

COLONIALISM/ POSTCOLONIALISM

Ania Loomba



3rd
edition

ROUTLEDGE

the NEW CRITICAL IDIOM



COLONIALISM/POSTCOLONIALISM

Colonialism/Postcolonialism is a comprehensive yet accessible guide to the historical, theoretical and political dimensions of colonial and postcolonial studies.

This new edition includes a new introduction and conclusion as well as extensive updates throughout. Topics covered include globalization, new grassroots movements (including Occupy Wall Street), the environmental crisis, and the relationship between Marxism and postcolonial studies. Loomba also discusses how ongoing struggles such as those of indigenous peoples, and the enclosure of the commons in different parts of the world shed light on the long histories of colonialism. This edition also has extensive discussions of temporality, and the relationship between pre-modern, colonial and contemporary forms of racism.

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- the relationship of colonial discourse to literature
- anticolonial thought and movements
- challenges to colonialism, including anticolonial discourses
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- issues of sexuality and colonialism, and the intersection of feminist and postcolonial thought
- the relationship of activist struggles and scholarship.

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Ania Loomba is Catherine Bryson Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, USA.

THE NEW CRITICAL IDIOM

SERIES EDITOR: JOHN DRAKAKIS, UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING

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Ania Loomba

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SERIES EDITOR'S PREFACE

The New Critical Idiom is a series of introductory books which seeks to extend the lexicon of literary terms, in order to address the radical changes which have taken place in the study of literature during the last decades of the twentieth century. The aim is to provide clear, well-illustrated accounts of the full range of terminology currently in use, and to evolve histories of its changing usage.

The current state of the discipline of literary studies is one where there is considerable debate concerning basic questions of terminology. This involves, among other things, the boundaries which distinguish the literary from the non-literary; the position of literature within the larger sphere of culture; the relationship between literatures of different cultures; and questions concerning the relation of literary to other cultural forms within the context of interdisciplinary studies.

It is clear that the field of literary criticism and theory is a dynamic and heterogeneous one. The present need is for individual volumes on terms which combine clarity of exposition with an adventurousness of perspective and a breadth of application. Each volume will contain as part of its apparatus some indication of the direction in which the definition of particular terms is likely to move, as well as expanding the disciplinary boundaries within which some of these terms have been traditionally contained. This will involve some re-situation of terms within the larger field of cultural representation, and will introduce examples from the area of film and the modern media in addition to examples from a variety of literary texts.

INTRODUCTION

Since the first edition of this book appeared in 1998, postcolonial studies has become *both* more entrenched in the Western academy, with many more books and journals appearing each year, *and* widely proclaimed as a dying field, replaced by less inescapably political fields of globalization studies, global anglophone studies, or world literature studies. This is ironic, given that our world has become clearly more asymmetrical in every way, across the globe, and also within most nation-states. Are these asymmetries legacies of colonialism—in other words, are they postcolonial phenomena—or do they mark something new, a break with the earlier history of empire? Is postcolonial studies redundant today or more important than ever?

When I first wrote this book, the field was still relatively new, and it was associated with a post-structuralist approach to literature and culture, which was often written in a dense and difficult language. At that time, despite the professed self-definition of most postcolonial critics as politically engaged teachers and writers, postcolonial studies was heavily criticised for being disengaged from questions of the economy, and for being so in the thrall of newfangled notions of ‘difference’ as to be depoliticised. At the

same time, the most strident complaints came from a different position—from conservatives who feared that postcolonial studies was part of the dangerous new politicization of the academy in general, and humanities in particular. There is no doubt that along with feminism, queer studies, race studies and other fields, postcolonial studies did transform the curriculum within many institutions, and also helped change the profile of those who were admitted as students and faculty. Thus entangled with the controversies of the culture wars, the field was understood to be eroding the centrality of great European art and culture, and even undermining the greatness of ‘Western democracy’ (see, for example, ACTA 1996 and 2002). Many years later, after the events of September 11, 2001, the US House of Representatives was urged to stop funding professors and students who had turned ‘anti-American’ under the influence of ‘postcolonial theory’ (Kurtz 2003).

