention is not sustainable, since on other occasions a garrulous Godbole readily provides his European audience with a detailed explanation of a song summoning Krishna's presence (p. 96), and later presses an exegesis about Hindu notions of good and evil on a distracted Fielding. Whatever can be inferred from Godbole's withholding information about the site of beliefs remote from his own, I would suggest that the import of silence within the novel resides rather in the lowly Indians, whose aphonia alludes to their habitation of a realm beyond the ken and the control of western knowledge, and who join India's material being and cognitive traditions in resisting incorporation into a western script.

For Edward Said the novel's ending is 'a paralyzed gesture of aesthetic powerlessness' where 'Forster notes and confirms the history behind a political conflict between

Dr. Aziz and Fielding – Britain's subjugation of India – and yet can neither recommend decolonization nor continued colonization. "No, not yet, not here" [sic] is all Forster can muster by way of resolution'.[39] As I read the open-ended closing act, all the novel's reflections on social and perceptual failure are rehearsed, but now there are gestures to a still deferred post-imperial condition which temporally the novel has not the means to articulate – 'No, not yet' – and which in the space the fiction occupies, cannot be realized – 'No, not there' (p. 316). For with the 'Not yet', first spoken by Ralph Moore in response to Aziz's lament that 'the two nations cannot be friends' (p. 306), and repeated in the last lines of the book, the negatives pervading the novel's rhetoric come to intimate not only a philosophical category and the prevailing constraints on both intercultural associations and displays of consummated same-sex intimacy, but a time when the existential discontents, social divisions, cultural chasms and perceptual restraints which the novel configures will be superseded.[40]

This postponement is itself a utopian greeting to an always unrepresentable future, and is positioned within a rhetoric of the gulf between illimitable desire and the circumscriptions of existence: '[t]he revelation was over, but its effect lasted, and its effect was to make men feel that the revelation had not yet come. Hope existed despite fulfilment' (p. 299); 'a passage not easy, not now, not here, not to be apprehended except when it is unattainable' (p. 309). The reconciliations and separations of the closing pages happen during the monsoon, named by Aziz as 'the time when all things are happy, young and old' and which the novel bathes in a magical aura (pp. 306–307). At Aziz's meeting with Ralph Moore, the rains 'made a mist around their feet' (p. 297), and when Aziz rides with Fielding, 'aware that that they would meet no more' (p. 310), 'myriads of kisses' surround them 'as the earth drew water in' (p. 313). But after Aziz has completed his conciliatory letter to Adela Quested, 'the mirror of the scenery was shattered' (p. 314) and the symbols of harmony give way to the chasms of the quotidian: 'the scenery though it smiled, fell like a gravestone on any human hope' (p. 316). As earth and rock, temple, tank and palace, horses, birds and carrion – the material and cultural forms of an India resistant to British rule – intercede against a premature concordance, 'No, not yet . . . No, not there', now signifies in a political and a cognitive register the impossibility of the journey promised by the novel and withdrawn in the narration.

When Forster is relegated as a bloodless liberal, whose understanding of and opposition to empire was circumscribed, or whose affection for the east is suspect because it provided him with opportunities for sexual adventures, his considerable distance from the prevalent ideological positions of his day is occluded. For although his deviations were performed with discretion, his transgressive sexuality at a time when homosexuality was officially outlawed and publicly disapproved in Britain, his socialism in a period of bourgeois hegemony, and his anti-colonialism in an age of residual imperial enthusiasm, converged in a stance which if not radical was dissident.[41] It is often forgotten that in 1935 Forster attended a meeting in Paris of the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture, organized by the Popular Front to unite communists, socialists and liberals in defence of 'the cultural heritage'. In retrospect it is possible to be cynical about the conciliatory politics which the congress opportunistically advocated, and to observe that Forster would have been quite at home in such a gathering. Yet his participation was surely an act of political integrity by an untheoretical socialist demonstrating his opposition to fascism and commitment to internationalism.

In his address to the congress, Forster used the vocabulary of liberalism – justice, culture, liberty, freedom – and conceded that the times demanded another and more inclusive language which he could speak: 'I know very well how limited, and how open to criticism, English freedom is. It is race-bound and it's class-bound . . . you may have guessed that I am not a Communist, though perhaps I might be one if I was a younger and a braver man, for in Communism I can see hope. It does many things which I think evil, but I know that it intends good.'[42] Forster's nonconformist dispositions enabled him to write a self-reflexive fiction where the recourse to received themes and rhetorics is sublated in an engagement with a colonial world as an agent of knowledge and an adversary to imperial rule. The complex registers of a metropolitan novel whose emergent modernism is inseparable from its unreached narrative destination in a colonial world, require that critics writing in a post-imperial era go beyond castigating its vestiges of Orientalism, whether sexually or culturally accented, and recognize also the extent to which both the textual India of British writing and the empire of British self-representation are disorientated.

Coda

12 Reconciliation and remembrance

During the early 1950s, at a time when only the most constrained and mutually impoverishing association existed between the structurally and socially separated communities, students at the anglophone universities of South Africa had the extraordinary opportunity of meeting across boundaries policed by law, custom and convention. For some of us these interactions provided an escape from a culture of compliance and conformity, opening new perspectives on the condition which we all differentially lived, and whose template had been set long before apartheid. More, we became aware that the beginnings, institutions and ethos of the mad South Africa into which we had been born, needed to be made public through political discourse and political activity, if a situation which we found socially outrageous, intellectually disgraceful and morally repugnant was to be contested and transcended.

They were the best of times and they were the worst of times. The government in power since 1948 was transforming an entrenched, egregiously oppressive system into the elaborately codified and punitive regime of apartheid; and resistant forces were intensifying the quest for programmes and strategies appropriate to the aggravated political situation. If dissent from within exclusively white academic circles was of a circumspect variety which condemned the architects of apartheid while withholding support from militant forms of contest, the student population contained more audacious elements. The English-speaking universities continued admitting a restricted number of African, Asian and Coloured candidates. Of these some withdrew from political participation, a small number were induced into collaboration with the regime, but many became what Gramsci named organic intellectuals – intellectuals who are oriented towards, and situate themselves on, the terrain of a people's struggles. With the war not long ended, there was a significant intake of mature white undergraduates – some from the then Rhodesia – who had commenced or resumed their studies after demobilization, and amongst them was a minority in whose altered horizons colonialism no longer appeared to be a natural part of the social landscape. And there were a few products of left-Zionist organizations whose first lessons in international socialism had paradoxically been learned within an exclusionary environment, and whose education was to be furthered by association with one or other revolutionary organization. It was these constituencies who remained immune from the blandishments of prominent fellow-students who although troubled by the intensification of repression, urged a stance of measured and cautious protest.

These then were becoming the very worst of times. A government haunted by spectres of communism, and unable to distinguish between moderate and radical

opposition, denounced all protest, all disobedience as dangerously subversive. Even the political discussions conducted within left-wing circles were deemed illegal, despite which the competing nationalist and class analyses of the dissident movements – the Congresses, the Communist Party, and the Unity Movement – were energetically and at times acrimoniously debated.[1] My remembrance of that distant time when local political agendas were considered not only within the larger field of anti-colonial writing – and this covers the work of liberation theorists in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, as well as the critiques produced from within European Marxism – but as belonging to the internationalist traditions of theoretical and performed opposition to structurally inequitable regimes, will be unrecognizable to later generations. And indeed my version of that era will also be unfamiliar to most of my contemporaries who may rather recall the University of Cape Town circa 1950 as a place where many went on dancing at segregated balls or cheering at segregated rugby matches, and most were either intent on acquiring professional skills or immersed in pursuing disciplinary knowledge.

I have used an anecdotal mode knowing that my account occludes as much as it tells, conscious that any claim to its 'truth' must be substantiated by archival sources and oral testimony, and aware that like any story gleaned from recollection, mine must be received with scepticism and suspicion, although I hope not pre-emptive disbelief. So let me at the outset concede that the auspicious bias of these memories is misleading, for in my generation the white membership of the far left, either concentrated in the Communist Party or dispersed in the Trotskyist movements, was negligible and soon to be diminished by those who were arrested, retreated into internal exile, emigrated or were expelled. Moreover an era of intensified repression and large-scale political imprisonment was about to commence.

In his book on Jewish history and Jewish memory, Yosef Yerushalmi has described memory as 'amongst the most fragile and capricious of our faculties . . . always problematic, usually deceptive, sometimes treacherous'.[2] It is obvious that reminiscence is never a transparent rendering of the past but an experience after the fact and one which is necessarily permeated by desire and accented with judgement, and can be the occasion for confession, self-justification, concealment or catharsis. But to recognize retrospection as a narrative practice owing its existence to screening and editing does not render it nugatory, any more than it disables the project of historiography. Rather it is because both memory and historical texts are partial chronicles of the past – in the sense of being both incomplete and slanted – that we need to distinguish who is doing the recollecting, and in what interest. For example, some revisionist chronicles of the Third Reich are apologias for an exorbitantly repressive regime; others have been directed at explaining genocide as the unforeseen and unfortunate outcome of sober political theories on the nature of society as a *Gemeinschaft*, as a community to which its members belong by filiation – a fraught and dangerous notion which in the case of its implementation in Germany entailed not only the exclusion but the extermination of those designated as outsiders.

In another context, it will be immediately apparent that in South Africa the stories of the past can be and have been retold in ways that represent a settler-colonialism as fulfilling a divinely appointed mission or a secular destiny. Similarly the Zionist version, despite its idealism, was from the outset tainted by construing the Palestinian people as dispersed communities without a culture or history, who had drifted from elsewhere into

the Holy Land and had no birthright to their place of habitation, which moreover they had lamentably failed to develop. With this, the Palestinians were written out of a scenario subsequently enacted by the state of Israel, an account which summons the Jewish people's ancient claim to the soil and asserts new entitlements won and established by dint of the competence, initiative and dedication of the rightful settlers who made the desert bloom and brought modernity to an antique land.

Some constructions of the past then will be made in order to explain death camps or to justify the expropriation of another's territory, and will therefore invent or reiterate vindications for the violent exertion of power. But there are other modes of historical recollection. And here we could invoke the fragmentary 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', where Walter Benjamin perceives historical memory as the fight for the oppressed past, as a contest to disclose the moral claims of dead victims who must be included as partners in the emancipatory project of the present:

> To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was' . . . No man or men but the struggling, oppressed class itself is the depository of historical knowledge. In Marx it appears as the last enslaved class, as the avenger that completes the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden . . . Historicism gives the 'eternal' image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience of the past.[3]

When explicating Benjamin's subtle work, informed as it is by a multiplicity of diverse traditions, Michael Newman has observed of Benjamin's notion of 'redemptive solidarity' that there is a difficulty in remembering the dead when this is brought into contact with the modernist theme of 'immanent historical progress, or history as progressive emancipation'.[4] For Jürgen Habermas however there is no such incommensurability:

> Benjamin is not concerned only with an emphatic renewal of consciousness . . . He twists the radical future-orientedness that is characteristic of modern times in general so far back around the axis of the now-time that it gets transposed into a yet more radical orientation toward the past. The anticipation of what is new in the future is realized only through remembering [*Eingedenken*] a past that has been suppressed . . . The anamnestic redemption of an injustice, which cannot of course be undone but can at least be virtually reconciled through remembering, ties up the present with the communicative context of a universal historical solidarity.[5]

Despite misgivings, Newman also goes on to suggest that the truth of invoking historical memory is to be discovered in an ever-to-be-renewed witness and anticipation; while Francis Barker as glossed by Neil Lazarus perceived remembrance to be 'a future-oriented imaginative practice that draws its inspiration from the gesture of solidarity with those trampled by "the enemy" ', and is 'about commitment and political hope. It has little to do with either atonement or witness'.[6] What many commentators derive from Benjamin's secular version of the Old Testament injunction to remember is the premise that the recall of wrong-doing has the capacity to nourish resistance against present iniquities. Or in the words of Milan Kundera, which could serve as a slogan for those pressing the claims of remembrance: 'The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting' (*The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*).[7] These are the

terms in which I will be later be considering the agenda of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a body that invited witness, pleaded for displays of atonement and sought to end a chapter of South Africa's history without a sustained theoretical encounter with a history of exorbitant oppressions, by this closing the door on a radical orientation toward the future. But first I want to consider the implications and consequences of 'coming to terms with the past' in other situations.

Where the formal normalization of a formerly iniquitous condition is being attempted, nominally reconstituted nations or governments of national unity must negotiate the dilemma of exposing the deeds and discrediting the ideology of the social order that was defeated or superseded but not necessarily dismantled, while at the same time working for the expedient coexistence of communities with divergent experiences of the past, different present commitments and incompatible anticipations of the future. It is a predicament that has been confronted or circumvented in many and diverse circumstances. When considering Italian fascism and its aftermath, Umberto Eco wrote: 'In my country today there are some who say that the War of Liberation was a tragic period of division, and that all we need is national reconciliation. The memory of those terrible years should be repressed, *refoulée*, *verdrängt*. But *Verdrängung* causes neurosis.' I will return to the deleterious and unpredictable sequels to repression. But for the moment I am concerned with Eco's subsequent sentence. This reads: 'If reconciliation means compassion and respect for all those who fought their own war in good faith, to forgive does not mean to forget . . . We are here to remember and solemnly say that "They" must not do it again.'[8]

The problems with this somewhat pedantic counsel are for me insurmountable, since it could be argued that to concede good faith to the Nazis, or the slave-traders and slave-owners, or colonizers who set out to dispossess indigenous inhabitants or exterminate aboriginal populations, is not only to debase the phrase but is also to pre-empt any discussion pertaining to individual responsibility for communal crimes. In our own times, it is abundantly evident that the surviving victims of the military dictatorships in Latin America together with the families of the disappeared are insisting that the past, which by fiat had been forgiven on their behalf by incoming governments, is not forgotten. For them there can be no pardoning the architects and agents of political systems which terrorized their critics and eliminated their opponents, and no official acquittal of those who instituted torture and execution as normal political practice.

Eco's reflections do however prompt the question of who constitutes the 'They', and who is to be deemed culpable. To differentiate between entire populations and those who devised and inflicted atrocities is a necessary but still insufficient condition, for this too readily rehabilitates the many who were complicit with the outrages committed in their name – and no state machine however repressive can operate without the concurrence of large numbers. By the same token it is undeniable that in such situations there are always some who actively resist or withhold their consent – the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a Jewish academic who survived the war in Nazi Germany, tell just such a story of singular persons who risked retribution through discreet acts of decency to 'non-Aryans'.[9] But given the eager and tacit support on which even the most base regimes depend, we cannot assume that with a change of government all of the ordinary people are always inclined to disavow old allegiances, or to admit as abominations the policies which they once endorsed or tolerated.

Since it is naive to assume an instantaneous change of heart and consciousness in such populations, perhaps a distinction should be made between a pragmatic rapprochement and a forgiving of trespasses that registers the impulse to include within the human commonalty even those who had participated in transgressing every tenet of a comprehensively defined ethical universalism. Thus what I will attempt to consider is the notion of exculpation or acquittal that is implied in the recommendation to overcome the past. And what I will not engage with are the concepts of absolution, mercy, atonement and repentance which belong to a theological discourse that I have neither the sensibility nor the language to address. In my less ecumenical vocabulary, propitiation and pardon can be performed in reciprocal face-to-face encounters where each can receive what the other bestows – and this indeed can be the stuff of drama. But surely no government or leader or officially constituted commission has the moral authority to grant a people's acquittal of their erstwhile oppressors, since in this situation the consent and cooperation of neither party has been solicited and procured.

I want then to ask whether the demands of reconciliation can be met without a radical restructuring of those economic, social, political and cultural circumstances which would render the wrongs of the past as properly transcended, thus enabling new modes of consciousness, new psychic dispositions to grow. Then and only then can recall of ancestral and recent adversity be contemplated if not in tranquillity, then perhaps with pain but without rage; then and only then can the afflicted and the descendants of the injured extinguish their urge to retribution. In referring to slavery, colonialism, the Holocaust and fascist dictatorships, I do not intend to equate the malevolent regimes, or to install a hierarchy of malignancy. That heinous acts were committed by all is the common and relevant factor when considering an ideology and ethic of reconciliation and judging whether, and under what conditions, its invocation can be properly received by those who endured the punishment, or ungrudgingly embraced by their heirs.

What we must surely question are the repercussions of absolving the many who implemented or were complicit with exploitation, terror and institutionalized persecution, or of allowing the perpetrators and their allies to feign ignorance of their own histories or to publicly denounce – which does not necessarily mean renounce – those beliefs and attachments that had prompted their conduct. Whose interests, we must ask, are advanced by an officially instituted memory loss? Who profits by forgetting? Is it those who suffered subjugation, or those who instituted and maintained their condition? Is it those whose ancestors were exterminated, or those who undertook the role of executioners? For since the abused, the punished and the insulted do not forget, the beneficiaries of amnesia are those whose ascendancy has been defeated or curtailed. And where, as is the case in South Africa, too many old injustices persist as a result of a political compromise with the capitalist system which installed and authorized the people's woes, and where to cite Benjamin again 'the enemy has not ceased to be victorious', whose purpose is served by a Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

The competing claims of reconciliation and remembrance have been played out most dramatically in post-war Germany, where in the words of Jürgen Habermas, the 'crass demand for reconciliation' necessitated 'the promotion of forgetfulness'.[10] When the post-war government, eager to effect closure on the past, installed a state-directed project of forgetting, the expedient was fortuitously aided by the western powers who

urgently needed to recruit ex-Nazis as their new allies in the Cold War. And it was abetted by those German academics and intellectuals who were determined to prevent the demonization of the Third Reich, insisting that the consolidation of the post-Nazi regime depended on acquitting those who had implemented, actively complied with or publicly endorsed fascism.

Habermas's sardonic commentary on the sanguine position of one such protagonist glosses 'defusing the past' as a process made possible by 'the discretion and willingness to reconcile shown by the generous opponents of the Nazis toward the troubled people of Germany' (p. 43). But as is well known, the institutionalized forgetfulness which some of Germany's ruling politicians continue to advocate, and which has encouraged latter-day fascists to deny the gas chambers as yet another Jewish lie, was and continues to be strenuously opposed by later generations who did excavate, confront and examine what their parents and grandparents had attempted to conceal, justify or relegate. On a wider front the history of German fascism has been remembered by the many, and not all of them Jews, who will not let the Nazis' systematic liquidation of Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally ill, Slavs and communists recede from public consciousness, and who will not undertake on behalf of the dead, to indemnify and pardon their persecutors.

In a lecture of 1977 addressing the situation in post-war Germany, Theodor Adorno criticized the notion of 'mastering the past' which he considered to be tainted 'by the idea of some ultimate repression'.[11] When examining the necessity of working through or reprocessing the past into something new, Adorno contrasted an active engagement with the past with the effort to commit the past to oblivion:

> 'Coming to terms with the past' does not imply a serious working through of the past, the breaking of its spell through an act of clear consciousness. It suggests, rather, wishing to turn the page and, if possible, wiping it from memory. The attitude that it would be proper for everything to be forgiven and forgotten by those who were wronged is expressed by the party that committed the injustice . . . One wants to get free of the past, rightly so, since one cannot live in its shadow, and since there is no end to terror if guilt and violence are only repaid, again and again, with guilt and violence. But wrongly so, since the past one wishes to evade is still so intensely alive . . . Should we consider it pathological to burden oneself with the past, while the healthy and realistic person is absorbed in the present and its practical concerns? That would be to appropriate the moral from 'And it's as good as if it never happened', which is written by Goethe but uttered by the devil at a decisive point in *Faust* to reveal his innermost principle: the destruction of memory. The murdered are to be cheated even out of the one thing that our powerlessness can grant them: remembrance. (pp. 115, 117)

For Adorno then the effacement of memory is a sign that the consciousness of historical continuity has been atrophied: 'Enlightenment about what happened in the past must work, above all, against a forgetfulness that too easily goes along with and justifies what is forgotten' (p. 125).

