

OF TWO MINDS: THE UNEASY RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND  
PSYCHOANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

Psychoanalytic theory has generally been considered politically and epistemologically unsuitable for feminist and anti-racist scholarship, but despite this psychoanalytic language and concepts permeate colonial discourse analysis and postcolonial theory. Indeed, it could even be argued that there is a tradition of psychoanalytic writing in postcolonial studies from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* and Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* to Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*. This dissertation examines the work of each of these theorists in order to better understand why they turn to psychoanalysis as a theoretical tool, how they put psychoanalytic concepts to work in their studies of colonialism, and what kinds of problems they encounter as a result. Though each of these writers expands and deepens our understanding of colonialism and its legacies, their studies do not question psychoanalysis as a colonial discourse itself. Furthermore, it is highly significant that Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha's psychoanalytic deployments are not able to either account for the lived experience of the woman of colour, or to locate her in their theoretical frameworks. Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus* is used to explore some of the connections between psychoanalysis and colonialism that Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha do not discuss. Nevertheless, in order to answer the broader question of the woman of colour, the final chapter proposes that instead of using psychoanalysis as a theoretical instrument we should turn psychoanalysis into an object of colonial discourse analysis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	2
Table of contents .....	3
Introduction: Psychoanalysis and Postcolonial Theory .....	4
Chapter One: The Fanonian Psychoanalytic .....	19
Fanon and the Colonial Psyche.....	22
Reading Fanon’s Psychoanalysis.....	33
Evaluating Fanon’s Psychoanalytic Strategy .....	43
Taking Direction from Fanon.....	54
Chapter Two: “None of them is true but all of them are realities”: Ashis Nandy’s psychoanalytic reading of colonialism .....	57
Colonialism as a Psychological Landscape: Nandy’s Perspective on the Lived Experience of Colonialism.....	60
Psycho-historical alternatives to colonial discourses: Nandy’s psychoanalytic method.....	64
Nandy’s Psychoanalytic Technique .....	73
The Limits of Culture: Problematizing Nandy’s Interpretations and Uses of Traditional Indian Culture .....	78
Chapter Three: “Homi Bhabha and the Truth of Psychoanalysis” .....	94
Bhabha and Fanon.....	99
Bhabha and Nandy .....	103
Bhabha and Psychoanalysis in the Colony .....	108
Problems with Bhabha’s Psychoanalytic Readings.....	118
Questions From Bhabha.....	129
Chapter Four: Anti-dote – Deleuze and Guattari’s Critique of Psychoanalysis.....	133
Traditions and Contexts 1: Guattari.....	139
Traditions and Contexts 2: Deleuze .....	145
Reading Anti-Oedipus for Postcolonial Studies .....	150
The Women of Anti-Oedipus .....	163
Chapter Five: Reshaping postcolonial relations with psychoanalysis .....	171
The postcolonial debt to Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha.....	171
Psychoanalysis After Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha .....	178
Psychoanalysis as Postcolonial Object.....	191
Works Cited.....	198

## INTRODUCTION: PSYCHOANALYSIS AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Ann Stoler has cautioned us that we should be clear in our minds about what we expect psychoanalysis to do for us in our studies of colonial and postcolonial cultures (170). Although it has become common to use concepts such as projection, fetish, phantasy, identification and sublimation to describe the terms of the cultural encounter between the colonizers and the colonized, Stoler warns us that these concepts should not be used as shortcuts through more painstaking analysis and research. Benita Parry has also expressed concern that poststructural incarnations of psychoanalytic theory in postcolonial studies have over-simplified our understanding of the colonial encounter, transforming a violent socio-political struggle between material bodies into an agonistic dialogue between psyches (“Signs” 12). Parry suggests that psychoanalytically inflected accounts of colonialism do not adequately allow for the material realities of colonial domination or allow postcolonial critics to intervene effectively in contemporary post-colonial battles. Although Stoler’s comments are addressed primarily to historians and Parry’s comments are addressed to literature scholars, their respective critiques are simply two views of the same question, the question that animates this dissertation: what theoretical work is psychoanalytic theory been called upon to do in postcolonial studies, and how effective is it?

In the chapters that follow I look at the way five critics have deployed psychoanalytic theory in their critiques of colonial and postcolonial cultures. In particular, I examine the strategies of those critics whose work supposedly gives license to others to use psychoanalysis to theorize about colonial society: Frantz Fanon, Ashis Nandy, Homi Bhabha, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. By examining which psychoanalytic theorists these writers draw on, how they adapt psychoanalysis to their own critical and theoretical ends, and what problems they encounter I hope

to provide the reader with a clearer sense of how psychoanalysis has been used to write against colonial discourses and their legacies, and some of the key problems with their methodologies. It is only after looking clearly at what strategies these writers employ that we can begin to decide how we should use psychoanalysis in our own work. Furthermore, it is only by looking carefully at the blindspots of these theorists' strategies that we can refine our awareness of the potentials and pitfalls of psychoanalytic theory.

A broad range of scholars whose work may be described as anti-colonial, anti-imperial or anti-racist have simply rejected psychoanalytic theory as so deeply implicated in racist and racialized logic as to be virtually useless to anti-colonial and anti-racist scholarship. Writing about postcolonial scholarship in particular, Ania Loomba identifies a problem with “psychoanalytical theories which remain suspiciously and problematically shot through with ethnocentric assumptions whose transfer to all subalterns is unacceptable” (“Overworlding” 307). Though Loomba does not dismiss psychoanalysis completely she acknowledges a “discomfort with their being mapped crudely (despite ‘sophisticated’ manoeuvres) onto all ways of being” (307). Other critics, whose special theoretical focus is the woman of colour, put the matter in more emphatic terms. Biodun Iginla observes “the topic here is the *(im)possibility* (at this point in history and discourse) of appropriating—even of deploying—either traditional or continental psychoanalytic theory for black feminist critical and theoretical practices” (31). Though Iginla’s comments were made in the early 1990s, her comments still appear to be pertinent.

There is a range of reasons why psychoanalysis seems unsuitable for anti-colonial theorizing. One of the most persistent reasons is Freud’s problematic discussion of non-Western civilizations. Freud’s work makes use of metaphors and analogies that place neurotic individuals, children, women and ‘primitive’ peoples in close relation to each other. Both *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*

take their cue from analogies just like this.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Peter Gay highlights precisely this feature of Freud's work when he writes: "The intellectual pedigree of the work, which includes James G. Frazer and Charles Darwin, is impressive enough ... What is no less impressive is the range of material on which he draws ... he enlists Polynesians, the Bantu and Zulus, neurotic women and boys traversing the oedipal phase" (481). In *Totem and Taboo* Freud indicates that the study of the mental life of "savages or half-savages" (3) is of particular interest since they embody an early stage of civilization. He continues "If our supposition is correct, a comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples, as it is taught by social anthropology, and the psychology of neurotics, as it has been revealed by psycho-analysis, will be bound to show numerous points of agreement and will throw new light upon familiar subjects" (3).

The point is not a simple, if offensive, one of diction. Freud writes in accordance with the anthropological science of his day, and his description of South African nations and South Pacific Islanders as 'primitive' is less troubling than the set of values he puts into play with his metaphor. The contrast Freud makes between the healthy and the neurotic, the European and the non-European, is a clear example of how psychoanalysis as an institution "constituted itself as a form of modern knowledge ... which contributed significantly to the Othering of non-Western cultures, by defining them, explicitly or implicitly, as lacking or anterior in comparison with domestic metropolitan 'norms'" (Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial* 142). It is tempting to conclude that this was a feature of psychoanalysis in its guise as late nineteenth-century science, but psychoanalytic theory has not made any significant

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<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes argued that neither one of these works are significant in Freud's oeuvre for their contribution to psychoanalytic theory as such. The argument is that they represent only a master's musing on cultural, religious and historical themes. Nevertheless, writing about *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Peter Gay, a sympathetic and acknowledged Freud scholar, assures us that "For many, this late essay, in which Freud sums up his long-held theories of culture, is the only Freudian text they ever read. The choice of *Civilization and Its Discontents* as the representative of his work is, for all its brevity, quite defensible" (722).

attempt to work through this historical legacy. Moreover, as we shall see in the chapters to come, more recent theoretical adaptations and appropriations of psychoanalysis have not been able to solve this problem adequately either.

These types of analogy and metaphor are not innocent factors in science, as has been well-illustrated by studies of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century scientific language. In her examination of the racial content of early twentieth-century scientific discourses, Nancy Leys Stepan argues that the metaphor is not simply a whim of the scientist's style but a core component of the scientific knowledge or theory the scientist is attempting to describe. By placing two previously separate components in relation to each other, the scientific analogy says something new about both of those components. To paraphrase Stepan's example, the analogy between neurotics and savages makes two new observations: neurotics are a distinctive 'race' within civilization, and the mental health of savages is always already abnormal (364). Of course, this does not exhaust the new information that is given by the analogy but it reminds us that the metaphor in science does not express a literal sameness. It is not about saying, crudely, that savages and neurotics are one and the same thing. Instead, it creates new ways of looking at and studying the reality under description by bringing together what previously seemed unrelated. Moreover, as Stepan argues, particular metaphors not only confirm theories about the world (here, that women, children, neurotics and savages are all less 'civilized' than European men), but distract us from examining the reality that is not neatly encapsulated by the metaphor (what, for example, of the dissimilarities between children and neurotics, or the persistent similarities between savages and white men?).

Another significant problem with a psychoanalytic methodology, as Parry's remarks suggest, is that a psychoanalytic reading of the colony tends to obscure both the material conflicts that drive colonialism as well as the possibility of anti-colonial

resistance. According to the terms of Bhabha's analysis, Parry argues, native resistance "is limited to returning the look of surveillance as the displacing gaze of the disciplined" ("Problems" 41). The question of whether psychoanalysis offers a sufficiently empowering language and theory for emancipatory scholarship is a question that feminist scholars, for example, have already struggled with. As Elizabeth Abel observes:

The traditional indifference of psychoanalysis to racial, class and cultural differences, and the tendency of psychoanalysis to insulate subjectivity from social practices and discourses all run contrary to a feminism increasingly attuned to the power of social exigencies and differences in the constitution of subjectivity ... psychoanalytic accounts of subjectivity ... have lost its material groundings and with them the possibility of interpreting (and thereby promoting) social change (184)

While psychoanalysis is based on close observation of social relations, it seems to refuse to account for the material, political and cultural factors underlying those relations. In political terms, for feminist and for postcolonial scholars, this creates a frustrating sense that there is no escape from the discourses that represent women, people of colour, gays and lesbians in negative or inferior terms. This reluctance to engage with the material, political or cultural contexts goes back to Freud himself who, as Brenkman puts it, though he "can entertain the possibility that civilization itself is a pathological process, he eschews the alternative possibility of specifying which processes, institutions and practices are pathological. Such evaluations would bring psychoanalysis too close to politics" (4). Anne McClintock identifies much the same tendency in Lacan, a theorist who "cannot account either descriptively or analytically for historical contradictions and imbalances in power ... [and] remains curiously indifferent ... to accounting for the institutions of violence that give the phallus and the patronym their political power in the first place" (197). Even if psychoanalysis is descriptive rather than prescriptive, the description is dangerously incomplete or unworkable for people of colour, for example.



If an engagement with psychoanalysis has seemed impossible for contemporary feminist and anti-racist scholars for epistemological and political reasons, it has, nevertheless, proved to be a reoccurring methodology in postcolonial theory. This dissertation begins with Fanon's work, written in the 1950s, continues on through Nandy's work, begun in the 1970s, and ends with Bhabha's work, written in the 1980s and 1990s. In part, the persistence of psychoanalysis is symptomatic of the general pervasiveness of psychoanalytic discourse in Western culture, or what Ian Parker has termed 'psy discourses' (1). It is part of the effectiveness of psychoanalytic discourse that it appears so natural to us, so that "it appears to stretch back to pre-human history at the same time as it extends into the deepest interior of the self in contemporary culture" (Parker 1). Those of us living and writing in the West think psychoanalytically without being entirely aware that we do so. We accept the idea of the unconscious mind almost without question and we speak of emotional repressions, neuroses and fetishisms as though they are the inevitable conditions of human existence.

Psychoanalysis also persists because, whether one explicitly acknowledges it as a conceptual tool or not, psychoanalytic assumptions permeate the practice of postcolonial studies much as they permeate our ordinary language. In postcolonial studies, as elsewhere, psychoanalysis is one of the "unconsidered modes of thought our practices rest on" (Foucault 154). Stoler has been one of the few scholars to point to the problem of psychoanalytic language in these terms:

Much colonial discourse, as Foucault's argument would suggest, has been framed by the search for the truth of the European bourgeois self through sex ... What is disturbing is that colonial historiography has inadvertently embraced this notion of 'truth' as well ... Freudian notions of a repressed, sublimated and projected sexual impulse are invoked to explain political projects in instinctual psychosexual terms (171).

Historical accounts of colonial cultures have tended to rely on explanations with psychoanalytic resonances without pausing to consider the implication of such

characterizations. One danger, as Stoler points out, is that we confuse the colonizers' categories for making sense of the colony with the objects of our colonial discourse analysis.

Literary theory is no less culpable in this respect. Indeed, the ontology of psychoanalysis so permeates the discourse of postcolonial theory that we have lost track of the origins of the terms that we use such as, most notably, the well-worn term 'the other' derived from Lacan. The most notable recent example of such work is, of course, that of Homi Bhabha, work that has had an enormous impact on literary and historical studies of the colony. As I shall devote chapter three to Bhabha's work I do not wish to make any detailed remarks about his theory here. I simply want to observe that Bhabha's work has been the occasion for a renewal of psychoanalytic language in postcolonial studies, not only in other scholars' applications of Bhabha's sophisticated psychoanalytic readings but in the sense that psychoanalysis represents cutting-edge theory for analyses of colonialism.

Although there have been critiques of how particular theorists use psychoanalysis, there has been little discussion of what the use of psychoanalysis might mean for postcolonial studies in broader terms. There have been studies that look critically at the intersections between race and psychoanalysis, or feminism, race and psychoanalysis, but postcolonial studies has not reflected on the meaning of psychoanalysis as one of its theoretical tools.<sup>2</sup> Although the studies mentioned above are invaluable in drawing attention to the potentials and blind spots of psychoanalysis in terms of race, analyses of race and gender do not cover quite the same ground as postcolonial studies. Although I will reference feminist scholars' problematization of psychoanalysis and representation, a critique of psychoanalysis from the perspective of postcolonial studies should be able to contribute something more.

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<sup>2</sup> For examples of recent work exploring the connections between feminism, race and psychoanalysis see Abel 184-204, Bergner 75-88, Doane 209-248 and Walton 223-251.

The value of postcolonial studies, as I understand it, is that it brings the history of colonialism and its legacies to bear on the ways in which we read and think about literature and other academic disciplines such as history and anthropology. It is not only concerned with bringing non-Western literatures, philosophies and histories into the modern, Western disciplines, but in understanding how those bodies of knowledge came to be ‘othered’ at the same time as non-Western bodies came to be ‘othered’. I recognize that many different kinds of scholars work in postcolonial studies, including literary critics, historians, anthropologists and sociologists, and that this definition of postcolonial studies would not be accepted by all of them. Nevertheless, I work from the perspective that postcolonial studies tries to understand and explain how colonialism has produced the categories of thought that we have today and to remain vigilant about how postcolonial attempts to break away from those categories sometimes succumb to the same problems. As Gyan Prakash writes: “at stake is not simply the issue as to whether or not former colonies have become free from domination, but also the question as to how the history of colonialism and colonialism’s disciplining of history can be shaken loose from the domination of categories and ideas it produced—colonizer and colonized, white, black and brown; civilized and uncivilized; modern and archaic; cultural identity; tribe and nation” (5). In writing this thesis from the perspective of postcolonial studies, then, I want to demonstrate that an effective critique of psychoanalysis is not simply about its suitability to represent race or gender, but its status as a modern, Western form of knowledge about minds and selves.

Before I elaborate further on what I attempt in this thesis it might be advisable to discuss here precisely what I do and do not mean by a critique of psychoanalysis. What I am most interested in here is the form of psychoanalytic language that is used by particular colonial and postcolonial critics. So, for example, under the term ‘psychoanalysis’ I include versions of psychoanalytic theory as diverse

as theoretically sophisticated Lacanian theory and loosely derived Eriksonian ego-psychology. I am not concerned as such with a critique of how orthodox or accurate or representative these adaptations are. Instead, I am interested in looking specifically at how each particular critic uses his reading of psychoanalysis to answer the problems that he sees in the available accounts of the colony or the postcolonial society.

In addition to limiting this discussion to colonial and postcolonial deployments of psychoanalysis, this dissertation is not explicitly concerned with writing 'better' psychoanalysis, that is to say a psychoanalysis that pays more attention to cultural difference or to the material conditions of its analytical objects. Though it might be desirable to develop a psychoanalytic language that accounts for issues of race more accurately, it is not the task of this dissertation to examine how that might be done. Instead I am interested in investigating how, by understanding our use of psychoanalysis better, we can write better studies of colonialism and clearer postcolonial theory. It is for this reason that I do not directly engage with any psychoanalytic texts here. I will not attempt to give a postcolonial reading of either Freud or Lacan not only because analyses that would demonstrate Freud or Lacan's implication in racist and sexist thinking have already been written by others, but because such readings would only confirm the notion that psychoanalysis is too problematic for postcolonial studies without posing the more important question: what should we do with psychoanalysis in postcolonial studies?

Foucault offers us a useful way of thinking about how this kind of critique of a system of thought might operate:

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kind of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest ... Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such (154)

The point of critique, then, is not to make judgments about the rights or wrongs of a way of thinking, rather it is to help us understand how and what we think. In terms of this dissertation, this means understanding what particular problems psychoanalysis resolves in postcolonial studies, and whether a psychoanalytic language is really the only solution. Psychoanalysis, as we shall see, is presumed to be the only language for writing about desire and identity, and as both themes have become more and more important in postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis has apparently inevitably come along with them. But perhaps the time has come to ask what is the price of psychoanalytic solutions in postcolonial studies?

There are many points at which one may enter a map of relations between psychoanalytic theory and analyses of colonialism. I have chosen to enter it via the work of five very different writers on the basis of three general factors. First, I have chosen these writers based on their direct engagement with issues of colonialism and postcolonialism, including relationships in colonial societies, the history of the colony and the conflict of cultures in colonial and postcolonial societies. The writers considered here devote a significant amount of their work to understanding colonies, decolonization and postcolonialism. Second, they all connect psychoanalysis to the colony, whether through direct analysis (Bhabha, Fanon), psychoanalytic histories (Nandy), or material practices (Fanon, Deleuze and Guattari). Psychoanalysis figures as a critical language in various ways in each of these writers, and part of my aim here is to demonstrate just how varied each critic's use of psychoanalysis is and to what extent he is able to draw out the critical potential of psychoanalytic theory. Third, I have chosen writers with a recognized influence on the mainstream of postcolonial theory to date. Though there are other writers who have made use of psychoanalysis to critique colonialism and racism, Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha are three of the most important critics in postcolonial theory canon. The inclusion of the work of Deleuze and Guattari is obviously somewhat of an exception to the criteria outlined.

Although Deleuze and Guattari do make some observations on colonialism and the implication of psychoanalytic theory in colonization, their critique is more concerned with the philosophy and politics of the European metropolis than its colonies.

Though their work has, until recently, had relatively little impact on postcolonial theory it is important in this thesis because of the critique of psychoanalysis that it offers and the terms on which it offers that critique.

The obvious starting point of this study is the work of Frantz Fanon. As the recent secondary literature on Fanon's work indicates, there are few scholars working in postcolonial studies today, from Marxists to deconstructionists, who do not cite Fanon as an influence on their particular approach to colonial analysis. Marxist-inclined theorists like Parry, Dirlik or Lazarus have emphasized the later Fanon who wrote about the need for the postcolonial world to be on guard against the native bourgeoisie, distracting cultural struggles and the necessity of engaging in violent revolution. Critics more committed to poststructuralist interpretations, like Bhabha and Young, have maintained that Fanon's use of psychoanalysis allowed us to view colonialism as something more than a merely political or economic arrangement.

By looking at Fanon's writing in the context of ethnopsychiatry in Africa (including his response to Octave Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban*), his own position as a practising psychiatrist and his final writings on mental health in *The Wretched of the Earth*, I argue that we do not need to choose between a psychoanalytic Fanon and a politically revolutionary Fanon. Instead, the significance of Fanon's work is his explicit politicization of psychoanalytic theory and psychiatric practice. However, since he maintains that revolution and decolonization will allow the man of colour to regain psychological health, he does not pursue the question of how this restoration will take place, and he does not sufficiently consider the possibility that the colonized might have cultural or psychological resources at their disposal. Most troubling of all, he does not seem to be able to account for the lives of women of colour in the

colony. As feminist critics point out, in Fanon's attempt to use psychoanalysis to write about race he replaces the theoretical position of woman with the position of black man pushing white women and women of colour out of the theory all together.

Ashis Nandy uses psychoanalysis and psychology specifically to understand what conditions made psychological resistance to colonialism either possible or impossible. Although he acknowledges the importance of Fanon's work in foregrounding the psychological damage colonialism inflicts on the colonized, he suggests that Fanon places too little faith in the ability of the colonized to resist colonial discourse through non-violent means. For Nandy, violent resistance is a less politically effective means of resistance than, for example, psychological resistance because violence ties the colonized people firmly to the terms of colonialism. In other words, although violent resistance might oust the colonizer from the physical space of the colony, only psychological resistance can oust the colonizer from our minds and hearts.

Nandy's brand of psychoanalysis is heavily inflected by a consideration of the culture of the colonized subjects. He avoids pathologizing Hindu culture through the language of psychology, and instead offers his own intuitive readings of how Hindu culture might be the psychological resource for creating postcolonial, or as he might refer to them, 'non-colonial' ways of being. Nandy's work consists largely of biographical studies that serve as accounts of how Indian subjects negotiated their way between the modern, colonial order of things and traditional, Hindu culture. His interpretation of Hindu culture, especially in terms of its ethics, is deeply insightful and productive but it naturally raises the question of whether we can, even in the most general terms, equate Hindu culture with Indian culture. Nandy does not consider how women, lower castes, lower classes or other minorities might live the impact of Hindu culture in different ways. In particular, he does not consider how Indian women might experience the cultural practices he celebrates as actively

oppressive. Though Nandy recognizes that culture must be constantly reinvented, his theory does not include a consideration of how culture is determined by and produced within particular social and political contexts.

Homi Bhabha, whose work represents the most recent application of psychoanalytic theory to colonial critique, seems to provide some answers to the problems in Nandy's work with his insightful discussions of culture in the colonial world and the contemporary metropolitan world. While Fanon and Nandy both turn to psychoanalytic theory to account for the ways in which colonized subjects experience colonialism and resist it, Bhabha uses it to account for the ways cultures interact. In *The Location of Culture* psychoanalytic concepts such as fetishism, mimicry and ambivalence are used to examine how cultures are performed, produced and authorized when they come into contact in the colonial society. In some sense, as many of his critics point out, actual colonial subjects disappear—whether male or female. How women, European or non-European, experience the colonial condition is not something Bhabha actively explores.

One of Bhabha's more well-known insights is his theory that stereotypes function as cultural or racial fetishes bridging and disavowing the difference between the culture of the colonizers and the colonized. In some sense Bhabha's writing seems to make much more literal use of psychoanalytic theory than either Fanon or Nandy. Whereas Fanon and Nandy both feel at liberty to interpret psychoanalytic theory loosely for their own analytical ends, Bhabha cites Freud and Lacan in particular as though their theories have the quality of truth. It seems that Bhabha uses psychoanalytic concepts to write about colonial manifestations because he finds that psychoanalytic language perfectly describes what happens in colonial cultures. Why this correspondence, or analogy, between colonial culture and psychoanalytic theory should exist, or what it might mean, is never explored in Bhabha's work.



In the fourth chapter, then, I turn to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari who have explored the question of why psychoanalytic theory might seem to describe Western societies and colonies so accurately. Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis, *Anti-Oedipus*, until quite recently, had not figured very often in postcolonial theory. Robert Young's discussion of the book, together with recent books by Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt and Peter Hallward are three of the few extended discussions of Deleuze and Guattari's theory in the context of colonialism. For Deleuze and Guattari psychoanalysis is a theory that complements capitalism, and works to produce the types of subjectivities and relationships that enable capitalism to flourish. If psychoanalysis seems to describe modern subjectivities so clearly then it is not because it is true, but because it normalizes those subjectivities. For Deleuze and Guattari the problem is as much about capitalism as it is about psychoanalytic theory, but the point is that these theories of modernity reinforce and require each other. Following Deleuze and Guattari, I argue that it is time to take their suggestion that we find 'escape routes' out of psychoanalytic theory more seriously. If postcolonial theory is meant to problematize the non-Western individual's relation to modernity, then *Anti-Oedipus* may offer a powerful model for intervention.

The work of these five critics demonstrates that psychoanalytic theory itself is not necessarily an apolitical or even politically blunt instrument of critique. In the hands of Fanon and Nandy, in particular, psychoanalysis is used to describe how the colonized are affected by colonial domination. In Bhabha's hands psychoanalytic theory provides a framework for understanding how colonized cultures survive and are transformed by their interaction in colonial societies. Nandy and Bhabha also explore how a psychoanalytic understanding of the relationship between the past and the present might provide the postcolonial society with a means of countering the legacies of colonial discourse that still operate today. In fact, for Nandy and Bhabha,

psychoanalysis is important as a means of destabilizing the continuing domination of the standards, practices and assumptions of Western knowledge. Psychoanalytic discourse, like any other discourse, can be strategically deployed. The question, then, is not whether psychoanalysis can be made politically useful in the short-term but whether it is a sustainable methodology for postcolonial studies in the long term.

In the concluding chapter, then, I will argue that we should abandon psychoanalysis as a tool for colonial and postcolonial critique precisely because its inability to account for the woman of colour is a significant failure in any postcolonial methodology. Instead, I argue that we should focus on turning psychoanalysis into an object of colonial discourse analysis. Feminist scholars such as Spillers, Walton and Seshadri-Crooks have begun this type of study, but they still focus more on the question of making psychoanalysis more sensitive and adaptable to questions of racial difference than investigating how psychoanalysis functions as a discourse about race and colonialism. Gay and lesbian studies scholars such as John Brenkman and Ann Pellegrini have also begun to examine psychoanalytic theory as an object of discourse analysis, but with a focus on challenging the theory's representation of European masculinity and heterosexuality. Although these scholars do not engage specifically with Deleuze and Guattari, their work travels along a similar trajectory. I would like to suggest that the recent work of these scholars combined with a postcolonial perspective might provide us with the means to open up psychoanalysis as an object of postcolonial critique.

## CHAPTER ONE: THE FANONIAN PSYCHOANALYTIC

It seems obvious that any investigation of the relationship between postcolonial theory and psychological discourses must begin with the work of Frantz Fanon. For some commentators, this is largely because of his psychoanalytically influenced book, *Black Skin, White Masks*. For others, it is because of his sometimes experimental and often politicized psychiatric practice in the Blida-Joinville hospital in colonial Algeria. However, though we readily acknowledge Fanon's engagement with psychoanalysis and psychiatry we have given relatively little attention to how his engagement functioned as a strategy rather than an endorsement of psychological and psychoanalytical theories and methods.

It may seem counter-intuitive to make this assertion at a time when those of us who read post-colonial studies are most familiar with Homi Bhabha's reading of Fanon's work. Bhabha presents us with a Fanon who "speaks most effectively... from deep within the struggle of psychic representation and social reality" (*Location of Culture* 183). There is no doubt that, for Bhabha, Fanon writes in the language of psychoanalysis. As many commentators such as Robert Young, Henry Louis Gates and Neil Lazarus have noted, where Fanon does not conform to Bhabha's creation of him, Bhabha excuses him and carries on. So it is that Bhabha's Fanon "lapses" into existentialist moments ("Black Man" 118), and reading Fanon's re-reading of Lacan he finds Fanon, "turns too hastily from the ambivalences of identification to the antagonistic identities of political alienation and cultural discrimination" ("Black Man" 121).

Depending on one's approach to Fanon, Bhabha's wilful attempt to turn Fanon into a Lacanian psychoanalyst of colonial and racist culture is either, as Gates suggests, "an oddly touching performance of a coaxing devotion" (460), or as Cedric Robinson writes, less kindly, "an ungracious conceit" (79). However, Bhabha is not

the only postcolonial theorist to read Fanon as the best exponent of his own methodological preferences. Gates' demonstrates in his review of postcolonial writing on Fanon that a range of scholars each produces very different readings of Fanon:

If Said made of Fanon an advocate of post-postmodern counternarratives of liberations; if JanMohamed made of Fanon a Manichean theorist of colonialism absolute negation; and if Bhabha cloned, from Fanon's *theoria*, another Third-World post-structuralist, Parry's Fanon (which I generally find persuasive) turns out to confirm her own rather optimistic vision of literature and social action (465)

Gates seems enchanted by what he calls the 'porous' quality of Fanon's texts which allows, perhaps even encourages, such varied interpretations. Simon Gikandi offers readers what I think is a more useful reflection. He suggests that even if the postmodern Fanon evinced by Bhabha and others is enchanting "there is no doubt in my mind that Gordon's existential Fanon is closer to the 'real' subject . . . Indeed, despite my own affinity for Marxist and Lacanian readings, such approaches to these texts have always seemed to me misplaced. The point is, we can put Fanon to whatever uses we want, but we should at least respect the intellectual positions he took" (149).<sup>3</sup>

What I want to focus on here is one of those moments where Fanon's intellectual position does indeed become obscured. Although Bhabha recognises and, even celebrates, the importance of psychological discourses to Fanon's project, he also fails to recognize the meaning of Fanon's eclectic use of psychoanalytic theory. Though Fanon begins *Black Skin White Masks* with the premise that a psychoanalytic investigation of the black man is urgently required, the book illustrates clearly how a solely psychoanalytic explanation of the black man's situation is ultimately impossible. His remark that "only a psychoanalytical interpretation of the black problem can lay bare the anomalies of affect that are responsible for the structure of

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<sup>3</sup> See Alessandrini 1-22 and Macey 26-30 for further discussion of the appropriations and misappropriations of Fanon's theories in recent postcolonial studies.

the complex” (*Black Skin White Masks* 12) is, therefore, an opening gambit rather than a declaration of allegiance. The psychoanalytic explanation Fanon has in mind is one that reworks traditional concepts, introduces social and economic factors into the diagnosis and questions the rules of psychoanalytic theory itself. Above all, it is an investigation of the “extent to which the conclusions of Freud or of Adler can be applied to the effort to understand the man of colour’s view” (*Black Skin White Masks* 141). Lewis Gordon suggests that any announcement Fanon makes about psychoanalysis at the start of *Black Skin, White Masks* is meant to mislead the reader, because Fanon’s tactic is “a provocative literary device of demonstration by failure. He will show that psychoanalysis cannot explain the black by attempting to explain the black psychoanalytically” (“The Black” 76).

Other critics have argued that we simply place too much weight on *Black Skin, White Masks* and should focus, instead, on Fanon’s less psychoanalytically influenced later texts. Benita Parry and Neil Lazarus are two of the most prominent critics to draw our attention to the Fanon who wrote *Wretched of the Earth* and underlined the violence and tension of the colonial state in his writings. Lazarus points out that Bhabha tends to read Fanon “back to front, as it were . . . thereby falsifying the testimony of his evolution as a theorist” (87). But there is a slippage here, between Bhabha’s psychoanalytic theory and Fanon’s critique of psychoanalysis. Even if we are reluctant to accept Bhabha’s explanations, we should be careful not to throw out Fanon’s engagement with psychoanalytic theory as well. There is an implication in the critiques of Bhabha that the revolutionary Fanon should supplant the psychological Fanon; that this is the ‘real Fanon’ or at least the more politically engaged Fanon.

While I am sympathetic to the readings Lazarus and Parry produce of Fanon’s work, I do not think we have to discount the psychological Fanon in order to reap the benefits of politically revolutionary Fanon. The use of psychological

discourse and the practice of psychiatry were clearly important political tools for Fanon throughout his brief life as a political activist. Critics such as Diana Fuss have suggested that Fanon's work is original because it introduces the idea that psychic processes such as identification are "never outside or prior to politics, what Fanon gives us is a politics that does not oppose the psychical but fundamentally presupposes it" (39). I would refine this statement a little further and argue that Fanon's work is original because he seeks to place the interdependence of politics and psychology to use in the causes of anti-colonialism and anti-racism. When Fanon entered the field of writing on psychology and colonialism, he was not the first writer to connect a psychological viewpoint with an analysis of the problems in a colonial society. Writing about Fanon's psychoanalysis, then, does not mean adopting a psychoanalytic approach but rather looking at the particular ways in which Fanon attempts to read, re-write and re-deploy psychoanalytic theory. In other words, we need to understand Fanon's use of psychological theories and practices as strategic, with an accompanying set of tactics.

### ***Fanon and the Colonial Psyche***

During the 1920s and 1930s many health professionals who worked in the colonies began to look more closely at the mental health of those in their care. Prior to this mental health in the colonies had not been a high priority for the colonial medical services compared, for example, with the need to deal with tropical diseases that affected many of the colonizer population. Indeed, in his study of ethnopsychiatry in colonial Africa, Jock McCulloch notes that asylums were simply considered a subdivision of the penal system as late as 1944 (3). As McCulloch shows, even if interest in colonial psychiatry began to grow during these years it was hardly ever matched by investment in mental health institutions and staff in the colonies. Nevertheless, it is possible to see a new stream of thought in the medical

literature and the discussions among doctors about mental health and the colony. In order to establish the context of Fanon's psychological and psychoanalytic writings, I would like to examine some significant features of the discussion: the psychological characterization of native cultures, the concerns about the mental fitness of the colonizer population and how these discussions reflected on the future of the Empire.

One of the most significant features of this emerging way of talking about colonialism was the effort to characterize colonized cultures and the personality types of the colonized populations in psychological terms. McCulloch's work discusses the concept of 'the African mind' as an example of such colonial psychiatric evaluations. Colonial psychiatry in Africa concluded that Africans did not have the complex inner life that the European had or the mental resources and habits with which to harness the potential of an inner life for creativity and achievement. This picture of Africans as people lacking control, discipline, creativity or intellectual curiosity, although painted for the most part without overt political intent fitted neatly into the argument for colonial government. Since Africans were infantile and uncontrolled, unable to function as rational and productive citizens, they required the supervision and management Europeans could offer.

In India, psychiatrists found a distinctly Indian pathology at work, but the description of this pathology worked towards similar ends as in colonial Africa. Owen Berkeley-Hill, an influential British psychiatrist in India, devoted some attention to drawing personality profiles of the Hindus and Muslims. He claimed "the Hindu has all the disadvantageous traits of the anal-erotic personality, such as irritability, bad temper, unhappiness, hypochondria, miserliness, pettiness, slow-mindedness, a tendency to bore, a bent for tyrannizing and dictating, and obstinacy" (Hartnack 242). Berkeley-Hill concluded that Hindus were thus unsuited to govern themselves since they did not have the psychological capabilities for leadership or

judicious management.<sup>4</sup> Like the Africans, the Hindus were also judged infantile. If the African was a rather excitable and uncontrollable child, the Hindu Indian was a sullen and obstinate child. Both were difficult to govern, but neither was suited to govern themselves.

Nevertheless, although descriptions of the colonized populations were part of an ongoing ethnological project, the native population was not really the subject of mental care as such. They may have been the subjects of psychiatric studies, but as noted above, they were often not deemed civilized enough to in fact require mental health care. The colonial asylum was generally a place for members of the colonizer community who could not afford to go home and to a lesser extent for extreme native cases. In any case, it is fair to suppose that the colonial specialist's chief concern was for the mental health of the colonizers themselves. Those on the spot in colonial outposts had long been thought susceptible to certain states of mind or nervousness. "Going native", in an earlier stage of colonialism, was a noted variety of this. Whether it was a case of 'tropical neurasthenia' in the Philippines, as Warwick Anderson writes about, or the 'Inferiority complex' of the European colonizer in Madagascar, as Mannoni writes about, there was a real anxiety about the fitness of the individual to carry on his, or, more rarely, her colonial duty.<sup>5</sup>

The psychological profile of the normal European male was the implicit ideal against which the portraits of the native population were drawn. So what were the

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<sup>4</sup> Berkeley-Hill thought Muslim Indians were rather more of a threat to colonial authority, since he considered them to be much more like the British than the Hindus could ever be. Nevertheless, he did manage to find a pathological framework to place them in. Hartnack argues "with the help of psychoanalytic concepts, however, he tried to show that the origin of Islam lay in an individual neurosis . . . [he] claimed that Islam could be traced to a neurosis of Mohammed, who suffered, among other things, from an all-pervasive father complex" (242).

<sup>5</sup> Anderson notes in his study of tropical neurasthenia in the American Philippines, that the subject of this type of nervous colonial breakdown or mental deterioration was usually male. This is an interesting fact given the general tendency for women to be diagnosed or to acknowledge mental disease far more readily than men (1354). Indeed, even in colonial India and Africa men were more likely to be the subject of concerns about mental health breakdowns in the colony than women. The connections between colonial psychology and gender may be a special case in the history of madness.



characteristics of normal mental health for the colonizer and colonized? In the case of the colonial psychiatrists in Africa the normal man was “emotionally balanced, reliable and realistic in his expectations, able to compromise and to control his anger (which in any case was not marked), and capable of empathy with the suffering of others. His life was ruled by rational choice, and he accepted responsibility for his own actions” (McCulloch 97). Berkeley-Hill’s ideal, though he was not in communication with colleagues in Africa, was very similar. For him, the ideal man exhibited “determination, persistence, reliability, thoroughness, and individualism” (Hartnack 242). The breakdown of this European personality in the colonies was evidenced by vague tendencies and physical symptoms. Men, in particular, were characterized as mentally exhausted, nervous, indolent, sexually indulgent and unfocused. In other words, the disintegration of the European personality was understood as a general failure to measure up to a civilized ideal.

It is possible, and tempting, to read mental colonial breakdown as the beginning of a critique of colonialism. Perhaps the European colonizer was beginning to realise the ethical implications of colonialism, and to suffer from the sense of living an unethical life. But, as Anderson points out “if there is a critique of colonialism within colonial psychology in this period, it is a muted one, with the specificity of colonial history and politics conveniently erased” (1367). The decline or debilitation of the European psyche in the colonies is an issue, but it never becomes so much of an issue that the Europeans should rather relinquish colonial control than continue the colonial project. Indeed, to some degree particular mental illnesses functioned as a badge of civilization. For example, colonial psychiatrists in Africa concluded that the colonized population did not suffer from depression. Depression was associated, in European thought, with “guilt, religious doubt and artistic originality, characteristics often identified as the very foundation of Western subjectivity” (McCulloch 111). If Africans did not exhibit these characteristics of

Western individualism or the heightened sensibility of the civilized person they could not suffer from depression.

Anderson puts the matter precisely: “It was a question of *how* white males might civilize the tropics (resident or distanced), and whether that region deserved their best efforts—they remained the only possible agents of civilization. Colonial optimism always won out over colonial pessimism” (1367). Indeed, in place of the old justifications for colonial rule such as moral or physiological superiority the Berkeley-Hills of the world could point to the psychological superiority of the European. Whatever the justification, the natives remained unsuitable for the responsibility of governing themselves. As Anderson shows, even if the European colonizer was somewhat the worse for wear he or she was still the one best suited to govern.

In order to illustrate more tangibly how the convergences between psychiatry, psychology, psychoanalysis and colonialism were written about and understood I will look closely at one text in particular, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* by Octave Mannoni. Mannoni’s study of colonial relations in the French colony of Madagascar was first published in France in 1949, and it displays many of the trends outlined above. Although Mannoni had begun analysis with Lacan and was later to become an important figure in the *École Freudienne*, he was not a mental health professional when he wrote the book. He was, in fact, an ethnologist with a keen interest in the health of his own psyche and a deep sense of pessimism about the future of the French Empire. Mannoni was troubled by the defective psychology of the colonizers, which he observed over twenty years in Madagascar, and sought to make his audience aware of the deepening problem.

The central argument of Mannoni’s work is that colonial society in Madagascar is built upon a clash between two different personality types. This clash produces numerous misunderstandings between the colonizer and the colonized,

eventually resulting in the breakdown of meaningful communications. In *Prospero and Caliban*, Mannoni attempts to guide his readers through “the phenomena that occur in a colonial situation and the way in which colonials as well as natives react to that situation” (22). Accordingly, he examines the Malagasy personality and the psychology of the European colonizer before turning to an analysis of human relations in colonial settings.

There are several interesting features of Mannoni’s argument. The first is his characterization of the Malagasy personality as a dependent one. He supports this argument with anecdotal evidence drawn from the European residents.<sup>6</sup> He goes on to argue that the Malagasy culture produces dependent personalities. In his most ethnographic voice, Mannoni describes how the practice of ancestor worship, prevalent among the Malagasy, makes it impossible for them to develop into mature, independent adults in the European sense. Unlike the European father, the Malagasy father does not figure as an absolute authority for his children. Instead, he acts as a type of mediator between the dead ancestors and his own family. As a result, Mannoni argues, there is no paternal power for the child to resist and test him or herself against. In short, there is an absence of the Oedipus complex to be experienced, much less resolved. Mannoni concludes that “instead of protesting, like the European that he is a man like his father, the Malagasy appears to claim that all men are children. He projects his own dependence on everyone else” (60). The thing that the Malagasy fears most, then, is abandonment. Mannoni suggests that if the bonds of dependence should ever be broken, the Malagasy will become very hostile.