I wrote this book as a teacher in India who felt that the issues that were being raised by the field merited both serious study and a refiguring. Ella Shohat had written that the very acceptability of the term ‘postcolonial’ in the Western academy served to keep at bay more sharply political terms such as ‘imperialism’, or ‘geopolitics’ (Shohat 1993: 99). Terry Eagleton (1994) made a related point that within ‘postcolonial thought’ one is ‘allowed to talk about cultural differences, but not—or not much—about economic exploitation’. While agreeing with these critiques, Eagleton’s use of the term ‘postcolonial thought’ to designate only a very particular academic trend in the West seemed unsatisfactory to me. Many writers and academics, especially those working in once-colonized countries, *do* write extensively about economic exploitation in relation to colonialism and its aftermath, but their work is often not included within what has become institutionalised as ‘post-colonial studies’. What Barbara Christian (1990) called ‘the race for theory’ had become detrimental to thinking about the area of study itself. Even as students felt obliged to engage with post-colonial theory, their encounter with this field rarely taught them much about colonial and postcolonial histories and cultures.

To offer an alternative map of postcolonial studies, this book shows anti-colonial intellectuals and activists as they drew upon,

but also expanded and critiqued, Marxist and other radical Western philosophies and challenged dominant ideas of humanity, history and identity. It locates key philosophical and activist networks that fed into the making of anticolonialism. It shows how their insights intersected with particular developments in philosophy, linguistics, sociology, history, feminism, race studies and cultural studies, and argues that these intersections generated new types of inquiries into the colonial past, a new focus on anticolonial resistance, and a new analysis of the dynamics of recently decolonized states. But from the very beginning, the field was riven with intense debates about the relationship between Marxism and post-structuralism, economic thought and cultural criticism, and the divides between the First World/Global North and Third World/Global South. In this book, I try and explain why these debates arose, what form they took, and use them to explore both the limitations and possibilities of 'postcolonial studies' and to argue that it is really not a tightly bounded 'field' as such. For that reason, in this book, the work of individual thinkers and critics is located within larger debates, such as those about ideology or representation, gender or agency. Particular issues, such as the place of gender in colonial rule, anticolonial movements and post-colonial societies, are highlighted in some sections but also dealt with throughout the book.

The book is divided into three main chapters, and a new Conclusion. The first chapter discusses the different meanings of terms such as colonialism, imperialism and postcolonialism, and the controversies surrounding them. It connects colonial discourse studies to key debates on ideology, subjectivity and language, showing why both a new terminology and a new reaching across disciplinary boundaries became necessary in the study of colonialism. This chapter will introduce readers to aspects of post-structuralist, Marxist, feminist and postmodern thought which have become important or controversial in relation to postcolonial studies. The last section of the chapter discusses the innovations, as well as the problems, that have been generated by the literary inception and inflection of colonial discourse studies.

The second chapter considers the complexities of colonial and postcolonial subjects and identities. How does the colonial

encounter restructure ideologies of racial, cultural, class and sexual difference? In what ways are patriarchal oppression and colonial domination conceptually and historically connected to one another? What is the relationship between capitalism and colonialism? Is racial difference produced by colonialist domination, or did colonialism generate racism? What frameworks can we adopt for understanding the complex restructuring of individual as well as collective identities during colonialism? Is psychoanalysis useful for understanding colonial subjectivities? How can we understand the concept of hybridity in the light of these issues? These questions are addressed with a view to opening up the larger debate on the relationship between material and economic processes and human subjectivities. This edition offers a new discussion of religious difference and how it shapes the idea of race, both historically and today; this history of race also shows why postcolonial studies must engage deeply with the past.