That the repression or censorship or shelving of a traumatic history can promote deceptively benign revisions of that past, is even evident in what some consider a recondite area of academic pursuits, and which has indeed taken place within the most internationalist of disciplines. A recent discussion in *The Mathematical Intelligencer*[12] has

criticized the official journal of the German Association of Mathematicians for the protocols of its retrospects on eminent mathematicians who were Nazis and had actively participated in expelling their Jewish colleagues from universities. According to the critics, these hagiographic assessments in the *Jahresbericht* either briefly pass over the Nazi activities of those being commemorated, or in the name of devotion to the notion of 'the pure scientist' are mute about the Nazi pasts of their subjects, thereby effectively exonerating violations of the ethics of 'pure' scientific enquiry. For what these appraisals omit is 'the theoretical justification, based on a pseudo-psychological typology of mathematical work' which these academics had advanced to legitimize the persecution of Jewish mathematicians.

Thus one renowned Nazi mathematician had declared that '[r]epresentatives of two different human races do not fit together as teacher and student. The instinct of the Göttingen students felt in Landau (a Jewish mathematician) an epitome of an un-German approach to the topics'.[13] And in correspondence with Landau, then also a Göttingen professor, the Nazi academic explained,

> I am not concerned with making difficulties for you as a Jew, but only with protecting – above all – German students . . . from being taught differential and integral calculus by a teacher of a race quite foreign to them. I, like everyone else, do not doubt your ability to instruct suitable students of whatever origin in the purely abstract aspects of mathematics. But I know also that many academic courses, especially the differential and integral calculus, have at the same time educative value, inducting the pupil not only to a new conceptual world but also to a different frame of mind. But since the latter depends very substantially on the racial composition of the individual, it follows that an Aryan student should not be allowed to be trained by a Jewish teacher.[14]

Such opinion may encourage sympathy with the sentiments which Victor Klemperer recorded in a diary entry dated 16 August 1936: 'if one day the situation were reversed and the fate of the vanquished lay in my hands, then I would let all the ordinary folk go and even some of the leaders, who might after all have had honourable intentions and not known what they were doing. But I would have all the intellectuals strung up, and the professors three feet higher than the rest; they would be left hanging from the lamp posts for as long as was compatible with hygiene' (vol. 1, pp. 176–177).

The silences in the obituaries solicited and published in a respected academic journal during the 1980s and 1990s are reminders that when the tenets of homicidal or coercive ideologies escape rigorous contest and are not intellectually disavowed and ethically condemned, then the untreated sewage of odious creeds will return to infect the present, their poisonous residues seeping even into the community of the most abstract and disinterested of the disciplines. This brings me back to what is an implicit refrain in this chapter – the responsibility of narrating the past in ways that subject the strategies validating violence, exploitation and persecution to scrutiny and judgement, and which animate the desire to bring a just future into being.

I have been advancing the case for recollection, for the constant renewal of historical memory, and I now want to consider an alternative position which, following Nietzsche, urges that we divest ourselves of the burden of the past. This argument was recently

rehearsed by David Dabydeen, the Guyanan poet, novelist and critic when responding during an interview to the notion of *creating* memory suggested by one of his interlocutors, Marina Warner. Instead he asserted that memory and the recovery of history is oppressive to contemporary black writing, and that only out of a 'creative amnesia', or the active impulse to forget history, could something new and unencumbered emerge.[15] We could note that this negative conception of remembering is creatively contradicted in Dabydeen's poems and novels, which are nurtured by the memory of slavery and indentured labour and kindle images of downtrodden ancestors. Remembering as the recovery of suppressed histories has been the concern of critics recuperating the slave narratives either written or dictated by ex-slaves of African descent during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[16] The importance of the 'imaginative appropriation of history' and the innovative use of memory in the present has also been elaborated by Toni Morrison: 'The struggle to forget, which was important in order to survive, is fruitless, and I wanted to make it fruitless . . . We live in a land where the past is always erased . . . The past (in America) is absent or it is romanticized. This culture doesn't encourage dwelling on, let alone coming to terms with, the truth about the past'.[17]

For me the competing claims of active forgetfulness and creative remembrance are elegantly condensed in Michael Newman's comment: 'The total recovery of that which has been lost – the forgotten, the dead – is impossible this side of eschatological redemption. Our relation with time and history can only be through our finitude, our historicity. Nietzsche was right to insist that with too much memory we cannot live and end up by denying what we have and foreclosing the future. But without remembrance we cannot live justly' ('Suffering from Reminiscences', p. 112). To remember in order to create the conditions for living justly was and remains the aspiration of all liberation struggles, whether in the metropolitan or colonial worlds. This dimension is erased by those critics who insist that the task of the postcolonial intellectual is not to recover 'signs of self-representation' or traces of 'the disenfranchized speaking for themselves'.[18] By contrast, Edward Said has named a 'Culture of Resistance', covering not only 'the rediscovery and repatriation of what had been suppressed in the natives' past by the process of imperialism', but uprisings, strikes, protests, demonstrations, campaigns, civilian militancy and armed struggles.[19] To recuperate *this* past is to recall that all colonialisms were about the conquest of space, the expropriation of resources and the exploitation of labour, and that what the colonial peoples were resisting was the violent appropriation of their lands and the assaults on their persons, as well as the subordination of their cultures and the denial of the right to self-determination. It is I suggest in the context of South Africa's long colonial past and still unreconstructed present that the brief and work of the TRC should be considered.

> Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious . . . Social Democracy thought fit to assign to the working class the role of the redeemer of future generations, in this way cutting the sinews of its greatest strength. This training made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren.[20]

If we proceed from the implications of Benjamin's aphorisms – the systemic enmity between capitalism and the dispossessed, and the power of remembered oppressions to incite irreconcilable hostility to contemporary violations – then the premises of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which sat from 1995 and produced its report in 1998,[21] could appear as misconceived and its effects as negative. All commentators have observed that the TRC was born of a political compromise, sometimes called a capitulation, at a time when popular struggles – which for the first had drawn white youth into active resistance – had been demobilized; that it became an instrument of implementing the negotiated settlement between the existing government and representatives of oppositional forces; and that its chronicle of the past was directed at achieving national reconciliation and constituted neither an analytic, active engagement with history, nor a theoretical demolition of the ideologies underpinning segregation and apartheid. Though its supporters have praised it as a forum for promoting national unity and ensuring the peaceful transition to majority rule, its critics have in the course of a prolonged debate found insuperable difficulties in endorsing either its mandate or its procedures.

Because my concern is with the continuity of historical consciousness, I will begin by referring more briefly to other important questions asked of the TRC. Amongst these is the selectivity of the witnesses, both confessors and victims, solicited and received by the commission. It has been pointed out that whereas the actual perpetrators of human rights violations were numbered, those complicit with the regime and the beneficiaries of its reign of terror constituted a majority of the white community and were not called to account; on the other side, the victims of political persecution were a minority, while the black population as a whole, urban and rural, who had suffered age-old and untold deprivation and harassment under white domination, remained unheard. In an essay on a community's loss of land in South Africa, David Johnson argues that 'the Griqua struggle for land restitution discloses a hierarchy of loss in which mourning the loss of loved ones (managed in South Africa by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission)' takes precedence over the loss of land (managed by the Land Commission), with the TRC eclipsing 'in the public imagination the Land Commission's attempt to address material loss'.[22] Concerning the public staging of mourning there have been demurs about the facile notion that an event performing past suffering and enacting remorse could effect 'national catharsis' and 'psychotherapeutic healing', thereby exorcizing the trauma of colonial violence and colonial guilt.

On its judicial failures, commentators have observed that although a gross violation of human rights was – after initial tensions within the commission – defined by legality not morality, those felons willing to testify were offered amnesty, with the consequence that justice was subordinated to the political interest of reconciliation. Although enshrined in law, this decision did not go legally uncontested: in a submission brought against the government and the TRC, counsel for the applicants argued that 'the state was obliged by international law to prosecute those responsible for gross human rights violations' and that the authorization of amnesty for such offenders 'constituted a breach of international law'. Dismissing the appeal, the respondents conceded that amnesty to the wrongdoer does effectively obliterate fundamental human rights, but concluded that Parliament was 'entitled to enact the Act [offering amnesty] in the terms it did . . . so as to enhance and optimize the prospects of facilitating the constitutional journey from the shame of the past to the promise of the future'.[23] Indeed the very

usage of a human rights vocabulary by the TRC has been questioned by Richard Wilson: suggesting that 'South Africa's transition became yet another example of the triumph of liberalism as it also coincided with the end of the Cold War . . . and the rise of laissez-faire economics', Wilson maintains that when national elites in the new South Africa turned to human rights talk 'as the hallmark of the new democratic order', this became a language of 'compromise and phony reconciliation' rather than 'the means to pursue a well-defined political will guided by a program of social justice'.[24]

Sceptics have also spoken their unease about the constitution of an official body in a secular state accommodating all the major world religions as well as atheists, which orchestrated its hearings in an atmosphere of euphoric Christian revivalism, during which the chairperson invoked 'the key concepts of confession, forgiveness and reconciliation' and credited God with overseeing the commission's proceedings and approving its goals. Despite this, it is agreed by all commentators that the report was a pragmatic document seeking to give an ethical gloss to a political process of compromise. It was as such that it won the support, sometimes qualified, of prominent figures worldwide. Describing the TRC as 'this crucible of harmonization', Wole Soyinka praised 'the heroic goal of reconciliation' while questioning both the '*a priori* exclusion of criminality and thus responsibility' and the absence of the 'material and moral' ingredient, a deficiency which he suggests could be remedied by adding restitution to the 'healing trilogy of Truth, Reparations, Reconciliation'.[25]

Given that no restitution can be made to the subjugated, living or dead, I am assuming that what is meant is compensation, and it remains unclear whether this implies a radical redistribution of all resources amongst all the dispossessed, that is, a social revolution, or remittances paid to those few designated as victims – an ethically dubious recommendation in itself and one that entails no change to the prevailing system. Moreover in urging the rich to publicly demonstrate their contrition, Soyinka's amendment offers yet further rewards to those who continue to hold economic power, and now with officially approved clean hands. Because this rhetoric does not take us very far, I want to look at the more consequent critiques made by scholars and activists within South Africa who are better able to perceive the commission within its historical parameters and constraints, and hence to identify the sources and effects of its premises and erasures. These criticisms traverse the categories of ontological error, historical occlusion and historiographical naiveté, and political irresolution, indeed quietism, in the face of continued structural inequalities.

The problem of remembrance and amnesia has haunted the discussion on a commission which places 'factual or forensic truth' and 'personal truth' on the same footing and fails to distinguish between unique experiences and collective memory, by this accrediting individual recall and testimony as storehouses of what happened to entire communities. Invoking Wittgenstein, Antony Holiday has faulted the commission's 'empiricist picture of the mind as a passive receptacle of experientially-sourced evidence that it is the function of language to make public', observing that in order to privilege a notion of value-neutral public access, 'epistemic privacy', which by its very nature is value-laden, must be excluded.[26] For Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, the TRC and other projects reworking memory and rewriting history in the interest of producing a counter-memory to the official record, 'ignore the relationship between individual testimony, evidence and historical memory' and hence fail to 'address memory as either a theoretical or a historical category'; meanwhile Ingrid de Kok, who sees

the TRC as 'elegy', has asked whether structures dedicated to reconciliation and unity might not 'unwittingly encourage social and cultural amnesia'.[27]

During the 'final discussion' of the commission held in Cape Town on 12 March 1998 under the title 'Transforming Society through Reconciliation', one of the panellists, at the time a doctoral student at the University of Cape Town, spoke of her discomfort at the TRC, which had 'inadvertently facilitated a traumatic repression of the past in its displacement of the relationship between victimised and beneficiaries'. As one such beneficiary she acknowledged 'the right of the victimised not to reconcile', adding: 'For victimised and survivors anger, which is an already empowering response, trauma and poverty do not end. Reconciliation could risk functioning as a silencing and censoring discourse . . . If reconciliation is used as a fixing, closing, ending concept, it could promote a forgetting, a disavowal of the past and the dangerous obliterating of the victimised.'[28]

These arguments impinge on historical remembrance, on retaining the past within both present consciousness and premonitions of a future. Such questions have been directly asked by Neville Alexander, a vocal member of South Africa's left-opposition and a stern but courteous critic of a commission which he considers did not analyse the violence of South Africa's racial capitalism and neither revealed the truth nor effected reconciliation.[29] Alexander's stratagem is to concede that despite these failures, the TRC all the same has a 'positive significance . . . for the future of South Africa', albeit an importance that 'does not, paradoxically, derive from its own activities', but instead from indicating the necessity of debate about South Africa's violent past and thus 'contributing to raising historical consciousness'. This debate is still in the making, while the formation of new modes of consciousness has been inhibited.

By limiting the scope of the TRC to describing the 'causes, nature and extent' of 'gross violations of human rights that had occurred between 1 March 1960 and 10 May 1994' – the dates of the Sharpeville massacre, and the installation of a new government of national unity under Mandela's presidency – a longer story of violations endemic to the social orders antecedent to apartheid is formally acknowledged but without even minimal analysis: recognition that 1948 'merely saw the beginning of a refinement and intensifying of repression', that racism has existed since the arrival of the first white settlers in 1652, that the 1913 Land Act had dispossessed the majority rural population, and that the British administration had played a definitive role in instituting segregation, can hardly be said to constitute a working through and reprocessing of the past. Rather the selective retrospect of the TRC registers the attempt to repress memory and serves to arrest the growth of historical analysis.

Indeed scholars have drawn attention to the faulty historiography informing the report's official account. Referring to criticism of the commission's historical standards and its process of knowledge-production in writing an authorized version of the country's past, Deborah Posel has observed its eclectic view of 'truth' and its positivist procedures, remarking that much of the text seems to have been written by people without historical expertise and unfamiliar with the voluminous literature and debates on apartheid, colonialism, racism and capitalism. Hence historical aetiology is reduced to 'racism', and 'racism' treated as an answer and not a question to be explained:

> The report contains a version of the past which has been actively crafted according to particular strategies of inclusion and exclusion, born of the complexities of its mandate. Part epistemological and methodological, part moral, the effect of these discursive strategies is to produce a primarily descriptive rendition of the past, uneven in its discernment of detail and indifferent to the complexities of social causation . . . With little explanatory and analytical power, the report reads less as a history, more as a moral narrative about the fact of moral wrongdoing across the political spectrum, spawned by the overriding evil of the apartheid system.[30]

Equally troubling is the commission's hope that its proceedings would enable a chapter in South Africa's history to be closed, making it possible to journey towards the future. As Alexander has remarked, it is 'impossible to put the past behind as long as one or more of the ideological bases of the conflict of the past continues to determine how one behaves in the present' (p. 7). In other, blunter, words, how can an active engagement with the past forgo the urgent task of engaging with the theoretical underpinnings to a racial capitalism? How can it turn away from examining why a grotesquely oppressive system came into being and was perpetuated? How can it overlook that segregation and apartheid were singular forms of colonial capitalism benefiting a minority and for long aided and abetted by international capitalism, which remained complicit with the regimes for as long as these provided advantageous sites for investment and were able to deliver profits?

Not only does the report fail to render the past intelligible, it also avoids addressing the circumstances of the political settlement out of which the TRC was born and which it abetted. It is therefore necessary to turn from its own rhetoric and consider the compromise in its historical moment: the militancy of a black proletariat whose development successive governments had tried to prevent by legislation, an impending implosion within the forces of production which had thrown an economy based on low wages and costs into disarray, pressure from accelerated internal opposition and vocal international protest together with divestment. This would explain why transnational capitalism in league with the existing administration had for long been in negotiation with the ANC, in preparation for a deal whereby political power would be shared but without threatening the economic regime. The existence of two agendas in the interim period is made explicit by Kelwyn Sole, who points out that 'simultaneously with formal transitional negotiations between political stakeholders in the early 1990s, it is now apparent that a second, more tacit, set of negotiations was taking place between the Government-in-waiting and capital'.[31]

Writing in 1992, Neville Alexander had anticipated the consequences of the overthrow of the racist state through a negotiated settlement and the establishment of a government of 'national unity':

> The potential for social conflict will be enhanced . . . the negotiation process [as conducted by the ANC] . . . can, if successful, lead nowhere but to a slightly modified, structurally adjusted racial capitalist system that will continue to generate class inequality largely as racial inequality . . . what is happening in South Africa today is a process of the co-optation of the black middle-class and of the leadership of the unionized workers by the ruling class.[32]

More recently the cultural critic Eve Bertelsen has remarked of the New South Africa:

> After some decades of promoting a quasi-socialist critique of class society, South Africa's political leadership has, since the elections of 1994, enthusiastically embraced the philosophy of the late capitalist 'free market'. This about-turn has been effected rapidly. Mandela himself announced to international forums that privatisation is now the policy of the ANC. We have the daily spectacle of erstwhile communist ministers promoting a macro-economic plan which will . . . [issue] in widespread public spending cuts and inadequate budgets for housing, health, welfare and education.[33]

Once property relations are removed from the discussion, it becomes possible to ignore that amongst the victors of the settlement were those formations that had been gestating over a long period, and which despite the restraints of apartheid laws have issued in a significant black bourgeoisie. This class is now undergoing an accelerated growth in the New South Africa: entrepreneurs in their own right, directors and advisors of multinational corporations, professionals, technocrats and apparatchiki serving the present regime. Since the influence of this diverse group, whether in or outside of office, is immense, a government itself committed to a free-market economy has been slow to inaugurate a programme redistributing land, resources and opportunity amongst the dispossessed – a procedure whose implementation is not wholly constrained by the pressures of global capitalism.[34] Given a growing black middle class and the expansion of the white urban and rural poor, it is surely time to stop speaking exclusively of the race divide in South Africa and think in terms of class – a category that was always relevant and too often absent in public discourse, and this includes the proceedings of the TRC.

Historians pursuing independent enquiries in accord with disciplinary protocols have situated the report of the TRC in the context of the many new forms of official history now being produced. Concerned to narrate the new nation and rewrite the colonial past as one of cooperation and transculturation, this genre of reconciliation historiography, which significantly emerged in the 1990s, foregrounds a South African past of congruence, social assimilation and cultural osmosis, hence necessarily fostering forgetfulness of separation, exclusion and repression, and occluding the counter-memories of overt and hidden traditions of resistance. This move by intellectuals has been attributed to a present political need to valorize compromise and conciliation – as is indeed evident in the vocabulary of the report, which speaks its preference for 'restorative justice . . . with correcting imbalances, restoring broken relationships – with healing, harmony and reconciliation'. If this is read as implying that justice and equality did once exist, then the cost to truth is incalculable. By reinforcing the political compromise with a compromised truth, the political compromise is transformed into a moral compromise. And while political compromise might be justified, this cannot be true of moral or intellectual compromise (Neville Alexander, unpublished paper).

By the time the TRC was pursuing reconciliation as a political programme, the burgeoning and influential area study of postcolonial studies had already in its revisionist versions of the imperial project installed reconciliation as an analytic principle and explanatory category. Why are some tendencies within a contemporary criticism which situates itself as a radical practice inspired to perceive colonialism as dialogic, as an

encounter of intimacy and negotiation rather than a space of unequal and ambiguous exchanges, a site on which an absolute discrepancy in power and structurally endemic conflict prevailed? How has it come about that it is now often necessary to remind an academic or student audience in Britain or the United States, fascinated as they are by thoughts of the neurotic structure to colonialism (and a neurotic structure it certainly was), that the imperial project was exercised though coercion and violence, and that the formal independence of colonies was achieved through civil and military struggles?