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<sup>6</sup> As was the case in many other parts of the Empire, colonizers had a store of classic stories that neatly dramatized some essential characteristic of the native. In the case of the Malagasy, this essential characteristic was a lack of gratitude. Mannoni assures his readers that he has experienced this situation too. He writes:

A Malagasy receives from a European some favour which he badly needs, but would never have dreamed of asking for. Afterwards he comes of his own accord and asks for favours he could very well do without; he appears to feel he has some claim upon the European who did him a kindness. Furthermore, he shows no gratitude—in our sense of the word—for favours he has received (42).

By contrast, Mannoni suggests that the European culture tends towards what he calls 'inferiority'. This might at first appear to be a rather unexpected claim, but Mannoni aimed at drawing a portrait of the pathology that he detected in the colonizers and the colonized. He argues that those Europeans who do become colonials are not created through their colonial experience. Instead they possess disturbing psychological tendencies that become expressed in a colonial setting such as a failure to accept reality as it is. He draws on European literature to support his argument, identifying Prospero and Robinson Crusoe as examples of the European colonial type. These men display an inability to accept that the others (whoever the others may be) we create in our unconscious do not correspond to the people we actually encounter in the world. Instead of accepting this reality, colonial types display an incredible and irrational need to control those around them. They are desperate, Mannoni claims, to find some paradise where anyone they encounter will be entirely governed by them.

Having outlined his theory of the colonized and colonizer's respective personalities, Mannoni turns his attention to the problem of political independence in a culture of dependence. He deals quickly with the problem of Malagasy agitation for political independence. This, he suggests, is simply the result of their loss of confidence in their European leaders. If the Malagasy genuinely want to move towards democratic self-government they will have to begin by reviving their own tribal forms of government. His advocacy of a return to tradition is somewhat curious since he attributes their dependency complexes to their traditional practices. However, he is not really interested in what will happen to the Malagasy, his main concern is the decline of the European character.

For Mannoni, there is nothing inherently problematic about the European's inferiority complex, indeed he notes that "providing it is resolved in good time, [it] is the main driving force of western man, and provides him with the energy which sets

him apart from all other peoples in the world” (127). In fact, he goes so far as to say that the Europeans brought up in the colony are generally less neurotic than their metropolitan counterparts. However, he claims that this is the result of living in a society where their authority is not challenged rather than a successful resolution of their inferiority complexes. If this situation persists, he warns his metropolitan readers, the psychological burden or unresolved authority issues will prevent the white man from reaching his full potential. In gloomy tones he writes, “already we can forecast what the main characteristics of this type will be: lack of originality and creativity, a distinct taste for feudal types of organization, and a lively desire to avoid infection from the complexes of the Northern hemisphere . . . far less worthy products than are Europeans” (127).

In other words, Mannoni is worried that the colonial Europeans will ‘go native’ if they are not provided with the challenges that build character. In the end, Mannoni avoids actual pronouncements about or solutions to the future of the colony, preferring instead to concentrate on the problem of the European character. He emphasises that his book is only about understanding the colonial situation as it exists and demonstrates why “only psychology can explain how and why a colonial situation so easily deteriorates into one of error and illusion” (198). Indeed, for Mannoni the kind of analysis his book attempts “is precisely the job psychoanalysis should perform in the study of such situations” (198).

It is in this context that Fanon enters the discussion on mental health and colonialism. In *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon is at pains to deal with Mannoni’s argument, devoting an entire chapter to an analysis of “The So-Called Dependency Complex of the Colonized Peoples”. I will examine some aspects of his response in the next section, where I will deal specifically with Fanon’s reading of psychoanalytic theory. However, before I go on to consider Fanon’s response to psychoanalysis in

detail I want to consider his deployment of psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis more generally.

First, Fanon wrests back the language of psychology and psychoanalysis to write about the man of colour's experience of colonialism. Fanon was not a psychoanalyst, and did not undergo any psychoanalytic training or undertake any psychoanalytic therapy himself. Nevertheless, he engages with the discourse in order to present a different perspective on the psychology of colonial relations. Fanon's work looks at the links between psychology and politics and illuminates them from a different direction than the ethnopsychiatrists or Mannonis of the world. The perspective on the psychology of colonialism offered by ethnopsychiatrists in colonial Africa, Owen Berkeley-Hill and Mannoni, although not overtly presented as arguments for colonialism, serves to confirm if not explain the need for a colonial order of things. They paint a picture of infantile, intellectually and morally immature native populations whose psychological profiles (neurotic or anal-erotic) make them unsuitable to govern their own affairs adequately without guidance from the colonizer. Fanon's work, as we shall see, attempts to show that the psychology of colonialism is not a question of describing the innate or essential characteristics of the native population. Instead, it is a question of understanding how colonialism has created damaging, if not unliveable, psychological conditions.

Another important strand of Fanon's strategy, which I cannot examine in detail here given the scope of this chapter, involved his work and practice as a psychiatrist. Fanon was very interested in socio-centric therapies throughout his working life. McCulloch, Vergès, and Bulhan have all written about Fanon's attempts to help his patients recover mental health through group activities in the hospital community. He worked to make the staff part of the community (rather than splitting the social world of the hospital between patients and staff), and increased his own understanding of the social and cultural world of his patients. Contrary to the

tradition of the colonial psychiatrist, Fanon did not accept the standard medical profiles of the day that deemed his mostly male, colonized Algerian patients lazy, passive, depressed or withdrawn. Instead he tried to understand how their experience of the colonial world produced such symptoms, and attempted to improve their experience of the world inside the institution by designing culturally appropriate group activities for them.<sup>7</sup>

What makes this aspect of Fanon's strategy so remarkable is his willingness to follow it through to its logical ends. Fanon's belief in the interdependent relationship between the mental illness of his colonized patients and the demands of colonial society led him to eventually resign his post as the Chief of Medicine at Blida-Joinville. In colonial Algeria, Fanon was not held accountable to the Ministry of Health in France but to the local authority in Algeria. In other words, as a doctor in the colonial medical service, he was an agent of the colonial government in Algeria. Realizing the incompatibility between his idea that psychiatry involved the reconciliation of an individual and his world, and his position as an agent of the government that made all political, economic and psychological reconciliation impossible, he gave up his post. In his resignation letter to the Resident Minister in 1956 he made this clear in his own, inimitable style:

Madness is one of the means man has of losing his freedom. And I can say, on the basis of what I have been able to observe from this point of vantage, that the degree of alienation of the inhabitants of this country appears to me frightening.

If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his own country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization . . . The social structure existing in Algeria was hostile to any attempt to put the individual back where he belonged (53).

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<sup>7</sup> In fact, Fanon observed that the activities originally developed for the male, Algerian patients were based on his own culturally French ideas of leisure or interest. He only realized later that these patients needed something more culturally appropriate when they did not respond to the activities. He and his colleagues devised an Algerian coffee shop for the patients rather than encouraging them to put together a community newspaper (an activity the French patients seemed to respond to).

Fanon went on practising medicine after his resignation, but it was as a doctor in the service of the FLN in Tunis, rather than as a government psychiatrist.

Fanon's work as a psychiatrist has proved to be as contentious a subject for his commentators and biographers as his revolutionary and theoretical writings. Macey and Vergès have both reminded readers that Fanon was a conventional psychiatrist who used the full spectrum of psychiatric treatments to treat his patients, rather than a pioneering, medical hero set apart from the entire medical tradition. Socio-centric therapy also involves certain problems, as McCulloch and Vergès both remind us, and as we shall discuss later in this chapter. Nevertheless, I think it important to acknowledge that Fanon's decision to resign his post in Blida had consequences not simply for him and his career, but for his family. The decision to act on his beliefs about psychiatry and colonialism demanded a level of integrity and consistency from him that continues to be admirable from a contemporary point of view.

The last aspect of Fanon's treatment of the psychology of colonialism that I want to look at here is how he makes graphically visible just what real mental illness in the colonies can look like. By the time Fanon wrote *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon's own experience and understanding of colonialism had deepened. In Algeria he was living in the midst of a colonial war. Some critics have argued that Fanon leaves behind his concerns with psychology and psychiatry towards the end of his career, but the last chapter of *Wretched of the Earth* before his conclusion is entirely devoted to the subject of "Colonial War and Mental Disorders". In this chapter Fanon presents some case histories of patients he has treated during the war. Some of them are drawn from the colonized population fighting the war of independence, others are drawn from the colonizers in charge of bringing the colonial rebels to account.

This chapter makes stark and unpleasant reading. Far from cataloguing a series of generalized behaviours and attitudes (for example, lazy, ungrateful, passive



natives) Fanon describes the mental and physical torment of living with colonial conflict and being forced to play a part in that conflict. This includes the physical symptoms and personal dilemmas that result from, for example, surviving mass murder, living in the knowledge that French soldiers have raped and degraded your partner, committing terrorist activity, and torturing other human beings. In the extremes of colonial conflict, then, we are not in the realm of abstract complexes and personalities, but a bloody and destructive encounter between a set of people who aim to dominate and another set of people who will not accept that domination any more. There is obviously a difference between the psychology of colonialism described by Mannoni, and that described by Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth*. And yet violence was beginning to erupt in Madagascar as Mannoni was writing just as it erupted in Fanon's colonial Algeria. Mannoni may have not have seen the potential or actual violence of the psychological universe he lived in, but Fanon saw it all too clearly and tried to make his readers understand the full horror of colonial conflict with his account of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis in the colony.

### ***Reading Fanon's Psychoanalysis***

How, then, does Fanon make use of psychoanalytic theory itself? I have argued that we should read Fanon's use of psychoanalysis as strategic, but what are his specific tactics? Perhaps his first, and most important tactic, is the introduction of "sociogeny" into the psychoanalytic method. In the introduction of *Black Skin, White Masks* he declares "the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Besides phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny . . . this is a question of a sociodiagnostic" (13). Phylogeny refers to the history of the evolution of a racial type, or a pedigree. Ontogeny is defined as the history of the development of individual being. Sociogeny, which is one of Fanon's interesting neologisms, could be understood to be the history of the development of a society. He specifically does not use the word

sociology, the study of a society. Instead, he asks us to consider the history of the development of a particular society, specifically the history of the development of the racist, colonial society. Understanding the alienation of the black man or putting together the psychology of the black man, will mean looking at the way in which a racist, colonial society comes to be and produces its effects. Fanon does not criticize the absence of a socio-political or socio-economic perspective in psychoanalysis itself. He simply insists that for the black man, “an immediate recognition of social and economic realities” (*Black Skin* 13) must come into play.

Fanon’s psychological and psychoanalytic investigations, then, proceed from the acknowledgement of certain facts. He insists on the reality of racism and the effects of racial ideology in colonial societies. Until that point, for most of the authors writing on mental health in the colony, racism was not even a topic for discussion. In his study of the field, McCulloch points out that even “the term colonialism appears so rarely in the literature that it is almost possible to survey it without being aware of the context in which it was written . . . they had no formal interest in the relations between black and white communities and they ignored the ways in which colonial contact had reshaped African societies” (138). Like Mannoni, the suggestion that their own work was racist seemed to be deeply upsetting to them. Their scientific contributions to the discussions were intended to be ‘above’ racism.

Mannoni was one of the first European commentators to tackle the topic of racism, or racialism as he referred to it, in his book. Perhaps predictably, he took much the same line as the ethnopsychiatrists. He did not see racialism as one of the defining features of colonial society, and did not see its relevance to his analysis. It was this attitude which allowed him to write, “France is unquestionably one of the least racist-minded countries in the world; also colonial policy is officially anti-racist” (110). In fact, though he devotes one chapter of *Prospero and Caliban* to the topic of “The Colonial Situation and Racialism” Mannoni is keen to rid himself of

the problems of race and racialism. He concludes that “nothing is gained by creating vague concepts like that of race” (121) and warns that once it is introduced into the discussion the conflict between colonizer and colonized can never be resolved. He observes with quiet distaste that the most one can expect of a racist is that “he will hide his racist convictions” (121).

In marked contrast to these attitudes then, Fanon insists that racism is a real phenomenon and is absolutely relevant to psychiatric, psychological or psychoanalytic investigations of the black man’s alienation. In direct response to Mannoni’s remark, at best naïve and at worst insulting, that France is not a racist country Fanon insists that it is:

Once and for all I will state this principle: a given society is racist or it is not. Until all the evidence is available a great number of problems will have to be put aside. Statements for example, that the North of France is more racist than the south, that racism is the work of underlings and hence in no way involves the ruling class, that France is one of the least racist countries in the world are the product of men incapable of straight thinking (*Black Skin* 85)

Whereas Mannoni, and others like him, write about the psychology of colonialism without reference to race as a lived reality or racism as such, Fanon places the term squarely in the centre of his analysis. For Fanon, there is no question that racism exists as a painfully real aspect of the colonized person’s life and, consequently, produces significant psychological effects.

Fanon not only places racism more centrally in the debate, he also insists on the structural nature of that racism. Insofar as Mannoni, unlike many of the ethnopsychiatrists, accepts the existence of racism in the colony he ascribes it to some ‘rotten apples in the barrel’. For Mannoni racism is a human flaw, or as McCulloch describes it “an aberration of the human spirit which could be overcome by appeals to reason” (138).<sup>8</sup> For Fanon, racism is not a question of some petty or

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<sup>8</sup> It is interesting to note that Mannoni believes European women are much more likely to succumb to ‘racialism’ than men. Unsurprisingly, given this view, he also finds that among the men ‘racialism’ is an attitude practised by the lower orders of the colonial hierarchy, but

uninformed fellows, not least because of his own experiences with racism at the hands of professors in medical school or colleagues. He draws his readers' attention to the specific structural arrangements and rewards of colonialism for the European colonizer. Mannoni may believe that economic factors do not explain very much about colonial relations, but Fanon writes that, for example, the conflict in South Africa between working-class whites and blacks is "fundamentally a result of the economic structure of South Africa" (*Black Skin* 87). Far from being a psychological misunderstanding or a human flaw, apartheid policy aims at "the separation of the natives from the Europeans, territorially, economically, and on the political level" (*Black Skin* 87) as described by a South African author of the time.

Fanon settles the question of the relationship between economics and racism with bitter clarity:

If one adds that many Europeans go to the colonies because it is possible for them to grow rich quickly there, that with rare exceptions the colonial is a merchant, or rather a trafficker, one will have grasped the psychology of the man who arouses in the autochthonous population 'the feeling of inferiority' (*Black Skin* 108).

One may approach the question of colonialism from a psychological or psychoanalytical perspective, but Fanon cautions us that we must not treat the psychological problems of colonialism in isolation from social, political and economic contexts. In fact, Fanon suggests that structural realities do not simply inform the analysis they direct the solutions. He writes "outside my psychoanalytic office, I have to incorporate my conclusions into the context of the world . . . . as a psychoanalyst, I should help my patient to become conscious of his unconscious and abandon his attempts at a hallucinatory whitening, but also to act in the direction of change in the social structure" (*Black Skin* 100).

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never by the finest specimens of European culture. There is something rather disingenuous about Mannoni's claims. While the Malagasy remain largely undifferentiated in his analysis of colonial psychology, his attack on the colonizers is finely tuned to exclude a great many people from any blame for the colonial situation.

The last aspect of Fanon's sociogenic method which I will consider here is his emphasis on the bodily experience itself, or as he describes it 'the lived-experience of the black man'. The fifth chapter of *Black Skin White Masks*, is often translated as "The Fact of Blackness". However, as Macey notes, the original French "L'expérience vécue du Noir" is better understood as "The Lived Experience of the Black" (164), or as Gordon further clarifies, the lived-experience of racism ("The Black" 77). Indeed, the book is subtitled "The Experiences of a Black Man in a White World". Clearly, as Gordon has persuasively demonstrated in his study of Fanon's philosophical ideas, this emphasis on the body owes something to Fanon's understanding of existential and phenomenological theories. Here, I offer Fanon's emphasis on the body simply as further evidence of his insistence on the material in his psychological investigations in contrast with the much more abstract and detached psychology of colonialism offered by his contemporary European commentators.<sup>9</sup> Physical bodies or bodily experiences do not figure prominently in Mannoni's book, and to the extent they appear in the literature by colonial psychiatrists, they are described in highly medicalized and depersonalized terms.

In contrast with these bland or sanitized accounts, Fanon lays bare his own intention to "convey the misery of the black man" (*Black Skin* 86), which he does in very physical terms. In spite of his warning, it is still painful to read Fanon's strangely familiar account of being forced to turn himself, his skin, into an object in order to lessen the weight of being black in a white world: "What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood" (*Black Skin* 113). The experience of existing in a black body is often made

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<sup>9</sup> Gordon's *Fanon and the European Crisis of Man* offers the best and most comprehensive explication of the phenomenological influences in Fanon's work, noting not simply how he uses those categories, but how, as with psychoanalysis, he remakes the categories in his discussions of racism, colonialism and the black..

physically painful in a white world. He indicates in another, earlier paragraph that it is also disorienting:

In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one, but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other . . . and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent not there, disappeared. Nausea (*Black Skin* 112)

Bhabha has interpreted this passage in a more empowering sense than I am presenting it here (*Location of Culture* 50). Rather than emphasizing the painful quality of Fanon's bodily fractures, Bhabha understands them as the fractures that, for Lacanian psychoanalysis, mark the process of creating and negotiating identity. I would argue instead that, for Fanon, these experiences represent a forceful, brutal fracturing of his experience of his body. Fanon demonstrates that being black in a colonial society produces psychological effects and affects which Mannoni and his colleagues do not even begin to comprehend or take into account.

Fanon's second central tactic, in *Black Skin White Masks* is to puncture the claims of psychoanalysis to be a universal theory. He attempts to prove that any universal category intended to describe the human functions as a "mask over the assimilation of the human itself with European values" (Young, *White Mythologies* 122). Against the universals of psychoanalysis, Fanon insists on the specifics of the colonial situation that he is seeking to describe and understand. He describes this objective neatly at the beginning of the most psychoanalytically-engaged chapter of *Black Skin White Masks*, "The Negro and Psychopathology": "One should investigate the extent to which the conclusions of Freud or of Adler can be applied to the effort to understand the man of color's view of the world" (141).

Fanon notes his sense throughout his own readings of psychoanalysis that something in the theory does not quite resonate with the life of a black man. He writes: "I have been struck by the disparity between the corresponding schemas and

the reality that the Negro presents” (*Black Skin* 150). Anticipating his readers’ comments that he is, in fact, only describing particular variations on universal themes he insists that there is something in the life of the man of colour being described which *alters the whole framework*. This is not merely a question of providing an example of how, in the particular case of the Black man, the theory does not work. It is a case of showing how the lived experience of the colonized black man ‘stretches’ psychoanalytic theory slightly. In some instances, then, Fanon dispenses with concepts as they apply to the life of the man of colour, in other instances he provides refinements and corrections in order to make the concepts applicable to a psychology of colonialism.

One of Fanon’s key challenges to psychoanalytic theory is his gleeful claim that the Oedipus complex does not exist in Black families in the Antilles. He writes, “if would be relatively easy for me to show that in the French Antilles 97 per cent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves” (*Black Skin* 152).<sup>10</sup> How Fanon arrives at the percentage calculation, or why he feels it would be easy for him to demonstrate the absence of Oedipal complexes is a matter for speculation. Bulhan, one of Fanon’s most admiring commentators notes, that this statistic is “an example of his tendency to make a categorical affirmation even in the absence of precise data to support it” (73). Nevertheless, as Bulhan also observes, the rhetorical effect of this denial of psychoanalytic theory’s cornerstone is powerful. Fanon was well aware when he wrote these words that the psychoanalytic community was adamant in its assertion that the Oedipus complex occurred universally and across cultures. The point, then, is not whether the Oedipus complex occurred or not among the French Antilleans.

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<sup>10</sup> Fanon goes on to claim that because of the absence of Oedipus complex in Martinique there is also an absence of neurotic homosexuality. Any homosexuality that does exist in Martinique he ascribes to purely economic motivations. See Fuss 32-36 for a discussion of the disturbing implications of Fanon’s analysis.

Instead, Fanon alerts us to the fact that the assertions of orthodox psychoanalytic theory can and should be challenged. It may be significant that this is the only concept he throws away wholesale. In almost every other case, in writing about Lacan's mirror state, Adler's theory of recognition or Jung's collective unconscious, as we shall see below, he refines the concept for his own purposes. Dismissing the Oedipus complex at the very beginning then, may be a theoretical flourish, or a signal that we are not in the realms of orthodox psychoanalytic theory.

Fanon may also have had genuine reasons to suppose that the Oedipus complex was not the central or significant feature of the Martinican's psychic life. His rewriting of the family in the psychic life of the colonized suggests an alternative explanation. For orthodox psychoanalysis the family is crucial, because it is the formation through which the child learns to be what he or she should be and what others should be. Indeed, for Lacan the family is the *most* significant "psychic circumstance and object" (Lacan quoted in Fanon, *Black Skin* 141).<sup>11</sup> Fanon accepts the psychoanalysts' view that the family represents the society in microcosm. The child learns how the world works from observing members of its family, and interacting with those family members. For the European child, Fanon suggests, this does not set up any particular conflict. The French family is, in effect, the French nation and "as the child emerges from the shadow of his parents, he finds himself once more among the same laws, the same principles, the same values" (*Black Skin* 142). Putting aside more detailed discussion of what is and what is not normal, Fanon asserts that the normal French child will emerge from his or her childhood into normal adulthood. For the colonized Black child, however, we are in a different psychological situation. For the Antillean child, emerging from childhood and making contact with the white world of the colonizer leads inevitably to conflict and

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<sup>11</sup> I use Fanon's citation of Lacan, since Fanon's reinterpretation of the mirror stage is based on his understanding of Lacan's theory.



psychological abnormality. In other words, Fanon suggests that for the Black child the crucial psychic circumstance and object is his or her contact with the White world.

In order to elaborate on this explanation, Fanon begins to experiment with psychoanalytic concepts such as Jacques Lacan's mirror stage and Carl Jung's collective unconscious. For example, Fanon suggests the reason that contact with the White world proves so difficult for the colonized child is that until this point the child has not realized his or her blackness. In other words, the child has not identified with his blackness. Making use of Lacan's mirror stage, Fanon reports on how Antilleans experience this phenomenon: "I contend that for the Antillean the mirror hallucination is always neutral. When Antilleans tell me they have experienced it, I always ask the same question: 'What color were you? Invariably, they reply: 'I had no color'" (*Black Skin* 162). He offers further evidence of the 'neutral' terms in which Antillean children experience and imagine themselves in the form of school essays describing their vacations. The black children remembered themselves as running through the countryside, with a rosy flush on their cheeks from the exertion. Clearly, Fanon argues, the Antillean child does not realise "the fact of his being a Negro" (*Black Skin* 162) whose skin could not display picturesque rosy blushes.

When the child does realise the 'fact' of his blackness, the result is devastating. Here, Fanon makes use of a well-known psychoanalytic concept, Jung's collective unconscious. Fanon clearly finds Jung's concepts of collectively held ideas, images and needs useful. But here, once again, he makes his own adjustment. For Jung, the collective unconscious is an instinct shared by and passed on through a race. Fanon observes that we do not have to make use of Jung's racialized thinking to make use of the concept. The collective unconscious is "purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group" (*Black Skin* 188). Jung ascribes the fact that these attitudes and images are shared to racial instinct, but

Fanon argues instead that it is cultural and therefore, acquired. When the colonized child, then, who has absorbed and internalized the prejudices and attitudes towards blackness prevalent in colonial culture, is forced to confront the fact that he must identify or be identified with blackness, his world begins to fracture. What does the black child do, Fanon asks his readers, having realized that from now on he will have to be a black person?

The problem is compounded, Fanon goes on to show, by the fact that “not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (*Black Skin* 110). Here, in the last chapter of *Black Skin White Masks* that deals specifically with a set of psychoanalytic concepts, Fanon makes use of Alfred Adler’s theories of inferiority. References to Adler’s more sociocentric and socialist psychoanalytic theory are scattered throughout the book, but it is only in the chapter, “The Negro and Recognition” that he comments on specific aspects of Adler’s theory and modifies them for his purposes. Adler hypothesized that those suffering from inferiority were driven to compare themselves with those they encountered, relentlessly seeking to understand how they measured up to others. In these encounters with others the individual could either feel superior to the Other, or, if he did not, he would have to develop an explanation for why he did not appear to advantage placed beside the Other. For Antilleans, Fanon argues, this is not a matter of individual psychology it describes the entire group. He writes unequivocally, “it is not just this or that Antillean who embodies the neurotic formation, but all Antilleans. Antillean society is a neurotic society, a society of ‘comparison’” (*Black Skin* 213).

This might seem to be a peculiar theoretical move from Fanon, since he appears to be arguing that Martinicans can all be classified under one psychological label. However, in the next sentence he places his own statement in question: “The Martinican is and is not a neurotic” (*Black Skin* 213). The neuroticism Fanon

describes is not to be understood as an innate or inherited characteristic. It is a response to the fact that historically the Black man has always been made to feel that he is inferior. Faced with this historical reality, the Black man has reacted with a superiority complex always seeking to measure up well against the others. What Adler understands to be an individual phenomenon, Fanon turns into a society-wide phenomenon.

Indeed, Fanon goes one step further. Adler theorises that the individual suffering from an inferiority complex compares himself with the Other. Fanon argues that for the black man, the comparison is slightly different. He compares himself with other black individuals, in relation to the White man. In other words, the significance of the Black man's comparison with Others is not how he measures up personally (although he experiences it individually), it is how he measures up in social terms. As Fanon observes repeatedly throughout the book, the psychic identifications, comparisons and experiences of the Black man are all tied to a myth of blackness. What he has been attempting to describe is not "a universal phenomenon, the criterion of maturity being in fact adaptation to society" (*Black Skin* 149). Instead, Fanon has been trying to illuminate a psychological problem entirely specific to the life of the colonized Black man. Namely, that he must find a way to bear "the whole weight of his blackness" (*Black Skin* 150).

### ***Evaluating Fanon's Psychoanalytic Strategy***

Fanon's critique of psychological analyses of colonialism and his own experiments with psychoanalysis cover a wide-range of issues. His writings represent an ambitious attempt to decolonize psychological discourse and psychiatric practice, but how effective are they? In one sense they were very effective since Fanon's work represents if not the end, then at least the beginning of the end of ethnopsychiatry and introduces the possibility that medicine and psychological discourse can be

placed in the service of the colonized. However, there are significant problems with Fanon's psychoanalytic studies both in terms of the rewritten psychoanalytic theory and the implications of Fanon's theoretical conclusions.

McCulloch suggests that psychiatry has historically had the task of bringing the discontented in line with civilization, and admires the impulses of Fanon's radical psychiatry that pay genuine attention to the complaints of those discontented. Nevertheless, he considers Fanon's approach a flawed one because it fails to specify a theory of how colonialism produces mental illness. McCulloch finds the assertion that colonialism and mental pathologies are linked in all of Fanon's work, but he notes that Fanon is never able to come close to turning his belief into a systematized theory. Without a clear description of the process, McCulloch suggests that we are left with the rather simplistic idea that decolonization will effect change in and of itself although we are not told how, or why.

Vergès is even less convinced than McCulloch that Fanon's politicized approach to psychiatry works. Indeed, she considers "Fanon's desire to show that politics and psychology were inseparably linked limited the dimension of his argument" (96). In contrast to Bulhan and McCulloch, she pits Fanon the psychiatrist, who she argues had to admit professional failure, against Fanon the activist, who would not accept the failure of colonial revolution. McCulloch concludes that Fanon believed in the link between colonialism and mental illness, but was not able to theorize it systematically. Vergès goes one step further however and considers it impossible to theorize these links between an alienating environment and the aetiology of mental illness. She insists that alienation is a basic part of human existence and cannot be eradicated by a decolonized practice of psychiatry. She offers as her simple, but effective, evidence the continuing presence of mental illness in Algerian society after the struggle for independence though. While she recognizes

and deplors the reality of colonial alienation, she concludes “psychological alienation is not the loss of freedom” (96).<sup>12</sup>

Fanon’s failure to theorize or prove the specific links between colonialism and mental illness suggests a serious problem. If we are to consider Fanon’s intervention in psychological theory and practice a strategic move, in what terms can we consider it a success or a useful model for contemporary anti-racist and anti-colonial theory? That is, if it works to achieve changes in the short-term as we perceive them now, is that sufficient? Is Fanon’s strategy to be evaluated in terms of his ability to throw the colonialist camp into confusion, or his failure to genuinely systematize a theory of colonial alienation? In terms of my study here I do not think we have to be waylaid by McCulloch and Verges’ charges. We are looking for ways in which Fanon shows us we can intervene in the psychoanalytic and psychological discourse on colonialism and racism, we are not in search of a fully worked out theory of mental illness. Indeed, it may be rather unfair to expect such a theory from Fanon, although it does suggest a useful and productive direction for further research in the fields of psychoanalysis, psychology and social psychiatry.

Perhaps a more significant problem, one that various scholars have pointed to, is that Fanon’s response to the psychology of colonialism remains within the bounds of psychological and psychiatric discourses. Anderson, for one, cautions that:

Whatever its political utility, Fanon’s work was still building on earlier medical framings of colonial nerves and therefore passed over its own complicity with the processes it condemned . . . Fanon was able to point to a convergence of colonialism and subject formation—an observation that makes this essay possible—but at the same time as he saw colonialism producing a symptom, it was framing even his own diagnostic activity (1369).

In other words, even if Fanon is able to introduce social, political and economic factors into the psychological analysis of colonial society, his work is still part of a

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<sup>12</sup> It is worth considering, however, that Algeria may not be the best example of Verges’ general point, since Algeria’s colonial history continues to wreak havoc on its ostensibly postcolonial present.

colonial medical discourse. McCulloch has also noted that, contrary to Fanon's portrayal of his methods, sociocentric therapies and techniques had long been part of the medical establishment. Far from being a revolutionary, Fanon was a doctor whose work built on already established medical foundations.

While I think we must be careful not to become distracted by debates about how original or revolutionary Fanon's work was, Anderson and McCulloch both remind us that escape from the discourse is not really possible. Anderson's observation that Fanon's colonialism was "framing even his own diagnostic activity" (1369) is intriguing and worth exploring further. However, Young reminds readers of postcolonial theory that it is not possible either to remove colonial thought from European thought, or to distance oneself from colonial thought inside a European tradition. Taking his cue from Fanon himself, Young writes, "it is rather a question of repositioning European systems of knowledge so as to demonstrate the long history of their operation as the effect of their colonial other, a reversal encapsulated in Fanon's observation: 'Europe is literally the creation of the Third World' (*White Mythologies* 119). Fanon attempts, in his repositioning of psychological and psychoanalytic discourses, to make their colonial assumptions and justifications visible, but he cannot render them powerless.

Despite this there are problematic aspects of psychoanalytic and psychological thinking that Fanon seems to take at face value. His understanding of sexuality and its relationship to civilization, for example, is at moments utterly and disturbingly Freudian. So perhaps understanding what Fanon takes for granted in psychological and psychoanalytic discourses is a much more promising line of investigation than evaluating how revolutionary his theories were. He either accepts psychoanalytic concepts whole or dismisses them, and if he accepts them he modifies their range or objects of application. He discards the Oedipus complex as it applies to colonized societies like Martinique, but even here he does not question Freud's

theory. While feminists and scholars of sexuality debate the actual descriptive value of psychoanalytic theories Fanon takes many of these mechanisms, and their implications, as accurate even if poorly contextualized and applied in the case of the inhabitants of colonial societies.<sup>13</sup> Maurice Stevens suggests that we cannot expect Fanon to be critical of psychoanalytic theories in the way that we are today. However, it is important to understand how Fanon's blindness to certain aspects of psychoanalysis "can suggest how a differently conceptualized psychoanalysis might function" (Stevens 213).

A key example of this blindness in Fanon's work is his acceptance of the Freudian schema of sexuality and ego formation. In *Black Skin White Masks* he states "every intellectual gain requires a loss in sexual potential" (165) affirming Freud's notion that civilization requires the repression of sexuality. As Stevens notes, following Doane's reading of Freud and Fanon, this acceptance passes over one of the most problematic and imperial moments of classical psychoanalytic theory. For Freud there is no doubt civilization is represented by Western notions of maturity, self-control and rationality. Those who did not fall into this group, those whose sexuality was still subject to chaotic and uncontrolled impulses, were inhabitants of 'the dark continent', primarily women, children, mentally deficient individuals and primitive races. Thus, even though Freud does not argue directly for savage or primitive cultures to be dismantled, the "binary opposition between the savage and the civilized in their relation to sexuality was a formative element of his thinking" (Doane 209). Doane concludes that, in some sense, children, women and inferior races are unpsychoanalyzable subjects. Their sexuality, free and unneurotic as Freud

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<sup>13</sup> Scholars of sexuality have been active in investigating the descriptive accuracy of Freudian theories themselves. One of the most interesting is Brenkman's study which claims orthodox psychoanalytic theory does not even describe the subject assumed to be at the heart of the theory, namely the white, heterosexual man. The question of whether psychoanalysis represents women accurately has been widely debated in feminist scholarship, by those who vehemently repudiate Freud (and Lacan) and those who continue to explore the possibilities of psychoanalysis for feminist theory. My understanding of this debate is derived mostly from the critical overviews provided by Rowley and Grosz 179-198 and Jones 86-101.

assumes it to be, marks the limit of his methods. This point certainly bears further examination, as we shall see in the remainder of this section.

One of the most formidable barriers, then, in Fanon's use of psychoanalytic theory arises in the form of his treatment of sexuality and gender generally, and the woman of colour specifically. Fanon's treatment of gender issues, and women of colour in particular, has received a fair amount of attention from feminist scholars. With the exception of T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's book-length study, feminist critics have generally concluded that Fanon writes the woman of colour out of the colonial scene and consigns the white woman to the role of troubled psychosexual. For the most part the feminist critiques of Fanon engage explicitly with his writing on psychological discourses. Since feminist theorists have generally been interested in issues of subjectivity this should not seem very surprising. And yet, there is something surprising about this interest in Fanon's experiments with psychology and psychoanalytic theory, because despite the engagement of French feminism with psychoanalysis women of colour have, until very recently, ignored it. As Gwen Bergner notes this neglect is "due largely to the assumed incongruity between psychoanalysis and the politics of racial difference" (75). If Fanon can be said to have worked through this incongruity in his work, as we have seen, why is the issue of gender still a focal point for critique in his work?

In a chapter of her book *Femmes Fatales* Doane examines Fanon's rewriting of psychoanalysis carefully as she traces the legacy of Freud's characterization of female sexuality as 'the dark continent'<sup>14</sup>. In Freud's scheme femininity is an emblem of various figures: castration, lack, inscrutability and, of course, racial otherness.

According to Doane's reading, Fanon replaces the territory of femininity in Freudian

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<sup>14</sup> Doane comments that this term, which is bandied about often in feminist scholarship, is actually "quite marginal in the Freudian corpus. The dark continent quote cannot be found in any of the more obvious places one might look –it is not in "Femininity" or "Female Sexuality" nor in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Instead it is tucked away almost unnoticeably in "The Question of Lay Analysis", a general treatise on psychoanalysis" (210).



psychoanalysis with black masculinity. Instead of white women, black men occupy the position of lack, castration and otherness. This is a powerful rhetorical move, and one that places black masculinity into a vulnerable position. Despite his ability to rewrite Freud's narrative, Doane's more pressing point is that the position of the woman of colour disappears, theoretically and materially, in Fanon's analysis. Doane suggests "it is in fact the white woman who becomes the pathological linchpin of Fanon's analysis" (220).

As Doane observes it might be easy to imagine the position of women of colour as parallel to that of white women. However, following the work of Hazel Carby, she argues that this formulation just does not leave any room for women of colour in *theory*. Here it is worth quoting Doane at length:

As has been frequently pointed out, the category of women is usually used to refer to white women, while the category of blacks often really means black men. What is lost in the process is the situation of the black woman. Her position becomes quite peculiar and oppressively unique: in terms of oppression she is both a black and a woman; in terms of theory she is neither. In effect, she occupies a position which is difficult to think within current paradigms . . . Her identity cannot be oppositional in the traditional way (231)

There may be solutions to this theoretical problem, but the point I want to focus on here is that though Fanon can describe how the woman of colour's experience of colonial racism differs from the man of colour's experience (especially in regard to sexuality) he cannot integrate his sense of the woman of colour's specific position into his theory. The woman of colour stands slightly outside his analysis, as an illustrative but not crucial matter.

It is possible, as Gwen Bergner does, to take Doane's conclusions in a slightly different direction. While Bergner agrees that Fanon writes women of colour out of his racially revised psychoanalytic theory, she argues that black women's bodies remain crucial to his project. Using Gayle Rubin's work on trafficking, Bergner argues that cultures depend on the circulation of women's bodies and colonial

cultures are by no means exempt from this. Having established this, Bergner concludes that Fanon's angry comments on women of colour in *Black Skin, White Masks* reflect "his own desire to circumscribe black women's sexuality and economic autonomy in order to ensure the patriarchal authority of black men" (81). Bergner brings Fanon's gesture up to date with an indictment of Bhabha's readiness to accept Fanon at his word that Man functions in his texts as a universal category of mankind, as well as his famous assertion that he knows nothing about the woman of colour. Bhabha, like Fanon, seems to accept that sexual difference must be subordinated to racial difference. Bergner concludes that for many scholars "black women could be added to the schema, but more accurately, their exclusion is integral to the present formulations, a Morrisonian 'ghost in the machine'" (85).

Before I go on to discuss the implications of these readings, I would like to outline some of the main objections to critical work on Fanon by feminist critics such as Doane and Bergner. T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's book, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* is the only book-length analysis of Fanon's thought from an explicitly feminist perspective. It is also one of the few extended discussions of Fanon's work from a black feminist perspective.<sup>15</sup> It is important, then, to understand why Sharpley-Whiting rejects Doane's and Bergner's analyses. Sharpley-Whiting is keen to oppose the general impression of Fanon's work as sexist, and to recover a sense of his relevance to a feminist theory and praxis. She argues that the main charges of misogyny against Fanon are based on his use of gender-specific language, his condemnation of Mayotte Capécia and other women of colour and his description of white women's pathological sexuality.

In response to the accusation that Fanon's language is gender-specific, Sharpley-Whiting notes that much of Fanon's work is experiential or personal in

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<sup>15</sup> For perspectives on Fanon from black feminists see also hooks 81-91 and Sandoval 86-106.

nature and naturally his text refers to himself and other black men. She also notes that white feminists seem much more willing to excuse or exempt the anti-female slant of western philosophers such as Freud, Derrida or Lacan than a black male writer such as Fanon. His language, for example, is nothing more or less than the tendency of all male theorists of his generation to write as though the world was primarily a male one. Nevertheless, her reading of anti-black male bias seems especially true of readings of Fanon's theory by feminist writers such as Susan Brownmiller, whose reductive reading of Fanon presented in Sharpley-Whiting's book does appear to reinscribe the idea of an aggressive, rape-obsessed black man (Sharpley-Whiting 14-16).

However, Sharpley-Whiting's discounts articles that provide perceptive and, in parts, positive readings of Fanon by Bergner and Doane. While it is clearly unfair to attack some theorists for their everyday chauvinisms and not others, it is not useful to close down various types of critique with a charge of anti-black bias. This comes dangerously close, as Doane points out, to a situation in which no one is allowed to write about anything they don't experience personally. Doane cautions, "such a position threatens to collapse together experience, discourse and ontology by transforming every type of writing into pure autobiography" (247).

What is most relevant for this thesis is Sharpley-Whiting's outright rejection that Fanon's writing marginalises women of colour. Indeed, she devotes an entire chapter to a defence of Fanon's reading of Mayotte Capécia's novel, *Je Suis Martiniquaise* as presented in *Black Skin White Masks*. Whereas other feminist writers find Fanon's discussion of Capécia harsh and unnecessarily judgmental, especially compared with his sympathy for the character of Jean Veneuse in the complementary chapter about the man of colour, Sharpley-Whiting finds Fanon entirely justified. She observes that Capécias exist because of the racist world they inhabit and if Fanon's "honesty in *Black Skin, White Masks* may be brutal it is not brutalizing" (161). She

makes an excellent point that, although we may dislike Fanon's tone in analysing Capécia, he may still be correct about the ways in which racist logic forces people of colour to behave. She also draws attention to the context of Capécia's novels. She observes that Capécia achieved considerable commercial success that was clearly less a reflection of her literary ability than her "seemingly effortless adeptness at acting as a mirror for the French" (156). The French literary establishment received her books well, and approved of her style and plotlines. Fanon's reaction to Capécia, then, is in part a reaction to what he may have perceived as her pandering to a white, racist audience. Sharpley-Whiting suggests that most critics who attack Fanon's reading have not read Capécia's novels, and do not appreciate the history of their reception. Attempts, like Bergner's, to turn Capécia into an oppressed woman struggling to find a way to secure her economic security through the love of white men seem hollow to Sharpley-Whiting.<sup>16</sup> Her reading does remind us to be alert to the context in which Fanon was writing. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that the chapter, "The Woman of Color and the White Man" actually says very little about the woman of colour. The chapter is perhaps better understood as the analysis of how the relationship between women of colour and white men has an effect on men of colour. Even if Fanon's brutally honest critique of Capécia is justified this still does not explain why the lived-experience of the woman of colour remains so conspicuously absent from Fanon's theoretical vision.