In the third chapter, processes of decolonisation, resistance, and the problems of recovering the viewpoint of colonised subjects from a 'postcolonial' perspective are examined. Various theories of resistance are approached here, not in a descriptive manner but by considering the crucial debates they precipitate about authenticity and hybridity, the nation, ethnicity and colonial identities. Theories of nationalism and pan-nationalism and their fracturing by gender, class and ideological divides are considered, alongside two of the most vexed questions in postcolonial studies. The first asks about the agency of the colonised, or 'subaltern' subject, and whether it can be recovered and represented by postcolonial intellectuals. The second examines the relationship between Marxism, postmodernism and postcolonial studies. In this new edition, I pay special attention to the place of feminism in these debates, arguing that feminism helps us think more sharply about how to combine critique and activism. Wherever possible, I have also placed the history and legacies of colonialism alongside questions raised by globalization, a question that I also turn to in the conclusion which looks at the new developments in the world and in the field since the first edition was published. Throughout the book, I try and show why postcolonial studies (however we define it—a field, or a perspective, or a political commitment) can

only remain a healthy and vital field of study if it is produced and debated within an international community. New challenges for postcolonial studies, especially those raised by considerations of globalization, the environment, and new global economic crisis are discussed both in the second half of this introduction and in the new concluding chapter.

One of the most intimidating aspects of postcolonial studies is the sheer scope of the subject. Modern European colonialism was by far the most extensive of the different kinds of colonial contact that have been a recurrent feature of human history. By the 1930s, colonies and ex-colonies of Europe covered 84.6 per cent of the land surface of the globe. Only parts of Arabia, Persia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Tibet, China, Siam and Japan had never been under formal European government (Fieldhouse 1989: 373). Such a geographical sweep, and colonialism's heterogeneous practices and impact over the last four centuries, makes it very difficult to 'theorise' or make generalisations about colonial dynamics. Each scholar, depending on her disciplinary affiliation, geographic and institutional location, and area of expertise, is likely to come up with a different set of examples, emphases and perspectives on the colonial question. I myself tended to turn to early modern Europe or to modern India and Africa for many of my examples. But just because colonial and postcolonial studies encompass such a vast area, it does not mean that we should only confine ourselves to study of particular cases, without any attempt to think about the larger structures of colonial rule and thought or their legacies. The point is not that we need to know the entire historical and geographic diversity of colonialism in order to theorise, but rather that we must build our theories with an awareness that such diversity exists. As Bruce Robbins warns us, while we must stay clear of the 'easy generalization' we should 'retain the right to *difficult* generalization' (1992: 174–76).¹

We certainly cannot dismiss the critique that postcolonial theory can be/is often written in a confusing manner, or that some of the landmark essays in postcolonial studies are notoriously difficult to read, or that the term 'postcolonialism' has become so heterogeneous and diffuse that it is impossible to satisfactorily describe what its study might entail. But this difficulty is sometimes due to

the inter-disciplinary nature of postcolonial studies which may range from literary analysis to research in the archives of colonial government, from the critique of medical texts to economic theory. It is also the case that the newer critical vocabularies are not always merely 'jargon'. They have emerged from thoughtful developments both in the social sciences and literary and linguistic studies, and therefore cannot simply be replaced by an everyday terminology. Nevertheless, it is important to try and discuss the issues at stake in language that is more 'user-friendly'. This book is written in the belief that postcolonial theory does not have to be 'depressingly difficult' (Williams and Chrisman 1994: ix), and in the hope that it will help readers to be energised by the intellectual and political possibilities of particular issues central to the field.

By the time the second edition of the book came out in 2005, the global situation had radically changed from that obtaining in 1998 when the book was first published. Two developments, seemingly contradictory but deeply connected, were especially important in marking both new problems and new opportunities for postcolonial studies. The first was the events of September 11, 2001, and the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, which made questions of 'empire' newly topical and urgent, and reminded us that the world was far from 'postcolonial.' The second was the question of globalization, and whether new transnational economic and cultural 'flows' had so deeply altered the globe that the histories and legacies of empire were no longer useful for understanding the contemporary moment.