This was the colonialism known to and communicated by liberation theorists who remembered a past denigrated and despised by colonialism and recalled the long traditions of dissent, in the cause of mobilizing subjugated populations to occupy the modern world as both subjects and dissenters. What too many postcolonial critics forget is that the critique of colonialism did not begin with the academic discussions of recent decades, but was inaugurated and elaborated within the Marxist discussions of theorist-activists in the colonial worlds who fought not only *against* imperial repression, but *for* creating situations in which futures transcending the institutions and values of capitalism could be contemplated. That the terms missing in the current postcolonial discussion – capitalism, property relations, class struggle, remembrance and anticipations of post-capitalism – are also absent from the report of the TRC, raises important questions of the ethical obligations attendant on rewriting the past.

The new democracy hailed by the TRC as an end, as an arrival, signals no more than a beginning, a staging post for further political and socio-economic processes. Perhaps the most notable absence in the history produced by the TRC is of any acknowledgement that South Africa's singular socio-economic system was and is embedded in capitalism, a calculated erasure substantially aided by substituting a metaphysical notion of 'evil' for terms that would more appropriately describe material and psychic violations. However, those who are writing from independent bases *are* producing histories of a unique settler colonialism and the long fight to undermine and end its dominion. They must then necessarily return to the annals of South Africa's competing liberation movements, and attend to the ideas and activities of *all* who participated in the struggles. Indeed without an account and appraisal of the intellectual traditions associated with or stemming from the minority Unity Movement – a Trotskyist left-opposition whose permutations survive as a dissident strand in contemporary South African political thinking – there would be a hole in the narrative, since it was this tendency which grounded its analysis in Marxist understandings of colonialism within the context of international capitalism. Such a narrative is essential if the longevity of the imperial project in South Africa is to be accounted for, its suppression of dissent and production of consent explained, its accommodation to changed conditions and reincarnation elucidated.

In the new world order the power of global capital looms over governments of national unity. Thus the critical question to be asked of an official ideology of reconciliation, with its language of consensus and settlement, is that it is deployed within social formations that remain fissured by class divisions and conflicts. In which case, is it not premature to prescribe concord when the circumstances making for discord remain in place? And is it not gratuitous for governments, politicians and intellectuals to entreat gestural atonement from the strong whose privileges are intact, while the dispossessed whose material needs and future-oriented aspirations remain unappeased are enjoined

to pardon their expropriators and exploiters? The problem for theoretical work then presents itself not as one of aligning reconciliation with remembrance, but rather of joining remembrance of the past with a critique of the contemporary condition. This means that we need to recall the long histories of injustice, to remember the obstacles in the way of building a just society and always to hold in view the prospect of a future. For our best hope for universal emancipation lies in remaining unreconciled to the past and unconsoled by the present.

Notes

1 Beginnings, affiliations, disavowals

1 See the criticisms of Masao Miyoshi, 'A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19 (1993), pp. 726–751 and Arif Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 20 (1994), pp. 329–356 and *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).

2 For an extravagant statement of this position, see Ian Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 68.

3 Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, *The Pre-occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 19.

4 For criticisms of this position, see Michael Sprinker's introduction to *Late Imperial Culture*, ed. Román De La Campa, E. Ann Kaplan and Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1995).

5 Colin Sparks, 'Stuart Hall, Cultural Studies and Marxism', in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 97–99.

6 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), pp. 366–367.

7 Aijaz Ahmad has recalled that 'the first major debate on the idea of the postcolonial took place not during the past few years but some years earlier', and 'not in cultural theory but in political theory, where the object of inquiry' was 'the postcolonial state', and the categories of colonialism and decolonization were used in a discussion conducted in Marxist terms, to designate 'identifiable structural shifts in state and society'; 'The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality', *Race and Class*, vol. 36, no. 3 (1995), pp. 1–20, 5.

8 Simon During, 'Postcolonial and Globalisation: a Dialectical Relation After All?' in *Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1998), pp. 31–47, 31.

9 Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 9.

10 See Neil Lazarus, 'Doubting the New World Order: Marxism, Realism, and the Claims of Postmodernist Social Theory', *Differences: a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1991), pp. 94–138.

11 Francis Mulhern, *Culture/Metaculture* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 156–159.

12 See Michael Sprinker, 'We Lost it at the Movies', *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 112 (1997), pp. 385–399.

13 Nancy Fraser, 'Recognition and Redistribution', *New Left Review*, vol. 212 (1995), pp. 68–93.

14 Fredric Jameson, 'Marxism and Postmodernism', in *The Cultural Turn* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 48.

15 'A Workshop on "Left Conservatism" ', Center for Cultural Studies, University of California at Santa Cruz, 1998.

16 Judith Butler, 'Merely Cultural', *Social Text*, vols 52/53, nos 3 and 4 (1997), pp. 265–277, 276, 267.

17 Terry Eagleton, 'Base and Superstructure Revisited', *New Literary History*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2000), pp. 231–241, 239.

18 Conference Abstract Book, 2000, section 12, no page number.
19 Poststructuralism was embraced for undermining the concept of language, and indeed of any signifying system, as a transparent medium for the neutral transmission of information. For Edward Said the study of colonial discourse was facilitated by Foucault's 'understanding of how the will to exercise dominant control in society and history, has also discovered a way to clothe, disguise, rarefy, and wrap itself systematically in the language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge'; *The World, the Text and the Critic* (1983) (London: Faber, 1984), p. 216. Gayatri Spivak, on the other hand, found that a postcolonial criticism could take 'analytic and interventionist advantage' of Derrida's deconstruction of the discursive apparatus to occidental reason since 'his sustained and developing work on the *mechanics* of the constitution of the Other' posed 'the question of how to keep the ethnocentric Subject from establishing itself by selectively defining an Other'; 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), rep. in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: a Reader*, ed. and intro. by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London: Harvester, 1993).
20 Peter Hulme, 'Subversive Archipelagos: Colonial Discourse and the Break-Up of Continental Theory', *Dispositio* XIV, vols 36–38 (1989), pp. 1–23, p. 3.
21 See especially Fanon, 'Concerning Violence', in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) (London: Macgibbon and Gee, 1965). On anti-colonialist traditions, see Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, especially Ch. 3, 'Resistance and Opposition'; Neil Lazarus, 'Disavowing Decolonization', *Research in African Literature*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1993), pp. 69–98; Benita Parry, 'Resistance Theory/Theorizing Resistance', in this volume.
22 As a sample consider Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia, 1983); Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* (London: Methuen, 1986); V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988); Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).
23 Said's work accommodates 'the rediscovery of what had been suppressed in the natives' past by the processes of imperialism' and is attentive to written or remembered accounts of native insubordination and rebellion, while Mudimbe addresses the problems of translating African gnosis.
24 For Gayatri Spivak the task of postcolonial work is neither to recover signs of self-representation or of 'the disenfranchized speaking for themselves' nor to address victimage 'by the assertion of identity'. See 'Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value', in P. Collier and H. Geyer-Ryan, eds, *Literary Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 56.
25 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 241.
26 Laura Chrisman, 'Inventing Postcolonial Theory: Polemical Observations', *Pretexts*, vol. 5, nos 1–2 (1995), pp. 205–212, p. 208.
27 Gyan Prakash, 'Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography', *Social Text*, vols 31/32 (1993), pp. 8–19, 16–17.
28 See 'Liberation Theory: Variations on Themes of Marxism and Modernity' in this volume.
29 Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 6.
30 Keya Ganguly argues that 'poststructuralism's apotheosis of otherness often proceeds by rendering otherness as an aporetic predicament of linguistic difference rather than as the outcome of the brute realities of domination', and in a footnote remarks on Derrida's 'wholly unsupportable claim that he, as a *pied noir*, is the most alienated of all victims of French colonialism on account of the fact that the Algerians at least had their own language'; 'Adorno, Authenticity, Critique' in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Crystal Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 254.
31 Tim Brennan, 'Postcolonial Studies between the European Wars: an Intellectual History' in Bartolovich and Lazarus, eds, *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*.
32 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 110, and *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: New Left Books, 1980), pp. 37–42.
33 Because colonialism's histories are of course differential, opportunities for discovering a

'middle ground' are greater, for example, in nineteenth-century India than in the plantation colonies of the Caribbean, the settler regimes of Southern Africa, the Americas and Australia, and the territorial expropriations in North and sub-Saharan Africa. All the same it remains the case that in India the political and cultural traffic which did occur was between the rulers and India's regional and national elites, and not its overwhelmingly peasant populations.

34 Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. xi, 8.

35 Annie Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 6.

36 See for example Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 'Unpacking the West: How European is Europe?', in *Racism, Modernity, Identity*, ed. Ali Rattansi and Sallie Westwood (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

37 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.6.

38 See the extensive work of Samir Amin and Immanuel Wallerstein.

39 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1965), p. 29.

40 Some time ago Ania Loomba and Suvir Kaul remarked that the privileging in western academies of 'the experience of migration or exile' has meant that ' "diaspora" swells to demarcate the entire experience of post-coloniality', and 'the subject-position of the "hybrid" is routinely expanded as the only political-conceptual space for revisionist enunciation'; 'Location, Culture, Post-Coloniality', *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 16 (1994), pp. 3–30, 8.

41 See Neil Lazarus, 'Transnationalism and the Alleged Death of the Nation-State', in *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), and Tim Brennan, 'The National Longing for Form', in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990).

42 In 'Gandhi, Utopianism and the Construction of Colonial Difference', Anshuman Mondal shows the tension between Gandhi's appeal to a sense of cultural difference based on a rejection of modernity and his own modernity evidenced in a commitment to social reform; *Interventions*, vol. 3, no. 3 (2001), pp. 419–438.

43 John Saul, 'Cry for the Beloved Country: the Post-Apartheid Denouement', *Monthly Review*, vol. 52, no. 8 (2001), pp. 1–51, 20.

44 Neil Lazarus, 'Charting Globalisation', *Race and Class*, vol. 40, nos 2/3 (1998/9), pp. 91–109, 106.

45 *Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha and Dispesh Chakrabarthy (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 4, 5.

46 Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 5.

47 'Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism', *New Left Review*, 7 (Jan./Feb. 2001), pp. 75–84. Brennan however is appreciative of the 'humane and thoughtful core' to cosmopolitanism exemplified in 'a mode of intellectual method most closely associated with Edward Said's worldliness – that roaming, hungry intelligence bound neither by discipline or dogma'. See *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 15. For Pheng Cheah cosmopolitanism is not identical to internationalism, its antonym being 'not nationalism but statism'; Introduction Part II, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 22.

2 Problems in current theories of colonial discourse

1 Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Europe and its Others*, vol. 1, Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), p. 234. This essay also appears in *Race and Class*, vol. 27, no. 2 (1985), and *Cultural Critique* (Fall 1955).

2 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1956), p. 183.
3 Homi Bhabha, 'Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1517', *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 1, pp. 93–94. This essay also appears in *Critical Inquiry*: ' "Race", Writing and Difference', vol. 12, no. 1 (1985).
4 Angela McRobbie, 'Strategies of Vigilance: an Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak', *Block*, vol. 10 (1955), p. 9.
5 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 17–18, 38.
6 Frantz Fanon, 'Racism and Culture', *Toward the African Revolution* (1964), trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 43.
7 Frantz Fanon, 'Concerning Violence', *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), trans. Constance Farrington (London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1965), pp. 30, 40–41.
8 Jonathan Dollimore, 'The Dominant and the Deviant: a Violent Dialectic', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 25, nos 1–2 (Spring/Summer 1956), p. 190.
9 On Fanon see David Macey, *Frantz Fanon: a Life* (London: Granta Books, 2000); *Rethinking Fanon: the Continuing Dialogue*, ed. Nigel C. Gibson (New York: Humanity Books, 1999); *Fanon: a Critical Reader*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon, T. C. Sharpley-Whiting and Renée T. White (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
10 Abdul JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics: the Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983).
11 See papers given at the 1984 MLA Convention Meeting on 'Representations of Colonization: Race, Class, Gender and the Fate of the Humanities', which in directing the discussion into representation *as* colonization signal the will of critics to self-destruct the area study. For sceptical views on the politics of deconstruction, see Barbara Foley, 'The Politics of Deconstruction', *Rhetoric and Form: Deconstruction at Yale*, ed. Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), Terry Eagleton, 'Marxism, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism', *Diacritics*, vol. 15, no. 4 (Winter 1985) and Nancy Fraser, 'The French Derrideans: Politicizing Deconstruction or Deconstructing the Political?', *New German Critique*, vol. 33 (Fall 1984).
12 For a recent study in this mode, see *The Black Presence in English Literature*, ed. David Dabydeen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).
13 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 1, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 1, 'Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow-Sacrifice', *Wedge* 718 (Winter/Spring 1985), repr. in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*, ed. and intro. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London: Harvester, 1993), and 'Imperialism and Sexual Difference', *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 8, nos 1–2 (1985).
14 Lata Mani, 'The Production of an Official Discourse on *Sati* in Early Nineteenth Century Bengal', *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 1.
15 Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Boundary 2*, vols 12, no. and 13, no. 1 (Spring/Fall 1984). See also Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1985).
16 Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).
17 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 24.
18 For a discussion of the correlation, see Sandra Gilbert, 'Rider Haggard's Heart of Darkness', *Partisan Review*, vol. 50, no. 3 (1983).
19 Homi Bhabha, 'Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', *The Politics of Theory*, Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1982 (Colchester: University of Essex, 1983), p. 200. A revised version of this essay appears as 'The Other Question', *Screen*, vol. 24, no. 6 (1983). For a discussion on Said's neglect of alternatives to Orientalism, see Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and Its Problems', *The Politics of Theory*.
20 The charge made by Abdul JanMohamed in 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 1, that

Bhabha's work rests on the assumption of 'the unity of the "colonial subject" ', would seem to rest on a misreading of Bhabha's argument.

21 Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, vol. 28 (Spring 1984), p. 126.
22 Homi Bhabha, 'Sly Civility', *October*, vol. 34 (Fall 1985), p. 74.
23 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 30.
24 Frantz Fanon, 'On National Culture', *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 179–180, 193.
25 Spivak does however acknowledge that the luminous, blazing, fighting, familial image of the Mother Durga erased by colonialist representation was restored in the hegemonic nationalist account. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', p. 129.
26 Homi Bhabha, 'Representation and the Colonial Text: a Critical Exploration of Some Forms of Mimeticism', *The Theory of Reading*, ed. Frank Gloversmith (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984).
27 Bhabha, 'Representation and the Colonial Text'.
28 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana/Collins, 1973), pp. 262–263, 265.
29 Julian Roberts, *Walter Benjamin* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 206.
30 For discussion of the problems in criticism which by dealing with 'Third World' literature on a mimetic level represses colonial difference, see Homi Bhabha, 'Representation and the Colonial Text'. Henry Louis Gates, 'Criticism in the Jungle', in *Black Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Henry Louis Gates (London: Methuen, 1984), discusses how 'mimetic and expressive theories of black literature continue to predominate over the sorts of theories concerned with discrete uses of figurative language', since the concern with 'the possible functions of black texts in non-literary arenas, takes precedence over their internal structures as acts of language and their formal status as works of art', pp. 5–6.
31 JanMohamed, *Manichean Aesthetics*, p. 265.
32 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 81.
33 Abdul JanMohamed, 'Humanism and Minority Literature: Toward a Definition of a Counter-Hegemonic Discourse', *Boundary 2*, vols 12, no. 3 to 13, no. 1 (Spring/Fall 1984). The problem of colonial and postcolonial literature written in the language of the invaders is not discussed by JanMohamed. On this see Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: James Currey, 1986), and for a dissenting view see Ali-Amin M. Mazrui, 'Ideology or Pedagogy: the Linguistic Indigenisation of African Literature', *Race and Class*, vol. 37, no. 1 (Summer 1986).
34 Edward Said, *Orientalism*, p. 13. See also Edward Said, 'Reflections on American "Left" Literary Criticism', *The World, the Text and the Critic* (London: Faber, 1984), where he questions 'why so few "great" novelists deal directly with the major social and economic facts of their existence – colonialism and imperialism – and why, too, critics of the novel have continued to honour this remarkable silence', p. 177.
35 In a review article, 'British and European Imperialism', *History Workshop*, vol. 16 (Autumn 1983), Prebon Kaarsholm writes that despite common knowledge of the importance of the nation's empire, 'it is astonishing how little energy has gone into the exploration of the foundations and functioning of imperialist ideology in Britain', and suggests that there is work to be done in examining the structure and dynamic of imperialism's discourses by using the methods of literary analysis, p. 589.
36 For a retrospect on this work, see *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies 1972–9* (London: Hutchinson, 1980).
37 See Edward Said, 'Intellectuals in the postcolonial World', *Salmagundi*, vols 70–71 (Spring/Summer 1986) for comment on his exclusion: 'One of the canonical topics of modern intellectual history has been the development of dominant discourses and disciplinary traditions in the main fields of scientific, social or cultural inquiry. Without any exceptions that I know of, the paradigms for this topic have been drawn from what is considered exclusively western sources. Foucault's work is one instance of what I mean as, in another domain, is

Raymond Williams'. I mention these two formidable scholars because in the main I am in almost total sympathy with their genealogical discoveries to which I am inestimably indebted. Yet for both of them the colonial experience is quite irrelevant and that theoretical oversight has become the norm in all cultural and scientific disciplines except in occasional studies of the history of anthropology', p. 62.

38 Francis Mulhern, 'Writing for the Future: the Politics of Literature', *New Statesman*, vol. 22 (March 1985), pp. 2–6.

39 See Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', pp. 22–23.

40 As an example, see the circumlocutory remarks of a socialist with a long and honourable record in the movement for colonial freedom: 'My own impression, for what it is worth is that the quality of life in pre-industrial societies was seldom, taken all round, even passably good . . . All this does seem to waft us towards the conclusion, unpalatable as it may be, that conquest by Europe, however sordid its motives, might be to the advantage of its victims, or their descendants'; V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to the Outside World in the Imperial Age* (1969) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. xxv–xxvi.

41 Bryan Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978). See also Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981). For a criticism of eurocentric theories of imperialism, see Thomas Hodgkin, 'Some African and Third World Theories of Imperialism', *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972).

42 *Inscriptions*, vol. 1 (December 1985), Santa Cruz Workshop, Colonial Discourse Group, University of California at Santa Cruz. See also Robert Stam and Louise Spence, 'Colonialism, Racism and Representation', *Screen*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1983): 'Our analysis draws from, and hopefully applies by extension to, the analysis of other oppressions such as sexism, class subordination and antisemitism, to all situations, that is, in which difference is transformed into "otherness" and exploited or penalised by and for power', p. 3.

43 Mc Robbie, 'Strategies of Vigilance', p. 7.

44 John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1860–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

45 Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism 1750–1914', *History Workshop*, vol. 12 (Autumn 1981), p. 24.

46 Raymond Williams, 'Problems of Materialism', *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980) and *Towards 2000* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983).

3 Resistance theory/theorizing resistance

1 For Fanon, the colonized prior to modern movements for national independence were passive, stultified, unproductive. Presumably this characterization applied only to the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa, since Algeria is credited with sustained military and cultural resistance against the French occupiers. See *Toward the African Revolution* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 65.

2 This position is elucidated and underwritten by Robert Young in *White Mythologies: Writing, History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990).

3 Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter Discourse: the Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 36.