In response to the critique that Fanon characterises white women's sexuality as pathological Sharpley-Whiting is again dismissive. She notes that Fanon's analysis is not to be taken as a broad description of all white women but as a particular description of negrophobic women. She cites a passage of *Black Skin, White Masks* where Fanon writes "if there are whites who behave naturally when they meet Negroes, they certainly do not fall within the scope of our examination" (31). In a

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<sup>16</sup> For another useful reading of the problem of Capécia in Fanon's work see Macey 168-177.

racist culture, Sharpley-Whiting affirms, perverse sexualities will be produced and among these white female masochism is “but one culturally induced manifestation of psychosis” (14). Fuss has suggested that we read Fanon’s focus on the imaginary rape of the white woman by the black man in the context of a racist world where every black man was assumed to have designs on white women. Be that as it may, Sharpley-Whiting conveniently ignores Fanon’s deeply troubling comment that some women just seem to ask to be raped. In the interests of defending Fanon from anti-black male bias she seems to excuse some of his most puzzling omissions.

Sharpley-Whiting is one of the only feminist scholars, however, to consider Algerian feminist critiques of Fanon in any detail. She discusses in particular the work of Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, founding member of the Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws. Helie-Lucas has written about the mythical quality of Fanon’s female Algerian revolutionaries. She argues that his portrayal of women during the colonial war belied the continuing oppression of Algerian women during and after colonialism. While Sharpley-Whiting recognises the right of scholars such as Helie-Lucas to critique Fanon’s representation of Muslim women generally and Algerian women in particular, she dismisses their critiques, too, declaring “it certainly does not serve our interests to inscribe ‘myths’ onto Fanon’s thought at the very moments when we are claiming to unpack his ‘myths’” (74).<sup>17</sup> In fact, according to Sharpley-Whiting the only feminist scholars who do seem to interpret Fanon correctly are radical black feminists such as Linda La Rue, France Beale and bell hooks. She maintains “an ethics of feminist criticism should allow one to critically engage and expose flaws in Fanon’s writings and versions of history without

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<sup>17</sup> Since this chapter is concerned primarily with the topic of psychoanalysis, I have not discussed in any detail the literature on Fanon’s writing about Algerian women. Fanon’s style and approach to Algerian women’s subjectivity is quite different, and invites comparison with his writing on Antillean women. For some views of Fanon’s writing about Algerian women see Helie-Lucas 25-50 and Moore-Gilbert “Engendering” 125-135. See also Lazreg 326-348 for a critical perspective on scholarship written in the Western academy about women in the Islamic world.

aggressive misreadings and textual revisionism” (74). One can only agree with such a statement, but it seems debatable whether all her criticisms of feminist scholars, Euro-American or Algerian, conform to this standard.

### ***Taking Direction from Fanon***

Clearly, Fanon’s efforts to reposition psychoanalytic methods and psychiatric practices pose as many questions as they offer solutions to those writing about colonial formations and postcolonial theory today. Even as they critique his efforts, scholars like McCulloch, Anderson, Doane and Bergner acknowledge that Fanon’s work makes it possible to think about the convergences between the psychic and the political in colonial society.

One of the first things Fanon’s work demonstrates is the importance of writing about the convergences between psychiatry, psychology and psychoanalysis and colonialism. As one of the few historians writing about colonial psychiatry today, McCulloch points out that the history of mental health practice and theory in the colonies has been relatively neglected compared with, for example, the history of tropical medicine. Anderson and Hartnack both echo his sense that the history of mental health practices in the colony is still a relatively unexplored field, even though the colonial provenance of medical and health sciences is acknowledged. Yet, as Fanon’s work demonstrates, it is a richly informative history for the student of colonial discourses. This is not merely a question of accumulating more academic knowledge, however useful that may be as an end in itself. Rather, it is a case of tapping a vein of knowledge about the products and effects of colonialism that Fanon, among others, pointed to over thirty years ago that remains rich with material for colonial discourse analysis and postcolonial studies.

Fanon’s work challenges us, both in what it demonstrates and what it forgets, to treat the relationship between psychology and colonialism as suspect. One of the

dangers of using psychological and psychoanalytic concepts to write about colonialism is that it seems, as it seemed at its beginnings, to be a progressive way of writing about colonial encounters. Mannoni, the African ethnopsychiatrists and Owen Berkeley-Hill were all convinced of the objectivity and even non-‘racialism’ of their writings. McCulloch is scrupulously careful in *Colonial Psychiatry and the ‘African Mind’* not to portray the ethnopsychiatrists as distasteful, colonial caricatures, because they were not the worst bigots of their time. They were scientists who offered a better, more scientific, more objective analysis than the true ‘racialists’. Psychological accounts and explanations for conditions such as colonial nerves were at the cutting edge of colonial medicine. Rather than relying on the old ideas of physical deterioration the colonial psychiatrists were employing new techniques and theories to understand and diagnose their patients. Fanon himself notes in “Racism and Culture” that the ways of talking about and thinking about racism are changing all the time. He alerts us to the fact that “racism has not managed to harden. It has had to renew itself, to adapt itself, to change its appearance. . . . Thus the ‘emotional instability of the Negro,’ the ‘subcritical integration of the Arab,’” (32). Though he is himself a practising psychiatrist, and has an interest in psychoanalytic theory, Fanon does not discount the possibility that these scientific languages can be used to justify and further colonial ends. His response is to use psychological theories and practices himself, as we have seen, to work towards anti-colonial ends.

Finally, Fanon’s work also alerts us to the particular problems of bringing the women of colour into psychoanalysis, even a psychoanalysis that has been modified for anti-colonial ends. Sharpley-Whiting’s review of feminist critique of Fanon suggests that we should not be too hasty in labelling Fanon’s work as anti-feminist. Nevertheless, although she critiques the general attitudes and approaches of a range of feminist scholars she does not take up the particular critical points that Doane, Bergner or Fuss makes about the subjectivity of the woman of colour’s in theory. It

remains unclear how useful Fanon's strategic use of psychoanalysis is writing about the women of colour's experiences in colonial society. Indeed, as we go on to consider other anti-colonial and postcolonial deployments of psychoanalysis we may want to consider the possibility that the subjectivity of the woman of colour marks the limit of how repositioned psychoanalysis can be.



## CHAPTER TWO: "NONE OF THEM IS TRUE BUT ALL OF THEM ARE REALITIES": ASHIS NANDY'S PSYCHOANALYTIC READING OF COLONIALISM

I began the previous chapter by noting that we cannot reflect on the uses of psychoanalytic theory in critiques of colonialism without touching first on the work of Frantz Fanon. If we can sketch a tradition of psychoanalytically informed writing about the colony Ashis Nandy is the next theorist in this tradition. In some sense, as we shall see, Nandy's work echoes the aims and politics of Edward Said's work, but it does so with an explicitly psychological perspective and psychoanalytic language that makes Nandy especially relevant to this study. In this chapter, then, I will clarify why and how Nandy chooses to investigate colonialism with psychoanalytic theory, describe some of the main features of his psycho-historical model and discuss the problems his particular deployment of psychoanalysis raises for writing about non-Western cultures.

In *Postcolonialism*, Robert Young suggests that Nandy's book *The Intimate Enemy* was at least as important as Said's *Orientalism* in establishing what the main objects of postcolonial criticism should be. With this slim book, Young writes, Nandy "established four of the major issues that have become central to the field" (*Postcolonialism* 341). Despite the importance Young accords to Nandy's work, a casual glance through some of the main surveys and readers in the field yields surprisingly few references to Nandy's work. He is not cited or excerpted in Williams and Chrisman's wide-ranging colonial discourse reader or Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's postcolonial studies reader, and he is not mentioned in critical commentaries of postcolonial theory such as Young's discussion of postcolonial critics in *White Mythologies*. Indeed, even in studies where Nandy's work is regularly cited it is not considered to be representative of postcolonial theory by some readers. In his book *Colonialism and Cultural Identity*, Patrick Hogan notes that although his study draws on

Nandy's analysis of the colony frequently colleagues reading his manuscript asked him why he had not used postcolonial theory to address his subject (24).<sup>18</sup>

The small body of commentary on Nandy's work exists mainly in reviews of his many essays and books, the prefaces to collected editions of his work and the recently compiled reader *Dissenting Knowledges, Open Futures: The Multiple Selves and Strange Destinations of Ashis Nandy*. Although references to Nandy inevitably touch on his psychoanalytic approach<sup>19</sup>, the review articles and the essays in the reader do not investigate why Nandy uses psychoanalytic theory to write about the colony, how he uses that theory (including, for example whose theory he uses and what psychological assumptions he works from) and what kinds of problems might result from his particular application of those methods.

In their review articles, critics such as Presler, Pye and Bose write about Nandy's work insofar as it answers particular problems in political science, and are therefore relatively unconcerned with how Nandy's work functions as a postcolonial critique of the categories history, modernity, science. They are not interested in the question of why Nandy sees psychoanalysis as a theoretical instrument for postcolonial scholarship. It is also interesting to note that while these critics all have problems with the implications of Nandy's psychological method for political analysis generally they do not seem to have any concerns about the psychological assumptions he uses to analyze colonialism. They all seem to agree, for example, that

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<sup>18</sup> In fact, as Hogan goes on to explain, the lack of theory in his manuscript was actually attributed to the fact that he had not discussed the work of Homi Bhabha. In light of the similarities that I hope will become apparent between Nandy and Bhabha's work in my discussion here, the reaction of Hogan's colleagues reflects the wider trend in postcolonial studies not to distinguish carefully enough between different psychological and psychoanalytical approaches to the theory and study of colonial discourses or indeed to recognize similarities between theorists as seemingly different such as Bhabha and Nandy.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Young suggests that it was Nandy who first gave serious thought to the "the psychology of resistance" (*Postcolonialism* 341) Ann Stoler characterises Nandy's work, along with Fanon, Mannoni and Memmi's, as building "on a Freudian psychoanalytics to provide a contre-histoire of colonialism" (170). In her useful survey of postcolonial studies, Ania Loomba simply mentions Nandy's work as an example of "the widespread use of psychoanalytic vocabularies in this field" (*Colonialism/Postcolonialism* 149).

ambivalent mother-son relationships and extreme fear and celebration of female power are significant psychological features of Indian culture that have a bearing on any analysis of Indian society and history. In other words, although they tacitly accept the same psychological facts as Nandy, they object to applying psychoanalytic methods to social and historical science generally without examining what problems arise specifically with Nandy's deployment of psychoanalytic methods.

For the most part the essays in the recent reader do not explore why Nandy uses a psychoanalytic method either, and are in any case generally less critical of Nandy's work. Indeed, only a third of the collection is actually devoted to commentary on Nandy (the first third consists of an extended interview with Nandy and the second third consists of autobiographical essays by Nandy). This reader, then, is perhaps intended more as a tribute than a critical analysis. Some of those writers who were asked to contribute to the reader have collaborated with Nandy on other projects and can be said to share rather than dispute his intellectual orientation. Commentators such as Meera Nanda or Sumanta Bannerjee who have taken issue with Nandy's representation of women, communalism and the values of traditional India, are not represented here.<sup>20</sup> It is an unfortunate possibility that these critics are simply dismissed by Nandy's advocates as hysterical secularists, as one critic characterizes them in a recent review of Nandy's work (Miller 299). However, the absence of these voices means that the collection reads a little too smoothly, without reflection on the implications of Nandy's attempt to destabilize history, modernity science with psychoanalysis. As we shall see later in this chapter Nandy's postcolonial interventions produce problems for representing some of those constituents his

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<sup>20</sup> Arif Dirlik makes a reference to these critics in his contribution to the reader, noting that "I think I appreciate the concerns of critics who view Nandy's writings from within a society that is torn by communitarian strife" ("Reading Ashis Nandy" 285) However, since Dirlik does not wish to become involved in the debate his only response is that Nandy must be allowed to bring his alternative reading of traditions into the public arena.

work is meant to make visible. In the following two sections, then, I will begin to identify what motivates and makes Nandy's use of psychoanalysis distinctive.

*Colonialism as a Psychological Landscape: Nandy's Perspective on the Lived Experience of Colonialism*

Nandy explicitly avoids identifying his work as a contribution to any particular school or movement in contemporary scholarship, and many critics writing about his work have accordingly found it difficult to place his work in any tradition.<sup>21</sup> While I recognize the difficulties involved in trying to pinpoint Nandy's place in postcolonial theory generally, I think we can at least understand his psychological perspective and psychoanalytic method more clearly if we pay attention to how Nandy himself references the work of Fanon and defines his project in relation to his work. In the previous chapter, I noted that many postcolonial scholars have drawn on Fanon's work as a license for their own readings of colonialism, whether those readings are psychological or emphatically non-psychological. Nandy, however, is not one of these scholars. Despite an explicitly psychological perspective, Nandy's references to Fanon often serve to distance his work from Fanon's or at least to point to different aims.

Nandy finds Fanon's earlier account of the psychology of colonialism useful. In *The Intimate Enemy* he acknowledges: "The broad contours of colonialism are now known. Thanks to sensitive writers like Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi we even know something about the interpersonal patterns which constituted

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<sup>21</sup> In his discussion of Indian postcolonial thought, Young is obliged to place Nandy in a category of his own as distinct from Bhabha and Spivak on the one hand, and the Subaltern Studies scholars on the other. Dirlik also positions Nandy's work as somewhere between established camps. For Dirlik Nandy's project takes shape between Fanon's revolutionary visions and the contemporary postcolonial critic who is so distasteful to Dirlik. In the introduction to *Exiled at Home* D.R. Nagaraj posits the existence of three streams of thought about colonialism: "schools that are defined by the idea of total conquest, the ones that are organized around the idea of a cultural soul, and the ones that stress mutual transformation" (xiii) He places Fanon, Memmi and Said in the first category, Ananda Coomaraswamy and Seyyed Hossein Nasr in the second and he places Nandy, alone, in the last category.

the colonial situation, particularly in Africa” (30). However, Nandy’s work is more concerned, as Young observes, with the psychology of resistance rather than the psychology of oppression. Though, quite obviously, the person who lives under colonialism is often also the person who resists colonialism, Nandy is more interested in tracing how psychological motivations and conditions make successful resistance to colonialism possible or impossible than in delineating the psychology of the colonized. Indeed, he says that one of the premises of his method is that it takes the possibility of psychological resistance seriously (*Intimate Enemy* vii). However, for Nandy the question is not simply the psychology of resistance—that is, how to be a successful ‘resister’—but psychology as resistance. In *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias*, Nandy explains why, *contra* Fanon, resistance must be something other than violent, external action. He writes:

Fanon admits the internalization of the oppressor. But he calls for an exorcism, in which the ghost outside has to be finally confronted in violence, for it carries the burden of the ghost within. The outer violence, Fanon suggests, is the only means of making a painful break with a part of one’s own self. If Fanon had more confidence in his culture he would have sensed that his vision ties the victim more deeply to the culture of oppression than any collaboration can. Cultural acceptance of the major technique of oppression in our times, organized violence, cannot but further socialize the victims to the basic values of their oppressors (33)

For Nandy, physical violence is not the most discursively or politically meaningful way of resisting colonialism since it remains firmly within the terms of the colonial encounter as defined by the colonizer. Violence, Nandy suggests, is the recognized political response to colonial oppression and is already anticipated by colonial discourse. He remains deeply committed to the possibility that resistance to colonialism can, indeed must, take non-violent forms. Resistance as psychology, then, is not an attempt to avoid confronting the violence in colonial societies, but to

assert the political viability of non-violence as a strategy of resistance.<sup>22</sup> Nandy's work, as Young points out, attempts to bring Gandhi's non-violent strategies, strangely absent from Fanon's writings and postcolonial theory generally, back into postcolonial theory.

Nandy locates the resources for a psychology of resistance in the culture of the colonized, and this is a second area in which he marks his own work as distinct from Fanon's. Where Fanon puts relatively little emphasis on the colonized population's culture, Nandy's work displays considerable confidence in the strategic usefulness of traditional Hindu cultural values, practices and knowledge. A discussion of the differences between Nandy and Fanon's readings of culture, and the importance of cultural practices in the anti-colonial struggle would be a thesis in itself. But it is worth noting that Nandy is a cultural insider to the culture he writes about, while Fanon was not an insider to Algerian or Islamic culture. Furthermore, as we shall see later, though Nandy claims that Fanon does not have enough confidence in the cultural resources of the colonized he also fails to note that Fanon, as an Antillean, has a young, diasporic rather than an old, traditional culture to draw on. Although Nandy does not advocate a return to traditions, he does work from the premise that Hindu culture provides most of the materials any Indian, Hindu or not, might require to survive colonization. Accordingly, he uses psychology and psychoanalysis insofar as these languages allow him to present Hindu ways of understanding and being in the world.

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<sup>22</sup> If Nandy's work refuses to treat the subject of physical violence in the same way as Fanon, this is not because he lacks an awareness of the physical violence colonialism engenders. Nandy describes being witness to violence as a boy when he lived through devastating famine in 1942, communal brutalities in Calcutta and East Bengal throughout 1946 and 1947 and the general physical confusion and violence of partition in 1947. He recalls that "these traumas shaped the mind of the Bengalis ... and the wounds inflicted by them remained raw throughout my adolescence and young adulthood" ("How I stopped worrying" 117). Moreover, during his adult life Nandy has witnessed the continuing communal violence that is, at least in part, a legacy of divisions and problems produced by colonial rule and colonial thinking.

In further contrast to Fanon, Nandy uses this psychological method partly in order to open up our understanding of colonialism. Though postcolonial theory has paid critical attention to the colonized, Nandy argues “less well known are the cultural and psychological pathologies produced by colonization in the colonizing countries” (*Intimate Enemy* 30). In other words, he is interested in the colonizer’s psychological suffering too. His argument that the colonizer also suffers the psychological effects of colonialism exposes colonialism as something more than just an economic or political arrangement. Nandy articulates his case for a wider psychological investigation in this way:

As folk wisdom would have it, the only sufferers of colonialism are the subject communities. Colonialism, according to this view, is the name of a political economy which ensures a one-way flow of benefits, the subjects being the perpetual losers in a zero-sum game and the rulers the beneficiaries. This is a view of the human mind and history promoted by colonialism itself. This view has a vested interest in denying that the colonizers are at least as much affected by the ideology of colonialism, that their degradation too can sometimes be terrifying (*Intimate Enemy* 30)

In other words, to accept that the colonizer is not pathologized by colonialism is to accept the colonizer’s account of colonialism. For Nandy, to take the view that colonialism is a psychological experience that marks both colonizer and colonized is not to ignore the economic losses of the subject population but to proffer an analysis of colonialism that is “relatively less contaminated by the ideology of colonialism” (*Intimate Enemy* 30). By examining the whole psychological picture of colonialism, Nandy tries to disrupt some of the most cherished stories and histories that colonialism tells about itself.

If Fanon considers the psychological health of black minds to be at risk in a colonial society, Nandy considers colonialism to be a psychological environment where the colonized may ultimately emerge as the more psychologically healthy. Nandy does not characterize the psychology of the colony as pathological or normative, or at least he avoids making any simple judgements about the

psychological responses and resistances colonial culture produces. Instead, he tries to develop a more interactive account of the psychological situation that is colonialism. In this account, 'Western' describes more than a geographical identity, it becomes a psychological category that Indians also have access to. It is Nandy's contention that Indians survived colonialism partly because they had access to the West as well as India as psychological landscapes. For the British, obliged to defend the Western identity they had helped to create, Nandy argues there were not so many psychological options.<sup>23</sup> Nandy pursues a psychological understanding of colonialism in his essays in order to demonstrate that the West lost colonialism's psychological battle and its attempt to make up for that loss through aggression and domination only made the loss more sustained.

***Psycho-historical alternatives to colonial discourses: Nandy's psychoanalytic method***

In *The Intimate Enemy*, Nandy sketches the theory of colonial relations that he follows and elaborates on in almost all of his subsequent books. Through a combination of psychoanalysis, biography and cultural commentary, he attempts to expose and thereby disrupt the account that the colonizers would like to give of colonialism. Or, more precisely, since Nandy recognises that the colonized often appear to offer the same accounts of colonialism as the colonizer, he attempts to disrupt the account that colonial discourse, as a collection of practices and statements larger than any individual author, gives of itself. In this section I will explore further what prompts Nandy to articulate his theory of colonial relations through psychoanalysis and outline the distinct way in which he makes use of psychoanalytic concepts and structures.

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<sup>23</sup> This theme of successful adaptation through cultural syncretism is of course partly derived from Gandhi, and appears again, in a more theoretically nuanced form in Bhabha's work.



Nandy declares repeatedly that he wants to enable alternative ways of reading colonial discourse and its continuing legacy in the postcolonial world. He is particularly interested in providing these options for the people who were colonized but he recognizes that the former colonizers may need alternatives too. Nandy insists that there are different way of thinking about colonialism's effects and productions, and that there were always different ways of behaving as a colonial subject (whether one was colonized or a colonizer) than our current reading of colonial discourses seems to suggest. Nandy's project is not a simple case of showing how the colonized defied the colonizer's expectations, or broke out of the colonial order of things. Nandy argues that simple anti-colonialism often functioned as "an apologia for the colonization of minds" (*Intimate Enemy* 6). Ziauddin Sardar suggests that the alternatives Nandy attempts to sketch are "located beyond the West/anti-West dichotomy, even beyond the indigenous constructions of modern and traditional options, in a different space" (214). In other words, Nandy's aim is to point to alternatives to the (obvious) option that is always already given by colonial discourse.<sup>24</sup>

In *The Intimate Enemy*, Nandy provides one demonstration of how an alternative to the colonial option might work in his discussion of the gender economy of Indian men before and after their encounter with colonialism. According to Nandy one influential reading, accepted among Indian and British historians, was that the encounter between British men and Indian men had resulted in a recovery of Indian masculinity. This was evidenced, for example, by the revival of warrior caste traditions. This historical finding was based on the scholarly consensus that before their encounter with the West, Indian men were effeminate or

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<sup>24</sup> Here we see in Nandy a rather Foucauldian approach to the whole question of resistance to power. As Don Miller notes, Nandy rarely cites Foucault (indeed, Nandy's work is generally free from references to the poststructuralist theorists that other postcolonial theorists rely on) but there is always hovering above his text the suggestion of sympathies with the concerns we currently associate with French critical theory. See Miller 301.

had degenerated into effeminacy. Nandy's essay challenges this account of Indian masculinity by introducing a consideration of traditional Hindu gender categories into the discussion.<sup>25</sup>

From the Hindu perspective, Nandy suggests, there are more possibilities of gendered behaviour than simply masculine or feminine. Furthermore, in what Nandy alleges is the Hindu non-binary scheme of gender, one does not ascribe positive moral value to one gender and negative moral value to the another, but rather distributes different moral values between genders.<sup>26</sup> Nandy claims that in the British gender economy that prevailed during the nineteenth century, femininity was demeaned and devalued. He also claims that at that time Indian gender economies attached significant spiritual power to femininity, which made femininity-in-masculinity a position of considerable strategic power if only one knew how to embody it and perform it. Nandy's analysis suggests that when certain Indian men chose to become hyper-masculine this tied them even more firmly to colonial discourse, since they defined their masculinity in terms established by the colonizers. Nandy points out that a creative use of traditional Hindu gender categories could have posed the question of masculinity in other terms. The prime example of this, though it appears somewhat later in the history of colonial India is, of course, Mohandas Gandhi, who was able to effect his psychological resistance to colonial discourse partly because of his complex gender identifications and behaviour.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Nandy does not provide a survey of the historical studies of the British-Indian encounter and its consequence for both British and Indian economies of gender he presumably writes against. However, for an excellent overview of some of the main historiographical and theoretical issues involved see Sinha 1-32.

<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to note that Nandy's discussion of non-binary gender is a scheme that he uses to describe the gender positions available to men, but he does not discuss whether Indian women have a similar range of gender positions available to them. Instead, femininity operates as a third (depersonalized) term between male and female that men *also* have access to.

<sup>27</sup> Erik Erikson and Nandy both consider Gandhi's complex gender behaviour and identifications as one of the reasons for his effective methods of colonial resistance.

Many of Nandy's essays point to the alternative ways of being a colonial subject that existed whether one was a scientist, filmmaker or cricket enthusiast. However, he recognizes that the means of disrupting colonial discourse was never restricted to a search for alternative ways of being but had to include the rethinking of the categories and uses of Western knowledge. The story that colonialism tells about itself is something more complex than a historical account; it is also a worldview and a whole system of knowledge. For Nandy, as for Said, western knowledge systems as apparently diverse as economics, medicine, literature, and geography are all part of the account that colonizing cultures would like to give of the relationship between their knowledge and Others' knowledge, and therefore, of their right to rule over those Others and lead them into the modern future. Nandy is acutely conscious that even if we live in postcolonial times this relationship between power and knowledge persists, and the only way to the future, as perceived by non-Western peoples, still seems to be through the discourses of Western knowledge<sup>28</sup>. As a result of the immediate predicament (such as finding other ways to the future than through modern sciences such as international development) as well as the legacy of past encounters (such as the encounter between Indian and British masculinity), Nandy attempts to demonstrate how western knowledge itself may be reworked for non-Western, or as he sometimes prefers to describe it, non-Modern ends.

As he himself explains it, Nandy is trying to do something more radical with the terms of Western humanities disciplines than simply reject them or provide alternatives to them. In response to some of his critics Nandy writes: "A.K. Saran once drew my attention to Dostoevsky's belief that there were two kinds of people in

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<sup>28</sup> I am thinking, for example, of the better health care and health education that is presumed to be the preserve of Western medicine. Or the need, as Said outlined in *Orientalism*, for non-Western humanities scholars to be aware of the (especially theoretical) work of Western scholars but the privilege of Western scholars enjoy of being able to ignore the work of their non-Western counterparts.

the world: the anthropologists and those subjected to anthropological enquiry. My difference with the two reviewers is exactly here. They use the categories of the anthropologists and I try to blend them with those used by the subjects” (“Cultures” 268). Or, more precisely, Nandy does not simply attempt to blend the subjects’ categories in with the anthropologists’ categories, he sometimes uses the subjects’ categories to launch a critique of anthropology. In the footnote to his remark about anthropologists and their subjects he observes: “I have complicated matters by first vaguely suggesting a normative frame based on native categories and, then, using the frame to evaluate the exogenous ‘universalist’ and ‘progressivist’ categories. The second set of evaluations are, I suspect, more disturbing” (“Cultures” 272). The idea that non-Western knowledge might be in a position to critique and re-order Western knowledge, rather than standing simply as an alternative to Western knowledge is, as Nandy intends, a more disruptive possibility than the mere existence of an alternative system of knowledge.

Nandy proposes to disrupt the legacies of colonial discourse with the language and theory of psychoanalysis. A social psychologist by training, Nandy identifies himself as a “meta-Freudian” (“Cultures” 273), or in more colourful terms as “a devotee of the Viennese shaman” (“After-Life” 107). More specifically, Nandy might be described as a Freudian ego-psychologist because, like one of his main influences, Erik Erikson, he understands the psychic health of the individual to be a product of the individual’s capacity to adapt to his or her environment successfully.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, in light of what I have already suggested about Nandy’s attempt to disrupt western systems of knowledge it might seem rather surprising that he relies on such a modern Western science as psychoanalysis to structure his project.

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<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to note that in contrast with Fanon, whose intellectual influences were largely French and German, Nandy’s influences are mostly American. He acknowledges an intellectual debt to Erikson who was one of the fathers of American ego psychology, Rollo May, America’s first existential psychologist and Robert Jay Lifton, the prominent American psychiatrist and historian.

One reason why Nandy identifies himself as a (meta-) Freudian is:

Freud, like Marx, was an internal critic of the modern West. Like Marx again, he was wedded to the Enlightenment vision of human emancipation and saw its inner contradictions. In some of their readings, such critics *are* useful to other civilizations trying to make sense of the modern West in indigenous terms and looking for a humane world order of knowledges and cultures ... I have used Freud and Marx to the extent that they are critical; I have not used them to the extent that they are modernists (“Cultures” 273).

Nandy is interested in psychoanalysis and Marxism to the degree that they make theoretical space for exposing the fractures and failures of western knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

Psychoanalysis, in particular, is built on the premise that Western subjectivity is constituted by fractures, repressions and conflicts and by the desperate struggle to cover over these conflicts in order to present a coherent and unified subject. Nandy is interested in these fractures, not so much because of what they suggest about the West (although, as noted, he is interested in the colonizers’ psychological losses too<sup>31</sup>) but because they present him with a way into those moments when western knowledge might have taken a more ethical, or as Nandy sometimes refers to it, humane form. Nandy relies on this critical possibility in psychoanalysis, however slight it may be, to present the encounter between Indian knowledge and Western knowledge not so much as the inevitable decline or defeat of Indian knowledge but as a complex web of success, failures and stalemates on both the British and Indian sides.

An example of how Nandy narrates these interactions is his account of the lives of two Indian scientists in *Alternative Sciences*, Jagdis Chandra Bose, a physicist who made remarkable use of his abilities as a physicist to study plant physiology and the self-taught mathematical genius, Srinivasa Ramanujan. Although the book

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<sup>30</sup> Although Nandy’s work does not engage explicitly with Marxist theory, he notes in a recent interview that “I was always deeply influenced by, and deeply aware of, Marx’s theory of alienation—some of his psychological sensitivities were more obvious to a psychologist, and I would also consider Marx a major theorist of psychology, independently of his status as a thinker in economics or politics. Many of his observations and interpretations of human subjectivity I have resonated to” (Lal 28).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Nandy’s discussion of Freud’s relation to western scientific norms (*Savage Freud* 133-144), and Kipling’s relation to norms of British masculinity (*Intimate Enemy* 64-70)

functions as a biographical study of contrasting personalities, it is also a meditation on the possible range of encounters between Western science and traditional Indian scientific paradigms during colonial rule. Here Nandy is keen to demonstrate that even so apparently universal a subject as science has its cultural and psychological aspects and, accordingly, the encounter between Western science and Indian science during colonialism was not a matter of superior science overtaking primitive science but of individual scientists' attempts to negotiate their place as scientists and colonial citizens in the emerging modern world. Nandy suggests that in this situation "the scientist becomes a microcosm where the community's adaptive capacities challenge the creativity of the individual. In the process, sometimes science itself is distorted and some scientists are destroyed" (*Alternative Sciences* 18). In Bose's case, his creativity as a scientist was obstructed by his attempts to secure his role as an authoritative Indian scientist in the colonial order of things. In Ramanujan's case, a less acute sense of his position as a colonial subject allowed him to keep his mathematical imagination and ingenuity alive.

Nandy's deployment of psychoanalysis is effective not simply because of how he interprets psychoanalytic theory, but of where he chooses to use psychological and psychoanalytic language. A second reason, then, for Nandy's use of psychoanalytic insights is that he recognises their marginal standing in political and historical accounts of colonialism and he seeks to exploit that quality. In collections such as *At the Edge of Psychology* and *Traditions, Tyranny and Utopias*, his insistence on writing of a psychological dimension in public politics is unsettling to academic readers who expect certain types of arguments to be made when the topic under discussion is, for example, state politics, and reject attempts to use other types of arguments.

Writing about Indira Gandhi as an embodiment of a particular kind of politics in India, Nandy justifies his use of a psychological analysis to assess Gandhi's politics:

Many political analysts feel that any emphasis on an individual necessarily detracts from the importance of larger social forces. Yet, the fact remains that these so-called larger forces are often only the theoretical constructions of the social scientist ... they do not exist in reality. Over-emphasis on them only reifies social reality and contributes to the exploitation and abuse of human beings in the name of social and historical forces which come to attain a certain sanctity independent of the reality of the persons involved ... an individual on the other hand concretizes a specific configuration of social, political and historical forces without either reifying them or detracting from the basic humanness of the main actors involved in policies and decisions. No emphasis on him can ever be an over-emphasis (*Edge* 120)

Here, the 'inappropriate' use of psychological or psychoanalytical language functions as a disruption of the conventions and expectations of western knowledge. In political science, for example, the psychological profile of a leader might be of some interest but it is not an acceptable framework within which to discuss her larger political choices or actions. Nandy's work represents a sustained attempt to use psychology and psychoanalysis where it is usually deemed inappropriate in order to expose our assumptions about the logic and rationality of our established accounts of political or historical events. Indeed, as Lal observes, "the 'psychologism' of [his] work is sometimes adduced as a reason for not taking it seriously" (25), which only points to the larger tendency in academic writing to reject certain kinds of evidence about political and historical phenomena. It is a measure of Nandy's analytical flair that even critics who question whether his technique of inserting psychoanalytic methods into other disciplines produces more analytical advantages than disadvantages still find the conclusions he reaches compelling.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, Nandy is interested in psychoanalysis to the degree that it represents more ethical ways of representing the colonial past and navigating the legacy of that

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<sup>32</sup> Reviewers of *At the Edge of Psychology* found Nandy's insights persuasive *despite* his psychologisms. See Gombrich and Gupta 252-8, Presler 224-234 and Pye 235-241.

history in the postcolonial present. In fact, I would argue that Nandy's understanding of Gandhi, for example, is mediated through Erikson's account of Gandhi's anti-colonial campaign so that psychoanalysis and *satyagraha* converge as powerful ethical philosophies in Nandy's work, as they do in Erikson's. In *Gandhi's Truth*, Erikson gives an account of Gandhi's life as well as his participation in the 1918 Ahmedabad mill strikes. However, although the book takes the form of a psychoanalytic study, Erikson is not simply providing us with an example of how his psycho-historical method works. *Gandhi's Truth* is also an attempt to work through certain ethical concerns about violence in contemporary society. Nandy's writing about Mohandas Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Indian terrorists and contemporary manifestations of *sati* are just some examples of how his work also attempts to grapple with how we experience and resist violence today.

Throughout *Gandhi's Truth* Erikson remarks on the analogy that he sees between Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha* (literally, truth-force) as a method for finding the truth that parallels psychoanalysis. He makes the observation that psychoanalysis, like *satyagraha*, "confronts the inner enemy nonviolently" (244). In other words, psychoanalysis—like *satyagraha*—is committed to working out personal and interpersonal conflicts in a peaceful way. Earlier in the book, in a direct address to Gandhi, he writes "my task in this book is to confront the spiritual truth as you have formulated and lived it with the psychological truth which I have learned and practiced" (Erikson 231), thus drawing Freud's work and Gandhi's work into a larger ethical project that involves, in the broadest terms, a non-violent search for truth<sup>33</sup>.

In providing a description of the viability and necessity of an ethical practice like *satyagraha*, then, Erikson is also providing an ethical defence of psychoanalysis.

He writes:

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<sup>33</sup> Erikson also notes "For all these inequalities call for conscious insight rather than for moralistic repression. And it is here, I feel, that your attempts at enlarging human awareness, and Freud's, complement each other" (244).



psychoanalysis, not if judged by its physicalistic terminology and theory but if understood as it is practiced and lived according to the rules and the intentions of its originator, amounts to a truth method, with all the implications which the word truth has in *Satyagraha ... is more than a vague analogy*; it is a correspondence in method and a convergence in human values which may well be of historical, if not evolutionary, significance (245)

I would argue that Nandy's use of psychoanalysis derives part of its power from Erikson's understanding of psychoanalysis as a truth-method.<sup>34</sup> In fact, it might be rather more accurate to say that Nandy's sense of psychoanalysis as a method for revealing other kinds of truths derives from both Erikson's understanding of psychoanalysis and Erikson's account of Gandhi's search for truth. Nandy does not simply use Erikson's method, he also makes Erikson's reading of Gandhi an element of his technique. It has been suggested that Nandy's work is Gandhian in spirit, and this would seem to be supported by the ethical tenor of his work.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Nandy's Psychoanalytic Technique***

Having discussed some of the aims of Nandy's psychoanalytic approach, let us look at his particular way of using psychoanalytic structures and concepts. I have suggested that he is strongly influenced by Erikson, and he does make repeated use of Erikson's model of psychohistory. Nevertheless, I would argue that Nandy does something much more sophisticated with psychoanalysis than the term psychohistory

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<sup>34</sup> It is also worth noting, here, that Erikson and Nandy are both concerned to argue for the viability of non-violence as a political strategy and that both articulate their position in psychoanalytic or psychological language. In *Gandhi's Truth* Erikson retells and comments on an anecdote about Gandhi:

Gandhi was asked by a foreign journalist, "How would you meet the atom bomb . . . with non-violence?" He answered, "I will not go underground, I will not go into shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see that I have not a trace of evil against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But that longing in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened.' Utter foolishness? Maybe; and yet, perhaps, true for its very absurdity. For Gandhi's answer only dramatizes a basic non-violent alternative which, while it must admittedly find new methods in an electronic and nuclear age, nevertheless remains a human alternative, enacted and demonstrated by the Mahatma as feasible in his times and circumstances (430).

<sup>35</sup> Young observes that Nandy is one of the few scholars writing in India today who has "been prepared to endorse [Gandhi's] politics without very substantial reservations" (*Postcolonialism* 352).

suggests, partly because he seeks to open up new or previously unasked questions about colonial and postcolonial politics than those raised by Erikson's studies of Gandhi's India or Native American tribes in contemporary America.<sup>36</sup> Nandy's reading of Indian culture, his particular way of writing psychobiographies or psychohistories, and his use of structural psychoanalytic elements (such as the psychoanalytic understanding of time) all suggest, once again, that rather than using psychohistory to offer a deeper, alternative kind of history he uses it to produce an alternative to the modern, colonial discipline that is History.<sup>37</sup>

Nandy's ability to use psychoanalysis and make it sensitive to the tradition of Hinduism is a meaningful achievement since he manages to use psychoanalytic language to write about Hindu culture without pathologizing it. For example, Nandy carefully avoids trying to explain the Indian personality in psychoanalytic terms.<sup>38</sup> As we saw earlier, Nandy does not consider himself to be an anthropologist in the field, but one who is in a position to blend anthropological knowledge with the anthropological subjects' knowledge. Despite Erikson's attempts to be a tolerant and sensitive observer of Indian culture he is not able, indeed he does not even attempt, to treat cultural traditions or practices as anything more than interesting background material to his interpretative biography of Gandhi.<sup>39</sup> The psychoanalytic tradition, as

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<sup>36</sup> This is not to say that Erikson was oblivious to the politics of colonialism or post colonialism in his own work. Indeed, for a writer who is often accused of being politically naïve or simply a conservative in the most literal sense of the word Erikson is much more alert to the ways in which colonial mentalities operate than many of his psychoanalyst contemporaries, or even his predecessors. He clearly understands that colonial mentalities persist after decolonization has officially taken place and he is one of the few prominent psychoanalytic writers of his time to discuss Fanon's work.

<sup>37</sup> Erikson suggests "Psychoanalysis, then, may well become operative in curing the historical process of some of its built-in impediments and in providing the conscious insights which are unconsciously sought in all manner of indirect self-revelations. I mean to say here that man by understanding the way he historicized may yet overcome certain stereotyped ways in which history repeats itself—ways which man can no longer afford" (439). Nandy seems doubtful that psychoanalysis can cure history, and instead looks forward cheerfully to its demise.

<sup>38</sup> Here Nandy's work diverges significantly from, for example, the work of the Indian psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar. See Kakar 441-48.

<sup>39</sup> Erikson, for example, considers the traditional Hindu life-cycle as a factor in Gandhi's decisions about his life, but it appears to serve more as authenticating background material to

many critics have observed, has been a heavily anthropological one and Erikson's attempts to balance that tendency with his own sympathetic observations of Indian culture are significant. Nevertheless, for Nandy the cultural considerations are not background, they form a more prominent part of the foreground that complicate purely psychoanalytic explanations.

One of Nandy's rhetorical devices is to begin his essay by retelling a Hindu myth that sets the moral tone for his work. In "The Savage Freud", for example, Nandy begins with a tale about a Hindu *pandit* who uses religious philosophy to justify robbery and murder to his impressionable son. This tale raises some awkward questions about the moral responsibilities of interpretation from the perspective of Hindu philosophy—questions that Nandy then uses to discuss the reception and development of psychoanalysis in India during the 1920s. Nandy relies on Hindu myths not because, as we might expect, they offer straightforward moral categories but precisely because they do not. According to Nandy, at least, Hindu myths have traditionally complicated notions of heroes and villains and even more complex notions of victory and defeat. Nandy strengthens the arguments of his essays by using the resolutions of moral problems he finds in these myths. Far from serving as authenticating anthropological details the myths provide a framework within which to evaluate whatever issue Nandy is discussing, such as, in the example cited above, the ethics of psychoanalytic interpretation.<sup>40</sup>

Despite his different cultural approach to psychoanalytic theory, Nandy repeatedly makes use of the biographical format Erikson developed.<sup>41</sup> We have

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the genuinely personal drama of Gandhi's life than a potentially viable scheme for interpreting Gandhi's life in and of itself. To be fair to Erikson he does acknowledge that while others might find it easy to psychoanalyze Gandhi he does not.