After the events of 9/11 in New York, conservative academics and policy makers across Britain and the US started advocating the need for 'a new kind of imperialism' spearheaded by the US that would fill the 'power vacuum' and chaos left by the earlier wave of decolonisation (see Stille 2002: 7; Bacevich 2003; Harvey 2005). They felt a compulsion to appropriate the history of past empires, especially the Roman and the British. Thus, Niall Ferguson exhorted Americans to emulate the British Empire, to acknowledge their imperial mission, to be in no hurry to return home from spaces like Iraq, and to send their 'best and brightest' (instead of their new immigrants and poor) to function as colonial soldiers and governors:

So long as the American Empire dare not speak its name ... today's ambitious young men and women will take one look at the prospects for postwar Iraq and say with one voice, 'Don't even go there'. Americans need to go there. If the best and brightest insist on staying home, today's unspoken imperial project may end—unspeakably—tomorrow. (Ferguson 2003: 52)

Of course, the *fact* of a US Empire was hardly new. After World War I the German conservative thinker Carl Schmitt had lamented the imminent passing of the European-led world order (founded precisely as European states jostled for colonial power in the seventeenth century) and the coming of a new US-centred one. The former, in his view, was multi-polar, because competing European states had established an international order, what he calls the first *nomos* or order of the earth or the *jus publicum Europaeum*. This order was precisely the order of colonialism, 'originally and essentially a law among *states*, among European sovereigns', aimed at establishing a 'European core' to be distinguished from what lay beyond (2003: 127–28). The new order, Schmitt bemoaned, would be unipolar and American hegemony would be complete. For political analysts and especially legal theorists, Schmitt's views on the international order have been very useful in thinking about the nature of global power, even though Schmitt himself was no liberal (Balakrishnan 2002). In 1933 Schmitt suggested that political power is essentially the power to establish oneself as above the law, as the exception; its famous opening line announces: 'Sovereign is he who decides on the exception' (1985: 5). Historically, exceptionality was the prerogative of the king, and later that power was appropriated by the nation-state; in the realm of international politics, American exceptionalism claims that the US, like the king, and like the State, stands above the law because *it* dispenses justice. As Paul Johnson fervently put it:

Fate, or Divine Providence, has placed America at this time in the position of sole superpower, with the consequent duty to uphold global order and to punish, or prevent, the great crimes of the world. ... It must continue to engage the task imposed upon it, not in

any spirit of hubris but in the full and certain knowledge that it is serving the best and widest interests of humanity.

(Johnson 2003: n.p.)

This was precisely the rhetoric used by the Bush administration in its invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. During the heyday of the British empire, the medieval concept of *translatio imperii*, which suggested that political power or legitimacy ‘translated’ first from Greece to Rome, and then to western Europe, was freely invoked as a justification of European imperialism. In the wake of the invasion of Iraq, it surfaced again in order to anoint the US as Britain’s rightful heir: ‘Winston Churchill saw in the United States a worthy successor to the British Empire, one that would carry on Britain’s liberalizing mission. We cannot rest until something emerges that is just as estimable and concrete as what Churchill saw when he gazed across the Atlantic’ (Kaplan 2003: 83).

Such an endeavour calls for the whitewashing of the destructive histories of modern empires, something that began to happen with renewed vigour in academia, politics and the media. David Cannadine’s *Ornamentalism* informed its readers that there was no racism in the British empire. George Bush claimed that the US freed Filipinos instead of colonising them. Such whitewashing directly attacked postcolonial scholarship. Dinesh D’Souza’s ‘Two Cheers for Colonialism’ claimed that ‘apologists for terrorism’ such as Osama Bin Laden and other ‘justifications of violence’ rely on a large body of scholarship ‘which goes by the names of “anti-colonial studies,” “postcolonial studies,” or “subaltern studies”’ (2002: n.p.). Niall Ferguson wrote that:

The British Empire has had a pretty lousy press from a generation of ‘postcolonial’ historians anachronistically affronted by its racism. But the reality is that the British were significantly more successful at establishing market economies, the rule of law and the transition to representative government than the majority of postcolonial governments have been. The policy ‘mix’ favored by Victorian imperialists reads like something just published by the International Monetary Fund, if not the World Bank: free trade, balanced budgets, sound

money, the common law, incorrupt administration and investment in infrastructure financed by international loans. These are precisely the things the world needs right now.