4 These issues are addressed by amongst others Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), Diana Fuss, *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference* (London: Routledge, 1989) and, in a colonial context, Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: *Subaltern Studies* and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 22 (1988), pp. 184–224; see especially pp. 204–205. The framing of the agon of structure and agency has been questioned by Anthony Appiah, 'Tolerable Falsehoods: Agency and the Interests of Theory', in *Some Consequences of Theory*, ed. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

5 Instances are the upsurge during the late nineteenth century of messianic movements and

Ethiopian or Zionist churches in sub-Saharan Africa which Thomas Hodgkin has described as precipitating a clash between colonial and prophetic power (see *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956)); maroonage or the flight of slaves from the plantation and post-plantation systems of the Americas to an outlaw life in the mountains and forests or to other territories; the concealment of meaning from master and overseer in creole and carnival; the parodic inversions of the colonizer's images in song and dance; non-cooperation with projects of social improvement; adherence to traditions the occupiers sought to reform; idleness and malingering to circumvent and undermine the demands of enforced and indentured labour regulations; and – if one is tempted to adapt the schema of silent majorities devised by Jean Baudrillard to specify inertia as opposition to a contemporary condition saturated by information technology – silence as a weapon against political authority. See *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983). The problem here is that silence can be read either as a sign of resignation to subjugation – being reduced to silence, as marking the refusal to speak or be heard within the oppressor's system of meanings – or as a form of non-speaking subjectivity. It can also register an exclusion operated by the text – the hole in the narrative. Some of the modes listed above have been problematized by David Theo Goldberg, who maintains that 'The discourses promoting resistance to racism must not prompt identification with and in terms of categories fundamental to the discourse of oppression'. As examples of the failure to make this distinction, he cites the black separatist movement and the tactics of resistance used by plantation slaves: 'slow work and malingering undermined the plantation economy but reinforced the stereotype of laziness; self-mutilation increased labour costs but steeled the stereotype of barbarism'. See 'The Social Formation of Racist Discourse' in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 313 and 318, note 58. The terms of this strong reservation impinge on the argument for the effectivity of reverse-discourse pursued in this essay.

6 Wilson Harris, *History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas* (Georgetown, Guyana: Ministry of Information and Culture, 1974), p. 14.

7 Rashmi Bhatnagar, 'Uses and Limits of Foucault's Theory: a Study of the Theme of Origins in Edward Said's *Orientalism*', *Social Scientist* (Trivandrum), vol. 158 (1986), pp. 3–22, p. 5. Ranajit Guha however has maintained that 'the appropriation of a past by conquest carried with it the risk of rebounding on its conquerors. It can end up by sacralizing the past for the subject people and encouraging it to use it in their effort to define and affirm their own identity'; 'Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography', ed. R. Guha, *Subaltern Studies VI* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 212.

8 Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, ed. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989), p. 260.

9 Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities', in *Black Film British Cinema*, ICA Document 7 (London, 1988), pp. 27–31, p. 29.

10 Stuart Hall, 'Minimal Selves', in *The Real Me: Postmodernism and the Question of Identity*, ICA Document 6 (London, 1987), pp. 44–46, p. 45.

11 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Jonathan Rutherford, ed., *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 222.

12 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., 'Afterword: Critical Remarks' in David T. Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

13 R. B. Kitaj, *First Diasporist Manifesto* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), pp. 21, 35, 37, 39.

14 See Manthia Diawara, 'The Nature of Mother in *Dreaming River*', *Third Text*, vol. 13 (1990/1991), pp. 73–84, and Elizabeth Grosz, 'Judaism and Exile: the Ethics of Otherness', *New Formations*, vol. 12 (1990), pp. 77–88.

15 A case for the power of the reverse-discourse which uses the same categories and vocabulary as the texts of social control it contests is made by Jonathan Dollimore, citing Foucault's argument in *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: 'Deviancy returns from abjection by deploying just those terms which relegated it to that state in the first place – including "nature" and "essence" . . . A complex and revealing dialectic between the dominant and the deviant

emerges from histories of homosexual representation, especially from the homosexual (later gay) appropriations of nature and essence'; *Sexual Dissidence: Literatures, Histories, Theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 95–96.

16 Michel Pêcheux, *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 157, 159.

17 Anthony Appiah, 'Out of Africa: Topologies of Nativism', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, vol. 1/2 (1988), pp. 153–178, p. 164.

18 Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: a Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), p. 42.

19 Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Cultures of Rule, Communities of Resistance: Gender, Discourse and Tradition in Recent South Asian Historiographies', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 22 (1989), pp. 95–114, pp. 98, 100, 104.

20 See Ranajit Guha: 'peasant uprisings variously called *hool, dhing, bidroha, hangama, fituri*, etc. . . . *hizrat* or desertion *en masse* of peasants or other labouring people . . . *dharma* or protest sitting down in the offender's presence with the pledge not to move until the redress of grievance . . . *hartal* or the general suspension of public activity . . . *dharmaghat* or withdrawal of labour . . . *jat mara*, or measures to destroy the offender's caste by refusal to render such specialist services as are required to insure him and his kin against pollution . . . *danga* or sectarian, ethnic, caste and class violence involving large bodies of the subaltern population'; 'Dominance without Hegemony', p. 267.

21 Elleke Boehmer, 'Transfiguring the Colonial Body into Narrative', *Novel*, vol. 26 (1993), pp. 268–277.

22 Ella Shohat, 'Imagining Terra Incognita: the Disciplinary Gaze of Empire', *Public Culture*, vol. 3 (1991), pp. 41–70, pp. 56–57.

23 See Dollimore, who argues for avoiding a 'theoreticist' writing-off of the histories of 'essentialist politics'; *Sexual Dissidence*, pp. 44–45.

24 But nor should the cost of the 'hybridity' effected by colonialism's invasions be uncounted. Glossing Edward Brathwaite's definition of creolization as 'one's adaptation to a new environment through the loss of parts of oneself and the gain of parts of the Other', Manthia Diawara adds that one must be aware of the fact that in fusing whiteness with the seductiveness of hybridization, one is also sacrificing not only a part of blackness, but certain black people; 'The Nature of Mother in *Dreaming River*', *Third Text*, vol. 13 (1990/1991), p. 82. These certain black people, inhabiting extant although neither static or intact autochthonous cultures, emerge in Caroline Rooney's reading of a story by Ama Ata Aidoo where she draws attention to a narration which legitimates 'a culture that predates and is not erased by colonial founding fathers who are not then an originating point of reference', and criticizes the amnesia of those who, having embraced the metropolitan culture, renounce their natal communities. See 'Are We in the Company of Feminists?: a Preface for Bessie Head and Ama Ata Aidoo', in *Diverse Voices: Essays in Twentieth Century Women Writers*, ed. Harriet Devine Jump (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 214–246, p. 222.

25 See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993).

26 In the late 1940s African writers and political activists close to the Communist Party – Gabriel d'Arboussier, Albert Franklin and Abdoulaye Ly – attacked Négritude for failing to give expression to the anti-imperialist revolution as a national liberation struggle fought by all classes, dismissing it as a mystification which placed the accent on the irrational aspects of African life and claimed the existence of a unique Negro culture – charges of which Césaire was exonerated. See Jacques Louis Hyams, *Leopold Sedar Senghor: an Intellectual Biography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971). See Wole Soyinka, who faults Négritude for negative and contradictory definitions, distortions of the African world-view and reinstalling blasphemies about the African as a non-analytic being; *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

27 During the 1950s and 1960s black writers who were the step-children of an anglophone oppression tended to emphasize their western formation – see for example James Baldwin, 'Princes and Power' in *Nobody Knows my Name* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964) and Ezekiel

Mphahlele, 'Remarks on Négritude', in Hyams, *Leopold Sedar Senghor*; another move was to stress the fusion of African strains with other lines in the making of the African-American identity. See Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1967).

28 Mphahlele allowed the historical fact of Négritude as both a protest and a positive assertion of African cultural values, and Soyinka conceded that 'it had provided a life-line along which the dissociated individual could be pulled back to the source of his material essence and offered a prospect for the coming into being of new black social entities' (*Myth, Literature and the African World*, p. 64).

29 See Michael Dash, 'Marvellous Realism: the Way out of Négritude', *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 13 (1973), pp. 57–70.

30 René Depestre, 'Problems of Identity for the Black Man in the Caribbean', in *Carifesta Forum: an Anthology of Twenty Caribbean Voices*, ed. John Hearne (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1976), pp. 61–67, pp. 62–63. Depestre was subsequently to put a greater distance between his stance and that of Négritude, attributing 'its original sin . . . and the adventures that destroyed its initial project' to 'the spirit that made it possible: anthropology', a criticism which Mudimbe reads as referring to techniques of ideological manipulation. Cited in Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988), p. 187.

31 Abiola Irele, 'Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa', in Isaac Mowoe and Richard Bjornson, eds, *The Legacies of Empire* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 121–158. See also Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*.

32 Cited in James A. Arnold, *Modernism and Négritude: the Poetry and Poetics of Aimé Césaire* (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 172. Marcien Towa's article 'Aimé Césaire, prophète de la revolution des peuples noirs' was published in *Abbia* (Cameroon), no. 21 (1969). *Abbia* was founded in 1962 by William Eteki, whose influential policies/politics attempted to reconcile Négritude with scientific knowledge in constructing a new African philosophy. See Richard Bjornson, *The African Quest for Freedom and Identity: Cameroonian Writing and the National Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 173–174.

33 There was some continuity in Haiti, where during the 1920s the journal *Revue Indigène* was established, while in the 1930s a group of intellectuals and writers calling themselves Les Griots (a name borrowed from an African term for the profession of poet-historian-musician) coined the word 'nigreté' to signal a rejection of assimilation and the reconstruction of an African identity. Similarly there were moves by literary coteries in Puerto Rico, Cuba and Brazil to locate the black communities of the territories within an African continuum and effect a bond of solidarity with other products of the African dispersal – as there were in the Harlem Renaissance.

34 Abiola Irele, 'The Theory of Négritude', *Political Theory and Ideology in African Society*, proceedings of a seminar held at the Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University (Edinburgh, 1970), pp. 162–190.

35 Césaire's *Letter to Maurice Thorez* (1956) criticized the Communist Party's position on the Caribbean dependencies, questioned the applicability of orthodox Marxist analysis to Martinican conditions, rejected the thesis that the urban proletariat, which scarcely existed in Martinique, was necessarily the vanguard of revolution, and reiterated his adherence to Négritude; cited in Arnold, *Modernism and Négritude*, p. 172.) Two years later Césaire, apparently at the behest of André Malraux, supported De Gaulle's constitutional referendum whereby Martinique became an overseas department of the Fifth Republic.

36 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 57, 59.

37 So novel are language, syntax and trope that commentators in glossing his poetry have been moved to their own displays of stylistic pyrotechnics: 'A poem of Césaire . . . bursts and turns on itself as a fuse, as bursting suns which turn and explode in new suns, in a perpetual surpassing. It is not a question of meeting in a calm unity of opposites but rather a forced coupling into a single sex, of black in its opposition to white'; Jean Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*, introduction to *An Anthology of New Negro and Malagasy Poetry* (1948) (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1976), p. 36.

38 James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 181, 185.
39 Aimé Césaire, *Collected Poetry*, trans. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 369–371.
40 See Eshleman and Smith, introduction to Césaire, *Collected Poetry*, p. 11 and Arnold, *Modernism and Négritude*, p. 218.
41 See Irele: 'Césaire's poetry . . . becomes quite literally an affect; a drama of consciousness, a sloughing off of processes by which the complex of negative associations through which the black subject has been forced to perceive himself is overturned and transformed into a mode of mental liberation and ultimately of self-acceptance' (Irele, 'Contemporary Thought in French Speaking Africa', p. 137). In their introduction to Césaire's poetry, Eshleman and Smith refer to French usages of words to designate things or persons belonging to the black race: the euphemestic 'noir', the derogatory 'negro', and the more neutral 'negre'; 'it is in this light that one must read Césaire's use of the word "negre" and its derivatives "Négritude, "negrillon' and "negraille": he was making up a family of words based on what he considered the most insulting way to refer to black. The paradox, of course, was that this implicit reckoning was the necessary step on the path to a new self-image and spiritual rebirth'; introduction to Césaire, *Collected Poetry*, p. 27).
42 James Snead, 'Black Independent Film', in *Black Film British Cinema*, ICA Document 7 (London, 1988), pp. 47–50, p. 48.
43 Kobena Mercer, 'Black Art and the Burden of Representation, *Third Text*, vol. 10 (1990), pp. 61–78, p. 77.
44 Henry Louis Gattes, Jr., 'Critical Fanonism', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17 (1991), pp. 457–470.
45 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: MacGibbon and Gee, 1965), p. 170.
46 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), p. 16.
47 For Mudimbe and Irele, Sartre's contribution was to have shifted Négritude from an ethnic to an historical concept and a revolutionary project, Mudimbe crediting Sartre with transforming it into a major political event and a philosophical critique of colonialism, while at the same time subjugating 'the militant's generosity of mind and heart to the fervour of a political philosophy' (p. 84).
48 The movement of Fanon's argument resembles the tropological production of the different registers to blackness in *Notebook of a Return to the Nativeland*.
49 Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), pp. 26–27.
50 The cultural agenda proposed by Fanon, in which an 'upward springing trend' is required in writing, dancing and singing, iterates the desiderata heard before and since in the programmes for the arts drawn up by radical political movements, bringing to mind Césaire's ironic reprimand to Depestre for supporting the then party line on poetry: 'Comrade Depestre / It is undoubtedly a very serious problem / the relation between poetry and Revolution / the content determines the form / and what about keeping in mind as well the dialectical / backlash by which the form taking its revenge / chokes the poem like an accursed fig tree' (*Collected Poetry*, p. 371).
51 Aimé Césaire, 'Culture and Colonialism', cited in Arnold, *Modernism and Négritude*, pp. 185–187.
52 For Amilcar Cabral's writing on culture, see Chapter 5 in this volume.
53 Peter Worsley suggests that 'It is more than possible that Roumain's poem rather than the Internationale, was the source of Fanon's title. It is a poem that saw the revolt of colour and the revolt of class as overlapping . . . Roumain, after a "furious embittered rhapsody on the sufferings of the Negro", stops himself short with a POURTANT in capital letters – "And yet / I only want to belong to your race / workers and peasants of all countries" '; 'Frantz Fanon and the Lumpenproletariat', in John Saville and Ralph Miliband, eds, *The Socialist Register* (London: The Merlin Press, 1972), p. 197.
54 Albert Memmi, *Dominated Man: Notes Towards a Portrait* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), p. 88.
55 Anthony Appiah, 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 17 (1990), pp. 336–357, p. 353.

4 Signs of the times

1 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).
2 See for example V. Y. Mudimbe, 'Reading and Teaching Pierre Bourdieu', *Transition*, vol. 61 (1994), pp. 144–160; Anthony Arnove, 'Pierre Bourdieu, the Sociology of Intellectuals, and the Language of African Literature', *Novel*, vol. 26, no. 3 (1993), pp. 276–295; Toril Moi, 'Appropriating Bourdieu: Feminist Theory and Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology of Culture', *New Literary History*, vol. 22 (1991), pp. 1017–1049; Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Oxford: Polity Press/Blackwell, 1994).
3 Christopher Norris, *The Truth about Postmodernism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).
4 Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994).
5 As examples, see Abdul JanMohamed, 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory: the Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1985); Laura Chrisman, 'The Imperial Unconscious? Representations of Imperial Discourse', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1990), pp. 38–58; Neil Lazarus, 'Disavowing Decolonization: Fanon, Nationalism, and the Problematic of Representation in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 24, no. 4 (1993), pp. 69–98; Arif Dirlik, 'The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 20 (1994), pp. 329–356; Masao Miyoshi, 'A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 19 (1993), pp. 726–751. Also the papers of Chrisman, Miyoshi and Lazarus given at the conference 'The Politics of Identity, Secular Criticism and the Gravity of History: The Work of Edward Said', Warwick University, March 1994, and collected as *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart in association with *New Formations*, 1995).
6 For critiques addressing Bhabha, see Lazarus, 'Disavowing Decolonization'; Ania Loomba, 'Overworlding the "Third World" ', *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 13, nos 1–2 (1991), pp. 164–191. Loomba also cites the criticisms of Bhabha made by Suvir Kaul in 'The Indian Academic and Resistance to Theory', p. 174. See also Chapter 2 in this volume; Manthia Diawara, 'The Nature of Mother in *Dreaming Rivers*', *Third Text*, vol. 13 (1990/1), pp. 73–84; Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture*; Alex Callinicos, 'Wonders Taken for Signs: Homi Bhabha's Postcolonialism', in *Post-ality: Marxism and Postmodernism*, ed. Masud Zavarzadeh, Teresa L. Ebert and Donald Morton (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1995); Lawrence A. Phillips, 'Lost in Space', *Scrutiny 2* (South Africa) vol. 3, no. 1 (1998), pp. 16–25; Geeta Kapur, 'Globalization and Culture: Navigating the Void', in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1998).
7 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p. 292.
8 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993).
9 Michel Foucault, 'Theatricum Philosophicum', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 185.
10 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 344.
11 A harsher estimate of the implications of this style is offered by Dirlik, who finds Bhabha to be 'a master of political mystification and theoretical obfuscation', observing that while the same tendencies are apparent in much postcolonial writing, these are rarely evident 'with the same virtuosity (and incomprehensibleness) that he brings to it'; 'The Postcolonial Aura', p. 333, n. 6.
12 See Anne McClintock, 'The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism" '; Ella Shohat, 'Notes on the "Post-Colonial" ', *Social Text*, vols 31/32 (1992), pp. 84–98 and 99–113, and Laura Chrisman, 'Inventing Postcolonial Theory: Polemical Observations', *Pretexts*, vol. 5, nos 1–2 (1995), pp. 205–212. Shohat suggests that 'postcolonial theory' should articulate itself as ' "post-anti-colonial critique", as a movement beyond a relatively binaristic, fixed and stable mapping of power relations between "colonizer/colonized" and "center/periphery" ',

pp. 105, 108. I would dispute Shohat's designation of 'Third World nationalist discourse'; see Chapter 3 in this volume. It is Lazarus's contention that Bhabha uses the concept of post-coloniality *against* the nationalism or nationalitarianism of liberation discourses, thereby repeating the move prevalent amongst radical critics, to disavow nationalism *tout court* by positioning nationalist discourses, both metropolitan and anti-colonial, 'as coercive, totalizing, elitist, authoritarian, essentialist, and reactionary', and hence obscuring these 'as the open site of political and ideological contestation'; 'Disavowing Decolonization', p. 70.

13 Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 32 (1990), and 'Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography', *Social Text*, vols 31/32 (1993), pp. 8–19.

14 See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), and Michael Sprinker, 'The National Question: Said, Ahmad, Jameson', *Public Culture*, vol. 6, no. 1 (1993), pp. 3–29.

15 Arif Dirlik, 'Post-Socialism/Flexible Production: Marxism in Contemporary Radicalism', *Polygraph*, vol. 6/7 (1993), pp. 133–169.

16 See Houstan A. Baker, Jr., *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 75–79.

17 See for example V. Y. Mudimbe's discussion of Africanist discourse, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (London: James Currey, 1988); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), and Laura Chrisman, *Re-reading the Imperial Romance: British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner and Plaatje* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

18 Cf. Eagleton's critique of the 'anti-realist' position in the work of post-Marxists which rejects 'the kind of classical epistemology which assumes some match or "correspondence" between our concepts and the way the world is. Rather, objects should be considered not as external to a realm of discourse which seeks to approximate them, but as wholly internal to such discourses, constituted by them through and through . . . as well as merely inverting the relation between signified and signifier. Hindess and Hirst . . . also effect a fatal semiotic confusion between *signified* and *referent* . . . The relation between an object and its means of representation is crucially not the same as that between a material practice and its ideological legitimation or mystification . . . Discourse for them "produces" real objects; and ideological language is therefore just one way in which these objects get constituted. But this simply fails to identify the specificity of such language, which is not just any way of constituting reality, but one with the more particular function of explaining, rationalizing, concealing, legitimating, and so on . . . With Laclau and Mouffe, what Perry Anderson has called "the inflation of discourse" in post-structuralist thought reaches its apogee. Heretically deviating from their mentor Michel Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe deny all validity to the distinction between "discursive" and "non-discursive" practices, on the grounds that a practice is structured along the lines of a discourse . . . A way of *understanding* an object is simply projected into the object itself . . . The category of discourse is inflated to the point where it imperializes the whole world, eliding the distinction between thought and material reality'; *Ideology* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 209, 219.