<sup>40</sup> Myths, and the structures and values of myths, figure repeatedly throughout Nandy's work. For some further examples see Nandy's *Alternative Sciences* 26-37, *The Intimate Enemy* 21-24 and *Savage Freud* 84-88. The use of myth in Nandy's work is closely related to his attempt to use psychoanalytic time to structure his alternative histories, as I discuss below.

<sup>41</sup> *Alternative Sciences* and *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism* are both long biographical studies; in essays such as *The Intimate Enemy* Nandy relies on shorter biographical vignettes to support

already seen that Nandy emphasizes the individual so it is not surprising that psychobiography is one of Nandy's primary methods of analysis. As Nandy himself acknowledges, one reason he prefers to work with persons rather than larger collective groups is that he knows how to read individuals. Nevertheless, we are not in the realm of a traditional psychoanalytic case history. Although Nandy finds psychoanalysis to be "the most influential theoretical frame for analysing the conversion of social realities into personality vectors" (*Alternative Sciences* 13), he continues it "tends to conceive of these realities in static and narrow terms once it goes beyond the immediate interpersonal world of the individual" (13). Nandy's aim in the psychobiography, then, is as much about a closer understanding of the way in which the society of the individual deals with its colonial conflicts as it is about the individual.

Nevertheless, these psychological portraits are not morality tales either. In contrast with a model of biography which "makes sense of our experiences and gives meaning to our lives . . . teaches us how to live and how not to live" (Sardar 221), Nandy's psycho-biographies are "ground for mining psychological insights, for understanding how the Indian Self survived, or failed to survive, the onslaught of colonialism, for constructing a politics of awareness—not a theology of deliverance" (Sardar 221). Nandy does not want to create a hagiographic series of portraits of heroes of the Independence movement, or some other past, golden age. The subjects Nandy chooses are frequently men who have sustained heavy psychological losses, as we saw in the case of the physicist Bose. Unlike Erikson's study of Gandhi, which serves as a kind of handbook for a life of non-violence, Nandy's biographies lay out

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his argument (including short studies of Kipling, C F Andrews, Orwell as well as discussions of Indian subjects); and in collections such as *At the Edge of Psychology* and *The Savage Friend* there are several essays that focus on biographical subjects (in the former, Indira Gandhi and Nathuram Godse, and in the latter, Radhabinod Pal, Girishkander Bose and Satyajit Ray).

the psychological topographies of particular colonial conjunctions and require the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.<sup>42</sup>

The last example of Nandy's method that I will discuss here is his use of a psychoanalytical sense of time. In this respect Nandy's work reaches far beyond psychohistory since, rather than simply using psychoanalytical concepts to understand historical events, he attempts to disrupt what seems to be one of history's most obvious disciplinary rules: the scholar's view of the past. Psychoanalysis is based on an understanding of time in which the past is always part of the present; it does not presume discrete separations between what happened yesterday and what happened today. The past is never over and put away. The study of history, on the other hand, must presume discrete separations between the past and the present in order to describe its object scientifically.

Although, "psychoanalysis and historiography thus have two different ways of distributing the space of memory" (de Certeau 4), Nandy uses the psychoanalytical sense of time in order to write his alternative histories. By using unorthodox chronologies and juxtaposing mythical insights with historical facts, Nandy suggests that he stays much closer to a traditional Hindu way of understanding the past.<sup>43</sup> In this way he forces psychoanalysis to work as "a source of defiance of the imperialism of history" ("History" 56) rather than as a tool to capture an extra or deeper level of

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<sup>42</sup> It is this type of ambiguity that Nandy asserts is antithetical to the discipline of History, and thus so necessary for his own non-Modern project. He writes "because, as an authentic progeny of seventeenth-century Europe, history fears ambiguity. The ultimate metaphor for history ... is synecdoche: the historical past stands for all of the past because it is presumed to be the only past" ("History" 48). Naturally, Nandy does not even attempt to narrate these ambiguities out of his historical writing and often deliberately cultivates them.

<sup>43</sup> Erikson also suggests that Indians have a different experience of time than people living in the modern West. He observes, "every man's life is a composite of the modern and the archaic, the logical and the nonrational, the proper and the passionate. But Indians, I believe, live in more centuries at the same time than most other peoples; and every Indian, be he ever so well educated and pragmatic, lives also in a feminine space time that is deep inside a HERE and in the very center of a NOW, not so much an observer of a continuum of means and ends but a participant in a flux marked by the intensity of confluence" (43)

history.<sup>44</sup> Nandy wants to remind historians, both Western and Indian, that there are people who have their own sense of history that does not match what professional historians recognize or acknowledge as history.<sup>45</sup> These are people, Nandy suggests, who value the poles of binaries such as remembering/forgetting, myth/history and past/present differently than the West and that they do not need to be brought into the institution of History (“History” 56).

***The Limits of Culture: Problematizing Nandy’s Interpretations and Uses of Traditional Indian Culture***

We have seen how Nandy’s work brings an understanding of Hindu culture to bear on psychoanalytical theories and takes the possibility of psychological resistance to colonialism seriously. Nevertheless a central problem with Nandy’s work is the way in which he defines, attributes and deploys Hindu cultural concepts. Moreover, it is largely because of these problems that Hindu women and Indian women generally become a kind of blind spot in his work. Arif Dirlik has suggested that one cannot accuse a writer who laments the loss of femininity in Indian men of being an anti-feminist (“Reading Nandy” 285). Nevertheless, Nandy’s understanding of culture and his psycho-historical methodology both work to restrict the ways in which we can read and theorize the lives of Indian women under colonial and postcolonial oppression. In this section, then, I will examine some of the problems with Nandy’s experiments with psychoanalysis and how Nandy’s focus on recovering and uncovering Hindu cultural resources prevents him from understanding how theoretical figurations of femininity contrast with the lived reality of women’s lives.

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<sup>44</sup> This is in marked contrast not only to Erikson’s conceptualization of psychohistory as he practiced it, but also in contrast to the generally accepted conventions of psychohistory.

<sup>45</sup> Nandy notes that although Gyan Prakash and Dipesh Chakrabarty both come close to advocating the kind of critique of history that Nandy advocates their arguments “turn out to be hesitant steps towards such a critique; at the moment they are powerful pleas for alternative histories, not alternatives *to* history” (“History” 53).

Nandy accepts, for the most part, a Freudian explanation of how an individual develops and reacts to the world around him or her. In general, he does not raise any “question [about] the great developmental constants psychoanalysis has uncovered” (Kakar 444). This might seem strange, given that, for example, Nandy substitutes the mother for the father as the significant parent in the Indian’s Oedipal complex. Nandy’s substitution would seem to be a major departure from Freud’s theory, and indeed if Nandy followed the logic of this substitution to its end his work would function as a rewriting of psychoanalysis in the Indian context. However, in Nandy’s work the fact that the mother is the primary focus of Oedipal ambivalence is used as a straightforward substitution that reflects the reality of Indian childrearing practices specifically and the tenor of Indian culture generally. It is in this way that Nandy, like Kakar and other Indian psychoanalysts before him, brings the Indian cultural milieu to bear on Western psychological schemes without disrupting the general theoretical framework of psychoanalysis<sup>46</sup>.

From a purely theoretical point of view this Oedipal substitution is already a disruption. If the mother is the important parent, rather than the father, this would seem to suggest that penis envy, fetishism and other symptoms deriving from Oedipal conflict must operate differently, or perhaps are not even meaningful, in an Indian context. However, in Nandy’s text this difference is not explored and its potential to disrupt the structure of psychoanalytic theory is limited. He does point to the fact that because of the importance of the mother, authoritarianism has a

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<sup>46</sup> The importance of the mother, rather than the father, in Indian culture is not Nandy’s idea or even Kakar’s. There is a long tradition of writing about Indian men’s fascination and frustration with their mothers which includes writers who have much less understanding and respect for Indian culture than Nandy or Kakar. Nandy’s contribution is to bring this well-established idea into the realm of discussions about Indian politics and history as a means of illuminating Indian culture rather than condemning it. It is interesting, however, to compare this with Erikson’s account of the Indian mother that suggests, perhaps in a covert move to preserve the importance of fathers from a psychoanalytic point of view, that in a large joint family the bond between child and mother is often more diffuse than in a Western home so that the child is not obsessively bound to the mother, but rather craves for the connection she or he has never been able to secure amidst all the other siblings and cousins (104-7).

different character in India than it has in Europe (*Edge* 107), but he does not turn this insight on psychoanalysis itself. Nandy uses his understanding of Indian culture as a matrifocal one to reinterpret the history of the colonial encounter in India, but he does not pursue the logic of his interpretations further than the particular historical case he addresses. As one commentator remarks, Nandy's "explanations and interpretations have, brilliant as they are, an *ad hoc* quality" (Pye 240).

Nevertheless, it is through his sympathetic account of Indian culture that Nandy is able to avoid psychoanalysis' usual problems with non-Western cultures. Freud's interpretation of other cultures in texts such as *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilization and its Discontents* typically finds non-Western cultures anterior or inferior. Seshadri-Crooks suggests that this could hardly be otherwise, given that "psychoanalysis, in pertaining to non-Western cultures, is always imbricated with anthropology (as ethnopsychology), which largely precludes the specificity (and thus normativity) of the object of study" ("Primitive" 177). We saw an example of this in Mannoni's account of Malagasy culture. Mannoni's interpretation of the psychology of colonial relations in French colonial Madagascar was heavily dependent on his ethnographic reading of Malagasy cultural practices such as ancestor worship. While some of the French colonizers were found to be suffering from the pathology of the Prospero complex as a result of individual pathology (pathology, Mannoni admits, fostered by the colonial environment), the Malagasy were found to be collectively mentally deficient as a result of their culture.

Unfortunately, even if Nandy's psychoanalysis enables a more respectful interpretation of Indian culture, it reproduces Mannoni's findings about the Europeans' non-relation to culture. Mannoni's theory was problematic not only because he pathologized the Malagasy, but also because he attributed the Malagasy's problems to their culture and the Europeans' problems to individual mental aberrations. Nandy, though he is able to recover Hindu culture as a positive force



and resource in the psychic lives of Indians, still ties Indian's behaviour to their cultural practices and values while the European's psychological motivations float more freely or at least do not clearly appear to be the product of their culture.<sup>47</sup> In *The Intimate Enemy*, he tells us that the British produced a discourse of hyper-masculinity in India because they were trying to suppress their own bisexuality.<sup>48</sup> However, he offers no explanation of this statement. What values, practices or symbols in English culture contributed to this shift towards hyper-masculinity? It is part of Nandy's project to demonstrate that Indians, through their capacity to draw on a cultural base, are not simply the victims of colonialism that conventional historical accounts might suggest and that the English do, in a sense, suffer from their inability to produce anything psychologically positive from their encounter with the Indians. The English, Nandy suggests repeatedly, are the losers in the cultural encounter. But is this because they have no culture to draw on themselves in the colonial encounter, or because their culture simply doesn't offer them the same, flexible range of psychological responses as Hinduism offers to Indians? If, as Nandy suggests at certain points, the British seek to suppress or express particular values and practices where does that come from in their culture?

In Nandy's account, as in Mannoni's and indeed, as in Freud's, Western people are described in terms identical with psychological schemas and non-Western

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<sup>47</sup> Or, indeed, as Mannoni does, Nandy offers individual analyses of British figures to account for their behaviour, versus the general cultural explanation he offers for the Indian response to British colonial discourses of masculinity.

<sup>48</sup> Nandy is particularly interested in the concept of psychological bisexuality. He claims, for example, that bisexuality, or at least a greater tendency towards femininity, in men in the West is connected with creativity in *The Intimate Enemy* 64-79 and *The Savage Friend* 237-266. One example is Kipling whose characterization as a thinking person rather than an active person marks him as psychologically bisexual. This rather simple division of masculine and feminine is clearly problematic. As Mrinalini Sinha has demonstrated in her study of the interactions between Bengali masculinity and British masculinity in nineteenth-century India, the question is quite a bit more complicated than Nandy's study suggests. Sinha's study is a response to the more generalist tenor of Nandy's work in *The Intimate Enemy*. In her own words, her study is an attempt to "complicate either notions of modern Western masculinity or traditional Indian conceptions of masculinity as discrete or mutually exclusive categories by a recognition of their mutual implication in imperial politics" (8).

people are explained via reference to their culture. In other words, these theorists seem to suggest that Europeans have no culture which makes them behave as they do—they are *purely* psychological creatures. This notion raises some seemingly insurmountable problems about the ethnocentric structure of psychoanalysis. If psychoanalysis describes Western subjects, if it functions as an ethnography of whiteness, how can it function as a useful theory for understanding non-Western subjects? Since the question of psychoanalysis' ethnocentrism is a central question for this study I will defer discussion of this problem to the final chapter. In the space that the deferral of this question creates, however, I would pose a related question: what is it that would constitute 'culture' in this kind of cultural psychology or cultural psychoanalysis? How should we understand the culture that Indians, or Malagasy, or Martinicans apparently take their psychological cues from?

Culture is by necessity a fluid concept. However, a significant problem with Nandy's conceptualization of culture is that his work relies too heavily on this fluidity. Although Nandy's open and positive definition of culture makes his work dynamic, Presler wonders if "it is almost too protean and pluralistic ... can a factor which is so variable, so subject to 'projection', be a reliable tool for analysing politics?" (229). I want to focus on three potential problems with Nandy's reading of Hindu culture here: First, Nandy consistently refers to Hindu and Indian culture as identical; Second, he sometimes ascribes great importance to cultural factors and at other times allows culture to fade into the background of his account; and finally, like Erikson, his view of culture is a highly optimistic one, which always seems to enable those who have faith in it. Culture never becomes a locus of oppression for Nandy.

Nandy writes about an 'Indian' way of thinking about the world that comes, in his account, from specifically Hindu (and perhaps even locally Bengali Hindu<sup>49</sup>)

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<sup>49</sup> Hindu practices and beliefs vary a great deal depending on the region, caste and even gender of the devotee. As Seshadri-Crooks notes, in her commentary on Bose, a Bengali

philosophy. Since Nandy himself refers to these Hinduism-derived ideas as Indian, it seems that he does not consider the different lived practices of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other non-Hindu Indians as significant impediments to the idea that these non-Hindus might share a Hindu view of the world. It may be, as he observes of his own Christian Bengali family, that some non-Hindus practice their faiths in ways inflected by Hindu philosophies and practices, but it does not seem plausible that this provides a basis for fully subsuming Muslim and other religious world-views into a Hindu world-view. On what terms is it possible to assume that, even only in psychological terms (whatever that might imply), Indians all think and behave in a 'Hindu' manner? If Nandy only means to write about Hindus, then what of the significant Muslim, Sikh and Christian minorities in India? Nandy never poses these questions, so it is difficult to determine whether he conflates Hindu with Indian because he thinks differentiations between faith groups in India are insignificant, or because he is writing a partial account of the colonial encounter.

Moreover, if Nandy's account should be read as specific to the Indian-British colonial encounter, how relevant is his psychological method to the analysis of other colonialisms? Fanon did not define his analysis of colonialism or methods of resistance in relation to Martinican, French or Arabic culture, and for Nandy this is one of the major problems with Fanon's analysis. In addition, in the case of cultural and ethnic groups like former slaves or indentured labourers where people have been forcibly removed and isolated from the cultural milieu they were born into, what is their culture? What could be their cultural basis for psychological resistance? In the case of indigenous groups, such as the First Nations of Canada and Aboriginal groups in Australia, whose culture has been systematically destroyed by forcing them

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Hindu, his focus on the Oedipal mother is unsurprising given that "Bengal, as we know, is the nucleus of goddess worship in India and produced the nationalist image of India as Mother" ("Primitive" 198). Nandy acknowledges that he is writing about the specific encounter between the English and the Bengali Hindu at certain points, but at others he writes about the significance of the goddess in Indian psychic life as a general axiom.

through institutions such as residential schools, what could their strategy for resistance be based on? Residential schools in Canada not only stripped many First Nations in Canada of their languages, but their own cultural, spiritual and epistemological perspectives. Still more devastating is the fact that through colonial encounters some indigenous populations suffered sharp decline over a relatively short span of time, through disease or alcoholism for example. Consequently, the cultural knowledge embodied in the groups were dramatically reduced. Nandy's larger concerns about colonial discourse and western knowledge systems would seem to suggest that he is writing about something more than just the Indian experience of colonialism. However, it is not clear that his strategy of cultural resistance would or could work in other contexts.

It is admittedly difficult to determine how we could convincingly define and locate the importance of culture in our accounts of historical and political phenomena. Cultural phenomena are simply not susceptible to objective specification. Nevertheless, as Presler notes, Nandy vacillates between two different understandings of culture that the former defines as weak and strong. Weak culture is "a pool of diverse values, meanings, interpretations, and concepts, any element of which can be plucked out, more or less at random, and made to address political crises and strains" (230). Against this, Presler defines strong culture as "a finite set of categories, rules and values which independently define, place boundaries on and control human action" (230). Another way of understanding this distinction might be that weak culture is something people use (it is produced through human interaction) and strong culture is something that acts on people (it produces human beings of a particular cultural type). Presler accepts that both definitions, as Nandy uses them, produce insights into Indian history. He does not seem to have a preference for one definition over the other. I would suggest, however, that culture must be a production. It must be something human beings create over time because otherwise

the kinds of changes and reinterpretations Nandy's work describes would not be possible. Nandy seems to pay insufficient attention to the production and processes of culture, and that is where his conceptualization of culture is least successful.

Nandy recognizes that culture is not a finite set of values that place boundaries on human action, because he emphatically denies that India is a traditionalist country and asserts only that it has a tradition to draw on. Nevertheless, this recognition is rarely followed through to its logical conclusion. Culture, for Nandy, is a political tool but he does not seem to examine the production or reproduction of culture as a politically or socially implicated process. For example, Nandy suggests that *sati* exists because Indians value conjugal loyalty but he neglects to consider how, as feminist scholars have, inheritance laws might also have had a part in making such a tradition. Moreover, he does not reflect or even acknowledge the economy that flows from contemporary *satis* such as Roop Kanwar's. One historian of feminist movements in India notes that after Kanwar died, stalls selling food for travellers as well as souvenirs of the event soon sprung up all around the site. Moreover, Kanwar's father-in-law and other men in the village established a trust named "organization for the defence of the religio-ethical ideal of sati" (Kumar 175) to collect donations from pilgrims and run the event which reportedly collected Rs. 50 lakhs within a month of its inauguration.

Kumar observes that although Nandy, among other critics, claimed Indian feminists who opposed *sati* were anti-Indian or unwitting collaborators with Western capitalism, "not one of these writers addressed themselves to the question of what had actually happened, or was happening in Deorala ... nor did any of them ask under what conditions Roop Kanwar had lived, or under what conditions she had died" (174).<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, as Kumar's description of the economy that developed

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<sup>50</sup> Nandy has consistently responded that critics of his reading of *sati* do not pay enough attention to his distinction between *sati* as an event and *sati* as an ideological practice. See

around the *sati* demonstrates, Indian feminists were hardly collaborating with Western capitalism in opposing the event since the *sati* itself “revealed the gruesome materialism of a society which permitted ‘sacrifice’ for profit” (175).

Kumar’s account of the Deorala *sati* undermines Nandy’s provocative questions about a contemporary Hindu woman’s right to practice her cultural traditions. He suggests that since men may choose to sacrifice their bodies for the defence of their country in war, women should be allowed to choose to sacrifice their bodies for a personally meaningful cause. He notes that in war there is at least profit to be made out of a soldier’s bodily sacrifice and this is the only thing that makes it more acceptable than a widow’s *sati*. He challenges the reader to consider whether the only reason that the soldier’s sacrifice is more acceptable is simply that “it does not prove the superstitions of the defeated cultures of Asia and Africa but is a respectable instrument of diplomacy and a profession on which the modern world is built?” (*Savage Freud* 51). Nandy’s analysis loses some of its rhetorical effect since, at least in contemporary forms, there are those who make profit from the self-immolation of the Roop Kanwars of the world as statesmen make profit from the sacrifice of their nation’s soldiers.

Nandy conceives of culture as a positive and harmonizing force in people’s lives. This is not to say that Nandy does not recognize the ‘dark’ side of culture, as he refers to it, but it occupies a limited place in his theory. Rather than adding strength to the argument that the dark sides of culture are pathologies of tradition, Nandy wants to make the case that the manifestations of ‘darkness’ we see today, such as religious fundamentalism and extreme secularism, are the real pathologies of tradition. However persuasive this reading is, Nandy seems unable to acknowledge or confront the problem of how the culture he views as adaptive and enabling can also

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*Savage Freud* 41 for Nandy’s discussion of specific critiques from critics including Kumar and Latika Sarkar.

be oppressive for people who supposedly subscribe to that culture's beliefs, values and practices. His writing about *sati* is a good example of this. He recognizes that *sati* is part of the dark side of Hindu culture (in fact, it is culturally specific to Hindu culture) but he still attempts to recuperate the values that he claims *sati* represents.

There is a general failure in Nandy's work to engage with how cultural practices, particularly those aspects of culture that derive from religious beliefs, operate in the lives of women, religious minorities, lower caste and working class people. Nandy suggests, in essays such as 'Woman and Womanliness' (*Edge* 32-46) and, more recently, 'Sati in Kali Yuga' (*Savage Freud* 32-52), that in India femininity is not as devalued as it is in the West because Indians associate femininity with power, particularly spiritual power. Nandy makes a case throughout his work that this sets up a different kind of gender dynamic in India and asserts that women in India "do not have to fight the same battles as their Western sisters have to fight" (*Edge* 42). While he recognizes that Indian women have battles of their own to fight, he wants to work from the position that femininity and women are not undervalued in India as they are in the West.

Nevertheless, in focusing so completely on an abstract scheme of gender, and in particular of femininity, Nandy avoids having to confront what this actually means for women. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, commenting on how the Hindu goddess has become a site of conflicted debate in feminist studies, brings us back to the reality of women's lives with this remark:

The symbolic valuation of forms is *not a reflection of the actual material and historical conditions in which they take shape*. If we locate the indices of the status of women in the latter, that is, in female sex-ratios, life-expectancy, literacy, income, subjection to violence, equality of opportunity, legal equality, then the evidence shows that societies that have goddesses—and women leaders—score poorly on these counts (35)

Sunder Rajan notes that the evidence contradicts the expectations of many feminist scholars, who expect, like Nandy, that in a culture where women can be invested

with spiritual power, this must represent the agency, or access to agency, of women in that culture.

In the 1980s and 1990s feminists in India weathered a difficult debate about the opposition between women's rights and communal rights (sometimes referred to as 'personal' laws). The stakes of the debate, secularism versus communalism, are usually presented in terms that neglect an analysis of how women specifically are affected by secularist or communalist laws and practices. In this sense, although Nandy comes down on the side of some version of communalism rather than secularism, he reproduces the established silence about women's lives. As Menon puts it, the debate "remains poised on the polarity of state and community, rendering invisible the axis upon which it turns, that of gender" (3).

Sunder Rajan turns to sociological statistics to make her point that women are still not enjoying equality with men in India, but Nandy's writing on culture is meant to disrupt the discourse that would represent Indian progress in terms of statistics on life expectancy rates. This is not to say that statistics are meaningless, only that this kind of sociological emphasis forms part of the developmental discourse that so disturbs Nandy. Sunder Rajan concludes her article with the affirmation that religious discourse "can only be countered, it seems to me, by a clear-cut and visible secular alternative" (38). The value of Nandy's work lies in his attempt to redeploy religious discourse in a way that takes it out of the hands of the fundamentalists who purport to represent communitarian values and the Western secularists. Nevertheless, As Menon notes, this issue turns invisibly on the axis of gender and if Nandy cannot bring himself to theorise this more rigorously, he cannot hope to convince critics like Sunder Rajan or Menon that there is still something enabling left in religious practice for Indian women.

Women's lives are also a blind spot in Nandy's psychobiographies. Largely influenced by Erikson's studies of great leaders such as Gandhi and Luther, Nandy



writes psychological biographies of men in Indian colonial history. In these stories women figure most often as mothers, wives or daughters. Since Nandy places a great importance on the Indian mother, the women he writes about are strong characters. His account of Rammohun Roy's crusade against *sati*, for example, is explained partly in terms of Roy's relationship to his mother and sister-in-law. Nevertheless, the women almost always exercise their agency and power within the confines of their family. With a few exceptions<sup>51</sup> women do not appear in Nandy's account as activists on their own terms. One might suppose that Nandy's subjects are inevitably men because he writes about the important figures of the independence movement, such as Gandhi. Psychohistory would seem to be most effective and illuminating when it deals with subjects we are all well acquainted with, and those subjects are generally the 'great men of history'. However, Nandy writes about a variety of minor historical characters such as Radhabinod Pal, a jurist who sat on the International Military Tribunal for the Far East held after World War II and Girindrasekhar Bose, the first non-Western psychoanalyst.

A consideration of the lives of a range of Indian women vital to the independence movement including Pandita Ramabai, Swarnakumari Debi (and her daughter Sarala Debi Ghosal) and Sarojini Naidu would complicate Nandy's view of culture as different subjects live and practice it.<sup>52</sup> Pandita Ramabai, for example, was a woman who spent much of her life trying to reform education in India. In particular, she was interested in educating women. She received her own education from her father, an itinerant Brahmin scholar and when he died she continued to wander the country with her brother lecturing to others. Ramabai was awarded a title recognizing her scholarly proficiency by the *pandits* of Calcutta and later appeared

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<sup>51</sup> As has been seen Nandy does write about Indira Gandhi as a historical actor in the larger world. See Nandy, *Edge* 112-130.

<sup>52</sup> See Kumar 32-95 for a brief but detailed and useful account of women who were important to the social reform and independence movements during the British Raj in her history of Indian feminism. See also Grewal 179-229.

before the Government of India's commission on education. She was a remarkable figure if only because of these achievements; however she also married a man who came from a different caste and religion than she did and after he died she converted to Christianity. In her history of feminist activism in India, Radha Kumar suggests that Ramabai converted to Christianity partly because the social reform movement could not quite absorb her. An individual like Ramabai is difficult to understand in terms of Nandy's account of an enabling, resistant Hindu culture. Ramabai's experience of living as a Hindu woman in the colony led her to decide that a conversion to Christianity would best help her achieve her educational reforms.

Women like Sarala Debi Ghosal offer another kind of a challenge to Nandy's account. Like many other women social reformers in nineteenth-century India, Ghosal was involved with educational reform. However, what makes her interesting is that in 1895 she took over editorship of *Bharati*, a journal her mother had edited, and through it she organized a campaign to rouse young Bengali men into defending themselves and Bengali women against British soldiers. Ghosal was determined to defend the honour of Bengalis, and protest against the British characterization of Bengalis as "a race of cowards" (Kumar 39). As a result she looked for ways to reinvent mythical figures into warrior-heroes, and was condemned by the Hindu orthodoxy for her unwomanly activities. Ghosal only organized these campaigns, she did not participate in them; but other women like Bhikaiji Cama were more clearly aligned with revolutionary action. Nandy never addresses himself to the question, what did the women do when the men shifted further towards the pole of masculinity? Though Ghosal and Cama are hardly representative of the majority of Hindu women in the late nineteenth-century, it is significant that Ghosal was organizing a fight for the honour of Bengalis. Although she also urged the men to defend the honour of their women, she understood the struggle in terms of her regional as well as her gendered identity. We are accustomed to treating slights on the

honour of women as insults to their men, but the reverse is also possible and implies a more complex interaction of gender roles than a simple polarity of masculinity and femininity.

Nandy's account of the colonial encounter leaves many questions about the psychology of Indian women unanswered. If, as his theory would suggest, they stood to lose some amount of cultural power as they ceded the ground of femininity to men, how did they fight this psychological loss? His theory relies partly on the idea of identification with the aggressor (as do parts of Fanon's argument), but he never explores how women might identify with their aggressors differently. Indeed, depending on whether the primary aggressor in the colonial situation is the white man or the white woman, the Indian women would face entirely different psychological conflicts and require different identifications than Indian men. Nandy does not consider the possibility that identification with the aggressor may be a psychological defence that is primarily available to men and that we might require alternative theories for making sense of Indian women's psychological resistance strategies. In some sense, as we saw in Fanon's work, Nandy's theory works only by pushing women, in theoretical terms, out of the picture

These examples show that other kinds of psychobiographies would complicate Nandy's relatively straightforward account of the kind of psychological resistance made possible by inherited cultural traditions and practices. I do not want to suggest that Nandy should write psychobiographies about these women. Indeed, perhaps he does not want to presume to write about women. Indian men need to be written about and represented in scholarly discourse just as much as women. However, he does need to bring a consideration of women's lives, experiences and work into his account. Nandy does acknowledge, as I mentioned earlier, that women have their own 'battles to fight' and stories to tell, but he has suggestions about how these things should be done too, and he rejects Western feminist paradigms. Instead,

he urges them to focus on issues that are specific to Indian culture. For example, he theorizes that while “in the West that may mean defying the limits of conjugality and giving a new dignity to the maternal role of woman; in India it may involve transcending the partial identity imposed by motherhood and winning a new respect for conjugality” (*Edge* 43). But as early as 1882 the activist Jyotiba Phule was already arguing for “the formation of a new and equalitarian husband-wife relationship” (Kumar 32).

In fact, a look at the history of feminism in India suggests that Indian women activists have been cautious about describing themselves as feminists, or pursuing Western feminist ideas since at least the 1920’s. In discussions among themselves, as well as more public debate, Indian women seem to have declared their preference for their own version of woman-oriented activism repeatedly, from Sarojini Naidu in the 1930s to Madhu Kishwar in the 1980s. In part, this is because much of women’s activism in India was connected to the Independence movement and so improving the lives of women was also always about improving the lives of Indians. But it is also because Indian activists recognized and deplored the patronising and arrogant attitude of Western feminists towards them. In other words, Indian women activists and theorists have long recognized what Nandy seems to believe they need to be told, and despite the determination to maintain their cultural distinctiveness they have found it necessary to critique religious discourses and rights.<sup>53</sup>

Nandy attempts to bring a genuinely sympathetic understanding of Hindu culture into psychoanalysis, and to identify how a particular cultural tradition includes psychological strategies for resisting mental, physical and intellectual attacks on that

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<sup>53</sup> In fact Nandy’s claim goes slightly further than this. He suggests that in fighting women’s oppression in India “the truly creative women in these areas have rarely been feminists, ardent or otherwise. The battle has been fought by men who have presumed that the plight of women in other areas of life extend to these too” (*Edge* 46) Nandy is referring here specifically to Western feminist drives to obtain greater participation from women in certain areas of public life. The problem, he suggests, is different in India because women have access to activities the West considers manly, such as politics.

tradition. Nevertheless, his neglect of how cultural beliefs are produced and lived as practices means that his notion of culture as a psychological resource remains problematic, not simply in terms of how women or minorities define themselves in relation to their dominant culture but what culture stands for when we talk about groups who seem to be without culture. Moreover, Nandy, like Mannoni, still leaves us wondering whether non-Europeans are bound to be defined in relation to their culture while Europeans may be understood as purely psychological creatures. If Fanon's work placed relatively little importance on deploying cultural identities and traditions to struggle against colonialism, Nandy's theories become untenable as a result of their dominant emphasis on the enabling potential of cultural solutions. The theoretical space between Fanon and Nandy's vision of this problematic leads us naturally to the work of Homi Bhabha. Not only does Bhabha draw on both these theorists in his work but he foregrounds questions of the production, reproduction and authorization of culture in an explicitly psychoanalytic language.

### CHAPTER THREE: "HOMI BHABHA AND THE TRUTH OF PSYCHOANALYSIS"

Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* is one of the foundational texts of postcolonial theory. Despite its significance, the book has not been considered a response to the specific problems of using psychoanalysis for anti-colonial and postcolonial ends which critics like Fanon and Nandy have already tried and failed to solve. Bhabha's project obviously relies on psychoanalytic theory, and yet it is at the same time a contribution to postcolonial theory and, as such, emerges from the influence of texts like *Black Skin, White Masks* and *Intimate Enemy* as much as Derrida's *Writing and Difference* or Lacan's *Seminars*. Fanon offered us a way of understanding the colonized through a sociologically and politically situated psychoanalytic portrait. Nandy expanded the psychological view of colonialism to include the colonizers, and also explored the ways in which the history of the colony could be represented more faithfully through a psychoanalytic lens. Bhabha builds on top of these projects in order to connect the history of colonialism with the history of Western modernity itself. In this chapter, I examine the specifically psychoanalytic aspect of Bhabha's work in relation to some of the themes and issues already explored in the work of Fanon and Nandy. Reading Bhabha in this context may clarify why he uses psychoanalysis and how he uses it to solve certain problems in writing about the colony and postcolonial critique. Having considered the specifically psychoanalytic aspect of Bhabha's work, we can then begin to evaluate the potential and the pitfalls of his theoretical solutions more precisely.

Critical commentary on Bhabha's work has focused most heavily on the question of whether or not his version of postcolonial theory can be useful in contemporary political struggles around race, colonialism and imperialism. In particular, his work has been accused of being "incompetent for handling neo-

colonialism, and ironically the professed counter-hegemonic thrust of postcolonialism appears irretrievably compromised” (Xie 165).<sup>54</sup> One reason why critics are not disposed to accept Bhabha’s solutions is because of his intensive use of Derridean deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis. As a result, his postcolonial strategies seem to depend too heavily on the critic’s role as a deconstructive reader and appear to best effect in the realm of texts, psyches and fantasy states rather than the ‘real’ world of colonial or postcolonial brutality.<sup>55</sup> Since his strategies are also described in a dense written style “thickened by improbable juxtapositions and innumerable fleeting allusions to the comments of critics, writers and thinkers” (Parry, “Signs” 7), Bhabha’s work has been rejected as too embedded in the Eurocentric language of high theory to be understandable to anyone except a small group of academics.<sup>56</sup>

Objections to the political utility of such textually based subversion as deconstruction are certainly valid, but there is a tendency among critics to reject Bhabha’s deconstruction and his use of a specifically psychoanalytic language at one

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<sup>54</sup> For some views of the difficulties with using Bhabha’s theory for contemporary struggles see Dirlik “Postcolonial Aura” 328-356, Parry “Signs” 5-24, Xie 155-166 and Miyoshi 726-751. Of these critiques, Parry’s is one of the most persuasive since it demonstrates a close reading of Bhabha’s work and a sensitive understanding of Bhabha’s political commitments. Unlike Dirlik she is also careful to caution readers that the problems she identifies with Bhabha’s methods should not be confused with the accusation that Bhabha is not sufficiently committed to the politics of decolonization.

<sup>55</sup> For discussion of some of the problems involved in applying Bhabha’s strategies in the real world see Dirlik “Postcolonial Aura” 328-355 and Ahmad 1-20. A related criticism is that Bhabha fails to understand how difficult it is to actually live the postcolonial or migrant experience he seems to celebrate. For discussions of this see Easthope 145-151 and Nicholls 4-25. Easthope puts his concern in rather strong terms. According to him, Bhabha “invites us to try and live in difference, in a state of pure hybridity, actually in the interstices ... I invite you to hesitate before trying this, for the experience is not at all unfamiliar, for it is the experience of psychosis” (147).

<sup>56</sup> For critics like Loomba “the slipperiness of his language and construction, it is itself open to criticism in work which purports to be political and interventionist” (“Overworlding” 308). Of course Bhabha is not the only postcolonial critic to be accused of taking the language game too seriously. Spivak’s work has been attacked as often as Bhabha’s. For commentaries on the problems with Bhabha’s written style see Parry “Signs” 5-24 and Loomba “Overworlding” 305-310. Several critics have also raised questions about the way in which Bhabha’s deconstructive technique and personal style deliberately and inadvertently create misleading representations of his sources, for detailed discussions of some of these instances see Moore-Gilbert *Postcolonial Practice* 114-151, Perloff 1-7 and Phillips 1-9.

fell swoop. Though there are some connections between Bhabha's deconstructive approach and his inclination for Lacan's more post-structural version of psychoanalysis these two aspects of his method should not be conflated.<sup>57</sup> In fact, it may be much more useful to consider Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis as a signal that his project engages with writers such as Fanon and Nandy, rather than a sign of his apparent interest in Western poststructuralist theories. Bhabha cites Fanon as a precedent for this very reason, but it is a precedent no one except Young seems to take as a serious statement of intent.

One reason for this may be the fact that insofar as Bhabha's work has been understood in relation to Fanon's work it has been criticized for his inability, or unwillingness, to represent Fanon's work accurately and his over-emphasis on the psychoanalytic aspects of Fanon's work. Many critics may well feel, then, that work that apparently misrepresents Fanon cannot be a meaningful response to problems in Fanon's theory, and yet this is what Bhabha's work attempts to do. In the first chapter we saw that a significant problem with Fanon's model stems from his inability to account for the ways in which an atmosphere of racism produces specific, sometimes pathological, behaviours. He suggests, for example, that watching films, reading comic books or history books in which black people are denigrated triggers an existential crisis in the psyches of black people when they realize they are living in a white world. As Nandy observes, Fanon is able to describe the general contours of colonialism, but though we may instinctively be persuaded that racist representations will lead the racialized person to doubt his or her own human worth we must still find a more nuanced way to connect the material condition (the colonizer's economic or social ability to control representations of the racialized) and the

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<sup>57</sup> There are some notable exceptions to the tendency to read Bhabha's deconstruction and psychoanalysis as one and the same problem. For critiques that focus specifically on the psychoanalytic content of Bhabha's work see Young, *White Mythologies* 151-6, Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial* 140-151 and Loomba "Overworlding" 307. Loomba simply registers her discomfort with psychoanalysis as a Eurocentric theory, whereas Young and Moore-Gilbert discuss the implications of Bhabha's psychoanalytic model in more detail.



psychological event (the colonized becoming mentally and psychically oppressed) than Fanon offers us.

Bhabha uses psychoanalysis precisely to specify these links; he offers us plausible explanations of cultural processes and productions in colonial settings. Since we will examine how Bhabha does this later in the chapter I will not elaborate on his method in any detail here, but a brief illustration may help clarify the point. Bhabha discusses colonial mimicry at several points in the first half of *The Location of Culture*. Far from emerging as a natural response to colonial oppression, a case of colonial (mis)identifications that more or less hit their mark, mimicry is shown to be a colonial production. Mimicry, in the colony, is produced by the colonial demand for and fear of well-assimilated native subjects.

The connections between Bhabha's and Nandy's work have gone generally unremarked by critics. This omission is partly a symptom of the relative silence about Nandy's work that we examined in the previous chapter. It is an unfortunate omission since, as we shall see in this chapter, Bhabha's work develops some of Nandy's most productive ideas about psychoanalytic time, the critique of Western history and psychoanalytic discourse as an internal critique of the authority of Western knowledge.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps because Bhabha focuses on some of the same main issues as Nandy he is also able to answer a problem in the latter's work. Nandy's work suffers from insufficient attention to the ways in which culture is produced and lived by minorities and relies on the notion of culture as embedded in certain behaviours, practices and beliefs. Where Fanon was not able to detail how a particular behaviour or practice mediated between the material conditions and the effects on the colonized psyche, Nandy's work provides a sometimes over-detailed picture that does not allow us to transfer his theory outside its particular habitus.

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<sup>58</sup> Young also notes that Nandy and Bhabha's work are thematically connected. See Young, *Postcolonialism* 343.

Bhabha, though he remains sensitive to Nandy's interest in cultural questions, is able to provide an account of how colonial cultures work (in his case, the reference point is often, again, the Indian colony) that is at the same time independent of a particular cultural reference point. In Bhabha's work, mimicry could as easily occur in an Indian, African or Caribbean colony. The dynamics of Bhabha's account do *not* depend on our knowledge of a particular colonized culture's gender economy or religious practices even as he insists on the importance of cultural processes in establishing (and destabilizing) colonial authority. Bhabha's colonial subjects, like Nandy's, are made through culture, but, unlike Nandy's, they are not fixed to culturally-prescribed ways of being and thinking.

The links to Nandy are also important because Bhabha's work continues to develop the transition from psychoanalysis as a tool against colonialism and psychoanalysis as a tool of postcolonialism, in other words as a tool for writing against the eurocentrism of western knowledge begun in Nandy's work. For Fanon, psychoanalysis was a way of making certain aspects of colonialism, aspects not adequately analysed before, known to the public: the devastating psychic damage of racism and the colonializing practices of European medicine. For Nandy, psychoanalysis begins to become useful on two levels. One of his tasks is still to explore the psychic damage (on both sides) of colonialism, but the other task is to use psychoanalysis as an entry point into the shadow side of modernity's account of itself. Bhabha's work takes up the second task even more energetically, to the point where it sometimes appears to eclipse both Fanon's and Nandy's primary task. What is significant, however, is that modernity does not depend on or even acknowledge the colonial moment as a foundational moment in its history. By reading psychoanalysis into colonial history, Bhabha is able to restore the colonial moment to the history of modernity. The key to Bhabha's project lies, at least partly, in his

deployment of psychoanalysis and that is why we must turn now to a more careful consideration of how he cites Fanon and Bhabha and situates his project in relation to theirs.