(Ferguson 2003: 54)

Here Ferguson justifies British colonialism by comparing it to the work of the IMF and World Bank, and to the ideology of free trade and neoliberal reforms, all elements of what is loosely referred to as globalization.

This brings us to the second reason why the world seemed so dramatically changed between 1998 and 2005—a process that was celebrated as ‘globalization’. Whereas Ferguson compares this new globalization to earlier imperial histories, until very recently globalization tended to be spoken of (and taught in universities) as something radically new and different. Innumerable scholars suggested that the supposedly benign and pacific forms of late twentieth-century globalization had rendered obsolete critical and analytical perspectives which took as their focal point the history and legacy of European colonialism. Globalization, they argued, cannot be analysed using concepts like margins and centres that were so central to postcolonial studies. Contemporary economies, politics, cultures and identities are all better described in terms of transnational networks, regional and international flows and the dissolution of geographic and cultural borders, paradigms which are familiar to postcolonial critics but which were now invoked to suggest a radical break with the narratives of colonization and decolonisation. Significantly, the book that most famously made this case did so by describing the contemporary global formation as imperial. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Empire* argued that the new global order should still in fact be called ‘Empire,’ but that its contemporary dynamics should be understood in *contrast* to those of European empires:

In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial centre of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a decentred and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural

exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colours of the imperial map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow.

(Hardt and Negri 2000: xii–xiii)

Whereas the old imperial world was marked by competition between different European powers, the new order is characterised by a ‘single power that overdetermines them all, structures them in a unitary way, and treats them under one common notion of right that is decidedly postcolonialist and postimperialist’ (9).

Hardt and Negri do not identify the United States as this new power, although they do argue that ‘Empire is born through the global expansion of the internal US constitutional project’, a project which sought to include and incorporate minorities into the mainstream rather than simply expel or exclude them (182). Likewise, they argue that contemporary Empire is ‘imperial and not imperialist’ because it does not consist of powerful nations that aim to ‘invade, destroy and subsume subject countries within its sovereignty’ as the old powers did but rather to absorb them into new international network (182). Hence, despite the importance of the United States within it,

Empire can only be conceived of as a universal republic, a network of powers and counterpowers structured in a boundless and inclusive architecture. This imperial expansion has nothing to do with imperialism, nor with those state organisms designed for conquest, pillage, genocide, colonization, and slavery. Against such imperialisms, Empire expands and consolidates the model of network power. Certainly ... the expansive moments of Empire have been bathed in tears and blood, but this ignoble history does not negate the difference between the two concepts.

(Hardt and Negri 2000: 167)

Hardt and Negri suggest that the new Empire is better compared to the Roman Empire rather than to modern European colonialism, since imperial Rome also loosely incorporated its subject states rather than controlled them directly.

This thesis received enormous attention, and generated vigorous discussion about the dynamics of contemporary global power and how best to challenge it. Vilashini Cooppan argued that the analogy with imperial Rome makes it difficult to accurately analyse US imperialism and its place in the contemporary world (Cooppan 2005). But Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman wrote that 'characterizing US political and cultural power as a global dominant detracts from a more thorough examination of sites and modalities of power in the global era'; accordingly, they celebrated *Empire* as 'exceptionally helpful in advancing our capacity to think past the reinscription of globalization as a centre/ periphery dynamic that produces resistant margins and hegemonic cores'. In their view it is this model of margin and cores which has prevented postcolonial studies from being able to analyse the operations of contemporary power (2001: 608). Other critics warn that geo-political centres and margins have not simply evaporated and that globalization has intensified pre-existing global asymmetries, particularly those that were produced by modern colonialism. Tim Brennan observes that *Empire* 'has almost nothing to say about the actual peoples and histories the empires left behind ... the authors barely nod in the direction of guest worker systems, uncaptialized agriculture, and the archipelago of *maquiladoras* at the heart of globalization's gulag ... the colonized of *today* are given little place in the book's sprawling thesis about multitudes, biopolitical control, and the creation of alternative values' (2003: 337).