19 This does not prevent Bhabha from labouring the point: 'It [the function of theory] makes us aware that our political referents and priorities – the people, the community, class struggle, anti-racism, gender difference, the assertion of an anti-imperialist, black or third perspective – are not there in some primordial, naturalistic sense. Nor do they reflect a unitary or homogeneous political object. They make sense only as they come to be constructed in . . . discourses' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 26).

20 Saussure's concept of language as a system of arbitrary and conventional signs, each defined not by essential properties but by its difference from other signs, maps the relational nature and inner operations of the linguistic system. As Christopher Norris has argued, Saussure's lack of interest in the referential aspect of language, justified as 'a matter of convenience or methodological priority', does not provide 'a warrant for extending the strictly heuristic principle to the point where any mention of the referent – any appeal beyond the

self-enclosed domain of signification – is regarded as a lapse into naive ("positivist" or "metaphysical") ways of thought' (*The Truth about Postmodernism*, p. 182).

21 In 'Doubting the New World Order: Marxism, Realism, and the Claims of Postmodernist Social Theory', *Differences: a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1991), pp. 94–138, Neil Lazarus argues that the 'post-Marxist' position prematurely 'extirpates *realism* in the course of its campaign against *empiricism*, reverting to an epistemological conventionalism that shaded almost inevitably into idealism, pragmatism, and, citing Roy Bhaskar, "judgmental relativism" '. Furthermore, postmodernist theorists following Foucault insist that discourse 'is not a language about the social; on the contrary, it is not to be thought of as any kind of signifying practice exercised upon the social. *There is no social; there is only discourse*', pp. 115, 123–124.

22 This problem is noted by Robert Young in his otherwise positive reading of Bhabha: see 'The Ambivalence of Bhabha' in *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990).

23 Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 11.

24 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), trans. Constance Farrington (London: MacGibbon and Gee, 1965), p. 30.

25 For a development of this argument, see Chapter 3 in this volume.

26 Cf. Stuart Hall's generous estimates of these and other anti-colonialists in 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 223.

27 See Chapter 2 in this volume and Cedric Robinson, 'The Appropriation of Frantz Fanon', *Race and Class*, vol. 35, no. 1 (1993), pp. 79–91. That Bhabha's 'catachrestic' rewriting is untrue to the language and spirit of Fanon's text has since been forcefully argued by Neil Lazarus in an extensive critique where he contends that 'Bhabha's textualism and his theoretical idealism prevent him from engaging adequately with the vastly differential thrusts, effects, and modes of domination/subjection as practized at different times by different powers in different parts of the world, or even with single colonies subject to the vicissitudes of uneven development. The problem derives, arguably, from the fact that although Bhabha predicates his theory of colonial discourse upon the work of Fanon, he contrives to read him "back to front" – that is from *The Wretched of the Earth* to *Black Skin, White Masks* – thereby falsifying the testimony of Fanon's own evolution as a theorist'. By reading *Black Skin, White Masks* 'not merely tendentiously but more specifically *against* Fanon's subsequent intellectual production', Bhabha uses it 'to disavow Fanon's political commitments and his theorization of the African revolution'; 'Disavowing Decolonization', p. 87.

28 See David Harvey, 'Class Relations, Social Justice and the Politics of Difference', in *Principled Positions: Postmodernism and the Rediscovery of Value*, ed. Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993), pp. 85–120.

29 For a believer's view, see R. Radhakrishnan, 'Poststructuralist Politics – towards a Theory of Coalition', in *Postmodernism/Jameson/Critique*, ed. Douglas Kellner (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989).

30 Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'Not You/Like You: Postcolonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference', *Inscriptions*, vols 3/4 (1988), pp. 71–77, p. 73.

31 This is an argument I elaborate in Chapter 3 in this volume.

32 See Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency' in *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 46.

33 Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World-System* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press and London: BFI Publishing, 1992), p. 199.

34 Christopher Miller, *Theories of Africans: Francophone Literature and Anthropology in Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 27–28.

35 Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

36 Ranajit Guha, 'Dominance Without Hegemony and its Historiography', *Subaltern Studies* VI (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 210–301.

37 Cf. Chrisman on 'the neglect or marginalisation of those geographical regions which experienced a different form of colonialism' in 'Inventing Postcolonial Theory: Polemical Observations', *Pretexts*, vol. 5, nos 1–2 (1995), pp. 205–212.
38 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 264.
39 Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989) and Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).
40 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).
41 Kobena Mercer, 'Welcome to the Jungle', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 55.
42 Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities', in *Black Film, British Cinema*, ICA Document 7 (London, 1988), pp. 27–31, p. 29.
43 Rasheed Araeen, 'How I Discovered my Oriental Soul in the Wilderness of the West', *Third Text*, vol. 18 (1992), pp. 85–107; Geeta Kapur, 'Contemporary Cultural Practice: Some Polemical Categories', *Third Text*, vol. 11 (1990), pp. 109–117, p. 116.
44 Manthia Diawara, 'The Nature of Mother in *Dreaming River*', *Third Text*, vol. 13 (1990/1991), p. 82.
45 Bruce Robbins, 'Review Essay: Colonial Discourse: A Paradigm and its Discontents', *Victorian Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1992), pp. 209–214, p. 212.
46 See Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: the Left and the End of Empire 1918–1964* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
47 Francis Mulhern, 'Althusser in Literary Studies', in *Althusser: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gregory Elliott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 166.
48 Antony Easthope, *British Post-structuralism since 1968* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 34–35, 72.
49 A. Sivanandum, 'All That Melts into Air is Solid: the Hokum of New Times', *Race and Class*, vol. 31, no. 3 (1989), pp. 1–30, p. 23.
50 For a powerfully argued case on the continuing need for forms of class politics, see Harvey, 'Class Relations, Social Justice and the Politics of Difference'.
51 Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Books, 1983.)
52 Tim Brannan, 'Black Theorists and Left Antagonists', *The Minnesota Review*. vol. 37 (1991), pp. 80–113.

5 Liberation theory: variations on themes of Marxism and modernity

1 Exceptions include Tim Brennan, Laura Chrisman, Neil Lazarus, Edward Said, Sonny San Juan and Robert Young.
2 Those troubled by the refusal of continental philosophy to engage with other cognitive traditions have urged colleagues to be critical of the tradition to which they adhere, and more open to systems construed elsewhere. See Robert Bernasconi, 'Philosophy's Paradoxical Parochialism', in *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998) and 'African Philosophy v. Continental Philosophy', in *Postcolonial African Philosophy*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). Discussion on the omissions from philosophical discourse has thus far centred on the status, or rather the dismissal, of African philosophy. See Lucius Outlaw, *On Race and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1996); Tsenay Serequeberhan, 'Fanon and the Contemporary Discourse of African Philosophy', in *Fanon: a Critical Reader*, ed. Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Renée T. White (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), and 'The Critique of Eurocentrism', in *Postcolonial African Philosophy*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). For Serequeberhan the distinguishing feature of the contemporary discourse of African philosophy is the indispensable and unprecedented acknowledgement of philosophy's 'overt social purpose'. Naming Fanon as the forebear of

this orientation, he proposes a parallel between 'the hermeneutical turn' in African philosophy and the 'national-ideological' thinking generated within liberation struggles; 'Fanon and the Contemporary Discourse of African Philosophy', pp. 246–248.

3 Göran Therborn, 'Dialectics of Modernity: On Critical Theory and the Legacy of Twentieth Century Marxism', *New Left Review*, no. 215 (1996), pp. 59–82, p. 74.

4 Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 75.

5 Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1983), pp. 16–17.

6 Michael Sprinker, *Imaginary Relations: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Theory of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1987), p. 233.

7 In a posthumous essay Michael Sprinker introduced a further caveat to assertions about the absence of politics in western Marxism when tracing the leftward move of Benjamin – a figure in that milieu although on the fringes of the Institute for Social Research. By recovering in Benjamin's writings a growing identification with Marxist historical method and communist politics, Sprinker locates this route as distinct from the one taken by the luminaries of the Frankfurt School who were without roots in either the labour movement or Marxism, and whose drift away from any affiliation to left politics was registered in the substitution of 'critical theory' for the previous 'materialist theory'; 'The Grand Hotel Abyss', *New Left Review*, no. 237 (Sept.-Oct. 1999), pp. 115–136.

8 Communication with author.

9 Gregory Elliot, *Althusser: the Detour of Theory* (London: Verso, 1987), p. 252 and *Althusser: a Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). In print is an essay on Wilfredo Lam, the surrealist Cuban painter and anti-imperialist radical: see *Ecrits philosophiques et politiques*, vol. 2 (Paris: IMEC, 1995).

10 Joseph McCarney, 'For and Against Althusser', *New Left Review*, no. 176 (1989), pp. 115–128, pp. 126–127.

11 Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (1965), trans. Ben Brewster (1969) (London: Verso, 1977), p. 210.

12 For a critique of Mao's Stalinism, see Isaac Deutscher, 'Maoism: its Origin and Outlook' (1966) in Robin Blackburn, ed., *Revolution and Class Struggle: a Reader in Marxist Politics* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977).

13 Robin Blackburn, introduction to Régis Debray, *Strategy for Revolution* (London: Cape, 1970), p. 11. See also Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) and Keith Reader, *Régis Debray: a Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto, 1995).

14 See Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, eds, *Régis Debray and the Latin American Revolution* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1968).

15 'Letter from Louis Althusser', 1 March 1967, Appendix 2 to Debray's *A Critique of Arms*, vol. 1 (1974) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977).

16 Since the completion of this essay a collection of Sartre's writings on colonialism has appeared: *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*, preface by Robert Young and introduction by Azzedine Haddour, trans. Azzedine Haddour, Steve Brewer and Terry McWilliams (London: Routledge, 2001).

17 Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Black Orpheus', introduction to *An Anthology of New Negro and Malagasy Poetry* (1948) (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1976), pp. 14 and 41.

18 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), trans. Charles Lam Markmann (1967) (London: Pluto Press, 1986).

19 Jean-Paul Sartre, Preface to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), trans. Constance Farrington (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965), p. 10.

20 Jean-Paul Sartre, introduction to *Lumumba Speaks: the Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba 1958–61* (1963) (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1972). Since the completion of this essay Ludo De Witte's study *The Assassination of Lumumba* has appeared (London: Verso, 2001). The publication coincided with a film on the death of Lumumba.

21 Frantz Fanon, 'Lumumba's Death: Could We Do Otherwise?', in *Toward the African Revolution* (1964), trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 197.

22 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sartre on Cuba* (1961) (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974).

23 This assessment is in line with Sartre's notion of the mortal danger of scarcity as a material

given and a negative force defining human relationships: 'The origin of struggle always lies . . . in some concrete antagonism whose material condition is scarcity'; *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), trans. Allan Sheridan-Smith, ed. Jonathan Rée (London: New Left Books, 1976), p. 113.

24 Edward Said, 'My Encounter with Sartre', *London Review of Books*, vol. 22, no. 11 (1 June 2000), pp. 42–43.

25 Mark Poster, *Sartre's Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), pp. 112–113.

26 Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France: from Sartre to Althusser* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 269.

27 Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 297, 299.

28 Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 255.

29 Despite which James wrote as sympathetically of Nkrumah's achievements and downfall as Sartre had done about the detours of Lumumba's radicalism. See Anthony Bogues, *Caliban's Freedom: the Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James* (London: Pluto Press, 1997) and Paul Buhle, ed., *CLR James: his Life and Work* (London: Allison and Busby, 1986).

30 *The CLR James Reader*, ed. Anne Grimshaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 303.

31 See for example Thomas Richardson, ed., *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 1.

32 In his early writings, Nehru traces the genesis of nineteenth-century imperialism to capitalism, and writing in 1939, he considered that the 'great world crisis and slump seemed to justify Marxist analysis . . . The Marxian philosophy appeals to me in a broad sense and helps me to understand the processes of history . . . Liberty and democracy have no meaning without equality, and equality cannot be established so long as the principal instruments of production are privately owned . . . Class struggles are inherent in the present system . . . I think India and the world will have to march in [the] direction of socialism . . . But India has not accepted this goal, and our immediate objective is political independence. We must remember this and not confuse the issue'; Jawaharlal Nehru, *The First Sixty Years*, vols I and II, ed. Dorothy Norman (London: The Bodley Head, 1965), vol. II, pp. 544, 546–547, 552; vol. I, pp. 278, 625. Julius Nyerere defined 'African socialism' as following Christian precepts, rooted in the communal values of traditional society, and committed to destroying exploitation and injustice, hence making it impossible to interpret 'Africanization' as the replacement of non-African landlords, employers and capitalists with their African counterparts; Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1968). A more robust appropriation of Marxism was made by a now unrecognizable Robert Mugabe: 'The Party [ZANU, Zimbabwe African National Union] has accepted scientific socialism as its guiding philosophy . . . We . . . have a duty to read and understand what the fathers of that theory actually said. We also have to examine that theory in the light of our history and the environment of our country'; Robert Mugabe, *Our War of Liberation: Speeches, Articles, Interviews 1976–1979* (Harare: Mambo Press, 1983), p. 38.

33 The notion of any such division between theories promoting revolutionary political practice – which in the last instance is the reason for Marxism's existence – and critique is rejected by amongst others Etienne Balibar, who contends that there is no distinction between the historical, economic and philosophical writings of Marx; Etienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* (London: Verso, 1995).

34 For some examples on South Africa see I. B. Tabata, *The Awakening of a People* (1950), intro. Dora Taylor (Nottingham: Russell Press, 1974) and Neville Alexander (No Sizwe), *One Azania, One Nation: the National Question in South Africa* (London: Zed Press, 1979). On Filipino liberation movements see E. San Juan, *Beyond Postcolonial Theory* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997); on Latin America see Tim Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); on Guyana, see Walter Rodney, *Walter Rodney Speaks: the Making of an African Intellectual*, intro. Robert Hill, foreward by Howard Dudson (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990); on India see Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885–1947* (1983) (London: Macmillan, 1989). See also Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), trans. Joan

Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972) and Norman Miller and Roderick Aya, eds, *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World* (New York: The Free Press, 1971).

35 Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (1913), ed. J. Fineberg (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936).

36 See Ernest Mandel, *Trotsky as Alternative*, trans. Gus Fagan (London: Verso, 1995).

37 Kwame Nkrumah, *Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf Books, 1973), pp. 489–499.

38 *Thomas Sankara Speaks: the Burkina Faso Revolution 1983–87*, trans. Samatha Anderson (New York: Pathfinder, 1988), p. 33.

39 Similarly, Angostinho Neto did not consider that formal independence in Angola constituted the attainment of revolutionary goals, regarding the armed rebellion as 'a school . . . the means whereby the people will continue the struggle in the future'; *MPLA: Revolution in Angola*, by members of the MPLA (London: Merlin Press, 1972), p. 7.

40 *MPLA: Revolution in Angola*, p. 19.

41 Frelimo, *Mozambique Revolution: The Official Organ of FRELIMO* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Jan.-March 1974; repr. and distributed by Liberation Support Movement Information Center, Richmond, Ont., Canada), p. 3.

42 Frelimo, *Establishing People's Power to Serve the Masses* (Toronto, Ont.: Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa, 1976), p. 3.

43 Antonio Gramsci, 'The Modern Prince' (1933/1934) in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 198.

44 See Amilcar Cabral, 'The Weapon of Theory' (1966) in *Revolution in Guinea: an African People's Struggle* (London: Stage 1, 1969).

45 Amilcar Cabral, *The Struggle in Guinea* (Cambridge, MA: Africa Research Group, no date), being a compilation of his speeches given at the Frantz Fanon Centre in Milan in 1964, p. 437.

46 Amilcar Cabral, *Toward Final Victory: Selected Speeches and Documents* (Partido Africano da Independencia de Guine and Cabo Verde Guinea-Bissau: Canada: LSM Information Center Press, 1974), pp. 87–88.

47 Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden* (London: James Currey, 1992), p. 299.

48 Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

49 As Eqbal Ahmad has observed, a revolution must not only 'promise a new vision of society', but must also 'be congruent with the old culture [since] the symbols of revolution and styles of leadership derive heavily from the local culture and constitute the creative links between the old and the new, between the mystical and the rational bases of legitimacy'; 'Revolutionary Warfare and Counterinsurgency', in *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World*, ed. Norman Miller and Roderick Aya (New York: The Free Press, 1971), pp. 63–64.

50 Frelimo, *Mozambique Revolution*, p. 3.

51 See Thomas Hodgkin, 'Nkrumah's Radicalism', *Présence Africaine*, vol. 85 (1973), pp. 62–72, p. 69.

52 See Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1964).

53 The tensions in Fanon's writing on this have been extensively examined and glossed by Neil Lazarus. See *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); 'Disavowing Decolonization: Fanon, Nationalism and the Problematic of Representation in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1993), pp. 69–97; 'Transnationalism and the Alleged Death of the Nation-State', in *Cultural Readings of Imperialism: Edward Said and the Gravity of History*, ed. K. Ansell-Pearson, et al. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997) and *National and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

54 *The Struggle for Mozambique* (1969) (London: Zed Books, 1983), pp. 104–108.

55 Lowe and Lloyd, eds, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, p. 6.

56 *Sacred Hope* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House, 1974), p. xviii.

57 Amilcar Cabral, *Toward Final Victory: Selected Speeches and Documents* (Partido Africano da Indepencisa de Guine and Cabo Verde Guinea-Bissau, Canada: LSM Information Center Press, 1974), pp. 38–45.
58 Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* (London: Heinemann, 1980), p. 143.
59 Lowe and Lloyd, eds, *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, p. 9; Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 241.
60 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Academic Freedom', *Pretexts*, vol. 5, nos 1–2 (1995), pp. 117–156, p. 146.
61 Stuart Hall, 'When was the "Postcolonial" Thinking at the Limit?', in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Lindi Curtis (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 247.
62 Simon During, 'Postcolonialism and Globalisation: a Dialectical Relation After All?', *Postcolonial Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1998), pp. 31–34.
63 Between the late 1950s and the 1980s the prominent politico-intellectuals assassinated by agents of colonial powers included the following: Patrice Lumumba (Congo/Zaire), Amilcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau), Walter Rodney (Guyana), Jacques Stéphen Alexis (Haiti), Eduardo Mondlane and Samora Machel (Mozambique), Ruth First (South Africa), Thomas Sankara (Burkina Faso).
64 Arif Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), pp. 64–65.
65 Arif Dirlik 'Post-Socialism/Flexible Production: Marxism in Contemporary Radicalism', *Polygraph*, vols 6/7 (1993), pp. 133–169, 142.
66 Arif Dirlik, 'Mao Zedong and "Chinese Marxism" ', in *Companion Encyclopaedia of Asian Philosophy*, ed. Brian Carr and Indira Mahalingam (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 69 and 70.
67 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 310.
68 Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848) (London: Verso, 1998), p. 38.
69 Samir Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization* (London: Zed Books, 1997).
70 Arif Dirlik, 'Is There History After Eurocentrism? Globalism, Postcolonialism and the Disavowal of History', *Cultural Critique*, vol. 44 (1999), pp. 1–34, p. 20.

6 Internationalism revisited or in praise of internationalism

1 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
2 Michael Sprinker, 'The National Question: Said, Ahmad, Jameson', *Public Culture*, 6, no. 1 (1993/1994), pp. 3–29.
3 Stephen Shapiro, 'Mythologies of Autonomy: Capitalist Space and Left Institutionality', to appear in *Reflexive Representations*, ed. Johannes Angermueller, Raj Kollmorgen, Joerg Meyer, Dick Wiemann, LIT: Münster, 2004.
4 Tim Brennan, 'The Empire's New Clothes', in Gopal Balakrishnan, ed., *Debating Empire* (London: Verso, 2003).
5 For a brilliant assault on those who hold positions under the 'spell of universal permanent capital', see István Mészáros, *Beyond Capital: towards a Theory of Transition* (London: The Merlin Press, 1995).
6 For a critique of the theoretical thinking of this epoch see 'From *operaismo* to "autonomist Marxism" ', *Aufheben* (no author), no. 11 (2003), pp. 24–40.
7 Paola Virno and Michael Hardt, eds, *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 1, 4. Since it is impossible to follow the arguments in *Empire* without some acquaintance with the concepts and esoteric vocabulary of the Italian extra-parliamentary left, Hardt's explanatory introduction to *Radical Thought in Italy* is an invaluable guide to the book's theoretical assumptions. Asserting that the axes of revolutionary thought within the Euro-American framework have now shifted from German philosophy, English economics and French politics to French philosophy, US economics and Italian polit-

ics, Hardt claims that Italian revolutionary politics can serve as a model 'for experimentation in new forms of political thinking that help us conceive a revolutionary practice in our times . . . the experiments conducted in laboratory Italy are now experiments of our own future' (p. 9).