### ***Bhabha and Fanon***

Robert Young writes, “If a psychoanalytical model might at first seem somewhat unexpected in the colonial context, [Bhabha] has the precedent of no less an authority than Fanon for its use, particularly his *Black Skin, White Masks*” (*White Mythologies* 153). Indeed, Bhabha signals that Fanon authorizes his project in various ways. The first epigraph of *The Location of Culture* is a quote from *Black Skin, White Masks*; the second essay “Interrogating Identity”, which establishes the important idea of the in-between in Bhabha’s work, is framed through a discussion of how Fanon theorizes identity; and Fanon’s words themselves are often called upon to prove the particular point Bhabha wants to make. Though critics have been consumed by the question of whether Bhabha reads Fanon correctly or not, I want to focus here on how Bhabha makes use of Fanon’s texts in order to both develop and refute aspects of Fanon’s theories in his work. If he rejects aspects of Fanon’s critique, this is only because he wants to foreground the larger theoretical stakes at issue in Fanon’s psychoanalytic portrait of the colonized.

Bhabha differs from Fanon most strongly in accepting psychoanalytic theory on its own terms. Though Bhabha, like Fanon, brings psychoanalysis back into the colony he rejects or at least passes over several problems with classical psychoanalytic theory as well as Fanon’s reworking of psychoanalysis in a colonial setting. Fanon did not regard psychoanalytic concepts as universal models. His critique was grounded in his sense of psychoanalysis as a regional, Eurocentric practice. One of Fanon’s major dissensions from classical theory concerns the assumed universalism of the Oedipus complex. In direct contradiction of this article of faith he writes:

It is too often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality. Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes . . . it would be relatively easy for me to show that in the French Antilles 97 per cent of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves (*Black Skin* 152).

The implications of this statement are not entirely straightforward, as discussed in the previous chapter, but his point is clear. The Oedipus complex should not be considered a universal process. Bhabha neither mentions Fanon's discomfort with the Oedipal model nor integrates it into his own work. Instead, his deployment of the Oedipus complex is relatively straightforward. He writes, "fetishism, as the disavowal of difference, is that repetitious scene around the problem of castration" (74). The problem of the threat of castration is taken for granted in its Freudian form and transferred to colonial scenes where it operates according to precisely the same logic of disavowal Freud described in 1927.

Unlike Bhabha, Fanon does not even adhere to one particular psychoanalytic school of thought. He cites Freud, Adler, Jung, Lacan, Deutsche, and Bonaparte alone in *Black Skin, White Masks*, feels free to disagree with Lacan, Jung or Adler as it suits his theory and his critique remains firmly grounded in an institutional understanding and practice of mental health care in a colonial hospital. It would seem surprising that Bhabha subdues this aspect of Fanon's work, especially taken together with Bhabha's assertion that he is recuperating the real value of Fanon's work in concentrating on his psychoanalytic investigations. How do Fanon's psychoanalytic investigations influence Bhabha when he neither cites Fanon's modifications nor integrates them into his own work?

While Bhabha rejects Fanon's specific critique of psychoanalysis he does not reject, what is for him, the main idea behind Fanon's portrait of how it is to live as a racialized and colonized subject. Indeed, he brings Fanon to our attention not as a black man who has a socio-political bone to pick with psychoanalysis, but as a man

who has a profound critique to make of the history of Western humanism and modernity. Bhabha insists on seeing Fanon's work as more than a localized critique of psychoanalysis, or strategy of anti-colonialism. He writes:

I claim a generality for Fanon's argument because he talks not simply of the historicity of the black man, as much as he writes in "The fact of blackness" about the temporality of modernity within which the figure of the 'human' comes to be authorized. It is Fanon's temporality of emergence—his sense of the belatedness of the black man—that does not simply make the question of ontology inappropriate for black identity; but somehow impossible for the very understanding of humanity in the world of modernity: 'You come too late, much too late, there will always be a world—a white world between you and me' (237)

In other words, for Bhabha, it is Fanon who initiates a discussion of how the figure of the 'Black man' disrupts available accounts of Western modernity simply by portraying his struggle to live between the myth and the lived-experience of blackness. That Fanon chooses to do so through a language of (modified) psychoanalysis is not, strictly speaking, the reason that Bhabha also makes use of psychoanalysis.

The precedent Bhabha acknowledges is not Fanon's use of psychoanalysis, but the implications of Fanon's psychoanalytic portrait of the colonized. It is true that Bhabha also chooses to make use of psychoanalysis, since it provides a language for describing identities that cannot be made compatible with liberal notions of public and private selves or rational and irrational acts.<sup>59</sup> But what is more important, for Bhabha, is that Fanon's psychoanalytic, or simply psychological, portrait demonstrates how the colonial subject's longing to become human is continually frustrated by the discourse of modernity itself. Modernity is a discourse that speaks of rationality and progress but turns on the notion of not-quite, not-white man who is the colonial or racialized subject. *Black Skin, White Masks* performs the

desire of the colonized to identify with the humanistic, enlightenment ideal of Man: 'all I wanted was to be a man among other men ...' Then in a

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<sup>59</sup> For an instructive account of why Bhabha uses psychoanalysis see Bhabha and Comaroff 29-32.

catachrestic reversal he shows how, despite the pedagogies of human history, the performative discourse of the liberal West, its quotidian conversation and comments, reveal the cultural supremacy and the racial typology upon which the universalism of Man is founded (Bhabha, *Location* 237)

In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha works out some of the processes by which the “performative discourse of the liberal West” authorizes itself and at the same time cannot completely effect that authorization.

The idea of the ‘black man’ has implications for writing the history of modernity, and for finding a time in which to represent that history. The black man Fanon describes, who exists in between myth and fact, highlights the linked problems of historicity and temporality that Bhabha develops throughout *The Location of Culture*.<sup>60</sup> Fanon, Bhabha argues, is one of the first critics who refuses to play the dialectic game “whereby the black man is part of a transcendental sublation: a minor term in a dialectic that will emerge into a more equitable universe” (238), but he also refuses to concede the ‘belatedness’ of the black man “because it is only the opposite of the framing of the white man as universal, normative” (237). According to Bhabha, it is Fanon who insists that the black man is neither a stage on the way to human, nor a supplementary identity to normative Whiteness, and so prompts us to look for another time in which to write history. When Bhabha claims that “it is one of the original and disturbing qualities of *Black Skin, White Masks* that it rarely historicizes the colonial experience” (42) this is not because he ignores Fanon’s careful attention to the time and place he is living in. Instead, Bhabha wants to draw our attention to the fact that Fanon does not have a suitable historical perspective for describing the history of the colonial psyche. The colonized psyche and Universal Man cannot both be represented in the same historical time with the master historical narratives that are available to Fanon. It is precisely this new kind of historical time

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<sup>60</sup> See in particular Bhabha *Location* 139-170; 198-211; and 236-256.

that Bhabha attempts to define and display in his work, and as we shall see Nandy provides another crucial element for theorizing Bhabha's new time.

### ***Bhabha and Nandy***

Despite the scarce number of references to Nandy in *The Location of Culture*, at first glance Bhabha and Nandy appear to have more closely connected theoretical projects than Bhabha and Fanon. In the few places where Bhabha makes reference to Nandy they seem to be in agreement. In the article "By Bread Alone" Bhabha acknowledges the connection himself when he writes, "my point here is close to Ashis Nandy's strictures on Western historicism ... The suffering of 'Third World' societies, according to Nandy, creates an attitude to its history which shares some of the orientations of semiotics and psychoanalysis" (200). In fact, Nandy has repeatedly argued for a psychoanalytic understanding of history that he claims is more congruent with traditional Indian conceptions and representations of the past (Nandy, "History" 44-66).

Bhabha's second reference to Nandy is also an affirmation of Nandy's position. Bhabha writes, "in his essay, 'The Uncolonized mind: postcolonial India and the East', Ashis Nandy provides a more descriptive illustration of a postcolonial India that is neither modern nor anti-modern but non-modern" (252). He goes on to quote from Nandy's text and follows this up with an affirmation of his own project "in splitting open those 'welds' of modernity, a postcolonial contramodernity becomes visible" (252). Is a certain notion of splitting or doubling so familiar from Bhabha's work another echo of Nandy's psychobiographical studies of Indian men made successful and yet haunted by their encounters with the West?

This view would seem to be strengthened by the fact that there are moments in Bhabha's text where even if Nandy's name is not invoked his project appears through the lines of Bhabha's words. For example, in "The Postcolonial and the

Postmodern' an earlier essay in which Bhabha discusses the notion of postcolonial contramodernity he suggests that this notion enables him to "attempt to represent a certain defeat, or even an impossibility, of the 'West' in its authorization of the 'idea' of colonization" (175). This is strikingly reminiscent of Nandy's attempts to represent another side of the West, as well as his notion that to accept the commonly-held view of colonialism as a one-way relationship of suffering and exploitation is to accept that colonialism is only "the name of a political economy which ensures a one-way flow of benefits, the subjects being the perpetual losers in a zero-sum game and the rulers the beneficiaries. This is a view of the human mind and history promoted by colonialism itself" (*Intimate Enemy* 30). Nandy, like Bhabha, is interested in producing other kinds of histories than those on offer in the West.

However, Nandy's attempts to break apart the structures of Western historicism with his psychoanalytical and psychological methods are quite different from Bhabha's. As we saw in the previous chapter Nandy uses psychological and psychoanalytical forms such as psychobiographies to write his alternative histories of colonialism in India. Although Nandy finds psychoanalysis to be "the most influential theoretical frame for analysing the conversion of social realities into personality vectors" (*Alternative Sciences* 13), he also observes that it "tends to conceive of these realities in static and narrow terms once it goes beyond the immediate interpersonal world of the individual" (13). Nandy's aim in the psychobiography, then, is as much about a closer understanding of the way in which the *society* of the individual deals with its colonial conflicts as it is about the individual. In other words, Nandy tries to use psychoanalysis to read the group as well as the individual without pathologizing either. Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis is much more limited to the particular uses of the concept he chooses to organize his essay around. In his work the psychoanalytic concept, intended to describe individual psychical phenomena, is used to account for the processes and behaviours of large groups of



people without any reflection on what it might mean to read those concepts into group dynamics.

In fact, this difference reflects the most insurmountable divide between Nandy and Bhabha namely their respective approaches to the question of the colonized population's culture. If Nandy is interested in collapsing the structures of Western historicism, it is because he believes in the ability of Indians to represent their own version of history and their own understanding of the past. As he puts it, if his attack on history "involved only the standard etic-emic differences, many would have felt more comfortable. But I have complicated matters by first vaguely suggesting a normative frame based on the native categories, and then using the frame to evaluate the exogenous 'universalist' and 'progressivist' categories" (Nandy, "Cultures" 273). Not only are there 'Third world' alternatives to the received framework of history, those alternatives may be used to evaluate the category of history itself. As such, Nandy is interested in offering Indian readings and methods for writing and representing history. Bhabha's attempt to intervene in the structures of history is not tied to a belief in an Indian or other cultural alternative. Indeed, as the whole chapter dedicated to his work in Young's account of Western historiography demonstrates, Bhabha's critique has its place and is launched from *inside* the problematics of Western philosophy. This is not to dismiss Bhabha's critique. However, it is clear that Bhabha's intervention in historicism is not a cultural restoration, like Nandy's, but something else.

Nevertheless, questions of cultural authenticity, cultural survival and cultural authority are of some importance to both critics. If, as Young suggests, Nandy's work established these elements as the primary concerns of postcolonial studies then Bhabha's work would seem to be much more in line with Nandy than with Fanon. However, if both critics are interested in the dynamics of cultural survival, here again they take quite different positions on the question. Bhabha never comes close to

specifying culturally Indian ways of doing or thinking things. Indeed it is the very lack of ethnic, or other socio-cultural, specificity that Bhabha seems to believe is so vital to his project and which his critics find so disturbing. For Bhabha, and Young suggests that many other secularist Indian critics agree, the recourse to Indian (or any other ethnicity) is a kind of political burden (represented as a search for authenticity) that must be dislodged. Cultural survival, in Bhabha's work, seems to refer to the creation and negotiation of identities beyond the 'traditional', whereas for Nandy cultural survival depends on the ability to remake 'critical traditional' identities.

While Nandy takes the possibilities of cultural-psychological resistance seriously, he does not, as we saw earlier, pay adequate attention to the production of culture and its impact on women, lower castes, religious minorities. Bhabha's work would seem to answer many of these problems because he assumes and explicitly works from the premise that culture must be produced, drawing especially on Foucault's theorization of culture. Moreover, in the later essays of *The Location of Culture* Bhabha actively grapples with the problem of how culture comes to be authorized, translated and even transformed. Nevertheless, perhaps because he concentrates so heavily on the structure of culture he has nothing to say about the content, or at least, he refuses to specify any cultural content. The consequence of this, in Bhabha's theory, seems to be that psychoanalytic processes and concepts fill in the space Nandy fills with 'traditional' Indian culture. Whereas Nandy, as I argued in the previous chapter, attributes Indian reactions to some version of traditional culture and European reactions to psychoanalytic schemas and processes, Bhabha seems to attribute everyone's reactions—colonizer and colonized—to psychoanalytic phenomena. The specificity that Bhabha refuses to engage with accords psychoanalysis much greater power to represent human relations than Nandy would concede. However, the processes of cultural production that Bhabha investigates illustrate the problem with attaching psychological actions to particular cultural forms

as Nandy appears to do. The problem of working out the relationship between culture and psychoanalytic theory continues to haunt us.

Bhabha's refusal to deal in specifics also extends to his treatment of gender in colonial societies. As we saw in chapter two, gender is a crucial organizing principle of colonialism for Nandy despite the problems his work raises for an account of the psychology of Indian women living under colonialism. And yet for Bhabha, who notes the importance of taking gender into account, it forms a relatively minor part of his theoretical excursions. Nevertheless, neither critic considers that his use of psychoanalytic theory would seem to exclude adequate representation of women generally and women of colour particularly. Moreover, neither critic considers that the material experience of the woman of colour might radically throw the schemes of psychoanalytic theory, such as the mechanism of identification, into question. As we will see later in this chapter with the work of Anne McClintock such a consideration opens many other questions about the critical potential of psychoanalytic theory in postcolonial studies.

Finally, even if Bhabha's choice to represent colonial phenomena in psychoanalytic terms is supported by Nandy's notion that the third world society's attitude can be characterized by affinities with psychoanalysis he does not use psychoanalysis in the way Nandy does. We saw in chapter two that Nandy's primary influences are Freud and Erikson, and his psychoanalytic understanding is heavily marked by a specific cultural, and even geographical, context. Nandy makes modifications to psychoanalysis that have an established heritage in Indian psychoanalysis, particularly the focus on mothers rather than fathers. Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis is at the same time more sophisticated (in that he follows Lacan and Derrida's readings of Freud) and less sophisticated (in that he appears to make no alterations to psychoanalysis depending on the context in which he is applying the

process or concept). Indeed, that despite his interest in the repetition of Western tropes that are the same-but –not-quite in the colonies his failure to remark on Nandy’s change of emphasis in the Oedipus complex equally puzzling<sup>61</sup>.

Nandy’s work and Bhabha’s are linked most strongly by the notion that psychoanalysis serves as a means of destabilizing Western historicism and History. Bhabha clearly takes this critique in the direction of Derrida, Lacan and Foucault while Nandy pursues a critique that is perhaps more concerned the representation of Indian histories than the history of Western modernity. If Nandy is interested in arguing that modernity is not the inevitable answer to certain problems in Indian culture and society, Bhabha is more interested in demonstrating how a history of modernity cannot be written without reference to colonies and colonialism. Furthermore, if Bhabha’s psychoanalytic method does not seem to take its theoretical cue from Fanon, it does not seem to take it from Nandy either. It appears instead that of Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha, Bhabha makes the most orthodox use of psychoanalysis. At least, it appears that he is the least suspicious of psychoanalysis’ claim to represent colonial society or colonized psyches, or of its potential power as a critique of Western philosophy and values.

### ***Bhabha and Psychoanalysis in the Colony***

In one of the first essays of *The Location of Culture* entitled “The Commitment to Theory” Bhabha makes an observation and poses a question to his readers: There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged ... are we trapped in a politics of struggle where the representation of social antagonisms and historical contradictions can take no other form than a binarism of theory vs. politics? (19).

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<sup>61</sup> Indeed, it is worth remembering that the Oedipal mother is not Nandy’s invention but a long-standing theme of psychoanalysis in India as discussed in the work of Erikson and Kakar, among others.

*The Location of Culture* may be characterized as a relentless attack against critique that poses social and historical problems in terms of such binarisms, rather than disclosing the conditions that enable the binarism to obtain. In Bhabha's view the binary between politics and theory has severe consequences for struggles against racism since it allows critical theory to continue its "familiar manoeuvre ... where, having opened up the chasm of cultural difference, a mediator or metaphor of otherness must be found to contain the effects of the difference" (31). It is one of the tasks of *The Location of Culture* to bring cultural difference, rather than cultural diversity, to the scene of critique. However, as Bhabha points out, there is an important distinction to be made between critical theory as an institution and the body of concepts and philosophies that it contains. He makes no apologies, then, for making heavy use of some of the most demanding theoretical languages available, that of deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis, to carry out his task.

Bhabha uses psychoanalysis throughout *The Location of Culture*, and he makes use of less well known figures such as Victor Smirnoff, Robert Waelder and Wilfrid Bion as well as those giants of psychoanalytic theory, Freud and Lacan. Unlike Fanon and Nandy there is no clinical context to Bhabha's deployment of psychoanalysis, or to his understanding of it. Bhabha uses psychoanalysis strictly as a theory, and emphasizes in particular the Lacanian understanding of the unconscious as structured like a language. Perhaps as a consequence one of the most important differences between Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis and Fanon's or Nandy's is that he does not describe people or their experiences of colonial life with the help of clinical categories. Instead, he uses psychoanalytic concepts to represent colonial phenomena and processes such as stereotypes, mimicry and projections.

Bhabha reads the stereotype, for example, in terms of Freud's notion of the fetish as a way of managing information about the world that one has but does not want to acknowledge. In the essay the concept of fetishism appears to answer the

particular problems Bhabha has identified in the available accounts of stereotypes. He opens his account of the stereotype, for example, by noting “an important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of ‘fixity’ in the ideological construction of otherness” (66). The problem with earlier studies of the persistence of colonial stereotypes (such as the dishonest Asian, the licentious African, the lazy Arab), Bhabha contends, is that they engage with the problem of these images as positive or negative, accurate or false, complex or simple, rather than as instances of a productive, effective and ambivalent discourse.

In an attempt to read the stereotype in these other terms, Bhabha offers the fetish as a useful model:

Fetishism, as the disavowal of difference, is that repetitious scene around the problem of castration. The recognition of sexual difference ... is disavowed by the fixation on the object that masks that difference and restores an original presence ... fetishism is always a ‘play’ or vacillation between the archaic affirmation of wholeness/similarity—in Freud’s terms: ‘All men have penises’; in ours ‘All men have the same skin/race/culture’—and the anxiety associated with lack and difference—again, for Freud ‘Some do not have penises’; for us ‘Some do not have the same skin/race/culture’ (74)

By reading the stereotype in these terms Bhabha is able to account for some curious features of stereotyping generally without making his account a simple question of moral or political judgment. This fetish model of the stereotype explains, for example, why such a range of stereotypes exists, in which the native is demeaned (the dishonest Asian) but also nostalgically loved (the faithful *Ayah*). It also explains why the same stereotypical figures persist in a variety of historical and economic conditions. The stereotype is not, in any sense, an index of reality, but a regime of truth on ‘race’ that tries to fix racial identity in order to manage anxieties about racial difference. The stereotype “impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of ‘race’ as anything other than its fixity as racism” (75), or as Fanon puts it more mournfully “I was expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger ... I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged” (*Black Skin* 114).

The turn to psychoanalytic figures, such as the fetish, allows Bhabha to establish how the fixity colonial discourse aims at is constantly undercut by colonial productions. In “Of Mimicry and Man” he makes use of Lacan’s theories of identification to investigate the well-known colonial phenomenon of the colonized subject who appears as a mimic of the colonizer, or to borrow Macaulay’s infamous words “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals and in intellect” (quoted in *Location* 87). The mimic is often read, like the stereotype, as an index of some original authenticity, whether that authenticity belongs to the colonizer or the colonized. In place of such an understanding Bhabha draws our attention to Lacan’s formulation of mimicry which emphasizes that there is no thing that is covered or disguised in order to produce the mimicry, instead the subject becomes identical with his or her environment. In Lacan’s words “mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry, is camouflage ... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled” (quoted in *Location* 85).<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, this process is built around an ambivalence because even if mimicry proves to be a subtle strategy for regulating and refashioning the native subjects it can never be total, and the excess that mimicry produces puts the whole meaning of colonialism’s declared authority and mission into question.

A closer look at one of Bhabha’s examples will allow us to understand his comments about colonial mimicry more clearly. He reads Charles Grant’s ‘Observations on the state of society among the Asiatic subjects of Great Britain’ as a document that is riddled with the contradictions of mimicry. In this text, written in 1792, Grant outlines his vision of Christian mission education in India. He presents

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<sup>62</sup> Since Bhabha relies so heavily on the particular words he cites from other sources I have chosen to use his in-text citations when referring to these writers, rather than citing the original source.

the need for English language instruction through Christian institutions so that the native can be made into a suitably colonial subject, one with “a sense of personal identity as we know it” as Grant writes (quoted in *Location* 87). Nevertheless, Grant recognises that such a development in the native’s moral identity might lead the colonial subjects to demand freedom from the British and since that cannot be allowed Grant proposes another way in which Christian schools can work on the colonial scene. According to Bhabha, Grant proposes that the Christian educational program should make use of local caste practices in order to prevent the colonial subjects from forming political alliances that might destabilize colonialism itself. In this way, as Bhabha notes, Grant produces a bitter knowledge of “Christianity as a form of social control which conflicts with the enunciatory assumptions that authorize his discourse” (87). In other words, through the demand for a colonial mimic the moral authority of Christianity is itself called into question by its readiness to become party to an oppressive moral regime.<sup>63</sup>

Mimicry and stereotypes are just two examples of psychoanalytic concepts Bhabha uses that work to complicate our understanding of colonial history. “Sly Civility” investigates colonial writing in terms of mechanisms of projection and paranoia; “Signs Taken for Wonders” brings some of the ideas of colonial fetishism and mimicry to bear on the icon of the English book as *the* symbol of colonial order; and “Articulating the Archaic” elaborates on the psychoanalytic notions of imitation and identification to theorize how cultural identity is transformed in the presence of cultural difference. Throughout the essays in the first half of the book Bhabha’s use of psychoanalysis demonstrates and emphasizes that colonial discourse is not a question of truth and lies, reality and fantasy but a curious combination and crossing of both modes of understanding that make nonsense of the distinction between

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<sup>63</sup> It is interesting to compare this with a non-psychoanalytic reading of the way in which liberal discourse destabilizes its own terms. See, for example, Mehta 59-86.



those modes. Psychoanalysis, particularly Freud's theory of disavowal and Lacan's theories of identification, prove to be the concepts that can best articulate these elements together.

In the last five essays of *The Location of Culture* Bhabha puts psychoanalysis to a slightly different use as he attempts to build and enact an argument about how the 'time' of the colonial and the migrant in modernity should be represented. Bhabha's discussion of time, as already mentioned, has something in common with Nandy's discussion but it is more carefully and deliberately elaborated than Nandy's passing observation that the non-modern's understanding of time is like the psychoanalytic sense of time. Instead of being content to point to other ways of understanding time, to be content with relativizing the notion of time, Bhabha wants to trigger "another *time* of writing that will be able to inscribe the ambivalent and chiasmatic intersections of time and place that constitute the problematic 'modern' experience of the Western nation" (141). Throughout the essays that follow he displays several different ways of understanding this new time, and the implications it has for representing both colonial history and the postcolonial present.

Bhabha makes it clear from the start of his discussion about time that he is not interested in the problematic of nationalism as such, but it is "the historical certainty and settled nature of that term against which I am attempting to write of the Western nation" (140). In particular, Bhabha is interested in examining how the Western nation is represented as a progressive temporal process, and how the migration of people out of the colonies and their presence in the Western nation is posed as a 'problem' within that temporal process. The "many as one" (142) or the notion of cohesive, social collectivities is central to the progressivist representation of the nation's time, and as we have already seen, Bhabha questions the demand for "gender, class, or race as social totalities that are expressive of unitary collective experiences" (142). In other words, probing the ways in which cultural difference

interrupts this temporal process is another way of insisting on the need for a more complex understanding of the subject's constitution and political agency.

Bhabha's psychoanalytic understanding of time has some contentious implications for his understanding of agency in the colony and our representation of acts of rebellion, insurgence and resistance, since he uses it to destabilize our notions of rational, intentional actions happening in linear time. Reading a moment in the 1857 rebellion, in which a *chapati* is mysteriously passed from one village to another without any attached message or explanation, Bhabha asks "what kind of agency is constituted in the circulation of the chapati?" (200). How we choose to understand the meaning of the *chapati* (indeed, whether we treat it as an actual happening or simply a myth) is not important, writes Bhabha. Instead, we must try to understand the time and the speed in which the *chapati* spreads from village to village, as well as how the story of the *chapati* spreads among the English and is recirculated in their accounts of the panic and fear that formed part of the 1857 rebellion. One way in which Bhabha unpacks this idea is through the psychoanalyst Wilfrid Bion's discussion of panic in times of war. Bion proposes that in a group psychosis fear and panic become interchangeable so that any given subject in the group has the feeling "that he can never catch up with a course of events to which he is always, at any given moment, already committed" (quoted in *Location* 206). Moreover, according to Bion, the event that provokes anger and fear "always falls *outside* the functions of the group" (quoted in *Location* 206).

The 'outside' of the group-in-panic is not to be understood in terms of a distinct, separate space outside, but as "constitutive of meaning and agency" (205). Bhabha proposes, for example, that this 'outside' can be understood as the experience of the undecidability of the chapati's meaning. In the historian's representation of the circulation of the chapati, the impossibility of fixing the meaning of the *chapati* splits up and doubles the subject. The panic of the natives

(who are themselves passing on the *chapati* without clearly fixing its meaning) is one part of the event, and the fantastical fears of the colonizer's receiving reports of this 'meaningless' event is another. The panic itself breaks down the possibility of a clear distinction between and inside and outside of discourse; the experience of the *chapati* as something between a sign and symbol is a "contingent, borderline experience ... in-between colonizer and colonized. This is a space of cultural and interpretative undecidability produced in the 'present' of the colonial moment" (206).

All this, eventually, brings us back to the relationship between a psychoanalytic understanding of time and history itself. Still writing about the borderline experience, Bhabha notes:

Lacan calls this kind of inside/out/outside/in space a moment of *extimité*: a traumatic moment of the 'not-there' (Morrison) or the indeterminate or the unknowable around which the symbolic discourses of human history come to be constituted. In that sense, then, the extimate moment would be the 'repetition' of rumour in the seriality of the historical event (1857), the 'speed' of panic at the site of rebel politics, or indeed, the temporality of psychoanalysis in the writing of history (207).

By inserting psychoanalytic time into the representation and writing of history Bhabha is able to disclose such extimate moments not only in one single historical episode as the circulation of the *chapati*, but in the accounts we have developed of modernity itself. Through readings of, for example, Foucault on the birth of modernity, and Jameson on the 'present' of late capitalism Bhabha demonstrates why a more complex understanding of modernity is necessary for contemporary struggles against racism.

Though Bhabha acknowledges Foucault as one of the theorists who has shaped his interest in the question of modernity he locates a significant problem in Foucault's silence about colonialism and modernity. Foucault does, in Bhabha's estimation, manage to write histories without linear causality or whole, all-powerful subjects, but since he cannot admit "the colonial moment as an enunciative present in the historical and epistemological condition of Western modernity, Foucault can

say little about the transferential relation between the West and its colonial history” (196). So while Foucault is able to produce an account of how Man comes to be a universal, or dehistoricized, Man he does so at the expense of explaining how those ‘others’ “women, natives, the colonized, the indentured and enslaved—who at the same time but in other spaces were becoming the peoples without a history” (197) make the emergence of Man possible.

Foucault relegates the question of colonialism to another space rather than accounting for it in the time of modernity. For Bhabha, this absence of the colonial time from Foucault’s account of modernity is important because it has an echo in the way migrants and refugees are figured as a problem in modern, civil society. In “How Newness Enters the World” Bhabha discloses how an inability to accommodate the time of the postcolonial into the account of the present leads to the impossibility, once again, of accepting migrants and other racialized subjects as historically representable subjects or as political agents.

Reading Frederic Jameson’s account of the challenges of political activism in the postmodern world, Bhabha draws attention to Jameson’s insistence on the category of class as Jameson understands it. Bhabha objects to Jameson’s argument that political activism based on race should be “mediated by the primary analytic category of class [so that] these communal identities are transformed into agencies ‘capable of interpellating themselves and dictating the terms of their own specular images’” (222). For Bhabha, this insistence that migrants and other racialized groups should enter into political agency through the appropriate space of a cohesive class constitution is a demand for interpellation that blocks the disruption in modernity’s time other forms of agency suggest (like, for example, the seemingly intentionless circulation of the *chapati* as resistance). Unlike Jameson, Bhabha does not assume that the social group in question must exhibit the characteristics of a class, or indeed

“have the ‘organicist’ history and conceptuality of the discourse of ‘class?’” (229) to be effective.

The effectivity of this new kind of political group, based on an experience of migration, racism or something else, is put into play partly through a different understanding of time. This is where a psychoanalytic understanding of time becomes important to Bhabha’s project again because it:

invests the utterance of the ‘present’—its displaced times, its affective intensities—with cultural and political value. Placed in the scenario of the unconscious, the ‘present’ is neither the mimetic sign of historical contemporaneity (the immediacy of experience), nor is it the visible terminus of the historical past (the teleology of tradition) (215)

In other words, psychoanalysis is able to provide a way of understanding the present that has not decided in advance what the outcome will be (teleology) or try to contain it to the single, real moment in which things occur. The cultural and political value of this kind of present is partly that it continuously allows the future to remain undecided. One can understand this best through the psychoanalytic concept of *nachträglichkeit*, a term that describes the process whereby the subject makes sense of things they could not grasp at the moment they were experienced, but made sense of retroactively. As a result of this the past is never fixed. It is placed in a continuous, if irregular, loop with the present, and hence always allows for the creation of different futures or outcomes. It is not simply the case, then, that Jameson’s demand for class forces migrants or postcolonial subjects to enter into the time of modernity on other terms; it is also the case that those subjects have a (psychoanalytic) time that has already disrupted the time of modernity.

The concluding essay in *The Location of Culture*, “Race, ‘time’ and the revision of modernity” clarifies the significance of Bhabha’s problematization of the postcolonial and the postmodern one last time. Through his investigation of fetish-stereotypes, panic-agency and the time of the colonial and the migrant in modernity Bhabha makes clear that we see “racism, not simply as a hangover from archaic

conceptions of aristocracy, but as part of the historical tradition of civic and liberal humanism that create ideological matrices or national aspiration, together with their concepts of ‘a people’ and its imagined community” (250).<sup>64</sup> In such a postmodern ‘present’ Bhabha wants to emphasize that the aim of postcolonial critique is no longer to “set up new symbols of identity, new ‘positive images’ that fuel an unreflective ‘identity politics’” (247) but to push the critique of modernity already available in the history of colonialism still further. This is why his use of psychoanalysis does not attempt to provide a postmodern, ‘raced’ or relativized psychoanalysis but a use of psychoanalytic language to disclose and disrupt the historical and contemporaneous accounts of modernity. To put it more poignantly, in words Bhabha borrows from a character in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, he asks us ““What is to be done in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem”” (255). The answer is not to accept the location of the postcolonial as a problem, but as “an enactment of the limits of the ‘idea’ of progress, the marginal displacement of the ethics of modernity” (255).

### ***Problems with Bhabha’s Psychoanalytic Readings***

In *The Location of Culture* psychoanalytic theory is called upon to perform several critical functions. Psychoanalytic texts provide the evidence of Bhabha’s argument in various ways, psychoanalytic concepts provide a language for describing the cultural phenomena and processes at work in the colony and psychoanalytic conceptualizations of time are used for deconstructing and reconstructing Western histories of modernity. In this section I want to examine whether and to what extent

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<sup>64</sup> It is worth observing that Bhabha’s articulation of the problem of racism in the contemporary world (the world of 1991 when Bhabha’s essay was first published) as inextricably bound up with modernity’s failure to absorb and acknowledge its colonial history, has now been echoed by many other scholars writing about race and racism though it is not an established axiom of postcolonial studies.

psychoanalysis fulfils all the critical functions Bhabha assigns to it, and what Bhabha neglects in his enthusiasm to put psychoanalysis to work for postcolonial studies.

A brief look at how Bhabha cites psychoanalysis sets the scene for a discussion of problems in Bhabha's methodology. Benita Parry has observed that Bhabha's text is heavy with "innumerable fleeting allusions to the comments of critics, writers and thinkers" ("Signs" 7). While this aspect of his writing is a mark of Bhabha's deconstructive style, such allusions and references are sometimes used to supply the evidence of Bhabha's argument. For example, in "Sly Civility" Bhabha writes "The other's aggressivity from without, that justifies the subject of authority, makes that very subject a frontier station of joint occupation, as the psychoanalyst Robert Waelder has written" (100). Robert Waelder was a prominent figure in American psychoanalytic circles, having begun his career with weekly meetings at Freud's home and eventually taking a period of analysis under Anna Freud. Nevertheless, most students and scholars working in postcolonial theory do not know Waelder's work, and the idea Bhabha cites is from an article on paranoia published in 1951. Since most readers of postcolonial are not likely to be familiar with Waelder's work it is not entirely clear what the citation is meant to add to our understanding of the essay's main theme: namely, discourses of civility as they exist in the conflicted culture of colonialism. Bhabha's use of Waelder's work is incidental, and the sentence or paragraph construction suggests that the words "a frontier station of occupation" simply provide us with a compelling image that illustrates Bhabha's point.

Psychoanalytic texts, then, are a powerful reference point for Bhabha, though they do not necessarily translate as such for his postcolonial theory readers. This is partly because his readers may not share his convictions about the uses of theory generally, and psychoanalytic theory specifically. Nevertheless, it is also true that Bhabha's citations are framed in such a way that it is actually difficult to determine

what it is he means to tell us through the citation. Waelder's words serve, more or less, as an illustration. Let us look at two more examples. In his discussion of colonial stereotypes Bhabha writes "For if 'skin' in racist discourse is the visibility of darkness, and a prime signifier of the body and its social and cultural correlates, then we are bound to remember what Karl Abrahams says in his seminal work on the scopic drive" (82). In this citation the connection between the discourse on dark and white skin in the colony and Abrahams' theorization of the scopic drive is by no means inevitable. Bhabha provides the assertion that "we are bound to remember" Abrahams work when we theorize why the visual symbolics of skin mattered in the colony.

The last example we will look at here comes from the essay "Signs Taken for Wonders".<sup>65</sup> Discussing the hybridity that accrues to the colonizer's artefacts in the colony Bhabha writes, "this partializing process of hybridity is best described as a metonymy of presence. It shares Sigmund Freud's valuable insight into the strategy of disavowal as the persistence of the narcissistic demand in the acknowledgement of difference" (115). The main issue under discussion in this essay is the emblematic 'English book', and the way in which the Indian discovery and reception of the English book constructs and displaces colonial authority. We are well justified in asking, then, what does it mean to say that this process 'shares' an insight with Freud's writing about disavowal? To share is a peculiar choice of verb, since it prevents us from deciding conclusively whether Freud's point is the original

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<sup>65</sup> These are not isolated examples of the way Bhabha makes use of psychoanalytic texts. In "Articulating the Archaic" as part of his discussion of the terrible silences that recur in novels set in the colony, Bhabha concludes with some words from Abrahams again. He writes, "we are put in mind of a child," the psychoanalyst Karl Abrahams writes, 'who catches a fly and having pulled off a leg, lets it go again.' The existence of the disabled native is required for the next lie and the next and the next and the next—"The Horror! The Horror!" Marlow, you will remember, had to lie as he moved from the heart of darkness to the Belgian boudoir." (138). Like the example of Waelder considered above the citation of Abrahams essentially adds nothing, but the accumulative impression is that psychoanalytic literature provides Bhabha with all the proofs, analogous or otherwise, that he needs to explain the processes of colonial culture.



description of a scene that occurred earlier in English colonies, or whether there is simply a clever, though essentially insignificant, analogy between the phenomena Freud describes and the phenomena Bhabha describes. Indeed, these “innumerable fleeting allusions” to psychoanalysis foreshadow a larger problem in Bhabha’s deployment of psychoanalysis, namely, determining the meaning of the psychoanalytic analogy that he consistently draws to our attention. We shall have reason to return to this issue later in this chapter.

Nevertheless, if Bhabha sometimes uses psychoanalysis allusively he also gives it two explicit critical tasks. The first of these is to explain the cultural processes that produce well-known colonial phenomena such as stereotyping, mimicry and hybridity. Let us examine more closely, then, how he uses the particular concept of fetishism. In this study I have a limited scope and so I restrict my discussion to one example. However, fetishism is the obvious example, not only because it best illustrates some problems with Bhabha’s psychoanalytic perspective, but also because of its connection with the racializing discourses of anthropology, ethnology and comparative religious studies. The idea of fetishism, as we shall see, is an exemplary symbol of Western discourses on race and cultural authority.

What is most striking about Bhabha’s use of the fetish is that he appears to use it as a purely psychoanalytic term. This is a curious narrowing of the concept for a scholar so committed to the articulation of multiple historical and social resonances in other contexts.<sup>66</sup> As both Robert Young and Anne McClintock remind us fetish is actually a term with a long and varied history.<sup>67</sup> As early as 1760 the French philosopher Charles de Brosses used the term fetishism to describe primitive religions.

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Young defends this narrowing by suggesting that the fact that Bhabha uses such a racialized concept as the fetish to talk about colonial discourse brings the idea full circle. That is, his use of the racialized concept for work committed to the deconstruction of racist thought justifies his use of the tool (*White Mythologies* 144).

<sup>67</sup> McClintock in particular provides an instructive account of the history of the fetish in its pre- and post-psychoanalytic forms (181-189). McClintock’s work derives in large part from the work of William Pietz, which explores figurations of the fetish that are not phallus-oriented.

'Primitive religions' refers, in this context, to those who worshipped inanimate objects believing them to be imbued with spirits or magical properties. About one hundred years later Karl Marx took up the term "commodity fetish" to refer to the magical qualities that appear to inhere in commodities in industrial economies. Freud was one of the last significant theorists to take up the term in 1905 to define a sexual condition in which an unlikely object is invested with erotic qualities and must be present for sexual relations to take place. McClintock reminds us that all of these conceptualizations are predicated on the idea of the 'primitive' worshipping and celebrating an inappropriate object thereby "displacing what the modern imagination could not incorporate onto the invented domain of the primitive" (182).

Even in a strictly psychoanalytic form the fetish is a potentially troubling concept. Although Bhabha takes Freud at his word about how the fetish works, and uses it to explain colonial stereotypes, he does not comment on the terms in which Freud sets up this theory. In one of his earliest accounts of fetishism Freud writes that the fetish itself, an object "very inappropriate for sexual purpose," is "with some justice likened to the fetishes in which savages believe their gods are embodied" (66). Such comparisons with the 'savage' or the 'primitive' to illustrate aberrant and, an equally damning shortcoming in the age of evolutionary theory, archaic behaviours are not uncommon in Freud's texts. The term fetish, in both its non-psychoanalytic and psychoanalytic forms, bears traces of a racializing discourse that Bhabha does not remark on. He puts fetishism back into the colony, but he does not question the logic of fetishism itself.

Problems with the psychoanalytic fetish also extend to questions of gender and sexuality, and particularly to questions of female agency. The fetish is an object that stands in for the mother's absent penis. Freud proposes the male child believes that, like him, all men and women have penises. The child assumes that everyone looks the way he does and when he finds that this is not the case Freud argues that

he becomes deeply anxious about the possibility that his own penis could be subject to removal. Freud observes “probably no male human being is spared the fright of castration at the sight of female genitalia” (354). This being the case, he proposes that the fetish “saves the fetishist from becoming a homosexual, by endowing women with the characteristic which makes them tolerable as sexual objects” (354). In other words, if the little boy did not develop a fetish, he might become a homosexual. In a Freudian context, then, fetishism does not make room for the possibility of a female fetishist, or indeed for the possibility that homosexuality is a viable resolution of problems of sexual identification. To theorize otherwise would place the idea of the castration complex and phallic symbolism in general in doubt. Bhabha’s use of Lacanian psychoanalysis does not solve these problems since, Lacan’s model appears to reinscribe some of the most problematic aspects of the classical theory.