The controversy about *Empire* was thus shaped by wider and ongoing debates about the nature and effects of globalization. Hardt and Negri's post-Foucauldian emphasis, and indeed their suggestion that global networks have not only changed the nature of repression but will in fact facilitate resistance by the global 'multitude' from diverse locations all over the world, resonates in disturbing ways with the claims of globalization's neoliberal advocates who argue that the global mobility of capital, industry, workers, goods and consumers dissolves earlier hierarchies and inequities, democratises nations and the relations between nations, and creates new opportunities which percolate down in some form or another to every section of society. These claims are also echoed by many cultural critics; for example, Arjun

Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* offers catalogues of 'multiple locations' and new hybridities, new forms of communication, new foods, new clothes and new patterns of consumption as evidence for both the newness and the benefits of globalization. Simon Gikandi astutely observes that despite the fact that globalization is so often seen to have made redundant the terms of postcolonial critique, the radical novelty of globalization is in fact asserted by appropriating the key terms of postcolonial studies such as 'hybridity' and 'difference', terms which were shunned by an earlier generation of social scientists. As he also points out, 'it is premature to argue that the images and narratives that denote the new global culture are connected to a global *structure* or that they are disconnected from earlier or older forms of identity. In other words, there is no reason to suppose that the global flow in images has a *homological connection* to transformation in social or cultural relationships' (Gikandi 2001:5; emphasis added).

Key to Hardt and Negri's understanding of the new Empire was that the mobility of people within it would dissolve older ideologies of difference; they made this suggestion by citing Etienne Balibar's important work on neo-racism which points out that a biological understanding of race has given way to a more culture-based understanding of difference (Hardt and Negri 2000: 191–92). No longer are the differences between, say, Europeans and Africans seen to be genetic in origin; rather they are understood as the products of disparate cultures. But whereas Hardt and Negri claim that these new ideologies of difference are more flexible, Balibar actually suggests the opposite. They write: 'Fixed and biological notions of peoples thus tend to dissolve into a fluid and amorphous multitude, which is of course shot through with lines of conflict and antagonism, but none that appear as fixed and eternal boundaries' (195). For Balibar, the new racial ideologies are not *less* rigid simply because they invoke culture instead of nature; rather, he writes, we see today that 'culture can also function like a nature' and can be equally pernicious (Balibar 1991a: 22). For instance, phobia about Arabs today 'carries with it an image of Islam as a "conception of the world" which is incompatible with Europeanness' (24). Thus Muslims are regarded as people who can never successfully assimilate into Western societies, or who

are culturally conditioned to be violent, ideas that dominated the media coverage of Islam after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States on September 11, 2001.

Culturalist views of difference, moreover, are far from being entirely new products of globalization. Balibar himself connects neo-racism to the anti-Semitism of the Renaissance. More recently, Lisa Lampert suggests a congruence between Samuel Huntington's rhetoric about the 'clash of civilizations' and medieval anti-Semitism and Islamophobia (Lampert 2004). Early modern European views of Muslims and Jews are also important in reminding us that 'culture' and 'biology' have in fact never been neatly separable categories, and that strategies of inclusion and exclusion have always worked hand in hand. Thus, it was the mass conversion of Jews and Moors after they were officially expelled from Catholic Spain in 1492 that intensified anxieties about Christian identity. It was then that the Inquisition formulated the 'pure blood' laws which engendered pseudo-biological ideologies of difference (see Friedman 1987, Loomba 2002). On the other hand, in the heyday of imperialism racial ideologies did not work through the ideology of exclusion alone but always strategically appropriated and included many of its others. Finally, contemporary views of cultural difference mirror past and present geo-political tensions and rivalries. Thus it is no accident that it is *Muslims* who are regarded as barbaric and given to acts of violence and *Asians* who are seen as diligent but overly attached to their own rules of business and family, both modes of being which are seen as differently incommensurate with the Western world. These views not only reverberate with older colonial views about Muslims as despotic and intractable, and Asians as inscrutable and insular, but speak to contemporary global economic and political rivalries.