8 Neil Lazarus, *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 41–51.

9 David Harvey, 'Globalization in Question', *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Winter 1995), pp. 1–17, pp. 5, 12.

10 Writing about China, Chinese scholars have shown that 'about 80% of the Chinese people live either at the bottom or the margins of society', some 14 per cent of the total available workforce or 100 million people are unemployed or pauperized, and the implementation of market-led modernization has issued in 'a return to conditions common during the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth-century' – low wages, long hours, absence of safety regulations, frequent disastrous accidents. See He Qinglian, 'China's Listing Social Structure', *New Left Review*, 5 (Sept./Oct. 2000), pp. 69–99 and Wang Hui, 'Fire at the Castle Gate', *New Left Review*, 6 (Nov./Dec. 2000).

11 Samir Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization: the Management of Contemporary Society* (London: Zed Books, 1997), p. 147.

12 Amin defines this world market as dictated by the monopolies he names as: technological, financial control of world markets; access to the planet's natural resources; media and communication monopolies; monopolies over weapons of mass destruction.

13 Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, pp. 3, 5. According to the World Outlook Report of the IMF which appeared in 2000, 'in the recent decades, nearly one fifth of the world's population have regressed. This is arguably . . . one of the greatest economic failures of the 20th century'. In the same year the World Bank reported in frustration: 'One legacy of socialism is that most people continue to believe the State has a fundamental role in promoting development and providing social services'; cited in Greg Palast, *The Best Democracy Can Buy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), pp. 50, 47.

14 Michael Mann, 'Globalization and September 11', *New Left Review*, 12 (Nov./Dec. 2001), pp. 53–54.

15 Peter Green, 'The Passage from Imperialism to Empire: a Commentary on *Empire* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri', *Historical Materialism*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2002), pp. 29–77, p. 43.

16 In reviewing George Soros's book *On Globalization*, Joseph E. Stiglitz, the economist who was fired by the World Bank for his measured criticism of its policies, mused: 'The world of international finance and economics is astonishing. What would seem to be basic, and even obvious, principles, often seem contradicted. One might have thought that money would flow from rich to the poor countries; but year after year exactly the opposite occurs.' See Joseph E. Stiglitz, 'A Fair Deal for the World', *New York Review of Books* (23 May 2002), pp. 24–26.

17 Leslie Sklair, 'Social Movements and Global Capitalism', in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998). For some statements from the horses' mouths on the new social movements and notions of a new internationalism, from a series entitled 'Movements' in *New Left Review*, see Naomi Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons', *New Left Review*, 9 (May/June 2001), pp. 81–89; John Sellars, 'The Ruckus Society', *New Left Review*, 10 (July/Aug. 2001), pp. 71–85; José Bové, 'A Farmers' International?', *New Left Review*, 12 (Nov./Dec. 2001), pp. 89–109; David Graeber, 'For a New Anarchism', *New Left Review*, 13 (Jan./Feb. 2002), pp. 61–73.

18 John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 157.

19 Ray Kiely, 'Actually Existing Globalisation, Deglobalisation, and the Political Economy of Anticapitalist Protest', *Historical Materialism*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2002), pp. 93–121, pp. 115–116, n. 95.

20 Ernest Mandel, *Trotsky as Alternative*, trans. Gus Fagan (London: Verso, 1995), pp. 80–81.

21 Antonio Gramsci, 'The Modern Prince', in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 133.

22 Gramsci, 'The Modern Prince', p. 198.
23 Georg Lukács, *Lenin: a Study on the Unity of his Thought* (London: New Left Books, [1924] 1967), p. 26.
24 Peter Waterman, 'Internationalism is Dead! Long Live Global Solidarity', in *Global Visions*, ed. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs and Jill Cutler (Boston: South End Press, 1993), pp. 257–261, p. 257.
25 Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, eds, introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 2.
26 Hardt and Negri, *Empire* p. 49.
27 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 53. On concepts such as 'immaterial labour', 'mass intellectuality' and 'general intellect' see also Hardt in Virno and Hardt, eds, *Radical Thought in Italy*, pp. 2, 5.
28 For a close reading of the flaws in their 'faddish' version of the technological and institutional changes in the sphere of production, see pp. 34–35 in Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, 'Gems and Baubles in *Empire*', *Historical Materialism*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2002), pp. 17–43.
29 The Hardt/Negri recognition that 'the great innovative sectors of immaterial production, from design to fashion, and from electronics to science' could not function without 'the "illegal labor" of the great masses', seems not to extend to acknowledging the dependence on 'legal' manual labour.
30 Previously Paola Virno, in 'Virtuosity and Revolution: the Political Theory of Exodus', had defined the multitudes as a new species once 'radically heterogeneous to the state' but who as 'a historical *result*' of the transformations 'within the productive process and the forms of life' have become absolute protagonists obstructing and dismantling 'the mechanisms of political representation'. See Virno and Hardt, eds, *Radical Thought in Italy*, p. 201.
31 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 395.
32 See Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp. 55, 58, 60, 61.
33 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 58; the order of phrasing has been rearranged.
34 See glossary of concepts in Virno and Hardt, eds, *Radical Thought in Italy*, no page number.
35 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp. 213, 215.
36 Although I hesitate to cite Slavoj Zizek because I lose my way in the labyrinths of his arguments, I cannot resist quoting his call to '*repeat*, in present worldwide conditions, the Leninist gesture of reinventing the revolutionary project in the conditions of imperialism and colonialism . . . the key Leninist lesson today is that politics without the organizational *form* of the party is politics without politics'; Slavoj Zizek, 'A Plea for Leninist Intolerance', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 28, no. 2 (Winter 2002), pp. 542–566, pp. 553, 558. For an expanded version of this argument see Slavoj Zizek, introduction and afterword in *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings From February to October 1917* (London: Verso, 2002).
37 Michael Hardt, 'Today's Bandung?', *New Left Review*, 14 (Mar./Apr. 2002), pp. 112–118.
38 João Pedro Stedile, 'Landless Battalions', *New Left Review*, 15 (May/June 2002), pp. 77–104, p. 99.
39 Stedile, 'Landless Battalions', p. 102.
40 Vilashini Coopan, remarking on 'the ease with which hybridity displaces race and nation' in the postcolonial discussion, has made a strong case for locating these categories within other axes of social existence (class and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, culture and community) and theorizing the coextensiveness of the terms in a context that is both comparative and historical; Vilashini Coopan, 'W(h)ither Postcolonial Studies? Towards the Transnational Study of Race and Nation', in *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, ed. Laura Chrisman and Benita Parry (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, for The English Association, 2000), pp. 14 and 19.
41 Neil Larsen, *Determinations: Essays on Theory, Narrative and Nation in the Americas* (London: Verso, 2001), p. 11.
42 Pheng Cheah, 'Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism', in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p. 291.
43 Fredric Jameson, 'Taking on Globalization', *New Left Review*, 4 (July/Aug. 2000), p. 65.
44 Tim Brennan, 'Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism', *New Left Review*, 7 (Jan./Feb. 2001),

pp. 75–84, p. 77. For an overview on the debate, see Crystal Bartolovich, 'Global Capital and Transnationalism', in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 126–161.

45 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 412.

46 For a discussion of revolutionary liberation movements, see Chapter 5 in this volume.

47 For articulations of positions which welcome diaspora for the enriching experiences this affords, as the location from which to theorize the contemporary condition, and as in itself engendering a mode of thinking that can roam far and wide because liberated from the fixity of place and community, see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Ali Behdad, 'Global Disjunctions, Diasporic Differences, and the New World (Dis-)Order', in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 396–409.

48 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp. 362, 363.

49 Nigel Harris, 'Everybody In?', *Red Pepper* (Aug. 2000), p. 26.

50 See for example the observation that in West Africa '[a]ll sorts of merchandize from a variety of origins are on display in traditional markets . . . Everything from computers, fax machines, and brand-name shoes to gold jewellery is found covered with dust in the market-place'; Manthia Diawara, 'Regional Imaginary in Africa', in Jamenson and Miyoshi, eds, *The Culture of Globalization*, pp. 103–124, p. 114.

51 Consider the women from China, Bangladesh, Thailand and the Philippines who 'have paid a recruitment fee in order to be shipped to Saipan, a half-forgotton US island in Micronesia. On arrival they are crowded into barracks where they have to work 70–80 hours a week without anything but a floor to sleep on. Because Saipan is a US territory, everything produced there is duty-free and without quotas, ready to be sold in the mainland at The Gap, J. Crew and Ralph Lauren stores, proudly bearing a "Made in USA" label'. See *Red Pepper* (no author), 'Sweatshops are everywhere' (Jan. 2002), p. 10.

52 See Jameson and Miyoshi, eds, *The Cultures of Globalization*.

53 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 213.

54 Paul Smith, *Millennial Dream: Contemporary Culture and Capital in the North* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 13.

55 Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 60.

56 Peter Gowan, 'Neo-liberal Cosmopolitanism', *New Left Review*, 11 (Sept./Oct. 2001), pp. 79–93, p. 79; Daniele Archibugi, 'Cosmopolitical Democracy', *New Left Review*, 4 (July/Aug. 2000), pp. 137–150; see also Daniele Archibugi, 'Demos and Cosmopolis', *New Left Review*, 13 (Jan./Feb. 2002), pp. 24–38.

57 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 83, 84, 85.

58 Aijaz Ahmad, 'Reconciling Derrida: "Spectres of Marx" and Deconstructive Politics'; Tom Lewis, 'The Politics of "Hauntology" in Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*'; both in *Ghostly Demarcations: a Symposium of Derrida's Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1999).

59 Derrida, 'Marx and Sons', pp. 241, 239, 252.

60 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. 85.

61 Derrida, 'Marx and Sons', p. 239.

62 Rahul Mahajan, 'Iraq and the New Great Game', *Red Pepper* (Sept. 2002), pp. 17–18, p. 18.

63 Gowan, 'Neo-liberal Cosmopolitanism', pp. 79–93, p. 93. For another optimistic vision of globalization from below, see Richard Falk, 'The Making of Global Citizenship', in Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs and Jill Cutler, eds, *Global Visions* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), p. 39.

64 Amin, *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*, p. 150.

65 Alejandro Colás, 'Putting Cosmopolitanism into Practice: the Case of Socialist Internationalism', *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1994), pp. 513–534.

66 Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: an Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); Tim Brennan, 'Postcolonial Studies Between the European Wars: an Intellectual History', in *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*, eds Crystal Bartolowich and Neil Lazarus (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 185–203; Perry Anderson, 'Internationalism: a Breviary', *New Left Review*, 14 (Mar./Apr. 2002), pp. 5–25.

67 The conduct of the Soviet Union towards the anarcho-syndicalists and the POUM (Partido Obrero d'Unification Marxista) during the Spanish Civil War is one such notorious instance, as is the failure of the PCF to support the colonial wars in French Indo-China and Algeria.

68 David Harvey, 'Globalization in Question', *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Winter 1995), pp. 1–17, pp. 13, 15, 16.

7 Reading the signs of empire in metropolitan fiction

1 With the expansion of critical discourse, English departments came to admit a body of anglophone – as well as translated – fictions from beyond Europe and North America that had hitherto been relegated to the margins. Simultaneously the study of comparative literatures opened its doors to novels, plays and poetry from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Arab world.

2 During the 1960s and early 1970s numerous books appeared with titles such as *British Novels of Empire*, *The Colonial Novel in English*, *The Colonial Experience* or *The Colonial Encounter in British Fiction*, and *Images of Empire in British Writing*.

3 See for example Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (1977) (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 69, 267.

4 Edward Said, 'Islam, Philology, and French Culture' and 'Reflections on American "Left" Literary Criticism', in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (London: Faber, 1984), pp. 273, 177.

5 'Studying the relationship between the "West" and its dominated cultural "Others" is not just a way of understanding an unequal relationship between unequal interlocutors, but also a point of entry into studying the formation and meaning of western cultural practices themselves'; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p. 230.

6 For an insistence on the necessity of periodization and differentiation in usage, see introduction to *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (London: Harvester, 1993); Laura Chrisman, 'The Imperial Unconscious? Representations of Imperial Discourse', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3 (1990), pp. 38–58 and Michael Sprinker's introduction to *Late Imperial Culture*, ed. Román de la Campa, E. Ann Kaplan and Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1995).

7 The effects on the colonized societies were equally profound: with the precipitate and uneven transformation of predominantly premodern or incipiently modern locations by imperialism, those most exposed and vulnerable to the cumulative effects of the accelerated upheaval were beset by acute experiences of discrete temporalities. These intensified existential dilemmas and new psychic dispositions engendered singular forms of modernity which came to be articulated in the modernist achievements of non-metropolitan literature: consider the poetry of René Depestre from Haiti and Aimé Césaire from Martinique, the novels of Edouard Glissant also from Martinique and the expatriate Guianan Wilson Harris. The scale and extent of this literature's modernist achievements are infinitely more than 'a shadow configuration of what once prevailed in the First World', as Perry Anderson once perversely maintained in 'Modernity and Revolution', *New Left Review*, no. 144 (Mar.–Apr. 1984), pp. 96–113, 109.

8 References to the literature examining the poem in the context of writings on slavery and the slave trade can be found in Debbie Lee, 'Yellow Fever and the Slave Trade: Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', *English Literary History*, vol. 65 (1998), pp. 675–700. For a more tentative perspective on slavery in the poem see Joan Baum, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles: Slavery and the English Romantic Poets* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1994), p. 49, where she suggests that the milieu of slave trading 'may have strongly influenced' the poem's theme.

9 Ian Duncan, '*The Moonstone*, the Victorian Novel, and Imperialist Panic', *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 3 (1994), pp. 297–319, 310. More on the moral panic induced by opium as a form of racial contagion can be found in Curtis Marez, 'The Other Addict: Reflections

on Colonialism and Oscar Wilde's Opium Smoke Screen', *English Literary History*, vol. 64 (1997), pp. 257–287.

10 Laura Chrisman, 'Gendering Imperial Culture', in *The Gravity of History: Reflections on the Work of Edward Said*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Benita Parry and Judith Squires (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996), p. 290. Thus when one critic cites *Jude the Obscure* as 'a parable of the exercise of the imperial power to exclude, *translated* into the terms of social class', and another reads the portrayal of striking workers in *Shirley* as *derived* from images of 'the savage or the colonial Other', the priority given to colonialist perceptions ignores that the ongoing drama of the domestic social formation in the throes of a class war did not require colonial antecedents or models for fictional reconfigurations of conflict. See Daniel Bivona, *Desire and Contradiction: Imperial Visions and Domestic Debates in Victorian Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 9 and Firdous Azim, *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* (London: Routledge, 1993) p. 199. Azim moreover contends that 'the literature of the colonial era played *the* definitive role' in constructing a 'universal and homogeneou subject . . . held together by the annihilation of other subject positions' (pp. 30–31).

11 Bivona, *Desire and Contradiction*, p. 9.

12 See Bruce Robbins, *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture* (London: Verso, 1993), pp. 202–203.

13 The phrase is Pierre Macherey's in *The Object of Literature* (1990) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 234.

14 On the failure of interdisciplinary studies to develop an adequate theory about the relationship between the arts, lived cultures and social structures, see Janet Woolf, 'Excess and Inhibition: Interdisciplinarity in the Study of Art', *Cultural Studies*, ed. with introd. by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (London: Routledge, 1992). In 'Spectres of the Aesthetic', Dave Beech and John Roberts trace new moves in the left's relationship to its own aesthetic past, and enlist Adorno 'against the grain of his current status as the principal defender of the modern account of art's autonomy' in support of a sense 'of autonomous art's permeation by the social', *New Left Review*, vol. 218 (1996), pp. 102–127, 123.

15 Katherine Bailey Lineham, 'Imperialism in *Daniel Deronda*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 34, no. 3 (1992), pp. 325–346. Lineham's argument proceeds from citing Deirdre David's claim that Gwendolen Harleth's 'psychological imperialism' serves as 'a *metaphor* for her class and her culture', the domestic and sexual politics of her private life being linked 'to *actual* imperialist policies of colonization and exploitation', pp. 327–328.

16 Tamar Heller, *Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 144–145.

17 Moira Ferguson, '*Mansfield Park*: Slavery, Colonialism and Gender', *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 13, nos 1–2 (1991), pp. 118–139.

18 Susan Fraiman, 'Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender, Culture, and Imperialism, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 21 (1995), pp. 805–821, 810.

19 Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire: the Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 28.

20 Suvendrini Perera, *Reaches of Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 81.

21 Susan Meyer, *Imperialism at Home: Race and Victorian Women's Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 22–23.

22 'The New Woman and the Crisis of Victorianism', and 'Empire, "Race" and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle: the Work of George Egerton and Olive Schreiner', in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 32, 35–36, 45.

23 Equally troubling is the claim that white women inhabiting or travelling in colonized territories were inclined to be critical of their compatriots, and therefore produced more sympathetic accounts of native peoples. See Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991) and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

24 Meyer, *Imperialism at Home*, p. 22.

25 Meyer, *Imperialism at Home*, p. 23.
26 In *Anatomy of Race*, ed. David Theo Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), p. 52.
27 For the context of the conversation, and Bristol as a slave port and a favoured retirement place for West Indian merchants and slave traders, see Baum, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, p. 6.
28 Cora Kaplan, ' "A Heterogeneous Thing": Female Childhood and the Rise of Racial Thinking in Victorian Britain', in *Human All Too Human*, ed. Diana Fuss (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 184–185. See also Carl Plasa, who suggests that, despite the text's scepticism towards its own rhetorical moves, the literality and historicity of slavery in *Jane Eyre* is obscured by the novel's use of the moral language of the abolitionists to dramatize domestic oppression; ' "Silent Revolt": Slavery and the Politics of Metaphor in *Jane Eyre*', in *The Discourse of Slavery: Aphra Behn to Toni Morrison*, ed. Carl Plasa and Betty J. Ring (London: Routledge, 1994).
29 Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995).
30 Peter Hulme, 'The Locked Heart: *Wide Sargasso Sea*', in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 85.
31 'Yorkshire Slavery in *Wuthering Heights*', *Review of English Studies*, vol. 38, no. 150 (1987), pp. 184–198. In a more recent essay Heathcliff is positioned as a racial other, his extravagantly disaffected deportment summoning the spectre of slave rebellion: see Maja-Lisa Von Sneidern, '*Wuthering Heights* and the Liverpool Slave Trade', in *English Literary History*, vol. 62 (1995), pp. 171–196, 172.
32 Gayatri Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1985), pp. 243–261, 243.
33 Marcus Wood, 'Canons to the Right of them, Canons to the Left of them: *Mansfield Park*, *Jane Eyre*, and the Memorial Subversions of Slavery', in *Slavery, Empathy and Pornography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
34 See David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing and Imperial Administration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).
35 Thus Bivona would include *Alice in Wonderland* and *Dracula* within the literature of empire, on the grounds that the fantasies enacted by these fictions deploy the figural patterns of an all-pervasive imperial imagination nourished by the turmoil attendant on encounters with cultural difference, or affrighted by the threat to the west's spiritual health and integrity from apprehensible or occult forces beyond its borders. For a more nuanced account of Dracula as 'an aggregate of race, class and gender' see Judith Halberstam, who discerns in this figure 'a composite of otherness that manifests itself as the horror essential to dark, foreign and perverse bodies'; 'Technologies of Monstrosities: Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', in Ledger and McCracken, eds, *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, pp. 249–250.
36 Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 3, 32.
37 For a discussion of the ways in which artefacts of African material culture acted on the making of British national identity, see Annie Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994). For evidence of the staggering range and quantity of printed and visual material produced by both state agencies and civil institutions, especially during the time of high imperialism, see John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: the Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africans and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), and Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (London: Routledge, 1995). On the diffusion of Oriental artefacts and styles, see MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). On a commodity culture in which images of empire freely circulated, see Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (London: Verso, 1991).
38 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*

(Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989).