While Bhabha expressed discomfort with the gendered fetish model in the earliest version of “The Other Question” he did not attempt to displace or deconstruct it. As McClintock writes, “Bhabha . . . footnotes his unease that ‘the body in this text is male’” (183) but nevertheless “defers ‘the question of women’s relation to castration and access to the symbolic; until he has worked out ‘its implications for colonial discourse’” (415). It is interesting to note that Bhabha’s footnote has disappeared from the version of the essay that appears in *The Location of Culture* though his use of the fetish model still remains to be modified in terms of gender. McClintock claims “Bhabha does not concern himself with the possibility that returning the footnoted female to the body of the text might radically throw into question the Lacanian theory of phallic fetishism and the scene of castration itself” (183). The fetish as it is theorized in psychoanalysis suits Bhabha’s purpose sufficiently to defer the need for a closer investigation of its gendered and racialized terms. Like Nandy, Bhabha does not consider how women of colour might identify

in relation to the colonizer differently than men, or how the mechanism of (mis)identification he describes might actually be unavailable to women.

In fact, the problem of the fetish is one feminist scholars continue to struggle with, since there has been no consensus on the issue of whether it is even desirable to recuperate the psychoanalytic theory of fetishism. From his initial discussion of fetishism in 1905 to his later, extended discussion in 1927 Freud insists it is an exclusively masculine problem. Indeed, it is the exemplary problem of masculinity since it “rests upon, but also serves to anchor, some of the most controversial axioms of psychoanalysis: female castration, male castration anxiety, the Oedipus complex and phallogentrism, as well as oculoentrism, the primacy of the visual” (Schor 114). Scholars such as Sarah Kofman, Emily Apter and Naomi Schor have made significant attempts to re-read Freud and the psychoanalytic legacy of fetishism, but Schor suggests that a more nuanced historical articulation of psychoanalytic fetishism with its Marxist counterpart may provide the most effective way of reading our way out of the gender problems with fetish theory.<sup>68</sup>

McClintock is one such scholar who attempts to solve the gender and race problems embedded in the fetish by placing it back into a historical context, thereby creating a version of the fetish that can be useful specifically for writing postcolonial studies. Drawing on the work of William Pietz, she prompts her readers to remember that the insistent phallic imagery and organization of the psychoanalytic fetish is not the only possible way of making sense of fetishes. The idea of fetishism existed and continued for four centuries before its organizing principle was narrowed down to

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<sup>68</sup> Schor suggests that Kofman’s re-reading of Freud only works by emptying psychoanalytic fetishism of its specific explanatory power. Since Kofman uses deconstructive theory to re-read Freud, her work comes closest to Bhabha’s in celebrating and focusing on the undecidability of the fetish. Indeed, as Schor notes “deconstruction ... can be said to be the supreme contemporary philosophical form of fetishism, in that it promotes the fetishist’s undecidability and mad logic to the status of a powerful strategy for undoing Western metaphysics” (114). Bhabha’s interest in fetishism, like Kofman’s, may simply be an interest in undecidability generally. He makes very little use of psychoanalytic concepts that do not relate to the problem of undecidable knowledge.

the phallus. The term was originally used by the Portuguese to condemn the magical practices of its non-Catholic population and as a term to control female sexuality.<sup>69</sup> When the Portuguese began trading with people on the West coast of Africa the term developed a colonial meaning in reference to the various ‘mysterious’ objects valued by West Africans. Pietz suggests that in this Portuguese-West African encounter two different value systems met and the question of trading and interacting on unequal terms became a mutual dilemma. How do you trade or behave with people who value different things than you do, or indeed are indifferent to the things you value most? Fetishes were the objects onto which various unresolvable questions of value could be projected, and thereby managed. Fetishes were meaningless objects to the European that could be traded to the ‘primitives’ as objects of value. McClintock, discussing Pietz’s work, notes that the idea of a highly-valued but valueless fetish became a central trope of Enlightenment thought, as the “recurring paradigm for what the Enlightenment was not” (187).

Such an account of the fetish has some important advantages for the postcolonial scholar. Most obviously, it restores questions of race, class and cultural value to the theory of fetishism. As such the fetish becomes an object with multiple points of origin or emergence. That is, the emergence of a fetish cannot be reduced to one type of theoretical explanation. As McClintock suggests “fetishes can be seen as the displacement onto an object (or person) of contradictions that the individual cannot resolve at a personal level. These contradictions may originate as social contradictions but are lived with profound intensity in the imagination and the flesh” (184). The contradiction in question, as Bhabha’s work suggests, can be a question of race as easily as it can be a question of sexuality or gender. Since her explanation is

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<sup>69</sup> McClintock points out that in the beginning the fetish was “associated with an *excess* of illicit female agency over natural and bodily authority, unlike the Freudian inscription of fetishism as associated with female *lack*” (186). Fetishism, then, is not self-evidently organized around male authority and the disavowal of female sexuality on its own terms.

not restricted to a binary (penis/no penis, dark skin/white skin), McClintock is able to offer an explanation of various objects and symbols that emerged during the age of Imperialism including “the fetishisms, for example, of national culture: the flags, wagons, maps and costumes and mummeries of national spectacle” (192). Most importantly, given Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha’s difficulties, McClintock is able to account for some of the ways European women acted as fetishists of race and imperialism, and how women of colour were able to make use of such fetishes in their fight against racism and colonialism.

Finally, Bhabha gives psychoanalysis the task of solving certain problems in Western historiography. Like Nandy, Bhabha makes use of psychoanalytic conceptualizations of time in order to present what are, in his view, more productive accounts of events in colonial history than conventional historiographical methods are able to provide. One example of this, as we saw in the previous section, is Bhabha’s use of the notion of deferred action or *nachträglichkeit*. If Western history is written on such foundational concepts as the linear progression of time, the past as a discrete object from the present or the future and the rational, intentional actions of subjects in time then Bhabha proposes that psychoanalysis can expose the lies of western history.

However, the western history that Bhabha opposes with his version of psychoanalysis is somewhat selective. Not only are there few references to contemporary historians, there are relatively few references to philosophers of history.<sup>70</sup> The history that Bhabha comments on and rewrites in his essays comes partly from historical accounts, such as E. Long’s 1774 *History of Jamaica*, *The Missionary Register* from 1818 or Kaye and Malleon’s 1888 *History of the Indian Mutiny*. These accounts of the colony written by colonizers certainly invite scrutiny and

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<sup>70</sup> The notable exceptions to this include Bhabha’s references to historians of India such as Ranajit Guha and C.A. Bayly, and philosophers of history such as Michel Foucault and Michel de Certeau.

commentary, not only in terms of how they represent the colonized but in terms of the theory of history that underpins them. Nevertheless, I would argue that historians writing about the colony today have already addressed many of the same issues Bhabha writes about and philosophers of history have certainly debated some of the issues Bhabha discusses. To attack Western histories as they are represented in such sources, rather than in the way histories of colonialism are written today is misleading and tends to undermine the value of psychoanalysis as a viable solution to the problems Bhabha identifies.

One important example that Nandy and Bhabha both critique is the notion of time as Western history understands and represents it. Yet Western historiography has long debated the question of the past as something that is neither absolutely of the past nor absolutely of the present.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, this is a fundamental question any historian needs to address to orient their work appropriately in terms of ethics, method and philosophy of history. Foucault's whole notion of genealogy is predicated on the precisely the notion that historians should only write histories of the present since to write histories of the past (based on either the notion of progress or regress) would be to assume we have progressed to a present that is either desirable, inevitable or both. To write history, in the Foucauldian sense, is to defamiliarize the present we live in—a notion surprisingly close to Nandy's reasons for using psychoanalytic time. Still earlier examples of innovations in representing the time of history would include the work of Fernand Braudel, whose classic study *The Mediterranean World and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* published in France in 1949 represented three kinds of historical time in the same work, and the work of the *Annales* School generally whose work was published as early as 1929.

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<sup>71</sup> For some useful general discussions of the history of historiography and the historian's conceptualization of time see, for example, Berkhofer 106-137 and Hamilton 5-50.

The question of history's objectivity and status as a rational science has also been discussed by historians since at least 1973 when Hayden White, in his now classic study of the great nineteenth-century historians, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century* problematized the supposed objectivity of western history, as written by historians such as de Toqueville, Burkhardt and Croce. History, White argues, is a form that the canonical nineteenth-century historians wrote in ironical, comical, satirical or tragic modes and the emplotments that are implied in each of these modes have rhetorical and ideological consequences for the histories they represent.

Bhabha does reference one of the most important philosophers of history in postcolonial studies: Michel Foucault. Indeed, he acknowledges himself to be very much influenced by Foucault's account of modernity and the history of universal Man. One reason he turns to psychoanalysis however is because of Foucault's failure to account for and include the colonial scene in his genealogies of the modern Western subject. Once again, however, though Bhabha uses psychoanalysis to argue that colonialism is an inextricable aspect of Western modernity, scholars such as Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper have explored the same problem through historical studies (Stoler and Cooper 1-58). Stoler finds the same problematic disconnection between modernity and the colony in Foucault's work but her 1995 account of child-rearing practices in the Dutch East Indies, *Race and the Education of Desire*, establishes, through empirical historical research, that the colonial project was at the same time part of the discourse on bourgeois civility.<sup>72</sup> Stoler's work was published a year later than *The Location of Culture* and drew on lectures by Foucault that were, at that time, only available in French.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the point is that while Bhabha's analyses of

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<sup>72</sup> For discussion of the historiographical issues this raises see in particular Stoler 95-136.

<sup>73</sup> The theoretical framework of *Race and the Education of Desire* draws on Foucault's College de France 1977 lectures.



problems in Western history are convincing psychoanalysis does not provide the crucial methodology for unpacking these issues.

To assert that psychoanalysis is not crucial to Bhabha's critique of Western history is not to suggest that there can be no critical or productive relationship between psychoanalysis and history.<sup>74</sup> It is simply to draw attention to the fact that psychoanalysis does not necessarily provide the corrective framework to western history that Bhabha suggests it could be because the history he presents to us is a somewhat skewed one. Moreover, as we have seen in this section, given Bhabha's generally uncritical use of psychoanalysis, postcolonial studies needs to reflect on the history of psychoanalysis as a western knowledge system before we can begin to write colonial history in the image of psychoanalysis.

### ***Questions From Bhabha***

Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis presents subsequent postcolonial theory and studies with some problems, and poses some questions for further discussion. By passing over the problems other scholars of race and colonialism have with psychoanalytic theory and effacing some of the dissenting questions voiced by Fanon and Nandy, Bhabha is able to leave psychoanalytic theory itself largely intact. In fact, in Bhabha's text "the colonial situation often seems to provide new materials to illustrate and 'authorize' psychoanalytic theory" (Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial* 146). In other words, he does not simply leave the theory intact; he appears to find further evidence of its 'truthfulness' in its ability to represent colonial discourse. Young and Moore-Gilbert both note that in several places the psychoanalytic interpretation Bhabha offers does not appear to be specific to colonialism at all. Instead,

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<sup>74</sup> There is, in fact, a thirty-year-old relationship between history and psychoanalysis. For some instructive commentaries on the possibilities of the encounter between these disciplines see, for example, de Certeau 3-34, La Capra 222-251, Derrida 227-266.

colonialism simply appears to be another set of case-studies that illustrate the structures and concepts of psychoanalysis.

Young points out that Bhabha seems unclear “whether the structures of colonial discourse are ‘analogous’ to those articulated by Freud or whether, as is sometimes implied, they actually involved the psychic categories as described by Freud” (*White Mythologies* 154). It seems urgent, if postcolonial studies is to make use of psychoanalysis, to attend to this question more carefully. In other words, we need to pose the question Bhabha never poses: why a Western theory of selfhood would provide a language for describing and interpreting colonialism? The modifications and critiques that Fanon and Nandy offer seem to suggest that there is no analogy, but both seem to accept that psychoanalysis accurately describes European psyches. Nevertheless, feminist critiques of psychoanalysis would seem to suggest that Western women can only be described in these terms after some careful theoretical re-reading and theorizing. In the case of fetishism, as we have seen, feminist psychoanalysis has yet to work out how to translate the concept into the experiences of women. The question of psychoanalysis’ descriptive accuracy is therefore also a question for postcolonial studies. What precisely is the nature of the convergences between psychoanalysis and colonial discourse? In the light of an answer to this question, what relationship can there be between psychoanalysis and postcolonial studies?

Young and Moore-Gilbert both suggest that one of the most significant problems with Bhabha’s psychoanalytic models lies in the fact that he does not attend to the material, cultural and historical contexts of psychoanalysis and I have discussed some examples of these omissions in Bhabha’s work. However, postcolonial studies have yet to develop in any detail what attending to the contexts of psychoanalysis this might mean. The solution here, as with suggestions for developing his textual approach, is to urge Bhabha generally to be more specific and

more attentive to the details of differential colonial contexts. Does this mean naming the caste, gender, sexual or racial positions of colonial subjects? We have already seen from the example of Nandy's work that this does not solve the problem of psychoanalysis in the colony. Does it, then, mean working through how cultural or racial difference would disrupt given psychoanalytic structures or does it mean locating Bhabha's use of the theory more precisely? Should we envision a version of psychoanalytic theory transformed by postcolonial critique or simply some evidence that Bhabha has considered the contexts of psychoanalytic thought?

It is certainly important to situate psychoanalysis in its historical and cultural contexts. I agree that Bhabha's use of psychoanalysis is largely uncritical leaving his readers with the impression that psychoanalysis is a useful but largely neutral and ahistorical theory. Much of the compelling work being done by psychoanalytically-influenced scholars like McClintock has demonstrated what careful attention to the history of psychoanalytic thought can produce. In McClintock's case her work has produced a serious critique of the sexism written into psychoanalysis together with a new model of psychoanalysis sensitive to the lives and experiences of women, especially those who lived and worked through the practices of colonialism. Nevertheless, I suggest that this cannot by itself answer the question of psychoanalysis' suitability for colonial discourse analysis and postcolonial theory. Such an approach continues to assume that the Eurocentric, racist, sexist and homophobia tones of psychoanalysis can be removed from the theory without radically altering the theory's explanations. The proposed solutions suggest that attention to contexts and details will produce a modified tool more appropriate to the study of colonialism, non-Western peoples and non-Western nations. But what if consideration and investigation of the racist, sexist and homophobia currents in psychoanalysis disrupts the entire theoretical framework? If these currents are not incidental aspects of psychoanalysis but *fundamental* to its logic and practices then the

use of psychoanalytic theory as a tool in postcolonial theory must be entirely reconsidered. Perhaps we should consider the possibility that far from facilitating colonial analysis psychoanalysis should become an object of postcolonial critique itself.

Young suggests that the answer might lie in the work of Deleuze and Guattari since, according to him, they argue “that psychoanalysis works in non-European cultures, not because of the universalism of the categories of the mind but precisely because of colonial history, which has had the effect of imposing Western structures” (*White Mythologies* 144). It would seem important, then, to take a closer look at the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to see whether we can sketch out some answers to this problem and the problem of psychoanalytic methods in colonial critique.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: ANTI-DOTE — DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S CRITIQUE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are best remembered for *Anti-Oedipus*, their extraordinary critique of psychoanalysis and capitalism. Using their own blend of post-structural theory and original philosophical concepts, Deleuze and Guattari provided an account of how the structure of psychoanalytic thought was connected with the material conditions of imperialism and capitalism as early as 1972.<sup>75</sup> French post-structural theory has proven to be very important to postcolonial scholars, but despite this Deleuze and Guattari's work has not, until recently, been used to address theoretical issues in postcolonial studies.

The absence of Deleuze and Guattari from postcolonial theory may simply reflect a general difficulty with the work of Deleuze and Guattari, often considered stylistically impenetrable and so intensely transdisciplinary as to be difficult for any individual reader to understand thoroughly.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, though their work makes rare references to Fanon and precedes the work of Nandy and Bhabha, Deleuze and Guattari are of particular interest to this thesis because they work out a detailed critique of psychoanalysis' theory of desire, identification and subjectivity, which they are able to connect to cultures of colonialism. In the remainder of this section, then, I will review some of the ways in which Deleuze and Guattari have already been called upon to solve problems in postcolonial theory and explore how we can make use of those projects to further this thesis.

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<sup>75</sup> *Anti-Oedipus* was originally published in 1972, but it was first made available in English translation in 1983.

<sup>76</sup> Here, I use the word 'transdisciplinary' rather than the more familiar interdisciplinary in order to reflect Guattari's concern that a scholar may produce interdisciplinary work that neither challenges their home disciplinary methodologies nor the other disciplines in which he or she visits. In other words, while interdisciplinarity as it is practised today often means using the insights of another discipline it seldom means using the methods of that discipline to destabilize the methods of one's original discipline. Instead of interdisciplinarity then, Guattari aims at transdisciplinarity, which is an attempt to combine and cross disciplines in order to produce "a genuine metamethodology that would upset existing power/knowledge formations" (Genosko 25).

The most familiar applications of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas in postcolonial studies are with their notion of minor literatures.<sup>77</sup> Although the notion of minor literature was not developed in relation to postcolonial literatures specifically, it is highly relevant for discussion of some of the most important issues in postcolonial studies, such as the effectiveness of identity politics, questions of authenticity and minority writers' relationships to canonical traditions. Minor literatures focus on minor people, a group Deleuze and Guattari define as those who are not necessarily in the numerical minority, but constitute a minority in relation to the majority standards such as being male, white, adult and heterosexual. The minor people are those who, as one critic puts it, are "seeds or crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements with the mean or the majority" (Smith xliii). A minor literature, such as postcolonial literature, can therefore serve as a medium for building these 'minor' identities, but it can also serve as a means for accelerating the collapse of majority standards.

Deleuze was particularly interested in the texts that explore the opening between the minor people, themselves in the process of becoming, and the individual writer struggling with a sense of being a unique instance of those not-yet constituted people. An obvious example of this could be a writer from an ex-colony who writes from inside the postcolonial metropole. The writer has to give expression to his or her own voice in the space between their experience of what it means to be a colonial subject and the metropolitan barrage of media that has its own story to tell about what colonialism means to it as a colonizing nation. It should be clear why the concept of minor literature might illuminate literary analyses of postcolonial writing. Nevertheless, as a whole, those scholars who have been interested in minor literature

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<sup>77</sup> See in particular JanMohamed and Lloyd. For other examples of postcolonial applications of the theory of minority literature see also Ponzanesi 599-611 and Sawhney 130-146.

have had less to say about the critique of psychoanalysis that informs such literature than about the ways in the theory could work in postcolonial contexts.<sup>78</sup>

Robert Young was one of the first scholars to suggest that *Anti-Oedipus* might provide some theoretical tools for breaking through the discursive paradigms that have dominated the field of postcolonial studies since the publication of *Orientalism*. In *Colonial Desire* Young discusses how Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of desiring-machines and territorialization might focus postcolonial scholars' attention back on capitalism and the material violence of acquiring colonial territories, without forcing them to lose a complex theory of desire. Despite the deeply influential psychoanalytic theory of unconscious desire, Deleuze and Guattari insist that it is not possible to think desire as something individual, and hence separate from the social field. Young suggests this theorization of desire might well be adapted for writing about racial and colonial desire. Racism, he suggests, is a form of desire that is produced not by individuals, but by and through groups; that is, it is a social product as well as a flow of desire that does not simply reduce down to an individual's desires.

Deleuze and Guattari, as Young discusses later, take their conceptualization of desire as social much further—as far as they can—to the point where it collapses psychoanalysis. Although Young clearly understands and sympathizes with the *Anti-Oedipus* critique of psychoanalysis, he does not seem to see the critique itself as significant for postcolonial studies but a question for the politics of psychoanalysis, and for the West's history of itself. However, from the perspective of the tradition we have been examining in this dissertation, if psychoanalysis is indeed “an ideological reterritorialization” (Young, *Colonial Desire* 171) then Deleuze and Guattari's work could also prove to be useful for turning psychoanalysis into an object of postcolonial critique.

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<sup>78</sup> One of the reasons Deleuze and Guattari value minor literatures is that they enact, in various ways, the kind of destabilization of psychoanalysis described in *Anti-Oedipus*.

Young anticipated that *Anti-Oedipus* would be useful in “decentring colonial analysis away from the East towards a more global surface” (*Colonial Desire* 167), and the recent collaborative work, *Empire*, by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri does indeed leave the categories ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ behind in order to investigate the emergence and operations of what they designate as the globalized ‘Empire’ we are living under now. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri pursue an analytic line of thought of their own that, despite obvious importance for the field of postcolonial studies, does not engage with the major debates that have characterized postcolonial theory over the last twenty years. Although *Empire* draws enthusiastically and frequently from Deleuze and Guattari, the authors do not even suggest that *Anti-Oedipus* can or should solve any problems in postcolonial theory. Instead, they are interested in using Deleuze and Guattari’s insights into the production of the social, what they describe as “not only the economic or only the cultural dimension of society but rather the social bios itself” (25). Like Young, Hardt and Negri are interested in Deleuze and Guattari’s ability to theorize the social as something that is neither material nor cultural, neither individual nor collectively shared but formed and produced by the interaction between the two.

While Hardt and Negri concede that postcolonial theory may be a useful tool for rereading history, they argue that “it is entirely insufficient for theorizing contemporary global power .... Empire is not a weak echo of modern imperialisms but a fundamentally new form of rule” (146). To continue to use postcolonial theory, they argue, is to work under the illusion that the new oppressions work in the same way as the old, colonial oppressions. It is in this sense that they speak of postcolonial theory as a symptom of passage, from the old colonial regimes to the new regimes of Empire. Indeed, it is an interesting feature of their analysis that fundamentalism, postmodernism and postcolonialism all figure as symptoms of the passage from modern sovereignty (i.e. the nation-state that began its rise in the nineteenth century)



to imperial sovereignty (i.e. the Empire that is described and analysed in their book). Though neither Hardt nor Negri are postcolonial critics, they confidently declare the end of postcolonial theory. This declaration raises, yet again, two of the most contentious issues in postcolonial theory itself: what is or should be the true object of postcolonial theory and is it theoretically aimless or empty if it has no practical answer to the contemporary global formations.

I am not convinced that we should be so quick to relinquish the postcolonial perspective. To begin with, Hardt and Negri's description of the passage from imperial to Empire is not conclusive. At the very least, it is not clear that we can train our sights onto the emerging political targets and forget about the old colonialisms—they are alive and well and myriad in their formations. Moreover, I would argue that although some scholars seem to believe that only those fields of study that take contemporary situations for their objects of study are usefully political, the power of postcolonial studies lies in its ability to illuminate both the political content of apparently non-political fields such as literature, history or art and to specify how those fields have built their cultural authority and continue to wield it. It is in this sense that Said's *Orientalism* can truly be said to be the founding book of postcolonial studies. Hardt and Negri suggest that we write theory in times when "the economist, for example, needs a basic knowledge of cultural production to understand the economy, and likewise the cultural critic needs a basic knowledge of economic processes to understand culture" (xvi). While I do not disagree with their assessment I think this type of interdisciplinary awareness is often interpreted as a tacit acknowledgement that we do not really need literature or history except as a handmaid to more overtly political studies. I maintain that literary and historical movements such as postcolonial studies or cultural history are still relevant to the problem of old colonialism and even new imperialisms.

Peter Hallward's recent book *Absolutely Postcolonial*, as the title suggests, is firmly committed to the continuing viability of a postcolonial analytic. Hallward does not agree with Hardt and Negri that postcolonial theory's moment has passed, but, like Young, he wants to explore a new framework for postcolonial studies and especially for reading postcolonial literature. In his search for a new paradigm Hallward draws on an interesting range of sources including Islam, Buddhism, Deleuze, Guattari and Alain Badiou.<sup>79</sup> He is particularly interested in what he describes as singularity, a concept that could be a useful way of breaking through the opposition between cultural and material approaches to writing about postcolonial texts that Young alludes to.

Hallward argues that postcolonial studies is preoccupied with the specific which he defines in the following way: "The specific ... implies a situation, a past, an intelligibility constrained by inherited conditions. The specific is the space of interests in relation to other interests ... the specific relates subject to subject and subject to other" (5). In other words, the demand to contextualize or historicize psychoanalysis is a specific solution. The singular, by contrast, "is constituent of itself, expressive of itself, immediate to itself. That the singular creates the medium of its existence means it is not specific to external criteria or frames of reference" (3). The singular is a much more difficult concept to define and to work with, but perhaps, to use the same example, attending closely to the phenomena of colonialism rather than reading them through the frame of psychoanalysis might be a singular solution.<sup>80</sup> In particular, reading texts that detail colonial breakdown in its immediacy might tell us

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<sup>79</sup> In the strictest sense Hallward's book takes its lead from Deleuzian philosophy rather than Deleuze and Guattari's collaborations. Nevertheless, as many critics who write about Deleuze and Guattari note their collaborative style makes it difficult to decide where one critic's work begins and the other critic's work ends.

<sup>80</sup> Hallward's study itself is a detailed examination of how four postcolonial novelists, Edouard Glissant, Charles Johnson, Mohammed Dib and Severo Sarduy aim to write away from the specific towards the singular.

something new about colonial societies than using psychoanalysis to read colonial history has been able to tell us thus far.

For Young, Hardt, Negri and Hallward, Deleuze and Guattari's theory is a means of answering the question: what is the most productive orientation for postcolonial studies? This dissertation is concerned with a related, though much more specific part of that question; is psychoanalysis a productive theoretical approach for postcolonial theory? Young suggests that Deleuze and Guattari may offer us another way to think about desire, and so relieve us of the need to rely on psychoanalytic conceptualizations of identity and desires. Hallward suggests that Deleuze and Guattari offer us a way to think about colonial phenomena beyond their close historical, material or cultural contexts without returning to universality. Though neither one of these critics examine Deleuze and Guattari's psychoanalytic critique specifically, they establish that *Anti-Oedipus* has solutions postcolonial scholars have yet to consider in detail. In the remainder of this chapter, then, I will look at some of the thematic ways Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis connects with the theoretical concerns Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha raise, the main problems Deleuze and Guattari identify with psychoanalysis and how we might make use of their critique in postcolonial studies.

### ***Traditions and Contexts 1: Guattari***

In the previous three chapters we have looked at the ways in which Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha successively experimented with psychoanalysis in order to turn it into a critical tool for writing about colonial and postcolonial conditions. With Deleuze and Guattari we have fallen out of the chronology—or at least we have to turn back from Nandy and Bhabha to *Anti-Oedipus*, originally written in 1972. With this in mind I want to discuss some of the context *Anti-Oedipus* emerges from and

how Deleuze and Guattari pursue similar theoretical interests as those theorists we have examined so far.

*Anti-Oedipus* is sometimes dismissed “as symptomatic of a certain cultural moment in which some of the euphoric spirit of the May [1968] events was consciously rekindled” (Heffernan 110), and in British academia in particular the book was for a long time understood as a thoroughly “time-bound intellectual phenomenon” (Heffernan 110). To accept this view, however, would be to neglect a consideration of how Guattari and Deleuze’s own long-term individual psychotherapeutic and philosophical projects came to meet and produce something that transcended both projects in their first collaborative text. It is partly in order to contextualize the routes that brought Deleuze and Guattari’s work together that I consider their work as separate strands in this section and the following section, though I do not wish to imply that one can read *Anti-Oedipus* as a simple synthesis of these two lines, or even that one can distinctly separate Deleuze’s contribution from Guattari’s contribution.<sup>81</sup> In this section I will highlight some of the features of Guattari’s project in relation to Fanon, including Guattari’s training in materialist psychiatry, his focus on the concept of desire and his vision of the limits and possibilities of a revolution of desire. In the following section I will highlight some aspects of Deleuze’s concept-philosophy and its relation to Nandy and Bhabha’s theoretical interests.

In one very direct way, the work of *Anti-Oedipus* brings us back to Fanon because an important aim of the book was to argue for a materialist psychiatry that takes account of the political and social productions that traverse the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst, his or her patients and the institutional environment that they both

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<sup>81</sup> Writing of another collaboration, this time between Deleuze and Clare Parnet, Tamsin Lorraine notes “We could talk about Deleuze and Parnet as subjects of distinct histories and give an account of how they came together in the writing of this book. But this would miss what for Deleuze is the crucial point: the book grew along lines that cannot be reduced to such a history” (187).

inhabit.<sup>82</sup> I think it is fair, as Hallward notes, to say that any accusation that Deleuze and Guattari disavow materialist concerns is quite unfounded. Hallward asks: “How can we read Deleuze and Guattari in terms of an end to the social when then they argue for the *immediately social* investment of even the most private desire? Or as privileging representation, when they do nothing but denounce it?” (43). *Anti-Oedipus*, however dense and stylistically unique, creates concepts with which to bring psychoanalysis and psychiatry face to face with macro-level and micro-level social conflicts.

Guattari worked at the interface between mental health issues and politics from a very early age. By the time he was twenty, in 1950, he had already met the psychiatrist Jean Oury who would found the famous La Borde clinic three years later. In the same year as the clinic opened, Guattari met Lacan and became deeply theoretically influenced by him.<sup>83</sup> By 1962 Guattari was in training with Lacan, and by 1969 he was an analyst with the École Freudienne Psychoanalytique. Lacan and Oury are both legendary figures in the French psychoanalytical scene, and Guattari’s working experience with both men clearly contributed to his ability to produce a rigorous, immanent critique of psychoanalysis.

Guattari’s connection to Oury is interesting from another perspective. Oury was a psychiatrist trained under François Tosquelles at Saint Alban, the man who was “one of the most significant influences on the young Fanon” (Macey 141). Tosquelles was known as ‘the red psychiatrist’, a man who had also combined an interest in left-wing politics with an interest in psychiatry from a young age.

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<sup>82</sup> Young also finds similarities between Fanon’s work and Deleuze and Guattari’s work. He suggests that all three authors bring a material consideration of space back to the centre of colonial analysis. See Young, *Colonial Desire* 166-174.

<sup>83</sup> Guattari scholar Gary Genosko points out that despite serious misgivings about Lacan’s theories, Guattari maintained his membership of the EFP until the end of his career. Genosko also observes “[Guattari’s] attachment was so great during his student years at the Sorbonne that his friends mockingly called him ‘Lacan’. Despite his criticism of Lacan and structuralist method, Guattari remained an Analyste membre, hoping that something would arise to challenge the technical elitism and reactionary theorizing” (111).

Unfortunately for the history of critical psychoanalysis, Oury and Fanon did not work at Saint-Alban at the same time. Oury was there from 1947 to 1949, and Fanon spent two years there from 1951 to 1953 as Tosquelles' houseman. Despite this, Fanon and Guattari's work can be read respectively as individual variations on the themes that Tosquelles and Oury brought to the forefront of French psychiatry in the years that followed. Macey notes that Fanon's mentorship under Tosquelles brought him in contact with "the most progressive current within French psychiatry" (141) not least because it exposed him to Lacan's work.<sup>84</sup>

Fanon and Guattari are partly connected, then, by their inheritance of the discussions around the politics of the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic institutions initiated by Tosquelles. Macey makes the connection to Guattari in his biographical study of Fanon and indeed uses Guattari's words to describe what the Tosquelles-Oury school of psycho-therapeutic reform might be said to aim at: "Its main characteristic is a determination never to isolate the study of mental illness from its social and institutional context, and, by the same token, to analyse institutions on the basis of interpreting the real, symbolic and imaginary effects of society upon individuals" (150). This definition could as easily be a description of Fanon's attempt to reveal psychiatric hospitals' implication in colonialism, as Guattari's attempt to reveal psychotherapeutic institutions' implication in capitalism.

In chapter one we saw how Fanon eventually came to the conclusion that he could no longer occupy his position as chief psychiatrist since the colonial mental health institution was an instrument of the "absolute depersonalisation" ("Letter" 53) of Algerians. Fanon repeatedly draws attention to the doctor's obligation to look at the world outside his consulting office and to consider his or her patients in relation to the world in which they experienced their mental crises. In describing his own

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<sup>84</sup> Genosko also offers a brief account of the theoretical and clinical innovations that developed among Tosquelles, Oury and their students and colleagues. See Genosko, 6-12.

revolutionary scheme for the psychotherapeutic clinic, transversality, Guattari makes an almost identical point. He writes: “Psychiatrists who run mental institutions suffer from a disjunction between their concern for those in their care and more general social problems that shows itself in various ways: *a systematic failure to understand what is going on outside the hospital walls*” (11). For both men mental health and mental health institutions were an inseparable element of any political discussion or, indeed, any political solution.

For both Guattari and Fanon, a primary task for transforming society and achieving the political aims of the revolutionary group—whether it is a group of patients in a clinic or a group of anti-colonial resistance fighters—is to be able to see one’s desires clearly. Guattari puts it this way, “the demand for revolution ... is directed equally to taking account of desire” (43). Guattari, as we shall see when we turn to the *Anti-Oedipus*, is concerned with removing the mediating processes that stand between our desires and ourselves, and he does not conceive of desire in the private, phenomenological terms that Fanon sometimes relied on. Guattari is interested in the individual’s desires too, but for Guattari, the more vital question is “can the group at once pursue its economic and social objectives while allowing individuals to maintain their own access to desire?” (41). He is not interested in the individual’s desires as much as he is interested in examining the structures and practices that seek to interpret any minority group’s desires back to them. So, for example, where Fanon devises an ingenious rereading of Hegel and Sartre to theorize in philosophical and political terms ‘what the black man wants’, Guattari tries to limit his discussion of desire to practices, structures and concepts that will enable minorities to theorize and recognize their desire for themselves.

Despite the importance of desire to both Fanon and Guattari’s revolutionary aims, one of the most important differences between them is the way in which they conceptualize how the group will learn to genuinely recognize its own desires. Fanon

argues, as we saw earlier, that desire will be recovered when the screen of colonialism (or simply institutionalization) is removed from before the subject's eyes. He never implies that the struggle to remove the screen and recover desire will be easy, but neither does he investigate the ways in which desire is captured in more subtle ways, such as our very reliance on psychoanalytic theory. For example, Fanon, in a partly playful gesture, says there is no Oedipus complex in the Antilles. Guattari, by contrast, estimates that there is Oedipus everywhere, and that it will not be easy to leave the comforting embrace of the Oedipus.<sup>85</sup> Fanon picks from psychoanalysis what he likes and discards what he has no use for, and in any case he famously 'stretches' concepts to cover his own analysis. Guattari presumes the need for a more thorough, engagement with psychoanalysis. He begins his work from the premise that he must be inside psychoanalysis to effect its collapse. He does not simply try to shake off Oedipus' company, but tries to outwit Oedipus at his own game.

As we saw in chapter one, some scholars have suggested that Fanon was not able to recognize the extent to which mental health sciences were complicit with colonial ideology, a position that marks him off from Guattari who was at times willing to be more sweeping in his condemnation of the psychotherapeutic institution. It is certainly debatable to what degree we can discuss either Guattari or Fanon's work as a rejection, reform or revolution in the field of psychotherapy. Guattari confirms Fanon's analysis that psychiatrists or psychoanalysts cannot do their work in isolation from social or political contexts, and even confirms that psychotherapeutic institutions are colonial instruments. He goes further than Fanon, however, in insisting on the connections between the theory of psychoanalysis and

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<sup>85</sup> This is evidenced not just by the theoretical positions Guattari takes, as we shall see in the next section, but in his complex position as an activist in anti-anti-psychiatry campaigns. He wrote, of R.D. Laing: "He has broken down the walls of the hospital, but one gets the impression that he remains the prisoner of other walls still standing within himself; he has not yet managed to free himself of the worst constraint, the most dangerous of all double binds, that of what Robert Castel has called 'psychoanalysis'—with its obsession with significant interpretation, its false-bottomed representation and shallow depths" (53).



the colonial order of things and refusing to use psychoanalysis as a interpretive frame according to its rules. Guattari condemns psychoanalytic theory precisely and repeatedly in these terms: “how illusory it is to seek to rediscover sheer, unmixed desire by setting off to find knots buried in the unconscious or hidden clues of interpretation. There is no magical effect whereby the transference can disentangle the real micro-political conflicts that imprison people, no mystery, no other world behind this one. There is nothing to rediscover in the unconscious” (57). So, if Fanon tries to reveal the presence of racist myths in the unconscious of the black man, Guattari insists that the unconscious itself is an illusory concept whose authority we should challenge.

### *Traditions and Contexts 2: Deleuze*

Since it is not possible to do justice to the range and complexity of Deleuze’s philosophical project in this chapter, much less a section of this chapter, I present here only those aspects of Deleuze’s work, such as his interventions in identity politics and his pursuit of non-representational modes of thought, that underline and anticipate some of Bhabha’s most important contributions to postcolonial theory.<sup>86</sup> Though Deleuze is one of the few French poststructuralist critics Bhabha does not cite, they share some ideas about how identity can and should be used in political struggles against oppression. I want to underline, however, that although they share certain convictions they do not agree on the value of psychoanalysis as a critical language for understanding colonialism.

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<sup>86</sup> Todd May defines non-representationalism, or antirepresentationalism as he refers to it, in the following way: “the principle that, ‘representing others to themselves—either in who they are or in what they want—ought, as much as possible to be avoided’” (13). May’s definition is a good starting point for our discussion, even though his study of the moral theory of poststructuralism is specifically concerned with people’s actions. In this sense, psychoanalysis is an exemplary form of representationalist thought because it purports to tell people what their unconscious desires are and aim at. Nevertheless, in the wider sense, Deleuze is arguing against all theories that represent a person or a thing to others or to themselves including, for example, literary theory that attempts to represent a book rather than inhabit it, and understand it on its own terms.

Deleuze was trained in philosophy under Georges Canguihelm and Jean Hyppolite, and taught in philosophy departments until his retirement. He wrote several monographs on individual philosophers including studies of Bergson, Hume, Kant, Nietzsche and Spinoza before he began his collaboration with Guattari. Despite the apparently non-philosophical form of works like *Anti-Oedipus* and his studies of cinema, Deleuze's work was always concerned with working out what Dorothea Olkowski has called the ruin of representation or, in other words, creating philosophical concepts that help us to think in ways we have never thought before.

One way we might understand Deleuze's work is that he brought an alternative to the Platonic tradition of representational thought in Western philosophy up to the surface and tried to carry its movement forward. Deleuze repeatedly represented his own project as anti-Platonic. Indeed, Michael Hardt notes that he had a tendency to "exaggerate the centrality and hegemony of 'State philosophy' in the history of western thought" (124).<sup>87</sup> Hardt points out that although Deleuze, and Derrida too, aim their projects against the philosophical tradition they in no way abandon philosophy. In Deleuze's case, although he chooses to develop the work of minority philosophers such as Spinoza or Duns Scotus, this minority tradition, according to Hardt, still "constitutes some of the highest and most central moments of Western metaphysics" (124). Whatever one's view of Deleuze's philosophical project, one can appreciate immediately what drew Deleuze to Guattari; Guattari as a Lacanian anti-psychoanalyst was a perfect complement to Deleuze the philosophical antagonist of representationalist thought.

Perhaps the most obvious similarity between Deleuze and Bhabha is the distinctive, dense style in which both theorists present their work. Deleuze, like Bhabha, tries to develop a politico-philosophical discourse that does not simply

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<sup>87</sup> Deleuze used the term 'state philosophy' to refer to the tradition in Western philosophy that privileges representational modes of thought.

reproduce in words a fully-formed world but puts the reader through the experience of the becoming of the critical discourse. In the simplest sense, one might say that Deleuze takes style seriously as an element of his theoretical argument. Eugene Holland suggests that it is a hallmark of any postmodern theories that it should “allegorically display or enact the very objects and processes it describes ... whatever meanings it may emit do not precede language that expresses them ... but rather spring from the play of the language itself” (“Anti-Oedipus” 291). Nevertheless, unlike Bhabha, Deleuze remembers that language is only one of many sign-systems and refuses to privilege it. Both Deleuze and Guattari warn against the tendency to neglect “ethological, ecological, semiotic, economic, aesthetic, corporeal, and fantasmatic elements and semiotics through the reduction of all sign systems to a semiology of language” (Olkowski 213).<sup>88</sup>

Deleuze’s first major philosophical work that was not a study of another philosopher’s work was *Difference and Repetition*.<sup>89</sup> An investigation of difference-in-itself, the book presented an important reversal that has become almost axiomatic to poststructural theories generally. It was in this book that Deleuze argued against the accepted notion that identity precedes difference, and insisted that difference and multiplicity are in fact the primary categories of ontology and identity a secondary category. It follows from this that repetition is never mere mechanical production from the original, but a recreation—a thing of its own—with difference from itself. Bhabha also depends upon such a model of difference (one he describes in terms of cultural difference versus cultural diversity) to establish the terms of his project in *Location of Culture*.<sup>90</sup> Like Bhabha Deleuze wants to affirm the positive aspects of

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<sup>88</sup> In his discussion of Deleuze’s work, Hallward also notes how differently Deleuze and Bhabha treat the question of language. Hallward clearly finds Deleuze’s work more productive for postcolonial theory than Bhabha’s, since “more than any other writer in the field, Bhabha seems to have trouble remembering Braithwaite’s simple point—that ‘it is not language but people who make revolutions’” (27).

<sup>89</sup> *Difference and Repetition* was originally published in French in 1968.

<sup>90</sup> See Bhabha *Location* 33-39.

difference; that it produces ideas, that it diversifies and that difference makes the substance of an idea or an identity rather than negating it.