39 Frederick Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922) (London: Frank Cass, 1965), p. 615.

40 J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a Study* (1902) (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 238.

41 Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics* (London: Macmillan, 1898), pp. 17, 53, 86.

42 Joseph Chamberlain, *Foreign and Colonial Speeches* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1897), pp. 78, 101, 195.

43 See Tom Kemp, 'The Marxist Theory of Imperialism' and Michael Barratt Brown, 'A Critique of Marxist Theories of Imperialism', in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972); also Roger Owen's introduction and Bob Sutcliffe's conclusion in the same volume; Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: an Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism*, trans. Brian Pearce (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976); Bill Warren, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism*, ed. John Sender (London: New Left Books, 1980); Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

44 Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913), trans. Agnes Schwarzschild (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951), pp. 446, 362. 'Historically the accumulation of capital is a kind of metabolism between capitalist economy and those precapitalist methods of production without which it cannot go on, and which, in this light, it corrodes and assimilates. Thus capital cannot accumulate without the aid of non-capitalist organisations, nor on the other hand, can it tolerate their continued existence side by side with itself. Only the continuous and progressive disintegration of non-capitalist organisations makes accumulation of capital possible' (p. 416).

45 John Goode has argued that George Gissing's dislike of the official violence sanctioned by imperialism is inscribed in his narratives of the domestic social space; *George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction* (London: Vision Press, 1978). Alexander Warwick finds the vampire fictions of the 1890s to be characteristic of 'the apocalyptic narratives of "imperial gothic" with their "simultaneous vision of collapse and salvation'; 'Vampires and the Empire: Fears and Fictions of the 1890s', in Ledger and McCracken, eds, *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*. For Warwick the monster is 'the female vampire, the product of the disruption of perceived gender hierarchies, a horse-woman of the Victorian Apocalypse who threatens the end of the "race" and the slow death of the British Empire on its throne', (p. 219).

46 Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 79, 108.

47 Chris Bongie, *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism and the Fin de Siècle* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 18.

48 Michael Valdez Moses, *The Novel and the Globalization of Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

49 See *Modernism and Empire*, ed. Howard J. Booth and Nigel Rigby (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

50 See Chapter 11 in this volume.

51 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen, 1981) and *Modernism and Imperialism* (Derry: Field Day, 1988).

52 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p. 17.

53 Fredric Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. and introd. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 349–350.

54 See for example Chapter 10 in this volume.

55 Laura Chrisman, 'Empire's culture in Fredric Jameson, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak', in *Postcolonial Contraventions: Cultural Readings of Race, Imperialism and Transnationalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 56. And indeed in *Howards End* the imperial system does impinge on the bounded domestic scene both in the ghostly form of the unspecified investments enabling the Schlegels' condition of permanent leisure, and most materially as the source of the Wilcox wealth in the Anglo Imperial Rubber Company of Nigeria.

56 Leonard Woolf, *Empire and Commerce in Africa: a Study in Economic Imperialism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1920), pp. 45–46.
57 A suggestion made by Michael Bell, *Literature, Modernism and Myth: Belief and Responsibility in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 149.
58 See Sandra Kemp, *Kipling's Hidden Narratives* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).
59 See Chapter 8 in this volume. We could also note that Gissing's revulsion at the vacuous pomp of the Jubilee year coexists with the hope that a population fallen into degeneracy would find spiritual renewal through participation in imperial venture. See David Trotter, 'Modernism and Empire: Reading *The Waste Land*', *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 28, nos 1 and 2 (1988), pp. 143–153.
60 Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (1924) (New York: Russell and Russell, 1957), p. 166.
61 See Michael Sprinker, 'History, Literature, Proust', in *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 42, no. 2 (1996), pp. 349–370 for a working through of how shifts in social power and ideological conflict are to be detected in the linguistic modulations of Proust's style; and Francis Mulhern, 'Althussser in Literary Studies', in *Althusser: a Critical Reader*, ed. Gregory Elliott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 159–176.

8 The content and discontents of Kipling's imperialism

1 'In Memory of W. B. Yeats', *The English Auden*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber, 1977), pp. 241–243. The verses on Kipling are omitted from the revised version in *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber, 1976), pp. 197–198.
2 T. S. Eliot, introduction to *A Choice of Kipling's Verse* (London: Faber, 1941). Among the responses were George Orwell, 'Rudyard Kipling' (1942) and Lionel Trilling, 'Kipling' (1943), both repr. in Andrew Rutherford, ed., *Kipling's Mind and Art* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964). Boris Ford's essay, 'A Case for Kipling?' first appeared in *Scrutiny* (1942); see Elliot L. Gilbert, ed., *Kipling and the Critics* (New York: New York University Press, 1965). See also E. M. Forster's earlier recoil from Kipling's outlook in 'The Boy Who Never Grew Up', *Daily Herald* (9 June 1921), p. 7, and 'That Job's Done', *The Listener*, Supplement III (March 1937).
3 See Gilbert, ed., *Kipling and the Critics*, and Roger Lancelyn Green, ed., *Kipling: the Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971).
4 Among the studies which appeared in the mid-1960s were Andrew Rutherford, ed., *Kipling's Mind and Art* (1964); J. I. M. Stewart, *Rudyard Kipling* (London: Gollancz, 1966); C. A. Bodelsen, *Aspects of Kipling's Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1964); Alan Sandison, *The Wheel of Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1967); Louis L. Cornell, *Kipling in India* (London: Macmillan, 1966); Bonamy Dobrée, *Rudyard Kipling: Realist and Fabulist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); T. R. Henn, *Kipling* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1967). J. M. S. Tompkins's *The Art of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Methuen, 1959) was reissued in 1965, and a few years later Elliot L. Gilbert's *The Good Kipling* was published (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970). Between 1960 and 1965 *English Literature in Transition* produced *An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Kipling*, III, 3, 4, 5 (1960) and VIII, 3, 4 (1965).
5 For citations of this tendency see 'Scrapbook: Post-Anti-Imperialism?', *Inscriptions 2* (1986), pp. 45–51 (Occasional Bulletin published by the Group for the Critical Study of Colonial Discourse, University of California, Santa Cruz).
6 The phrase is Salman Rushdie's; see 'Outside the Whale', *Granta*, vol. 11 (1984), pp. 125–138.
7 Paul Driver, introduction to *A Diversity of Creatures* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 23.
8 Andrew Rutherford, general preface to the World's Classics new edition of Kipling (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. vii–viii.
9 Eric Stokes, 'Kipling's Imperialism' in John Gross, ed., *Rudyard Kipling: the Man, his Work and his World* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p. 90.
10 Sandison, *The Wheel of Empire*, p. 112. For a variation of this thesis, see Gilbert, *The Good Kipling*.

11 Alan Sandison, introduction to *Kim* (World's Classics), pp. xii, xv; *The Wheel of Empire*, p. 78.
12 See David Trotter, introduction to *Plain Tales from the Hills* and Edward Said, introduction to *Kim* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987). See also Robert MacDonald, 'Discourse and Ideology in Kipling's "Beyond the Pale" ', *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1986), pp. 413–418.
13 Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain* (1997) (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 69, 267. The absence of a left critique of imperialist culture has been discussed by Edward Said, 'Reflections on American "Left" Literary Criticism', *The World, the Text and the Critic* (London: Faber, 1984) and by Prebon Kaarsholm in a review article, 'British and European Imperialism', *History Workshop*, vol. 16 (Autumn 1983).
14 Rudyard Kipling, *Something of Myself* (London: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 1, 173–174.
15 From a volume including *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys* and *In Black and White* (London: Macmillan, 1895). Page references in the text for Kipling's works of fiction are to the uniform Macmillan edition.
16 See Ann Parry, 'Reading Formations in the Victorian Press: the Reception of Kipling 1888–1891', *Literature and History*, vol. 11, no. 2 (1985), pp. 254–263.
17 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 24.
18 See, for example, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'Vision in Kipling's Novels', in Rutherford, *Kipling's Mind and Art*, and Nirad Chaudhuri, 'The Finest Story about India – in English', in Gross, ed., *Rudyard Kipling: The Man, his Work and his World*.
19 Said, introduction to *Kim*, p. 45.
20 Said, introduction to *Kim*, pp. 28, 24, 41.
21 See Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, vols 1 and 2 (London: Macmillan, 1899).
22 Thomas Pinney, ed., *Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches 1884–88* (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 177–178.
23 Pinney, ed., *Kipling's India*, p. 175.
24 Michael O'Pray, 'Radical Visionaries: Powell and Pressberger' (a review of Ian Christie's *Arrows of Desire*), *New Formations*, vol. 1 (1987), pp. 155–159.
25 *Contemporary Review*, vol. 58 (Sept. 1890).
26 Said, introduction to *Kim*, p. 24.
27 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 85.

9 Narrating imperialism: beyond Conrad's dystopias

1 Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (1977) (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 6, 10. See also *Aesthetics and Politics: Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno*, trans. Ronald Taylor (London: New Left Books, 1977). Adorno proposed that the work of art stands as a critique of the objective world, as 'the negative knowledge of the actual world', its autonomy asserting itself as uncompromising alienation of that reality; Brecht perceived the function of theatre as staging phenomena in such a way that what had seemed natural and immutable is revealed to be historical and thus the object of change.
2 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Durkness*, 1902; reference is to the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1973).
3 There exists an abundance of glosses indifferent to the novella's historical, political and ideological materials. When critics in the past did attend to its imperialist registers, some felt free to pronounce: 'It is one of the great points of Conrad's story that Marlow speaks of the primitive life of the jungle not as being noble or charming or even free but as being base and sordid – and for *that* reason compelling' (Lionel Trilling); or to write that 'Marlow and Kurtz are Europeans who react differently to the primitive lure of Africa', and to describe Kurtz as a 'pioneer in the psychic wilderness of Africa (K. K. Ruthven). See *A Casebook on Heart of Darkness, Nostromo and Under Western Eyes*, ed. C. B. Cox (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 64, 78, 80.

4 Chinua Achebe, 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', in *Researches in African Literatures*, vol. 9 (Spring 1978), pp. 1–15.
5 V. S. Naipaul, 'Conrad's Darkness' and 'A New King for the Congo: Mobutu and the Nihilism of Africa', in *The Return of Eva Peron* (London: Deutsch, 1980), pp. 204, 214, 216.
6 Leonard Courtney, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, vol. 61, no. 4 (1989), p. 640. Cited in Sven Lindqvist, *Exterminate the Brutes* (London: Granta Books, 1997), pp. 28–29. According to Lindqvist the report drew on an article by E. J. Glave in the *Century Magazine* of 1897.
7 See Lindqvist, who also draws attention to the French Central African Expedition of 1898 involving atrocities and massacres.
8 Letter to William Blackwood, 31 December 1898, in *Joseph Conrad: Letters to William Blackwood and David S. Meldrum* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1958), pp. 36–37.
9 Letter of 8 February 1899 in *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, ed. C. T. Watts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 116.
10 Nico Israel had made a convincing case for these connections: 'As emphasized by the text's semiotic glut of rivets, connecting rods, ship's chains and tackle, sealing wax and bits of string and yarn, *Heart of Darkness* portrays the colonial enterprise as a vast circuit of material and imaginary connections – between metropole(s) and periphery, colonizer and colonized, sites of production and consumption, a global circuit subject at any moment to fraying, coming apart, or breaking down', *Outlandish: Writing Between Exile and Diaspora* (Palo Acto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 40.
11 In the context of the fiction the phrase signifies Kurtz's madness; however, Lindqvist argues that extermination of the 'lower races' pervaded nineteenth-century racial thinking and had indeed been carried out in Tasmania.
12 See Tim Young, *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850–1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).
13 Christopher Miller, *Blank Darkness: Africanist Discourse in French* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).
14 Edward Said has written that 'much of Conrad's narrative is preoccupied with what eludes articulate expression – the jungle, the desperate natives, the great river, Africa's magnificent, ineffable dark life', *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p. 199. In an earlier commentary Said found in *Heart of Darkness* an act of discursive power, its narrative form a paradigm of a colonial discourse which is totalizing and all-enveloping in its attitudes and gestures, shutting out as much as it includes, compresses and asserts. For despite Conrad's scepticism about the imperialist enterprise, Said argued, the text restores Africa to European hegemony by historicizing and narrating its strangeness. See 'Intellectuals and the Postcolonial World', in *Salmagundi*, vols 70/71 (1986), pp. 44–80.
15 According to Vivek Dhareshwar, Marlow's failure to form images and the inability of the narrating voice to stage 'the extraordinary event' dramatize 'the ruin of representation', because of which the happening is to be grasped in terms of the act of narration being itself the event. 'Toward a Narrative Epistemology of the Postcolonial Predicament', in *Inscriptions*, vol. 5, *Travelling Theories Travelling Theorists* (1989), pp. 135–157. For Christopher Miller, what is told is the impossibility of narrating a silence and a void, since narrative is the passage of time, and the fiction's 'Africa' condenses the absence of time.
16 Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, p. 10.
17 This is an argument I make in *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers* (London: Macmillan, 1983).
18 Ludo De Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*, trans. Ann Wright and Renée Femby, (London: Verso, 2001), pp. 1–2.
19 Here we could recall Althusser's remarks on the mediated relationship of art to knowledge and ideology: 'Art . . . does not give us a knowledge *in the strict sense* . . . but what it gives us does nevertheless maintain a certain *specific relationship* with knowledge. This relationship is not one of identity but one of difference . . . I believe that the peculiarity of art is to "make us see" . . . "make us perceive", "make us feel something which *alludes* to reality . . . What art makes us *see*,

and therefore gives to us in the form of *"seeing"*, *"perceiving"* and *"feeling"* (which is not the form of *knowing*), is the *ideology* from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art, and to which it *alludes*'; 'A Letter on Art' (1966) in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 204.

20 Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension*, p. 20.

21 Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo*, 1904; references are to the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1972).

22 The narrative structure has been variously read by critics. For example, Avrom Fleishman maintains that it reflects a sense of history's unfolding process in a society perceived as a living organism (*Conrad's Politics: Community and Anarchy in the Fiction of Joseph Conrad* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967)); while Gareth Jenkins, who examines the ideological tensions hidden in the work's 'curious chronological distortions and narrative complexities', attributes these to a commentary on its own narrative structure 'which is calculated to deny the possibility for real change and expose history as illusory' ('Conrad's *Nostromo* and History', *Literature and History*, vol. 6 (Autumn 1977), pp. 138–178).

23 Joseph Conrad, 'Henry James: an Appreciation' (1905), in *Notes on Life and Letters* (London: Gresham Publishing, 1925), p. 17.

24 Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), pp. 118, 137.

25 Jean Franco, 'The Limits of the Liberal Imagination: *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Nostromo*' (1975) in *Joseph Conrad: Third World Perspectives*, ed. Robert D. Hamner (Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1990), p. 201.

26 Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), trans. Stephen Moore and Edward Aveling, p. 72. On the affinities to Marx's analysis, see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London: Methuen, 1981), esp. p. 278: 'The whole drama of value and abstraction is concentrated in this antithetical phrase, in which the ideal sentimentalism of the capitalist dynamic is suddenly and brutally demystified'; also Jim Reilly, 'Stasis, Signs and Speculation: *Nostromo* and History', Ch. 4 in *Shadowtime: History and Representation in Hardy, Conrad and George Eliot* (London: Routledge, 1993).

27 Joseph Chamberlain, *Foreign and Colonial Speeches* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1897), esp. pp. 78, 101, 195.

10 *Tono-Bungay*: the failed electrification of the empire of light

1 H. G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay* (1909). References are to the World's Classics edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), ed. with an introduction and notes by Bryan Cheyette and biographical preface by Patrick Parrinder.

2 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 99.

3 Jon Thompson, *Fiction, Crime and Empire: Clues to Modernity and Postmodernism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 14–15.

4 Elaine Showalter has drawn attention to Wells's anti-realist narratives, maintaining that he needs to be considered in the company of Kipling, Conrad, Camus and Coetzee; see 'The Apocalyptic Fables of H.G. Wells', in *Fin de Siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Stokes (London: Macmillan, 1992). Lucille Herbert maintains that the book is characterized by 'a search for expression which inheres in the process of composition itself'; see 'Tono-Bungay: Tradition and Experiment' (1972) in *H.G. Wells: a Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 142–143. Pursuing a related thesis, Jeffrey Somers locates its originality in establishing a fictional novelist who foregrounds the strategies used in compiling his manuscript; see 'Wells' *Tono-Bungay*: the Novel within the Novel', in *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 17, no. 1 (1985), pp. 69–79.

5 Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists*, ed. and introd. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989), p. 43.

6 In *Exiles and Emigres* Terry Eagleton, who argues for recognizing that 'particular genres of novel are intimately related to particular areas of social reality', places Wells's fiction with 'lower middle-class naturalism' which 'saw its own audacious realism as an assault on

bourgeois conventionality, a significant exposure of submerged social realities'; (London: Chatto and Windus, 1970), pp. 13, 71.

7 Perry Anderson, 'Marshall Berman: Modernity and Revolution', in *A Zone of Engagement* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 34–35 (essay first appeared in *New Left Review*, 144, Mar.–Apr. 1984). Although Wells is widely regarded as a socialist of sorts, his class alignments were uncertain. In a disobliging and witty essay on Wells's proclivity for muddled thinking, Christopher Caudwell wrote: 'Wells is a petit bourgeois, and of all the products of capitalism, none is more unlovely than this class . . . because he has climbed into bourgeois security he must always without realising what he is doing identify with bourgeois interests. He must crusade for Imperialism in the War, for liberal Fascism and a New Deal during peace. He must loathe all signs of the arising of the Morlocks, and crusade relentlessly against Marx or any Socialism that admits the existence of classes, that is "ungracious" or "bitter" . . . the proletariat does not exist for Wells. The change [in social relations and productive forces] therefore can only come from the within the bourgeois class'; *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938) (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1947), pp. 76, 82–83, 85.

8 Citing Adorno's axiom, Peter Osborne proposes that modernity be understood as a lived knowledge of shifts in the experience of historical time and space, and as an act of cultural self-redefinition; *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995).

9 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 310.

10 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: a Modern Edition* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 38.

11 Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: the Experience of Modernity* (first pub. in USA, 1982) (London: Verso, 1983), p. 15.

12 Introduction to World's Classics edition, pp. xvi–xvii, xix.

13 See David Lodge, '*Tono-Bungay* and the Condition of England', in *H.G. Wells: a Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Bernard Bergonzi (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976).

14 Fredric Jameson, *Modernism and Imperialism* (Derry: Field Day, 1988).

15 *Problems of Greater Britain* was the title of a book by Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (London: Macmillan, 1890) which celebrated the pre-eminence of an empire with unbounded regions, enormous military resources and access to immense masses of raw materials.

16 On the effects of overseas expansion on the internal constitution of Englishness, see *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity and Cultural History*, ed. Bill Schwarz (London: Routledge, 1996).

17 For discussion of the double-think within much of British anti-imperialism, described as both a minority current and a limited and conditional stance, see Stephen Howe, *Anticolonialism in British Politics: the Left and the End of Empire 1918–1964* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

18 On Hobson, see Chapter 7 in this volume.

19 J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a Study* (1902) (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 367.

20 Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993).