It was on the basis of these arguments about difference that Deleuze resisted the political lure of identity politics. In fact, Deleuze insisted upon his right to speak of drugs or homosexuality without ever having been stoned or having slept with a man in order to oppose the ‘evidence of experience’ to borrow Joan Scott’s phrase.<sup>91</sup> *The Location of Culture* is founded on a similar theoretical commitment. Bhabha also insists that the time has come to be released from the political burden of speaking ‘as’ black, or speaking ‘as’ a lesbian and he notes that “the representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-give ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities” (*Location 2*). For Bhabha, as for Deleuze, the minority is always in the process of becoming, however differently these two critics envisage that process of becoming. The minority’s identity is always a negotiation and a struggle to secure authority but not to be trapped by it. Like Bhabha, Deleuze rejects Nandy’s argument that traditions may be creatively renewed and redeployed for anti-colonial ends since, inevitably, these traditions are the expression of a particular religious perspective and do not function as genuinely democratic forms. Deleuze recognizes that even as we insist on the right to speak we must ask “how can we manage to speak without giving orders” (Buchanan 5). Bhabha explores the other side of the same question when he asks, if we cannot rely on anybody’s access to whole, authentic cultural tradition to give them the right to speak, how does cultural authority constitute itself?

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<sup>91</sup> The gender historian Joan W. Scott has made a powerful argument for the importance of questioning experience as a category for history, and especially for histories that presume to ‘rescue’ minority subjects by providing them with a new voice. She insists that “what counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, and always therefore political” (412). Though Scott obviously works from a different perspective than Deleuze and Guattari, she wants to turn history into a genuinely nonfoundational discipline. She suggests that this will serve women, gays or people of colour better than any experience-based theories can.

Nevertheless, Deleuze develops the notions of difference and identity on different terms than his contemporaries Derrida and Lacan, and hence on different terms than Bhabha.<sup>92</sup> Where Derrida and Lacan focus their critical attention on linguistic models and textual methods, Deleuze is not content to limit his analyses to the textual manifestations of difference-in-itself. In his early works, before the collaboration with Guattari, Deleuze was already experimenting with the ways his understanding of difference might change how we represent and understand bodies, such as the body-without-organs, or how it might lead to a new kind of minority politics. *Anti-Oedipus* itself is, as I have already noted, an argument for a materialist psychiatry that is based, at least in part, on the theory of difference that Deleuze had already worked out.

At the same time Deleuze is not uninterested in signs, including language. In fact, he develops a unique way of reading signs that is especially interesting for this study because it brings an unusual intersection of psychiatry and literature into focus. Deleuze, though not a literary critic, was deeply interested in literature and in particular what he called his ‘critique et clinique’ project. The terms of this project were to read literature as a document of health rather than neuroses, in which writers diagnosed and even composed clinical syndromes before psychiatrists or other doctors had recognized them.<sup>93</sup> It is this project that feeds into the anti-psychoanalysis critique in *Anti-Oedipus* because a principal feature of psychoanalysis for Deleuze is its utter failure as a symptomatology, that is its failure to read the world, or to recognize the signs that, for example, writers read and write about so

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<sup>92</sup> For a useful account of Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of Freud in comparison with Lacan’s critique see Holland “Anti-Oedipus” 291-307.

<sup>93</sup> Deleuze argued that instead of reading literature for signs of neurosis, in the way that Freud reads literature for signs of the syndromes he writes about, we should read literature as a creative symptomatology that identifies the cluster of symptoms that could be used as the criteria for diagnosing syndromes. For Deleuze the writer is potentially a much better diagnostician than the psychiatrist since he or she is not concerned to fit what he or she sees into prearranged symptomatological channels and observes his or her subjects on their own terms.

insightfully in their creative works. As we shall see, Deleuze came to see psychoanalysis as a particularly threatening form of representational thinking and sought to break up the supposedly natural affiliations between psychoanalysis and literature.

Indeed, in many ways Deleuze's approach brings us back to literature. Deleuze was committed to reading literature on its own terms and literature as theory-in-itself rather than, as much of the recent postcolonial approach to literature has been, reading it as a reflection of its historical or economic contingencies. Despite this, as Young and Hallward both point out, Deleuze always insists on treating literature as embedded in social relations, and so in no way attempts to write about literature as divorced from the terms of its production. It is strange to suggest that a philosopher might bring us closer to literature than a literary critic, but perhaps at a time when theory crosses disciplinary lines it is not so uncommon to find that another discipline's methods have something to renew our home discipline. Perhaps, as Colombat suggests, philosophy and literature come together in Deleuze's thought because "the concept of representation is always the main target of the power of demystification in thought, in literature, in philosophy" (202). Deleuze is definitely of interest to us because he relies heavily on readings of literature, privileges difference over identity, and develops a sophisticated theory of writing-as-becoming, all while refusing to privilege the heavily textual terms of deconstruction and psychoanalysis.

### ***Reading Anti-Oedipus for Postcolonial Studies***

What does it mean to be anti-Oedipus? According to Deleuze and Guattari it means to oppose the social, political and historical formations, such as capitalism or psychoanalysis, that trap desire into fixed and monotonous forms. They theorize that desiring-machines produce and these productions immediately unfold into the social

field without having to pass through any mediating structures. In their own words they declare:

The schizoanalytic argument is simple: desire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, a machinic-arrangement—desiring-machines. The order of desire is the order of production; all production is at once desiring-production and social production. We therefore reproach psychoanalysis for having stifled this order of production, for having shunted it into representation (*Anti-Oedipus* 296)

*Anti-Oedipus* outlines a practice, what they term a schizoanalysis, that reveals how desire gets trapped in structures like the Oedipus, and how we might release ourselves from our attachment to Oedipus.<sup>94</sup> It is in this sense that Foucault's preface describes *Anti-Oedipus* as a book of ethics, a guide to living in such a way that we do not choose or yearn for the enslavement of our own desires.

*Anti-Oedipus* foregrounds desire as an important factor in any social, historical or political analysis, and we can see immediately from this why Young has suggested that Deleuze and Guattari might be a useful theoretical resource for postcolonial studies. The desiring-machines that they describe in the book are a crucial concept for connecting the social to desire, without having to take any detours through “mediation or sublimation, any psychic operation, [or] transformation” (29). Nevertheless, they also recognize that in order to make their position more tenable they have to expose the workings of the dominant system for interpreting and understanding desire in Western society, namely psychoanalysis. The major aim of the anti-Oedipal critique is to insist that psychoanalysis is not the only language or hermeneutic for speaking about desire, and that its representation of desire is a

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<sup>94</sup> Heffernan offers the following distinction between schizophrenia as it figures in *Anti-Oedipus* and as the mental illness we are familiar with: “our’ capitalist schizophrenics represent the failure of revolutionary desire, its capture and organization into the form of illness. What is required is rather the activation of schizophrenia as a process” (125). Heffernan acknowledges that despite this the schizophrenic seems to retain a certain revolutionary character as a result of his or her experience of mental illness. It is also worth noting that the schizophrenic, and schizoanalysis generally are not given any special attention in the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

particularly debilitating one—a representation that colludes, in particular, with capitalism.

Before we look more closely at the anti-Oedipal critique it is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari do not reject psychoanalysis in absolute terms. Although they expose the most reactionary premises of Freudian thinking they recognize that all theories are composed of reactionary, revolutionary and reformist parts so there is no need to “play ‘take it or leave it’ under the pretext that theory justifies practice” (117). We can understand this in the straightforward sense that psychoanalysis may contain some revolutionary elements and we may still choose, as Nandy does, to use psychoanalysis only insofar as it is critical. On the other hand, it is also possible that Deleuze and Guattari seek to remind us that we are not able to play take it or leave with psychoanalysis. In other words, like R.D. Laing, we may be subject to oedipalization when we least expect it and therefore cannot afford to take such a casual attitude to this deeply influential theory.<sup>95</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari, there is no question of simply trying to ignore psychoanalysis.

Indeed, they go so far as to retain some aspects of psychoanalysis. Although the attack on the Oedipus complex itself appears to demolish a cornerstone of psychoanalytic thinking, they are careful to note that “we do not deny that there is an Oedipal sexuality, an Oedipal heterosexuality and homosexuality, an Oedipal castration . . . We deny that these are productions of the unconscious” (74). Rather than suggesting that certain relationships, desires and conflicts do not exist they insist only that they do not limit themselves to the interpretations psychoanalysis offers of these phenomena. They refuse to take Oedipal signs for something more significant or complex than productions of desiring-machines.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> See Guattari 53 for his critique of Laing.

<sup>96</sup> For Deleuze and Guattari Kafka was a key literary model since his works create lines of flight out of the Oedipus. Although they acknowledge his use of Oedipal themes they



Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari even give psychoanalysis credit for recognizing some important aspects of their argument though they also charge it with not taking those recognitions far enough. Psychoanalysis, they agree, highlights how important desire, sexual energy without procreative ends and associative chains of unconscious thought are. In some sense, *Anti-Oedipus* is even an attempt to return to the basic discoveries of psychoanalysis and prise them loose of “the restricted code of Oedipus” (47). It is at the same time, however, an attempt to reach much further than psychoanalysis, since breaking the Oedipal code will finally allow us to live “beyond the father’s law, beyond law, [this] is perhaps the most essential possibility brought forth by Freudian psychoanalysis” (81).<sup>97</sup>

*Anti-Oedipus*, then, makes use of psychoanalytic thinking to present its argument. The critique of Oedipus owes a great deal to a careful reading of Lacan’s reworking of the Oedipal complex and Melanie Klein’s theory of partial objects, as well as close readings of Freud’s texts. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari accept the legitimacy and potential of certain psychoanalytic techniques. For example, they are very interested in free association insofar as it allows subjects to express their desires in a form that is not chained to sense or logic, but they reject the psychoanalytic attempt to channel those desires into the pre-approved symbols where, as Holland puts it, “every woman is the mother, every aggression a parricide, anything concave or hollow a symbol of feminine lack, anything longer than it is wide a phallic symbol” (*Anti-Oedipus*, 45).

Deleuze and Guattari’s theoretical engagement with psychoanalysis, even as they attempt to explode that theoretical structure, raises a set of questions that we

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suggest that a reading of Kafka’s texts on their own terms shows that Oedipal themes are accelerated or exaggerated so that in the end they appear divested of their authority.

<sup>97</sup> In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari conclude that this revolutionary possibility is being realized to a much greater degree outside psychoanalysis than inside psychoanalysis, and they cite an article entitled “The Murder of Father Freud” as evidence. We might consider the controversy surrounding Jeffrey Masson’s *The Assault on Truth* and Todd Dufresne’s *Killing Freud* as contemporary attempts to do the same.

might want to consider from the perspective of postcolonial studies: To what degree can we maintain a partial or critical engagement with psychoanalysis? At what point have we modified the theory so heavily that we can no longer say we are making use of psychoanalysis? On what terms can we really use psychoanalysis for our own theoretical ends, and when is it using us? This last question is particularly important for postcolonial scholarship, and I will address it in the final chapter. Deleuze and Guattari's critique appears rather damning, but their critique does not preclude a certain kind of engagement with psychoanalytic theory. The question, for them and for postcolonial studies, is what kind of engagement is theoretically productive from the perspective of our discipline. In the what remains of this section, then, I will discuss how the five main objections that *Anti-Oedipus* raises to psychoanalytic thinking including the problem of prohibition-as-desire; the connection between psychic repression and social repression; identity as a system of binaries; and the social realm as a case for applied psychoanalysis might help us reconceptualize the role of psychoanalysis in postcolonial theory.<sup>98</sup>

The first problem Deleuze and Guattari identify, a problem that arches over the following four objections, is that psychoanalysis fundamentally misrecognizes and subsequently misrepresents desire. While this is true in the general sense that psychoanalysis poses its theories as a mediating structure between our desires and us, it is also true in the particular sense that Deleuze and Guattari describe below:

we have a triangulation that implies in its essence a constituent prohibition, and that conditions the differentiation between persons: prohibition of incest with the mother, prohibition against taking the father's place. But a strange

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<sup>98</sup> I would like to note, for the reader's clarification, that although I present here four of the five paralogisms of psychoanalysis, as Deleuze and Guattari explain them, I do not present them in the order or under the titles that Deleuze and Guattari use. This is partly because I wish to emphasize certain aspects of their critique and have not discussed what would undoubtedly be, for them, vital aspects of their commentary (for example, their reading of Klein's theory of partial objects) and partly because the Deleuze and Guattari style of writing is ingeniously composed so that elements of the theme return again and again in variations without being mere repetitions. It is impossible to do justice to the subtlety of this writing style, so I have elected simply to present the objections in a more linear manner that suits my thematic interests.

sort of reasoning leads one to conclude since *it is forbidden, that very thing* was desired (70).

In other words, according to the psychoanalytic scheme we only realize Oedipus is our desire at the same moment when we realize we can never fulfil that desire. Desire is the thing that escapes us. Naturally, given their commitment to non-representationalist thought Deleuze and Guattari object to this conceptualization of desire as something that only becomes visible, or articulated, at the moment when it is displaced because it is located in the theoretical framework as the 'invisible' or lacking thing. They object to psychoanalysis' failure to understand that the prohibition of a desire is not desire itself—that lack or incompleteness is not the defining feature of desire. For them, as evidenced by the concept of desiring machines, desire is something that is produced by and between bodies not repressed or permitted according to Oedipal laws.

Though this first objection is posed at the meta-philosophical level it has consequences for postcolonial studies. If psychoanalysis misrepresents desire, or rather conflates its own theorization of what desire is with desire itself, then its value as an actual theory of desire is significantly diminished. Psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari seem to suggest, is nothing more than a discourse about its own conceptualization of desire. If this is true, then studying psychoanalysis as one Western theory of desire among others may well be an important task for postcolonial studies, but using psychoanalysis as a theory of desire to explain and account for the colony seems to be an exercise in proving that the theory works in other contexts. Bhabha's work, as we saw in the previous chapter, was criticized on precisely these grounds. It would seem clear, however, that colonial societies were social and political formations that incited, produced and managed different economies of desire than those produced in the metropolitan centres. If psychoanalysis can only refer all formations of desire back to its Oedipal

conceptualizations, then postcolonial studies needs to develop its own conceptual tools for explaining the singularly colonial productions of desire.

Though Deleuze and Guattari discard the notion that desire can be repressed, they do not discard the possibility that the Oedipal prohibition works as a form of social repression. In fact, they argue that Oedipus, though it is not a genuine prohibition, functions as a social repression because the Oedipus is a way of thinking about desire that has captured us. We believe that Oedipus is the only way to think about our desires, and so we allow ourselves to be caught in the Oedipus trap. In their own words Deleuze and Guattari argue that the Oedipus is:

the bait, the disfigured image, by means of which repression catches desire in the trap. If desire is repressed, this is not because it is desire for the mother and for the death of the father ... The danger is elsewhere. If desire is repressed, it is because every position of desire, no matter how small, is capable of calling into question the established order of a society (116).

They argue that psychoanalysis has an interest in presenting Oedipus itself as the repressed desire, since in this way, psychic repression appears primary and social repression must appear to follow later, as a secondary problem. We might think, for example, of the alternative to Lacan's mirror stage proposed by Fanon. He claims that the black child in the closed world of his or her family is psychologically healthy, but that the child's contact with the social forces of the racist world triggers problems.

Deleuze and Guattari insist that it is social repression that depends on psychic repression, or, in other words that "psychic repression, is a means in the service of social repression" (119). They do not attempt to do away with the separate concept of psychic repression, but they recognize that social repression sometimes delegates its work to agents of psychic repression, such as, most obviously, the family. They argue that it is vital not simply that desire be repressed but that it takes repressive forms that the subjects themselves desire, hence their affirmation of Wilhem Reich's proposition that the masses are never simply fooled but have their

desires educated, coded and recoded back to them so that desire can go on being repressed. Desire is not something to be released from repression, it is something to be captured and recaptured by an ethics, such as *Anti-Oedipus*, that enable us to look clearly at those forces that have desire in their hold.

Repression of desire is, in fact, a ready and familiar trope for explaining the psychic and social features of colonial society. We saw a perfect example of this in Nandy's work. Nandy proposed that the discourse of hyper-masculinity the British introduced to India was a result of their repressed homosexuality, a repression that could be resolved in the colonies where British men were more free to express their homophilia, if not their homosexuality. The notion that the colonies were a place where the colonizer could resolve his psychic repressions, either by expressing them or sublimating them, is not unique to Nandy; it is almost a cliché in the histories and literatures of colonialism. But if psychic repression is a theoretical object produced by psychoanalysis, and it is also an object that distracts our clear view of the social conditions of repression than it is not the most useful concept for postcolonial studies. In fact, it may also be preventing us from reading colonial formations of desire in their immediacy. Nandy's example is instructive. Though he is able to focus our attention on a historical moment where British and Indian desires produced a uniquely colonial formation of masculinity he is not able to describe this formation as anything more than a psychic repression with social consequences. Like Bhabha, Nandy is able to show us that repression is a mechanism that works in the colonies too but he is not able to show us how the social, political, cultural and economic conditions brought psychic desires into play in order to achieve colonization.

Deleuze and Guattari's third key objection to Oedipus is that it allows no conception of identification that cannot be collapsed into its double-bind terms, a problem that has important consequences for the notion of identity. They point to the warning psychoanalysis threatens us with: "Oedipus informs us: if you don't

follow the lines of the differentiation daddy-mommy-me, and the exclusive alternatives that delineate them, you will fall into the black night of the undifferentiated” (78). Identification, and hence identity, must be channelled into the terms of the Oedipus or it risks disintegration. This is problematic in itself, but Deleuze and Guattari remind us that “Oedipus creates both the differentiations that it orders and the undifferentiated with which it threatens us” (79). The Oedipus is, once again, an effectively captivating theoretical structure precisely because whether you successfully resolve your Oedipus complex or not you will still be subjected to the structural terms of the complex. Deleuze and Guattari are interested in Lacan’s attempt to elaborate Freud’s account of identification, but ultimately they conclude that Lacan’s concepts of mother-functions and father-functions simply reproduces the Oedipal triangle at another, perhaps simply semantic, level (82). In opposition to the scheme of identifications Freud and Lacan develop Deleuze and Guattari foreground the schizophrenic who is able to maintain several kinds of identifications, including mommy and daddy, without becoming especially fixed on those identifications. For the schizophrenic, Deleuze and Guattari insist, identification is not the problem Freud suggests it must be.

This objection goes to the heart of current psychical and cultural approaches to reading colonialism, and to the heart of the tradition we have been discussing in the previous three chapters. Indeed, Diana Fuss describes identification, in these terms, as a violent colonial metaphor (215-27). Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha rely on their own interpretations of identification. For Fanon, identification is a question of mutual recognition; for Nandy a question of mediating between cultural identities he defines as ‘Indian’ and ‘British’, respectively, and for Bhabha binary mechanisms of identification provide the means of explaining the ambivalence of colonial phenomena. However, as we have already seen, the binary framework poses serious problems for each of these writers, not one of whom is able to account for women

of colour in the colony since they quite literally cannot be included in the binary psychoanalytic scheme of identification. This is not an accidental feature of Fanon, Nandy or Bhabha's analysis—but a necessary corollary of their psychoanalytic methodology. Deleuze and Guattari's schizophrenic may or may not be a practical theoretical alternative to the psychoanalytic scheme, but it does at least foreground the possibility of a subjectivity built on multiple identifications none of which are given special priority, whether those identifications are personal, familial, historical or imaginary.<sup>99</sup> Though it may seem merely a practical methodological compromise to make use of identification as psychoanalysis describes it, the cost to postcolonial studies is a methodology that cannot account for women of colour. If women of colour cannot be represented in psychoanalytic terms, if their presence is one that always remains to be worked out afterwards, then what is the real value of psychoanalysis to postcolonial theory?

So far, we have been concerned with objections that are internal to the logic of psychoanalytic theory, but as noted earlier Deleuze and Guattari's critique pursues some of the social, political and historical ramifications of the Oedipus. The final objection we will deal with here returns to earlier questions about the relations between psychic and social repression. Where psychoanalysis admits that there may be factors in play beyond the family, it places those factors after the time of the family so that the family remains the most important starting point of any discussion of the psyche. As should be clear from the discussion above Deleuze and Guattari do not accept on any terms that the family takes precedence or is a space preserved from the social. What is perhaps more interesting for our purposes is that, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the attitude that the social comes afterwards leads to

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<sup>99</sup> An illustration of the social and political content of even the most personal desires is the content of patient's delusions. Deleuze and Guattari point out that delusions are never reducible to mommy and daddy but take their cues from the world around them; the paranoid delusions of a patient are as likely to be about the Communists listening in on their thoughts as their parents trying to poison them.

applications of psychoanalysis to other fields of study such as anthropology, history and classical studies. Instead, this is a theoretical move that is obviously particularly distasteful to them. They insist that one cannot simply apply the framework of psychoanalysis to other fields, and, writing as early as 1968, they observe that such kinds of applied psychoanalyses are always on offer.

Indeed, in some sense, this dissertation is concerned precisely with the problem of preventing studies of colonialism and postcolonialism from becoming just these types of applied analyses. Though interdisciplinarity is an important aim in itself, and postcolonial studies is an interdisciplinary field, Guattari reminds us that interdisciplinarity is often merely a front for the scholarly incursion of one discipline by another. In the encounter between psychoanalysis and postcolonial studies, psychoanalysis has yet to be transformed. Though historical practice and philosophy, for example, have been forced to make some concessions to postcolonial critique psychoanalysis, though recognized to be a Eurocentric theory, has not. Subaltern studies scholars have attempted to transform the way colonial Indian history is read and written, and have even argued for the need to 'provincialize' Europe in history (Chakrabarty 20-23). Despite the fact that postcolonial studies' encounter with psychoanalysis dates as far back as Mannoni and Fanon's writing in the 1940s we have yet to make any significant postcolonial incursion into psychoanalytic theory.

Despite the weight of these objections, Deleuze and Guattari recognize that a highly significant problem still remains: if psychoanalysis is not an accurate representation of desire and economies of desire why is it that psychoanalysis appears so universal to us? Why does it seem to describe certain aspects of our culture so smoothly and faithfully? Deleuze and Guattari do not suggest that Freud's account of culture was simply expertly descriptive (rather than morally prescriptive) and that is why psychoanalysis sometimes seems to offer such powerful explanations of Western culture. Instead, they describe how different types of societies, with their



own distinctive arrangements and economies of social production have different arrangements for capturing, understanding and representing desire to the members of those societies.<sup>100</sup> In the case of the capitalist society Deleuze and Guattari argue psychoanalysis is the perfectly designed form of desire-trap. Psychoanalysis appears to explain so powerfully how certain things in our society work because it the kind of structure of thought a capitalist society requires.

Deleuze and Guattari illustrate the inevitability with which psychoanalysis seems to explain our society with an example that is particularly important for this study, namely how psychoanalysis understands and explains the colony. They ask why, when anthropological experts admit that they do not encounter the precise psychoanalytic schemas described by Freud in colonial societies, psychoanalytic schemas still appear to occur universally in those societies. Rather than simply attributing this to the pseudo-scientific status of psychoanalysis they argue that colonization itself is a material condition that produces Oedipalization. Like capitalism, colonialism requires and produces the education of desire in its image.

Deleuze and Guattari take the case of a young Ndembu man whose maternal grandfather was a chief (166). The young man appears to be suffering from an inability to take his place in his society. He does not succeed at anything he tries, he suffers from illness, is described as vain and is constantly haunted by the ghost of his grandfather. The Ndembu are a matrilineal society, but the young man chooses to stay with his father and on his father's death his problems intensify. At first glance his case seems to be purely Oedipal, but Deleuze and Guattari warn us that we rush

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<sup>100</sup> At least a third of *Anti-Oedipus* is devoted to explaining the connection between types of social-economic arrangements and their corresponding ways of coding and recoding desire. I give relatively little space to explaining this aspect of their argument only because I want to preserve the focus on the critique of psychoanalytic theory. Nevertheless, it is a central claim of the book that we have psychoanalysis because a capitalist society requires this type of mechanism for coding and recoding desires. Deleuze and Guattari describe three types of society, not to be understood in any evolutionary or evaluative sense but simply as different ways of organizing social and economic productions. These three types of social assemblages are referred to as machines: the primitive-territorial machine, the barbarian-despot machine and the civilized-capitalist machine.

to the Oedipal analysis because we are “conditioned to say Oedipus every time someone speaks to us of father, mother, grandfather” (168). However, they acknowledge out that there seems to be some Oedipalization at work because the colony:

becomes Oedipal in part, under the effect of colonization. The colonizer, for example, abolishes the chieftainship, or uses it to further his own ends ... The colonizer says: your father is your father and nothing else, or your maternal grandfather—don’t mistake them for chiefs ... your family is your family and nothing else; sexual reproduction no longer passes through those points, although we rightly need your family to furnish a material that will be subjected to a new order of reproduction. Yes, then, an Oedipal framework is outlined for the dispossessed primitives: a shantytown Oedipus .... To the degree that there is Oedipalization, it is due to colonization (168-9).

In other words, a psychoanalytic account of the young man’s problems passes over his political and social claims to power as an indigenous chief. This stems partly from his difficulties establishing those claims in the colony because of the British refusal to recognize such power structures. But it also stems from the fact that the desires in play in this scenario were not “a grotesque hiatus of castration, everything was scattered into a thousand break-flows of the chieftainships, lineages, the relations of colonization” (168).

Deleuze and Guattari come to this conclusion on the basis of their readings of selected anthropological texts, but it has larger implications for psychoanalysis and the study of colonialism generally. Where psychoanalysis provides a persuasive explanation of colonial phenomena we must ask the question: why and how does this explanation come to seem persuasive? Critics hostile to psychic approaches have long argued that such approaches obscure the political and social factors in play, but here Deleuze and Guattari go further. They ask us to ask ourselves why, when we know this is true, we return again and again to the thought-structures of psychoanalysis. They claim “Oedipalization is always colonization pursued by other means, it is the interior colony, and we shall see that even here at home, where we Europeans are concerned, it is our intimate colonial education” (170). It is not

enough, then, to dismiss psychoanalysis as a Eurocentric theory; if it is “an intimate colonial education” then we need to find out how and why Oedipalization functions as colonization. Is Deleuze and Guattari’s claim merely a dramatic flourish or a profound philosophical statement? Postcolonial studies have an obligation to investigate these claims further.

### ***The Women of Anti-Oedipus***

Though *Anti-Oedipus* gives us several ideas about how to reorient postcolonial studies approach to psychoanalysis, we need to be cautious about simply applying Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of desire as an alternative to the psychoanalytic version we currently deploy. Young has suggested the Anti-Oedipal model could be useful because it treats desire as something immanent to the social field, but what are some of the implications of their theory of desire? In this concluding section I want to highlight some of the questions feminist scholars have already raised about Deleuze and Guattari’s model. I draw on the work of feminist scholars here in part because they are the only critics to have addressed the question of how a minor group, like women or people of colour, makes sense of the demand to ‘become minor’ when the demand is addressed to them. I also draw on the feminist critique because it is clear, from the previous three chapters, that even when philosophers and theorists claim to be speaking of everyone they are only speaking of man.

Before we discuss the problems with using Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, however, we must address the possibility that Deleuze and Guattari’s anti-psychoanalytic critique is simply unconvincing. By and large, those who remain unconvinced are those with a greater investment in psychoanalysis itself, whether that means practising Freudian analysts or critical psychoanalytic theorists who make selective, even catachrestic use of psychoanalytic concepts. In a familiar move that many other critics have made in relation to anti-psychoanalytic critique Jerry Aline

Flieger remarks “there is such animus in this frontal attack on psychoanalysis that it smacks of classic Freudian denial ... in which the patient protests too much. In fact, I think the virulence of this disavowal indicates that Deleuze and Guattari are more Oedipalist than they aver” (221).<sup>101</sup> Denial, the resistance to analysis itself, is of course always already part of the process of being psychoanalysed. Deleuze and Guattari have already warned us of the ‘double-bind’ structure of psychoanalysis, where one is enfolded in the structure whether or not one resolves the crisis adequately.

Though Flieger, as an admitted Freudian, genuinely finds *Anti-Oedipus* an exaggerated protest, she bases much of her criticism of Deleuze and Guattari on the fact that they were uninformed about recent strains of psychoanalysis, such as Lacan’s re-reading of Freud. This, as we noted earlier, is simply not the case, not only because of Guattari’s personal analysis with Lacan and his own work at the La Borde clinic at the vanguard of the French psychotherapeutic field, but also because the *Anti-Oedipus* clearly takes issue with Lacan’s theoretically sophisticated reinterpretation of the old Oedipal structure. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari also make use of and critique elements of Kleinian psychoanalysis. However much one might disagree with Deleuze and Guattari, they are not uninformed about their subject and they do not tackle this theoretical opponent by either trying to downplay its importance or ignoring it. We cannot, then, discount their critique on the basis of ignorance.

Flieger also suggests that there is simply misrepresentation of psychoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus*, since all of psychoanalytic thought is reduced to the triangle of the Oedipus complex. Whether we can reduce psychoanalysis to the Oedipus complex is

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<sup>101</sup> In an interview with Jean-Jacques Brochier in 1976 Guattari commented “*Anti-Oedipus* was barely noticed. What is quite funny is that, when the book came out, the Psychoanalytical Society recommended people just to ignore it, and the whole thing would blow over. Which is precisely what happened!” (Guattari, 49) Perhaps this was the psychoanalytic institution’s own version of denial.

a legitimate question. Deleuze and Guattari certainly assume that Oedipus is the cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory, and therefore the emblem of the psychoanalytic thinking that they want to oppose. By way of comparison, Genosko has suggested that in Guattari's work "the straight gate to the critique of psychoanalysis was through the transference relation because it is the cornerstone of psychoanalytic method" (69). This comment occurs in the context of a discussion of Guattari's clinically oriented critique of psychoanalysis and his development of the concept of transversality rather than transference. Perhaps, then, we must make a distinction between psychoanalytic method and theory as each having its own dominant principle.

On closer inspection, however, Flieger's complaint seems to be that Deleuze and Guattari do not recognize the complexity of the Oedipus complex and its already social nature rather than actually disputing the centrality of the Oedipus complex. Flieger, like Lacan, or indeed Bhabha, reads psychoanalysis as a theory that acknowledges and manages much more complexity than its critics would suggest. Nevertheless, the continuing problem for Deleuze and Guattari is that psychoanalysis insists on channelling this complexity through the Oedipal triangle.<sup>102</sup> Flieger may well object to the absurd light in which this channelling appears in *Anti-Oedipus*, but this is not a fault in the argument itself so much as a rhetorical effect that Flieger finds discomfiting.

If we can accept Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis then, like them, we may be prompted to develop or at least explore alternative theoretical languages. If we do not have to speak of desire in psychoanalytic terms we can also begin to conceptualize desire in new ways. However, as I have already indicated, speaking of desire in the terms Deleuze and Guattari propose is not without its

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<sup>102</sup> The diagram that appears in Flieger's article is a perfect illustration of this—although several terms appear under each of the heading's mother, father and child the discussion is still limited to these three terms! See Flieger 233.

problems. In revisiting the *Anti-Oedipus* Heffernan writes “schizoanalysis can propose no positive political formulations beyond a kind of avant-garde guerrilla warfare is the result of a weakness in Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation of desire” (127).<sup>103</sup> He goes on to argue that schizoanalysis can propose no meaningful political action because Deleuze and Guattari’s critique is only able to historicize desire’s forms of repression and not desire itself. If the desire Deleuze and Guattari refer us back to turns out to be a transcendental substance, something always there and always available but never historicizable, how can it be useful to our analyses of colonialism?

Deleuze insists time after time, however, that desire is not always present in the same form or in the same amount but changes depending on what forces are in place in the social field. In Olkowski’s words:

Active force or desire is not a matter of freeing oneself or being freed from an oppressive state, religion or family. It is not something always already there in every body; it is there to a greater or lesser degree depending on the history of the forces that have taken hold of that body (and so constitute it) and the struggles between those forces for possession of it (47).

If Deleuze and Guattari do not attempt to historicize desire in the course of their work, this is simply because they want to insist that desire is not something that can be adequately represented by an interpretative framework alone. Nevertheless, their refusal is not the same thing as treating desire as a transcendental factor. They acknowledge that desire, as a production that occurs in the real-time of the world, is affected by and alters in time. Hallward and Olkowski both insist that a key advantage of Deleuze and Guattari’s work is their refusal to describe anything purely in terms of historical contingencies despite their recognition that different conditions obtain at different historical moments.

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<sup>103</sup> Hardt and Negri also claim that Deleuze and Guattari “discover the productivity of social reproduction (creative production, production of values, social relations, affects, becomings), but manage to articulate it only superficially and ephemerally, as a chaotic, indeterminate horizon marked by the ungraspable event” (28).

Moreover, though historicizing desire is not part of the project Deleuze and Guattari set for themselves, it is not excluded from or contradicted by the broader implications of their project. Indeed, their affinity for Foucault's work clearly points to the compatibility of historicizing desire with locating desire's entanglements in systems such as psychoanalysis. In some sense Deleuze and Guattari's project is always on the tip of Foucault's tongue and yet never comes to be fully articulated, whether because Foucault could not or did not want to pursue the problem.<sup>104</sup> It is exactly in this sense that *Anti-Oedipus* does not simply urge us to cast off psychoanalysis but to work through an understanding of how psychoanalytic thinking has taken hold of our bodies over time. If psychoanalysis is a force that takes hold of bodies or societies, then one of postcolonial studies' tasks should be to investigate how and under what conditions psychoanalytic thought captured colonial bodies and societies.

Rather than attempt any representations of desire, it could be argued that Deleuze and Guattari are more interested in the question of how a minority group can "at once pursue its economic and social objectives while allowing individuals to maintain their own access to desire?" (Guattari 41). How, for example, do postcolonial or feminist activists and scholars pursue their goals, without forcing postcolonial subjects and women to accept their idea of what a woman or a postcolonial subject is? Despite the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's question feminist scholars have been rather reluctant to make use of Deleuze and Guattari's work. The theory of minor identity that follows from the Anti-Oedipal theory of desire works against certain strong tendencies and traditions in feminist politics and scholarship. Deleuze and Guattari conceive of minority politics and identity in terms that are antithetical to identity-politics. Does this make their work an insurmountable

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<sup>104</sup> Butler, for example, resolves her problem with Deleuze's concept of desire precisely by supplementing it with Foucault's historicization of desire.

barrier for feminist and postcolonial studies, however instructive their break with psychoanalysis might be?

Alice Jardine was one of the first feminist scholars to work through some of the implications of *Anti-Oedipus* for feminist activism and scholarship. We have already noted that Deleuze and Guattari insist on the process of becoming that the minority group must go through, rather than presuming a pre-given identity based on certain shared characteristics. It is in this sense that they famously urge a ‘becoming-woman’ on all human beings in *Anti-Oedipus*, including women. They do not assume that any individual woman is already ‘become-woman’. Nevertheless, according to Jardine, the logic of their complex reading of gender and sex and their urging on of all of us to “become woman” leads us to the point where: “Man is always the subject of any becoming, even if ‘he’ is a woman. A woman who is not a ‘woman-become’ is a Man and a subject to that extent and to that extent only. Woman is never a subject but a limit—a borderland of and for Man” (Jardine 53). She goes on to ask, “is it not possible that the process of ‘becoming’ woman’ is but a variation of an old allegory for the process of women becoming obsolete?” (53). In other words, the category of Woman, as distinct from real women, becomes a philosophical trope that men use for their own purposes on their way to enlightenment, or liberation just as the savage or the primitive functions as a trope in Freudian texts.

Deleuze and Guattari’s discussions about desire, identity and becoming do repeatedly slip into the world and texts of white men. They are keenly interested in the insights offered by literature and yet they remain problematically enchanted by writers who can best be described as chauvinist, such as Henry Miller and D.H. Lawrence. Deleuze and Guattari privilege discussions of these authors in their work precisely because, for them, “even the most phallogentric and notorious male writers—they mention Lawrence and Miller—have, in their writings, ‘become woman’ or relied on the process of becoming-woman” (Grosz 205). However, it is



not clear what place there is for women's texts in a world where everyone is urged to become-woman, or for postcolonial writing in a world where everyone is urged to become-postcolonial. The hallmark of brilliant writing in Deleuze and Guattari's estimation seems to be the ability to enact the rhizomatic multiplicity of identity, and if women, or postcolonial writers, are intent upon carving a space for their marginalized identities it would seem that they cannot (yet) achieve brilliance. Once again, as Fanon warned against, the woman or the racialized subject appears to be a stage on the way to more authentic (white, male) being.

For Jardine, the only solution to this problem is to assert "it is up to women not to disappear from that space of exploration" (59). Feminist scholars, or postcolonial scholars, must continue to place questions of race, gender, colonization and patriarchy into every philosophical debate. However, Grosz suggests that if we can suspend our judgment of Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the becoming-woman we may find that it leads us on to something more productive. It may be difficult for feminists to accept the loss of the term 'woman' for the promise of what it might lead to, just as postcolonial studies struggles to maintain coherent meanings for the terms colonial and colonizer. However, giving up the term 'woman' does not necessarily imply the disintegration of directed feminist activism or scholarship. Deleuze and Guattari state: "It is of course indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity ... But it is dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject." (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 276). Feminist scholarship has already struggled for some time with the question of what it means to use the term 'woman' and at the same time try to divest it of its oppressive connotations. Where feminist scholarship has failed, however, is in its inability to locate the woman of colour, or race generally, in the category 'woman'. To give up the perceived coherence of the term 'woman', then, may be easier for some feminists than for others.

Deleuze and Guattari urge us to encounter difference on its own terms and in its multiplicity, not as something that resembles something else but as something that we must encounter for the first time. Instead of writing about sex or race, terms that are too thoroughly entrenched in current modes of thinking to permit rethinking, they urge us to break them up into ‘a thousand tiny’ races or sexes and thereby destabilize the terms that create normality and difference-from-normality. To write about the ‘becoming-woman’, then, is not to write as though women do not exist but as though we are not already certain in advance who is a woman and what that woman wants. In fact, there is no question of writing about women, or on behalf of women, there is only writing that creates lines of flight out of the fixity of representational thought. We may have a tool to break apart the binary that has plagued us in the work of Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha. The question is no longer, how do we fit the subjectivity of the women of colour into the psychoanalytic scheme (woman of colour versus white woman; woman of colour versus man of colour; woman of colour versus woman of colour; or women of colour versus white man?) but how to write about subjectivity in such terms that do not relapse into the terms of the psychoanalytic.

The Anti-Oedipal critique proposes some radical philosophical and political solutions to problems of critique and representation, and as such, notions of becoming-woman or desiring-machines may in fact ultimately prove unworkable. The value of the encounter between Deleuze and Guattari and postcolonial studies discussed in this chapter may be as little as this: after their critique we cannot write as though the problems we face with psychoanalytic methodologies are the result of insufficient historical contextualization or gender specification. Instead, we must begin to unpack the meaning of Deleuze and Guattari’s provocative claim that “Oedipalization is always colonization pursued by other means” (170).

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESHAPING POSTCOLONIAL RELATIONS WITH PSYCHOANALYSIS

In the previous four chapters we have been concerned only with the potential and problems of the work of individual theorists as particular instances of the conflicted relations between psychoanalysis and postcolonial studies. In this last chapter, then, I want to discuss some of the larger implications of each of these instances. First, I want to clarify how Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha's adaptations of psychoanalysis demonstrate some of the uses of psychoanalytic theory for colonial critique. Following this I want to explain how these particular partial engagements with psychoanalysis fail to resolve certain problems with psychoanalysis as a colonial and colonizing discourse and finally, to sketch out what kind of relationship between postcolonial studies and psychoanalytic theory might foreground these concerns more clearly and productively.

### *The postcolonial debt to Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha*

We began with Fanon, not only because he is the most well known proponent of a colonial psychoanalytic, but also because his work has been cited as a precedent for many subsequent psychoanalytic studies of colonialism. *Black Skin, White Masks* did establish certain important considerations for any critique of colonialism that makes use of psychoanalysis. First, Fanon demonstrates in various ways that one can write about the man of colour in terms of psychoanalysis without pathologizing him. Writing in response to a tradition of representing natives, primitives and others as the pathological exemplar, Fanon finds other ways to use psychoanalytic theory. In *Black Skin, White Masks* he presents "a psychoanalytic interpretation of the lived experience of the black man" (157) that attempts to understand through reference to politics and material conditions how the black man experiences his world. Though he sometimes exhibits a rather natural desperation to

redeem the black subject from misunderstanding, he is mostly uninterested in explaining why the black man behaves as he does (the mode that colonial psychiatrists often chose to represent colonized or otherwise marginalized subjects); instead he is interested in explaining in psychoanalytic terms how the black man experiences his life in the wake of the Negro myth that degrades, devalues and makes fearful the black man in society. Though we did not consider Fanon's clinical writings in any detail in the first chapter, it is also worth observing that Fanon repeated this same procedure in his clinical discussion of his Arab patients. In Fanon's case histories the medical profile of the lazy, dishonest Arab was displaced by a portrait of the Arab patient depersonalized by colonial practice inside and outside the mental health institution.

It might be argued that Mannoni, and not Fanon, is the first person to use psychoanalysis as a political tool for writing against colonialism. I reject this argument because whether one reads Mannoni as explicitly anti-colonial or benevolently paternalist, his interest is primarily with the soul of the European colonizer rather than the trauma of the colonized. Christopher Lane has recently argued that we should reconsider Mannoni's position in light of his later renunciation of the Prospero complex, and he outlines his reading of this most persuasively (127-150). However, Fanon writes in the knowledge that psychoanalysis, psychiatry and psychology are material practices that are made and remade in the context of a racist world and a colonial power. Mannoni cannot acknowledge, much less articulate the effect of racism in the colony. Fanon insists that the political matters when one discusses the psyche of the man of colour at least, even if it does not matter when one discusses the psyches of others.

If Fanon does not pursue the kind of colonial analysis of knowledge that Nandy and Said do, he recognizes that colonial power shapes colonial knowledge, and that psychoanalysis, or the more scientifically established field of psychiatry,

participates actively in that construction. But, more to the point, he was willing to use his understanding and acceptance of this to turn psychoanalysis into a political instrument. Fanon is prepared to identify precisely how psychoanalysis and psychiatry contribute to the colonization of whole peoples. In a quite unfashionable, and even simple, manoeuvre, he specifies in texts such as *The Wretched of the Earth* how specific political situations produce a range of mental health disorders, distortions and disabilities. While this is by no means systematic in Fanon's work—a reflection, perhaps, of the fact that he is engaged in a tactical move—it means that he can make use of psychoanalysis and his position as a psychiatrist as political tools.

Fanon reminds us that however much Freud, Adler or Lacan suggest otherwise the psychoanalysis of the person of colour cannot be attempted from a purely individual angle—not because the man of colour is not a fully individualized, or psychologically complex whole, but because his world is materially and psychically influenced by the colonized-colonizer relationship. This problem of whether the person of colour is the only person who must/can be described in terms of their social/cultural background is one we shall return to again, as it echoes and repeats in various forms through Nandy, Bhabha, Deleuze and Guattari. Nevertheless, the significant point is that the psychic cannot be separated off from the social at any point.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, Fanon's work reminds us that the woman of colour does not have the analogous experience of colonialism to the man of colour. In the analysis of the colonial society Fanon presents, the woman of colour is a kind of theoretical problem that he cannot, like Freud before him and Bhabha after him, solve.

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<sup>105</sup> For example, it might be argued that the little Antillean's childhood is a period in which his psychic world is not disturbed by the racist world he will grow up to inhabit. Fanon, like other writers influenced by psychoanalysis, seems to suggest that the childhood of the Antillean child is also a harmonious existence before entry into the Law of racism. However, to see the non-events of this childhood time is to miss the point of Fanon's account—this time appears undisturbed and harmonious because the child is being educated in the image of colonial desire to see himself precisely as a little Frenchman.

Nevertheless he recognizes that consensual sexual relationships between men of colour and white women are viewed differently than relationships between women of colour and white men in the colonial world. He is so intent on exploding the myth of the black man who rapes that he neglects to discuss the reality of the white man who rapes (a lived-experience of far too many women of colour for Fanon to be unaware of it), but he recognizes that, in any case, there is a difference in the way the man of colour and the woman of colour live their sexual lives in the colony. He also recognizes that the black man faces different challenges in relation to white men and white women—the difference that sex and gender make to power relations. After reading Fanon it is not possible to pretend that the woman of colour can simply be tagged on as an analogous afterthought in psychoanalyses of colonialism.

Nandy's work begins from some of the same concerns as Fanon's, and like Fanon's work his work demonstrates that psychoanalysis can be bent to different purposes. First, Nandy is also interested in representing the man of colour, in this case the Indian man, in psychoanalytic terms that do not pathologize him. He achieves this, in part, by focusing on the male Indian subject, thus displacing the European subject as the normative psychological model. Nandy demonstrates through his studies of colonial men, in his case the scientists, jurists and political figures rather than the 'everyman' of Fanon's analyses, that the Indian subject has access to a psychological integrity that the European subject may sometimes lack, and even fail to have a means to obtain. Though it may appear that Nandy simply turns the tables of psychoanalysis—pathologizing the European subject—in fact his work is more nuanced than this since he is able to represent Indian subjects who also fail to resolve their internal conflicts constructively. There is no suggestion that the Indian subject will always hold the upper hand morally or psychologically, but Nandy's work clearly shows that there can be something more than escape from pathologization for the man of colour as subject.

The psychologically whole picture of the Indian subject that Nandy is able to sketch in his work is due in large part to his emphasis on culture. His work reminds us that culture is an important factor in any psychoanalytic investigation of colonialism for several reasons. For Fanon, the difference of the black subject from the normative white subject of psychoanalysis was because the specific pathology of living as a colonized and racialized subject had not been accounted for—even theorized—by the Freuds or Lacans of the world. For Nandy it is because the psychology of the colonized, as well as the colonizer, needs to be understood in terms that have less to do with pathology as such and more to do with interpersonal and intrapersonal adaptations to the surrounding environment. These adaptations are productive or obstructive, as Nandy reads them, depending on the cultural resources of the adaptee. Culture, in the form of traditions, texts, practices and everyday behaviours is the psychological resistance that Nandy offers as an alternative to Fanon's revolutionary solutions, not because he discounts violence absolutely but because violence itself is what the colonizer expects and proffers as the answer to the problem of colonial oppression. Where Fanon depends on linking psychoanalysis to the political and material contexts of its practice to make it an effective anti-colonial instrument, Nandy depends on linking psychoanalysis to the cultural resources of the colonized people to make it an effective anti-colonial hermeneutic.

Indeed, despite the political value of reading colonial relations in this way, Nandy is more interested in an analysis of colonial knowledge than Fanon and so his work reminds us that psychoanalysis itself has a critical potential as a form of knowledge that though inside the boundaries of Western knowledge is relatively marginalized. It is this potential that has been exploited in more recent postcolonial applications of psychoanalytic theory and so perhaps seems so familiar to us now, but it is something that originates with Nandy and not with Fanon. For Nandy, psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry as marginal, one might even say

untrustworthy, sciences are useful allies for the postcolonial scholar since they represent points at which one can look into Western knowledge and find its useful fractures. For Nandy, psychoanalysis is valuable insofar as it participates in the non-modern's view of time. Hindus, Nandy argues, have an understanding of time that does not proceed in a linear, non-reversible direction. Instead, as in psychoanalysis, the past is always part of the present and the present can be remade through the past. Nandy goes so far as to suggest that non-modern knowledges have the capacity to re-evaluate modern categories, and it is in this sense that he employs psychoanalysis as a means of re-evaluating history.

Nandy, like Fanon, begins by adapting the content of psychoanalysis, by reworking Hindu content into an array of psychological responses and positions, but he ends by making use of psychoanalysis as a structure that has analogies with the non-Modern. For Bhabha, there is not even a suggestion that psychoanalysis needs to be culturally re-worked or that psychoanalysis is something that has affinities with the way of thinking or being of the colonized. Unlike Fanon and Nandy, Bhabha does not base his project on a reworking of the content of psychoanalysis as such. Instead, he moves away from specifying an existential or psychological subject, and focuses on psychoanalytic processes. This is an ingenious solution to the question of psychoanalysis' universalism since it moves the use and discussion of psychoanalysis to an entirely different level. Rather than struggling with the question of the man of colour as a subject, a question that both Fanon and Nandy devote some energy towards resolving, Bhabha questions the terms of an anti-colonialism that insists on identity politics. He wants to insist that we are not obliged to speak of culture, or more simply of 'difference,' every time we speak of the colonized person, or the person of colour.

Unlike Fanon and Nandy, Bhabha wants to try and theorize the person of colour not as someone inevitably produced by his racial, cultural or colonial identity.



Indeed, Bhabha's work appears to advance the relationship between psychoanalysis and colonial critique considerably, since he is able to discuss the colony in psychoanalytic terms without pathologizing the person of colour and without tying the man of colour to his cultural origins, religious affiliations or experiences of his brown skin. If we think of Fanon's work as a response to the ethnopsychiatrists' will to describe people of colour in terms of their culture, and Nandy's work as an attempt to define the person of colour's culture as his psychological advantage then it is Bhabha who is able, finally, to speak about the colony in psychoanalytic terms without reference to people of colour's entanglements with psychoanalytic theories as such.

Bhabha introduces a new possibility for psychoanalysis as a method of reading the colony, by treating it as a useful framework, perhaps the pre-eminent framework for understanding how colonizers and colonized alike manage the relationship between the knowledge we have and the reality we experience. Bhabha, like Nandy, works from the premise that psychoanalysis is something one can use to enter into the spaces where Western knowledge and rationality fracture and reveal the ambivalence of Western authority. In particular, Bhabha makes use of psychoanalysis as a theory that can manage the uncertainty of knowing and knowledge generally and where Nandy uses this to undermine Western disciplines (international development, political science, history), Bhabha uses it to explain particular colonial phenomenon like stereotypes—figures of knowledge that appear, disappear and reappear with consistency even though everyone tacitly admits that they do not capture the 'truth' of the situation. For Bhabha, unlike Fanon or even Nandy, the aim of postcolonial critique is not to uncover the 'truth' behind colonial representations, it is to understand how colonizers attempted to secure their authority through their representations of the colonized and how their efforts always failed to function perfectly.

*Psychoanalysis After Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha*

Having briefly revisited how Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha turn psychoanalysis to constructive critical uses, I want to look at the problems that proceed from these varied adaptations of psychoanalysis. In order to make my argument clearer I have divided these writers' treatment of psychoanalysis into two categories: those that deal primarily with content (who can psychoanalysis describe, what kinds of cultural, social, political contexts should be brought to bear on psychoanalysis); and those that deal primarily with the structures of psychoanalytic thought (what kinds of processes does psychoanalysis theorize, how can we make use of psychoanalytic insights, how can we translate psychoanalytic concepts into general philosophical insights). Though these categories inevitably blur, particularly, for example, in the work of a critic like Nandy, they provide us with a reasonable means of separating out different ways of using psychoanalysis and their attendant problems.

Fanon and Nandy attempt to adapt psychoanalysis by changing its range of application and altering its content. In the work of both critics psychoanalysis becomes useful, for the most part, insofar as it can be used to understand the concerns of the man of colour living under colonialism. For Fanon, this means splicing psychoanalysis, oriented primarily towards the individual, with the material, political, cultural and mythical contexts of the colonized black man's life. For Nandy, adapting psychoanalysis means interweaving Hindu cultural discourses and practices with psychoanalytic method to produce a psychoanalysis that helps us understand the psychological choices available to the colonized Indian and, to a lesser degree, the colonizers of India. In each case the change of content enables the critic to write about a different subject than psychoanalysis appears to have in mind. But this alteration of content raises certain problems for our use of psychoanalysis. Nandy's is

a psychoanalytic theory adapted for Hindu Indian men and Fanon's is a theory for colonized Black men. If these are only pockets of micro-analyses, what is their value?

Micro-analyses are in themselves important projects but they do not lend themselves towards a broader theoretical aim than the representation of a particular constituency. Moreover, that constituency is frequently defined in terms of characteristics or practices that excludes some of the people the writer supposedly writes on behalf of. In theory Fanon and Nandy write analyses of the colony, but, as we have seen, though Nandy and Fanon are both conscious that the woman of colour has a different experience of colonialism neither one is able to fully account for her in their analyses either in terms of her lived-experience (of culture, politics or socio-economic constraints) or in theoretical terms as a subject with her own set of psychological identifications, misrecognitions or fetishes. However much is gained by opening up psychoanalysis to write about a new subject—the man of colour—the theoretical gesture is contained by its inability to speak of the woman of colour. Of course, it could be suggested that we simply need a broad range and number of micro-analyses in order to give each subject position its attention (the working class man of colour, for example, who is not central to either Nandy or Fanon's critiques). But while this may produce several interesting psychoanalyses, (and there are no guarantees of the success of such a theoretical gesture), it does not provide us with a way of understanding social, political and cultural relations in the colony except as sets of binaries that we define according to the categories that seem self-evident to us such as man/ woman or black /white.

If it seems that Fanon's and Nandy's work is too small a sample on which to base this conclusion, it is worth considering the problem as feminist scholars have addressed it. In theoretical terms, Nandy's and Fanon's adaptations are broadly comparable with feminist adaptations, whether those adaptations rely most heavily on reading psychoanalysis against the grain, developing new terminology for case-

specific neuroses and psychoses, or using orthodox psychoanalytic terms to write about women's specific experiences of marginalization and oppression. Feminist applications of psychoanalysis have been criticized repeatedly for their failure to consider the lived experience of the woman of colour, or even to acknowledge the implication of Freud and Lacan's thought in western colonizing discourse.

Until very recently, questions of race and women who have a lived-experience of ethnic or cultural difference have simply not been considered important in psychoanalytic feminism. Though feminist critics sympathetic to psychoanalysis, such as Jacqueline Rose, have identified psychoanalysis as valuable precisely because "it gives an account of patriarchal culture as a trans-historical and cross-cultural force. It therefore conforms to a feminist demand for a theory which can explain women's subordination across specific cultures and different historical moments" (90) critics such as Spivak, Abel and Jones have challenged this reading of psychoanalysis. Abel, for example, comments "by insisting that the Father's Law is necessary and tantamount to culture, however, the official Lacanian account prohibits alternative conceptualizations of culture and renders variations within patriarchal social forms (and thus in the degree and kind of women's subordination) either inconsequential or invisible" (185). The failure to acknowledge and account for the particular lived experience of the woman of colour is exacerbated, as Seshadri-Crooks is only the most recent critic to point out, by the fact that "what feminists have largely ignored in their discussion of Freudian theory are the cultural and racial particularities of the metaphor of the 'dark continent' in not raising the question of racial difference with regard to irrational and mysterious 'others' (Africans and Orientals) in theories of subject formation, feminism both reproduces and reifies Freud's insouciance regarding (gender) difference" ("Primitive" 175).

Nevertheless, it is possible that this gap in the critical horizon of psychoanalytic feminists is not necessarily evidence of any particular hostility to the

woman of colour, but a potential problem with psychoanalysis itself. Even when feminist theorists have attempted to correct this gap in more recent readings of psychoanalysis, the result has been mixed. Feminist critics such as Mary-Ann Doane and Jean Walton have actively attempted to give a more central place to the issue of race in feminist psychoanalysis. Walton is motivated by the sense that “psychoanalytic feminist theory participates in what can only be a self-defeating process of disavowal insofar as it deploys psychoanalysis as a means of rewriting female subjectivity yet remains silent about race” (242). Nevertheless, their analyses have difficulty positioning the woman of colour as a subject within psychoanalytic schemas. Walton’s sensitive and excellent examination of the question of race among 1920’s feminist psychoanalysts is able to put the topic of race into the discussion, but it remains a discussion about the white woman’s subject-formation. Once again, this is not a criticism of Walton’s analysis but a symptom of psychoanalysis itself.

Looking at the case material of white women analysands seen by Horney, Deutsch and others, Walton shows how the white patients negotiated their place in the world and in power in relation to black men as well as white men. She is able to put black men and white women into the same analysis (where white men are figured as an invisible centre of power), but women of colour are still absent from the discussion.

Admittedly, the object of Walton’s analysis, or Doane’s, is not to put women of colour into the picture as such, but to “expose and address the ways in which whiteness has come to post as deeply constitutive of female subjectivity, even in the most groundbreaking work of feminists to date” (246). For Walton, the question of the analysand’s race as such is not the central issue. Instead, she is interested in how any analysand comes to understand his or her subjectivity as raced, because, according to her, psychoanalysis and feminism have not given enough consideration to the question of race. For Doane, the point is not to stretch psychoanalysis to cover the black woman, but to delineate exactly how the theoretical position

occupied by the woman of colour disappears in texts written by both men of colour and white women. In both cases, the woman of colour cannot become visible.

Introducing the topic of race into psychoanalysis, then, is no guarantee that the woman of colour gains a space of representation as subject.

It seems reasonable to conclude that despite our best attempts to adapt or attend to context, we have not yet been able to turn psychoanalysis into a descriptive theoretical tool for producing a meaningful analysis of more than a particular target group. Indeed, it remains in question whether all constituencies can be represented through psychoanalysis. In particular, as Fanon, Nandy, Bhabha, Deleuze and Guattari all demonstrate, it seems (almost) impossible to say anything about a particular subjectivity—the woman of colour. And, in fact, this leads us to a question we are forced to pose, which is, can the woman of colour be represented in psychoanalysis at all? Spivak has cautioned us that the question is not whether the subaltern can speak, clearly she can and she does, but whether we can hear her through the terms the discourse has already established about the nature of subjectivity. It is worth noting that though Spivak is often accused of erasing the woman of colour as subject, she is nevertheless one of the few critics who always manages to write about the texts, lives and actions of women of colour.

Even the most recent theoretical interventions into psychoanalysis by scholars focused on the woman of colour conclude that there is no space for the woman of colour as analysand. There is, however, a space for the woman of colour as analyst, and though recuperating the notion of the woman of colour as psychoanalytic subject is not possible, perhaps not even desirable, we can place her at the centre of a new kind of analysis of colonial subjectivity. How does she come to figure as a limit of subjectivity? As Jardine indicates, it is up to women not to disappear from the space of theoretical exploration. Presence in that space may not

always mean claiming the space of representation, instead it may mean claiming the right to critique the terms on which representation is based.

This question proves particularly relevant for postcolonial studies because since the cultural-linguistic turn, a key aspect of its scholarly focus has been the problem of subjectivity, especially in relation to race. An interest in the constitution of subject-positions is the reason we ostensibly turn to psychoanalysis and yet no manoeuvre can put the woman of colour as subject into play in psychoanalytic terms. It seems clear to me that if psychoanalysis is to continue to figure in postcolonial studies, but it cannot say anything about the woman of colour, we have to rethink the terms on which we engage with psychoanalysis. As will become clear later in this chapter, I am not arguing for an abandonment or excision of psychoanalysis but it seems extraordinary that after all this time we still have to say loudly and clearly, psychoanalysis is a flawed theory of subjectivity and can therefore no longer serve as a guiding theory in postcolonial studies.

Though it may seem contradictory, I want to emphasize that I do not reject psychoanalysis on the grounds that it can never be made politically useful. Feminist critics have suggested that psychoanalysis has no politics of its own to offer, but psychoanalysis is politically versatile enough to prove useful to anti-colonial projects. Indeed, I recognize that used in a very tactical way, as we have seen Fanon and Nandy do, it can prove useful in the short term and I do not dismiss the importance of short-term tactics for postcolonial studies. However, it seems to me that the short-term uses of psychoanalysis may be nearly exhausted, and if we do not now begin to examine everything Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha put to one side we risk reproducing the racializing and colonizing logic of psychoanalysis every time we make use of it. By altering content we gain short-term tactical advantage and we even set tremors into the structure that might eventually collapse the edifice. But we cannot shift the terms of subjectivity psychoanalysis establishes.

If alterations to the content of psychoanalysis are simply exhausted as a theoretical solution the possibility of salvaging something of the structures of psychoanalytic theory is held out by Bhabha's work, and to a lesser degree, by Nandy's. Instead of even attempting to alter psychoanalysis, is it possible to simply make use of the 'pure' structures of psychoanalysis?<sup>106</sup> 'Pure' structures means, as we saw in Bhabha's work, that we can use psychoanalytic concepts and theoretical mechanisms without reference to their original context as objective principles about how we know and manage information about the world. In a recent critique of psychoanalysis and Freud studies, Todd Dufresne has suggested, in somewhat blunt terms, that the only reason we continue to draw on the ideas psychoanalysis offers us is bad intellectual habit. He asserts that:

There is little agreement about what Freud got right and what he got wrong. Let's just admit the obvious ... Freud was bound to get something right. I am reminded of authors like Erich Fromm and Max Horkheimer who argue, for example, that the death drive theory may have been very wrong, but it was at least a correct recognition that people are aggressive. But, really, do we need Freud to tell us that people are aggressive? So why do we keep referring to Freud as though he was essentially correct about human psychology when, arguably, he was trivially or incidentally correct? (xvii)

For Dufresne, there is relatively little to be gained from Freud in the way of either material description or critical insight. Instead, we draw on Freud, and in recent times on Lacan, to add a certain *cachet* to our own work, or simply to indicate our intellectual sympathies with certain theoretical interests and objectives. In Nandy's work, for example, I have argued that a commitment to psychoanalysis, via a reading of Erikson's ego-psychology, forms part of a commitment to non-violent forms of resistance. In postcolonial studies generally, a psychoanalytic approach has come to

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<sup>106</sup> In her reading of how psychoanalysis has appropriated the expertise of classical studies with its overdetermined readings of Greek tragedy Winter suggests that this interest in the 'pure' structure of a text (or the happenings in a text) is itself symptomatic of psychoanalysis' drive to swallow other fields into the body of its expertise. See, in particular, her reading of Lacan's reading of Oedipus (83-90). By using the term 'pure' structures here I mean to capture the idea that, as we saw in Bhabha's work, we can use psychoanalytic concepts and theoretical mechanisms without reference to their original context as objective principles about how we know and manage information about the world.



be identified with an interest in questions of desire, subjectivity and ethics and with a concern to expand our view of colonialism as more than a purely material or economic phenomenon.

However, if psychoanalysis has become the predominant way to indicate a commitment to issues such as non-violence, questions of subjectivity and ethics, then the whole theoretical discussion is deeply impoverished. This is partly because psychoanalysis is clearly an imperfect theoretical tool for carrying the weight of such a broad range of concerns. More importantly however, though we recognize the problems with psychoanalysis we continue to use it as the only available language for writing about desires instead of developing new languages. Instead of arguing about whether or not culture and the subject should take precedence over society and the material grounds of critique (as Marxists critics and psychoanalytic-linguistic critics continue to debate) we should be searching for different ways to frame the discussion altogether. While we do undoubtedly turn to certain sources and master texts out of intellectual habit and feeling, I want to address the question of psychoanalytic structures in a less polemical manner than Dufresne.

Dufresne asks ‘do we need Freud to tell us that people are aggressive?’ Obviously the answer to this is no, and he puts the question in reductionist terms to begin with.<sup>107</sup> The more significant question for us is, why can’t we use psychoanalysis as a pure structure? The most significant problem is that without the specific context to ground it psychoanalysis begins to take the foreground in colonial critiques, sometimes to an absurd degree as we saw in Bhabha’s work. Indeed, as Winter observes, borrowing from psychoanalytic theories to read other cultural manifestations only proves Freud’s own assertion in *Totem and Taboo* that

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<sup>107</sup> Freud’s theory of drives and instincts must surely be recognized as something more complex than “people are aggressive”. Indeed, Freud’s contribution is not so much that he finds humans to be aggressive, but the way he is able to theorize how they channel and manage the aggression they feel towards themselves and others.

“researchers in these other disciplines ‘lack’ a ‘technique to make sense of culture, while psychoanalysts simply need to become acquainted with the ‘material’ that lies ready to hand and ‘awaits treatment’” (210). The discussion inevitably becomes one about psychoanalysis, rather than the (post) colonial. Bhabha’s work is a very sophisticated attempt to deploy psychoanalysis, but it is still not able to escape this problem as we saw in chapter three.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, Winter argues that historically psychoanalysis has constituted itself as a discipline by reading another discipline’s texts (historical documents, Shakespearean plays, anthropological surveys) through psychoanalytic concepts, and then claiming universality for itself when it finds those concepts apparently displayed in those texts.

Used in this way psychoanalysis itself grows stronger all the time until, like McClintock’s fetishes, it can provide an explanation of everything from nineteenth-century advertisements to Boer insignia, or one man’s obsession with shoes to the colonial stereotype of the inscrutable Asian. I reduce it to these terms not in order to make it an easy target of my critique—I recognize the complex thinking the notion of the fetish represents in psychoanalytic registers alone—but to demonstrate that in such attempts to use the fetish what matters most continues to be the fetish, the Oedipal complex; the psychoanalytic language rather than the postcolonial object. The psychoanalytic ideas become oddly empty and grandiose at the same time when we use them in such a broad and wide-ranging way. Perhaps, though it is not the purpose of my dissertation to enter into this debate, the time has come for another return to Freud in order to place the fetish back into its original context.

In other words, the apparently useful analogies that we find in psychoanalytic theory threaten to take over the subject matter all together. Psychoanalysis is able to

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<sup>108</sup> This seems to happen to Bhabha most often in his intensely Lacanian moments and this same problem seems to occur in the most recent work of Seshadri-Crooks whose approach obviously shares something with Bhabha’s. In *Desiring Whiteness* Seshadri-Crooks aims to answer some very important questions about race as a regime of visibility but in trying to ‘complicate’ our notion of race she ends by providing us with an analysis so complicated as to be virtually unrepeatable.

make the question of universality that it wants to pose about its own discourse—is psychoanalysis a universally applicable theory—a vital question in the theoretical project of postcolonial studies too. Deleuze and Guattari alert us In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly alert us to the fact that it is all too easy to confuse the categories and problems psychoanalysis produces with the categories and problems that are actually at stake in various kinds of social analyses. The question of psychoanalysis' universal applicability is a distraction from the other questions postcolonial studies could and should be posing to psychoanalysis. From the perspective of postcolonial studies, the main problem with using pure psychoanalytic structures—and ignoring the question of content all together—is simply that it gets us no closer to understanding psychoanalysis as a colonial and colonizing discourse itself.

What Fanon, Nandy and Bhabha are not able to do at the same time as they make use of psychoanalysis for their own political projects is to expose the racializing and colonializing logic of psychoanalysis. Bhabha's work, which stands as an example of the theoretical practice most indebted to orthodox psychoanalysis in postcolonial theory, continually reminds us that the exact fit between psychoanalytic theory and colonial society is itself a question we have yet to pose with any determination to answer it. Though psychoanalysis answers Bhabha's demand for a hermeneutic that does not insist on the fixity of culture, he never explores the problems with psychoanalysis as a Western form of knowledge or the question of why psychoanalysis seems to describe colonial culture so aptly.

If critics do acknowledge the racializing logic of psychoanalysis, they put this issue to one side for a moment or they accept that, despite obvious problems, there is still something structurally useful about Freudian schemes.<sup>109</sup> The question of

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<sup>109</sup> We saw an example of this in Bhabha's notorious footnote about gender, as discussed by McClintock. A more recent example can be found in Seshadri-Crooks deployment of Lacan.

putting problems to the side, for a moment, often means that we never return to deal with the problems, or to the fact that we construct an analysis that works perfectly well until we remember that we have forgotten to account for the theory's latent racism, homophobia or sexism. Added to this there is the problem inherent in the notion that this consideration can be put aside—at least temporarily—in the minds of some, a suggestion that would not be palatable to others. For a feminist theorist the question of putting aside misogyny or sexism for a moment seems unthinkable. Perhaps the time has come that we cannot put the racializing logic of psychoanalysis aside anymore either. I have already admitted the possibility that psychoanalysis may prove useful as a short-term tactic against the *racist* logic of Western knowledge, but I am convinced that we have come far enough in this critical project that we require a long-term strategy against the *racializing* logic of Western knowledge. In psychoanalysis, perhaps because the problem of 'women' or 'race' has already been neglected, we make a tactical mistake by reaffirming that moment of silence, whatever our philosophical or political aims.

Recognition that psychoanalysis is a colonial discipline is not, however, enough by itself. Though such an acknowledgement has been a long time coming, psychoanalysis requires painstaking working through in order to be emptied out of its theoretical power. The advantages psychoanalysis offers are heavily counter-balanced by what it is imperfectly able to do. Even recognition of the material colonial practices of psychoanalysis is not enough since like Mannoni's colonial racists the Berkeley-Hills of the world can be understood as a few 'rotten apples' and not as signs of inherent racializing tendencies of psychoanalysis. This is a quite fair

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In *Desiring Whiteness* she writes "I have tried to work with the richest aspects of the theory, and in the process have found it necessary to wrestle with it ... However, the 'appropriation' of Lacan that follows does not take the expected form of 'ideological revision' ... Attention to the person of Lacan and his political responsibility in failing to detail a theory of race is not relevant to my project" (3).

objection but it does not discount the need to understand how psychoanalysis thinks race and the colonial order of things.

We regularly choose, instead, to use psychoanalysis to explain race itself, as a category of experience, as a historically contingent category, as a category that hovers between the material and the cultural. Seshadri-Crooks and Spillers both contribute to the dialogue between race and psychoanalysis, keeping close to Fanon perhaps but choosing not to say anything about psychoanalysis itself as a discourse about race. Again I recognize the possibility here of a tactical political project that has considerable theoretical value. In fact, Spillers does subordinate psychoanalysis in her text as a “supplementary protocol” for investigating the lives and experiences of African-Americans (378). I do not dismiss any critical work that helps us to understand race in ways that complicate its ‘common-sense’ quality as we live it and experience it. But, even these projects need to eventually go further and investigate what psychoanalysis has already said about race, and made it possible or impossible to say about race.

In other words, I argue that there can be no more partial engagements with psychoanalysis in which we attempt to make useful scraps of psychoanalytic thought for colonial analyses. Instead, I argue for a concerted critical effort to produce psychoanalysis as an *object* of colonial discourse analysis. Instead of accepting the limited terms that only psychoanalysis can speak to notions of subjectivity and desire (always pushing race to the limits and borderlines of subjectivity while it does so), we should try to understand how a theory of subjectivity that is always discounting race makes itself so authoritative as a universal theory of subjectivity.

What I propose is not an excision of psychoanalysis from our critical horizon in postcolonial studies. That would be both impossible, and intellectually irresponsible. It is impossible because, as Deleuze and Guattari remind us, one cannot completely excise psychoanalysis from an understanding of Western culture.

Even Dufresne does not desire such an excision since, as he reads it, psychoanalysis is a useful cautionary tale for the history of Western knowledge. But more importantly, one does not defuse a system of thought by refusing to think it out or, put another way, by refusing to 'out-think' it. Instead, one decolonizes psychoanalysis best by investigating the truth-claims it makes. The best way to deal with psychoanalysis, then, is to read it, write about it and think about it, but to do so in terms that refuse to participate in its logic. Deleuze and Guattari have shown us a way that remains to be unpacked in colonial and postcolonial studies.

It is in this spirit that we turn to Deleuze and Guattari. Although their focus is less squarely on the colonial scene than that of Fanon, Nandy or Bhabha, they nevertheless provide a critique of psychoanalysis that broaches questions of colonization and also works from the same premises about difference as Bhabha works from. Like him, they argue that the person of colour can no more, and no less, be read in terms of his or her culture than the White person. Deleuze and Guattari remind us that if psychoanalysis appears to answer all our hopes and dreams as an analytic, this is because it was designed precisely to do so. This is not because it captures reality or truth, but because it is an apparatus that educates our desires. We have been well schooled, rather than duped, since that would imply some type of conspiracy from which we can all consider ourselves released. I suggest that one aim of postcolonial studies must be to help us deconstruct our colonial education in psychoanalysis and reassemble it for different purposes.

Before I go on to discuss some ways in which we might attempt this postcolonial re-education, I must acknowledge that there is yet one more possibility for a postcolonial use of psychoanalysis that we have not yet considered here. It is a strategic abuse of psychoanalysis, a catachresis, as Spivak has suggested, or a contrapuntal reading, in Said's terms. Certainly many of the most interesting and persuasive feminist explorations of psychoanalysis have been hauntings and

possessions of Freud's texts (such as the work of Irigaray and Kofman) and a postcolonial haunting would undoubtedly be a fruitful theoretical project. In some sense all the uses of psychoanalysis that we examined here are catachreses in that they use psychoanalysis for different purposes than originally intended. However, they do so within the confines of psychoanalytic terms, using the same concepts and assuming that they work in approximately the same way in colonial conditions as they do in metropolitan, bourgeois settings.

Once again, I recognize the value of such an intervention, provided it is actually able to inhabit psychoanalysis and turn it to other political as well as epistemological ends. Nevertheless, it seems that such interventions often end by being sophisticated reaffirmations of psychoanalysis because reading against the grain has, in some sense, already been provided for by the discourse itself. Psychoanalysis itself is full of uncertainties and incoherencies and therefore reading it against the grain proves to be a theoretical challenge that one can only keep in sight by being radically anti-psychoanalytic from the beginning. I am also convinced that it is not possible to effect the kind of theoretical detachment from psychoanalysis if one is trying to inhabit it at the same time. Perhaps the final appeal of my argument should be simply the argument of novelty—we have already tried to inhabit psychoanalysis and deconstruct it without in significantly diminishing its ontological and epistemological hold on us. Why should we not try something more radical?

### *Psychoanalysis as Postcolonial Object*

Psychoanalysis is a theory developed in the scientific and theoretical context of nineteenth-century scientific racism. In drawing attention to its origins I do not mean to revive a well-worn argument against psychoanalysis that Freud was a racist, but I do want to emphasize that he theorized in a climate where certain notions of race and racialization underpinned scientific and philosophical enterprises. If we

mean to take account of this in our use of psychoanalysis for postcolonial purposes it seems absurd to continue to use psychoanalysis as an instrument of our analyses. In this last section I want to clarify what theoretical and critical attitudes would make it possible to put psychoanalysis at the centre of our analytical focus, since to demonstrate specifically how I would perform this critical task would be the subject of a study of its own. I want to draw attention to four issues that seem crucial.

First, we must not forget what we are about in postcolonial studies or allow psychoanalysis to write its project in larger and bolder letters over our critiques. Spillers and Spivak, though they both find interesting motifs and ideas in psychoanalysis, maintain a critical detachment from psychoanalysis that allows their larger point to come through. For Spillers, the specific questions that affect, and emerge in, the Black American context are never weighted down by the 'pure' structure of psychoanalysis. Similarly, Spivak never allows psychoanalysis' drive to assert itself as a universal theory to distract her from the task of showing how "feminism lives in the master-text as well as in the pores" (92). If we agree that postcolonial studies aim to understand and reveal how colonial history has produced many of the categories of thought, knowledge and subjectivity we have today, then we need to investigate psychoanalytic categories in the same way as we have already begun to destabilize the foundational categories of historical and literary representation.

Second, this task supposes that we abandon the 'reading against the grain' approach to psychoanalysis, in the hope that it might tell us something it did not mean to tell us. I do not mean that we should only have recourse to readings that take psychoanalysis at face value (supposing that were even possible), or that deconstructive strategies should be tossed out of the window, but that we ought to be especially careful with a master-text like psychoanalysis that is always, already against the grain. It is simply too easy to become weary of reading against the grain



and slip imperceptibly into it. It is the special preserve of psychoanalysis, however, that it seems to anticipate antagonistic reading beforehand and disarm them. Perhaps it is a form of interpretive cowardice to choose not to tangle with psychoanalysis at such close quarters, but it is worth observing that though Marxism is a coherent theory that critiques the theory of capital, we do not have the equivalent theory that critiques the psychoanalytic economy of desire. I do not forever discount the possibility of using psychoanalysis as a theoretical instrument again, although I admit that from this view it is hard to imagine what such psychoanalysis would look like. Instead, I caution that psychoanalysis is a particularly elusive master-text and trying to outwit it on its own terms is neither possible nor a particularly productive use of our scholarly energies.

Third, postcolonial studies can and should rely more on literary texts themselves to answer our questions about identity in the colony. In the previous chapter, I noted that Deleuze considered writers the most gifted diagnosticians of society's ills. In other words, writers, much more than physicians, psychoanalysts or psychiatrists were in a position to produce meaningful accounts of the codings, decodings and recodings of desire in any society since they were not bound to a diagnostic framework (i.e., squeezing every social conflict into the triangular terms of the Oedipal complex), and they were in the position to allow the depiction of those desires to take their own form in the organic form, style, actions and tone of the novel. Where, in Deleuze's view, psychoanalysis profoundly failed as a symptomatology, literature succeeded admirably. Hallward's work, as we saw in the last chapter, is one of the only studies written from a postcolonial perspective to follow Deleuze's cue. His book *Absolutely Postcolonial* produces a theoretical framework for thinking about the individuation and relationality of colonial subjects by looking at how four different postcolonial writers write about identity and group relations. In Hallward's book the writers are the postcolonial theorists, not simply the

producers of texts we come to make sense of afterwards. If colonial desire requires a theoretical language of its own, it would seem that an excellent language is already provided by the authors we read. Though, regrettably, I do not have the scope here to provide an example of how such an analysis might work it bears further investigation.

Fourth, as I already suggested in the previous section, we must keep the woman of colour in our theoretical sights. Though the woman of colour cannot be recuperated and restored as a subject she can figure as an analyst. Seshadri-Crooks has discussed the problems a woman of colour encounters when she tries to enter Freud's texts as an analyst. The task, then is by no means straightforward, but the woman of colour as analyst might force us to carry on questioning why we accept psychoanalysis as the predominant language of subjectivity and desire when it cannot be made to represent her desires and subjectivities.

Despite the fact that I cannot undertake an actual analysis here, I want to explore a few ways of understanding this task before I conclude. First, it might mean that we consider psychoanalysis, as Doane and Brenkman have suggested, as an ethnography of whiteness. That is we can consider psychoanalysis as a discourse on race insofar as it constructs and deconstructs the boundaries of whiteness as the normative subject position. Nandy's project is perhaps the only one that comes close to positioning psychoanalysis in these terms, though, as we saw in his discussion of culture, as well as Mannoni's, that it is sometimes a question that they pose by omission. If culture explains 'Others', and psychoanalysis explains the 'self' then the logical assumption must be that psychoanalysis is an ethnography of the white, male, heterosexual self.

What are the implications of such an analysis for postcolonial studies? First, it opens up psychoanalytic texts and practices as a rich vein of knowledge about racialized subjectivities. It means reading Freud, and Lacan, as writing about the

subject's racial formation. Thus far only feminist theorists have been willing to undertake this task, and in particular Walton and Doane, while they acknowledge the limits of such an analysis, have already tried to undo the ways in which psychoanalytic theory, in its feminist forms at least, writes race out of the analysis.

Yet another way of positioning psychoanalysis as our object, one that is perhaps the most germane to this study of postcolonial methods, is to consider psychoanalysis as a practice and text that we can read as an index of colonization. Here we return to Nandy's account of G. Bose, and the case of Indian psychoanalysis. Nandy provided us with a complex account of one Indian psychoanalyst's experiments with Hindu texts and Freudian concepts. While this was interesting as a way of understanding one moment, or one set of colonial documents, it did not do very much to help us understand how psychoanalysis even came to matter in the colonies. One example of such a study might be an investigation of how colonized subjects became 'psychoanalyzable', how they entered into and were captured by the discourse. Histories of colonial mental health practice tend to focus on the European doctors and their European patients since, unsurprisingly; the bulk of resources went to caring for the European or Anglo-Colonial patients. At the same time there was a lot of discussion of colonized people in terms of psychoanalytic and psychiatric disorders (Hindus as a culture were considered to be anal personality types for example) even while they remained relatively untreated for mental illnesses they actually suffered from.

In fact, the problem went further than this. Colonized Africans, as Jock McCulloch's work suggests, were actually not considered human enough to suffer from mental illnesses such as depression. The diagnosis of mental illness presupposes a certain understanding of what emotions are, how they are expressed and when it is suitable to express them. Africans could not suffer from mental illness because they, supposedly, did not experience "guilt, religious doubt and artistic originality,

characteristics often identified as the very foundation of Western subjectivity” (McCulloch 111). If Africans did not exhibit these characteristics of Western individualism, the heightened sensibility of the civilized person, they could not suffer from depression.

This is a social field that could be highly informative—what were psychoanalysts theorizing about race, how were they actually treating patients (and who were they treating?), and finally, what made it possible to speak in psychoanalytic terms about people one could not actually psychoanalyze, how and when did these people become psychoanalyzable? These kinds of questions keep us focused not on how psychoanalysis explains race, the colony, colonial stereotypes, as it explains everything else but on how race, the colony and colonial identifications were produced, educated and reproduced by psychoanalysis itself. Psychoanalysis, in this type of analysis, at last becomes the object of postcolonial studies, rather than the comptrroller.

The aim of this dissertation has not been to either attack or recuperate psychoanalysis. Indeed, I have argued that focusing on psychoanalysis itself diverts us from the task of postcolonial studies which, as I understand it, is to reveal how knowledge systems, academic disciplines and sciences have come to exert their influence over the ways in which we live race while all the time denying the importance of the category of race. I remain convinced that psychoanalysis participates in the colonial order of things in ways that we have yet to unpack, and I want to propose the task of scrutinizing colonializing and racializing logic of psychoanalysis as a way of foregrounding the political project of postcolonial studies—a project that should aim to re-read psychoanalysis or history or literary studies without being overrun by those disciplines. As Stoler has argued we routinely use Foucault without heeding his critique of psychoanalysis, and though Deleuze and Guattari are rising again in postcolonial studies this has more to do with their critique

of capitalism and their rhizomatic theory of multiplicity than it has to do with their critique of psychoanalytic thinking. Stoler's patient questions about psychoanalysis in colonial historiography have been relatively rarely discussed in a work that was otherwise groundbreaking in colonial discourse studies. If many of us still remain unconvinced that psychoanalysis bears examination as an object of analysis itself, then we have to ask ourselves what do we have invested in psychoanalytic ways of thinking that we are not prepared to examine. Deleuze reminds us "we have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts we deserve given our way of being or style of life" (Olkowski 46). If the repeated suspicion about psychoanalysis is resistance, then perhaps it is the task of postcolonial studies to resist.

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