21 Bryan Cheyette points out that the Jew was 'a specific element in much liberal and socialist thinking: the Boer War (1899–1902), for instance, was notoriously blamed on a supposed international Jewish plutocracy by many radical pro-Boers'; introduction to World's Classics edition of *Tono-Bungay*, p. xxxii.

22 Other allusions to Jews who are not immediately distinguished by their financial perspicacity and success are similarly directed at situating them as *alien* in appearance, speech and manners. See Cheyette: 'Wells's connection between the rise of a plutocratic class and "Semitic" blood was a commonplace in Britain that goes back, at least to the novels of Anthony Trollope. The gradual decline of the landed gentry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, meant that the forces of modernity which were replacing the aristocracy – finance capital, liberal democracy, the growth of the British State in general – were often seen in fearful terms as replacing a cherished Old England. The figure that was most often associated

with the "alien" transformation of the landed gentry was, as in *Tono-Bungay*, that of "the Jew" '; introduction to World's Classics edition of *Tono-Bungay*, p. xxxii.

23 For a discussion of 'the culture of consumption' that is concerned with women's position in modernity, see Mica Nava, 'Modernity's Disavowal: Women, the City and the Department Store', in *Modern Times*, ed. Mica Nava and Alan O'Shea (London: Routledge, 1996).

24 Bryan Cheyette has noted that although Wells made connections between 'the rise of a plutocratic class and "Semitic blood" ' and 'often used the language of socialist anti-Semitism', he 'also believed firmly in an international world order' and wanted Jews to assimilate into British society. However, Cheyette concedes that his narrator does rely on the language of race when struggling 'with the question of whether these "alien" and irrational forces of modernity are racially distinct from Britain as a whole'; introduction to World's Classics edition of *Tono-Bungay*, p. xxxii.

25 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, 2nd edn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 265 (first pub. as *Faces of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977).

26 David Harvey, writes that on the path to globalism pursued by the major capitalist powers, 'the world's spaces were deterritorialized, stripped of their preceding significations, and then reterritorialized according to the convenience of colonial and imperial administration'; *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 264.

27 Thomas Richards has shown how within the new commodity culture the admen of the patent medicine system targeted 'the terrain of the human body', while their remedies were in turn targeted as fraudulent by government agencies and the established medical profession. See *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 169, 184–185.

28 'Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful', William Morris.

29 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 32. Here Anne McClintock offers a history of soap as an icon of white civilization, noting that advertisements of the product projected images and slogans of 'imperial hygiene': 'With the burgeoning of imperial cotton on the slave plantations came the surplus of cheap cotton goods . . . Similarly, the sources for cheap palm oil, coconut oil and cottonseed oil flourished in the imperial plantations of West Africa, Malay, Ceylon, Fiji and New Guinea' (p. 210).

30 Carolyn Marvin, in *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking about Electric Communication in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), discusses the domestication of electricity as a means to protect the middle-class hearth, and as providing 'the connecting link for a political order that sustained the economic one' (pp. 76, 97).

31 Marvin's study documents the concrete role of electricity allied to technology in the making of modernity, and cites countless instances of its metaphoric usage as a divine gift, a power equal to the sun and a healing agent.

32 This is not to suggest that Wells as a public man dissociated himself from imperialism's legitimating strategies. In *The Modern Utopia*, for example, he writes of 'the very real nobility of [the Victorians'] dream of England's mission to the world', while also deploring 'the crude and violent Imperialism of the popular press' (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), pp. 327, 349. In *The New Machiavelli* Wells concedes that 'the cant of Imperialism' was 'speedily adopted by all sorts of base enterprises and turned to all sorts of base ends', but insists that, 'Mixed in with the noisiness and the humbug of the movement there appeared a real regard for social efficiency, a real spirit of animation and enterprise' (London: Oldham Press, n.d.), p. 211.

33 Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 143–144.

34 Wells's pontifications on race scoff at stupid and extravagant generalizations concerning categories and scorn the current delirium about race and the racial struggle. However, in arguing that there are 'unequal cultures' he resorts to the same vocabulary as that used by

protagonists of racial inequality. See *A Modern Utopia* (1905) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967).

35 In *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siecle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Stephen Arata suggests that imperialism was understood by contemporaries as a symptom of decline and not strength.

36 C. F. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen, 1909), p. 223.

37 Cheyette, introduction to World's Classics edition, p. xviii.

38 In *The New Machiavelli* Wells offers some reflections on the cleansing effects of war, writing as Europe was preparing for the 1914 conflict: 'For my own part, since I love England as much as I detest her present lethargy of soul, I pray for a chastening war – I wouldn't mind her flag in the dirt if only her spirit would come out of it . . . At the most, a European war would be a dramatic episode in the reconstruction I had in view', p. 222.

39 Perry Anderson, 'Marshall Berman: Modernity and Revolution', in *A Zone of Engagement* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 32. See also issue of *New Formations*, no. 28 (Spring 1996), on *Conservative Modernity*.

40 This tendency is also noted by Alexandra Warwick, 'Vampires and the Empire: Fears and Fictions of the 1890s', in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Sally Ledger and Scott McCraken (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

11 Materiality and mystification in *A Passage to India*

1 E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924) (London: Penguin, 1989).

2 Against this trend, Paul Armstrong contests charges of epistemological and narrative naiveté. See 'Reading India: E. M. Forster and the Politics of Interpretation', *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 38, no. 4 (1992), pp. 365–385. See also the volume edited by Davies and Wood which seeks to re-examine the novel in the light of contemporary critical paradigms (Tony Davies and Nigel Woods, eds, *A Passage to India* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1994)).

3 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p. 214.

4 Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism Avant-Garde Decadence Kitsch Postmodernism*, rev. edn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 92.

5 E. M. Forster, 'Art for Art's Sake', in *Abinger Harvest* (New York: Penguin, 1967), p. 93.

6 See Benita Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination 1880–1930* (1972) (London: Verso, 1998).

7 Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Bart Moore-Gilbert, 'Introduction' and 'Reading Kipling, Reading Bhabha', in *Writing India: 1757–1900*, ed. B. Moore-Gilbert (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

8 Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

9 Aijaz Ahmad, 'Indian Literature', in *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 277.

10 Zakia Pathak, Saswati Sengupta and Sharmila Purkayastha, 'The Prisonhouse of Orientalism', *Textual Practice*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1991), pp. 195–218, pp. 198–199.

11 See for example Jenny Sharpe, who argues that the racial significance of rape in the novel requires that it be read 'according to the narrative demands of the Mutiny reports', where 'a discourse of rape' was used in the management of anti-colonial rebellion' ('The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counter-Insurgency', in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory* (London: Harvester, 1992), pp. 221–243). In Brenda Silver's view, the book's deployment of sexuality within a discourse of power makes it possible to understand that to be *rapable* is 'a social position' cutting across 'biological and racial lines' ('Periphrasis, Power and Rape in *A Passage to India*', in *Novel: a Forum on Fiction*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1988), pp. 86–103, p. 88). Addressing the novel's attempt to reconfigure colonial sexuality into 'a homoeroticization of race', Sara Suleri argues that this translation of an imperial erotic revises 'the colonialist-as-heterosexual-paradigm', presenting instead an alternative colonial model in which 'the most urgent cross-cultural invitations occur between male and male, with racial difference serving as a substitute for gender' (*The Rhetoric of English India*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 133, 139). In more general terms, Parminder Bakshi has placed the fiction within a well-established narrative mode of an Orientalism imbued with homoerotic desire ('Homosexuality and Orientalism: Edward Carpenter's Journey to the East', in *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*, ed. Tony Brown (London: Frank Cass, 1990)). For Christopher Lane, Forster transposed the problem of homosexuality onto race and colonialism, the shift in locale from England to colonial India alleviating his difficulty in writing about same-sex relationships at home (*The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995)). Joseph Bristow finds that for Forster 'the desire for connection' between colonial rulers and subaltern peoples is 'indissociable from fantasies of dominative violence' ('Passage to E.M. Forster: Race, Homosexuality, and the "Unmanageable Streams" of Empire', in *Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity*, ed. C. E. Gittings (West Yorkshire: Dangeroo Press, 1996), p. 140).

12 Forster's shame at availing himself of sexual power over Indians is registered in his memoir, probably written in 1922. He was at this time employed as private secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas Senior, who in a gesture joining the abuse of his social authority with the tolerance of a committed heterosexual for a friend's incomprehensible urges, procured servants of his court to assuage Forster's lust, quaintly blamed by Forster on the heat. See 'Kanaya', in *The Hill of Devi and Other Indian Writings*, ed. Elizabeth Heine (London: Arnold, 1983). As Lane points out, this memoir records Forster's disgust with those servicing his sexual needs; equally evident in this memoir is Forster's self-disgust.

13 The foremost exponent was E. J. Thompson, one of whose books, *A Farewell to India*, was at the time of its publication (irrelevantly) compared to Forster's novel. See Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*.

14 On this history of insurgency see the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, a selection of which appears in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

15 Silver's reading misconstrues Adela Quested's charge of rape as an act of resistance against the silencing of women and Indians. It proceeds from conflating distinct and specific forms of oppression in the interest of appropriating all discourses of discrimination, as well as the counter-discourses these engender, to a feminist critique. Hence Silver privileges the exercise of female autonomy over Quested's exercise of white authority, a move which seriously distorts the fiction's exposure of Anglo-Indian racialized sexual anxieties.

16 Kenneth Burke, 'Social and Cosmic Mystery: *A Passage to India*', in *Language as Symbolic Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

17 Pierre Macherey, 'Georges Bataille: Materialism Inverted', in *The Object of Literature*, trans. David Macey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 118.

18 Macherey, 'Georges Bataille', p. 118.

19 Letter to G. Lowes Dickinson, quoted in Oliver Stallybrass, introduction to *A Passage to India* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 26.

20 The telepathic Mrs Moore 'knows' that the accident to the Nawab Bahadur's car was caused by an apparition, '[b]ut the idea of a ghost scarcely passed her lips' (p. 111); Adela hears what has not been spoken affirming Aziz's innocence (p. 209); in the interstices of a chant to Krishna, Aziz recognizes 'the syllables of salvation that had sounded during his trial' (p. 308); the punkah-wallah is perceived as 'a male fate, a winnower of souls' (p. 221), and Ralph Moore is manifest as 'a guide'.

21 In an essay on Carpenter, Forster wrote: 'As he had looked outside his own class for companionship, so he was obliged to look outside his own race for wisdom' (*Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951) (London: Arnold, 1972), p. 207). Bristow has remarked that '[A]lthough Whitman's "Passage to India" has frequently been mentioned in commentaries on *A Passage to India* . . . the dissident homosexual politics implied in this choice of title have generally gone unrecognized' (*Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1995), p. 86).

22 Edward Carpenter, 'India, the Wisdom Land', in *Toward Democracy* (London: Swan, 1911).

23 Walt Whitman, 'Passage to India' (1871), in *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 328.
24 John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas De Quincy: a Psychopathology of Imperialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 7–8.
25 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 12.
26 Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', in *Europe and its Others*, vol. 1, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen, Diana Loxley (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), p. 15.
27 Although Forster was not a scholar of Hindu philosophies, he was familiar with the myths, epics and iconography of India's varied cultures, and he found the dialectical style of Hindu thought congenial. On re-reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* in 1912, before his first visit to India, Forster observed that he felt he had now got hold of the structure of its thought: 'Its division into states of Harmony Motion Inertia (Purity Passion Darkness)' (quoted in P. N. Furbank, *E.M. Forster: a Life*, vol. 1 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), p. 216.)
28 A post-Vedic heterodoxy of the fifth century CE, but like Buddhism, with which it has historical and theoretical affinities, rooted in the ancient metaphysics of Dravidian India.
29 Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*.
30 Richard Dellamora has noted the coded homoerotic inflection which the word *friend* carried for Forster ('Textual Politics/Sexual Politics', *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 54, no. 1 (1990), pp. 155–164, p. 159.)
31 Sara Suleri, 'The Geography of *A Passage to India*', in *Modern Critical Views*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 169–175.
32 Francesca Kazan, 'Confabulations in *A Passage to India*', in *Criticism*, vol. 29, no. 2 (1987), pp. 197–215.
33 Godbole encounters the recalcitrance of stone during his religious observances when, in imitating God, he attempts and fails to impel it to 'that place where completeness can be found' (p. 283).
34 Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: the 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bangali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Peter Drucker, ' "In the Tropics There is no Sin": Sexuality and Gay-Lesbian Movements in the Third World', *New Left Review*, no. 218 (1996), pp. 75–101; Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*.
35 See Bakshi on Carpenter's preoccupation with the nakedness of natives: 'Repeatedly in the Ceylon section of *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, the narrator dwells on the physique and nakedness of the natives . . . Again, a *yogi* in Benares is approvingly described as "a rather fine-looking man" with "nothing whatever on but some beads round his neck and the merest apology for a loin-cloth" ' (p. 62).
36 For Bristow this transfer, which represents Aziz's sexual potency and erotic power, also represents his servility within an exploitative imperial situation: 'This incident assuredly points to the ambivalent manner in which homophile longing and dreams of empire meet and part. Without doubt, Aziz's body provides the template for the highly conflicted desires experienced by the European liberal author whose homoeroticism often must have felt uncomfortably close to the dominative violence meted out by imperial rule' (*Effeminate England*, p. 87).
37 Drucker, ' "In the Tropics there is No Sin" ', pp. 81–82.
38 Pathak, Sengupta and Purkayastha, 'The Prisonhouse of Orientalism'.
39 Edward Said, 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 15, no. 2 (1989), pp. 205–225, p. 223.
40 Christopher Lane contends that 'the ending refuses to develop or curtail Asiz and Fielding's intimacy; geography intervenes, bringing their contact to a provisional halt without irreparable damage. The novel's closing sentences foreground a drama about men's sexual intimacy and the abstract forces which keep them apart' (*The Ruling Passion*, p. 155). See also Bristow, who traces the novel's tension in striving to realize homophile intimacy while acknowledging 'how comradeship between men and nations can only come about with the end of empire' (*Effeminate England*, p. 86).
41 In 'The Birth of an Empire' (1924), an account of a visit to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, Forster mocks the rhetoric of 'a high imperial vision' (*Abinger Harvest* (New York:

Penguin, 1967), pp. 44–47), and in 'The Challenge of our Times' (1946) he applauds the colonial people kicking against their masters (*Two Cheers*).

42 'Liberty in England' (1935), in *Abinger Harvest*, pp. 62–63.

12 Reconciliation and remembrance

A version of this chapter was given as a lecture at the University of Cape Town in 1995, published in *Pretexts*, vol. 5, nos 1–2 (1995) and since substantially revised.

1 A federal organization which developed out of South African Trotskyist groups and retained links to the Fourth International. It produced significant analyses of South Africa's settler colonialism and devised radical strategies of opposition, but failed to develop as a mass movement. See Allison Drew, *Discordant Comrades: Identities and Loyalties on the South African Left* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2000), Baruch Hirson, *Revolutions in My Life* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995) and I. B. Tabata, *The Awakening of a People* (1950) (London: Spokesman Books, 1974).

2 *Yosef Yerushalmi, Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 5. The literature on memory is immense and contentious. For an overview of the issues and a breakdown of the tensions in the discussion, see Kerwin Lee Klein, who refers to 'the recent explosion of journals, museums, films, art pieces, and monographs on memory' and comments on the 'several alternative narratives of the origins of our new memory discourse'. See 'On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse', *Representations*, no. 69 (Winter 2000), pp. 127–150, pp. 142–143.

3 Walter Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 257, 262, 264.

4 Michael Newman, 'Suffering from Reminiscences', in *Postmodernism and the Re-reading of Modernity*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 84–114.

5 Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 11–12, 15.

6 Neil Lazarus, 'Before the Dogcatcher's Van: History and Subjectivity in Francis Barker', *Textual Practice*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2001), pp. 431–446.

7 For a discussion of memory and forgetting, see Richard S. Esbenshade, 'Remembering to Forget: Memory, History, National Identity in Postwar East-Central Europe', in *Representations*, vol. 49 (1995), pp. 72–96.

8 Umberto Eco, 'Revival of the Old Beast', part 1, *Guardian* (12 Aug. 1995), p. 27, col. 2.

9 Diaries of Victor Klemperer, vol. 1, *I Shall Bear Witness* and vol. 2, *To the Bitter End*, abridged and trans. by Martin Chalmers (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1998 and 1999).

10 Jürgen Habermas, 'Defusing the Past: a Politico-Cultural Tract', in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

11 Theodor Adorno, 'What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?' in Hartman, ed., *Bitburg*, citation from editor's note, pp. 114–115.

12 *The Mathematical Intelligencer* vol. 17, no. 2 (1995).

13 Information and citation in B. Booss-Bavnbek, 'Memories and Memorials', *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1995), p. 18.

14 Cited in M. R. Chowdhury, 'Landau and Teichmüller', *The Mathematical Intelligencer*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1995), p. 13.

15 'Amphibian Hermaphrodites: Heike Härting and Tobias Döring, A Dialogue with Marina Warner and David Dabydeen', *Third Text*, vol. 30 (1995), pp. 39–45.

16 See e.g. *The Slave's Narrative*, ed. Charles T. David and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). See also Wilson Harris, *History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas* (Guyana: The National History and Arts Council, 1970).

17 'Living Memory: a Meeting with Toni Morrison', in Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpents Tail, 1993), p. 179.

18 See Gayatri Spivak, *The Postcolonial Critic*, ed. Sarah Harasym (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 56.
19 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), p. 253.
20 Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History, pp. 257, 263.
21 *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, vols 1–5 (London: Macmillan Reference; US: Groves Dictionaries Inc., 1998).
22 David Johnson, 'Theorising the Loss of Land: Griqua Land Claims in Southern Africa, 1874–1998', in *Iterations of Loss*, ed. D. Kangagian and I. Ieng (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).
23 Judgement on submission from The Azanian Peoples Organization and Other Applicants, including Nontsikelelo Margaret Biko, heard at the Constitutional Court of South Africa on 30 May 1996, Case CCT 17/96, typescript.
24 Richard A. Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 12, 223.
25 Wole Soyinka, *The Burden of Memory, the Muse of Forgiveness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 31, 34, 41, 91.
26 Antony Holiday, 'Forgiving and Forgetting: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission', in *Negotiating the Past: the Making of Memory in South Africa*, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 53.
27 Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool, 'Orality, Memory and Social History', and Ingrid de Kok, 'Cracked Heirlooms: Memory on Exhibition', both in Nuttall and Coetzee, eds, *Negotiating the Past.*
28 Heidi Grunebaum-Ralph in proceedings published on the internet; p. 3 of 20 pages.
29 Neville Alexander, 'The Politics of Reconciliation', to appear in a study on the transition in South Africa. Since completion of this essay, *An Ordinary Country* has appeared, University of Natal Press, 2003.
30 Deborah Posel, 'The TRC Report: What Kind of History? What Kind of Truth?', paper presented at a conference on 'The TRC: Commissioning the Past', University of Witwatersrand, June 1999, cited in Alexander, 'The Politics of Reconciliation'.
31 Kelwyn Sole, 'The Witness of Poetry: Economic Calculation, Civil Society and the Limits of Everyday Experience in a Liberated South Africa', *New Formations*, no. 45 (Winter 2001–2002), pp. 24–53, p. 26. See also Trevor Ngwane, 'Sparks in the Township', *New Left Review* 22, 2003, pp. 37–56.
32 Neville Alexander, *Some are More Equal than Others* (Cape Town: Buchu Press, 1993), pp. 5, 30, 78.
33 Eve Bertelsen, 'Ads and Amnesia: Black Advertising in the New South Africa', in Nattall and Coetzee, eds, *Negotiating the Past.*
34 See John Saul, 'Cry for the Beloved Country: the Post-Apartheid Denouement', *Monthly Review*, vol. 52, no. 8 (Jan. 2001), pp. 1–51.

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