Critics of globalization do not deny its reality or its transformative powers, or the many ways in which it marks a departure from the old world order. But they contest its supposedly democratising effects or egalitarian potential, and point out that if we treat contemporary globalization as if it did not have a history, we obscure the inequities it cements. There is no doubt that globalization has made information and technology more widely

available, and has brought economic prosperity to new sections of the world. However, the extreme mobility of capital, P. Sainath observes, far from fostering ideological openness, has resulted in its own fundamentalism, which then catalyses others in reaction:

Market fundamentalism destroys more human lives than any other simply because it cuts across all national, cultural, geographic, religious and other boundaries. It's as much at home in Moscow as in Mumbai or Minnesota. A South Africa —whose advances in the early 1990s thrilled the world —moved swiftly from apartheid to neoliberalism. It sits as easily in Hindu, Islamic or Christian societies. And it contributes angry, despairing recruits to the armies of all religious fundamentalisms. Based on the premise that the market is the solution to all the problems of the human race, it is, too, a very religious fundamentalism. It has its own Gospel: The Gospel of St. Growth, of St. Choice.

(Sainath 2001: n.p.)

Joseph E. Stiglitz, Nobel laureate and once Chief Economist at the World Bank, also used the phrase ‘market fundamentalism’ in his critique of globalization as it has been imposed upon the world by institutions like the World Bank and the IMF:

The international financial institutions have pushed a particular ideology—market fundamentalism—that is both bad economics and bad politics; it is based on premises concerning how markets work that do not hold even for developed countries, much less for developing countries. The IMF has pushed these economics policies without a broader vision of society or the role of economics within society. And it has pushed these policies in ways that have undermined emerging democracies. More generally, globalization itself has been governed in ways that are undemocratic and have been disadvantageous to developing countries, especially the poor within those countries.

(Stiglitz 2002: n.p.)

Stiglitz connects these developments to colonialism, suggesting that ‘the IMF’s approach to developing countries has the feel of a colonial ruler’, and that developing countries dealing with the IMF

have been forced to ask ‘a very disturbing question: Had things really changed since the “official” ending of colonialism a half century ago?’ (2003: 40–41).

Of course, even as mainstream media celebrated globalization and its supposed facilitation of cosmopolitan exchange, its dissolution of national boundaries, and the free flow of capital, there was plenty of serious work documenting that the very opposite was occurring. In 2003, an Indian research group argued that

The great range of actual measures carried on under the label of globalization ... were not those of integration and development. Rather they were the processes of imposition, disintegration, underdevelopment and appropriation. They were of continued extraction of debt servicing payments of the third world; depression of the prices of raw materials exported by the same countries; removal of tariff protection for their vulnerable productive sectors; removal of restraints on foreign direct investment, allowing giant foreign corporations to grab larger sectors of the third world's economies; removal of restraints on the entry and exit of massive flows of speculative international capital, allowing their movements to dictate economic life; reduction of State spending on productive activity, development and welfare; privatization of activities, assets and natural resources, sharp increases in the cost of essential services and goods such as electricity, fuel, health care, education, transport, and food (accompanied by the harsher depression of women's consumption within each family's declining consumption); withdrawal of subsidized credit earlier directed to starved sectors; dismantling of workers' security of employment; reduction of the share of wages in the social product; suppression of domestic industry in the third world and closures of manufacturing firms on a massive scale; ruination of independent small industries; ruination of the handicrafts/ handloom sector; replacement of subsistence crops with cash crops; destruction of food security ...

(Research Unit for Political Economy 2003: n.p.)

The report concluded that ‘far from becoming more integrated and prosperous, the world economy is today even more starkly *divided*’. Even World Bank statistics concede that ‘the number of the poor

worldwide has grown during the 1990s. A third of the world's labour force is unemployed or underemployed'. If the earlier period of colonial globalization simultaneously integrated the world into a single economic system, *and* divided it more sharply into the haves and the have-nots, the new empire both facilitates global connections and creates new opportunities, as well as entrenches disparities and creates new divisions.

In the conclusion to the second edition of this book, I argued that postcolonial studies cannot be simply replaced by something called globalization studies. If it is to be equal to the task of analysing our contemporary world and visualising how it can be changed, globalization studies will have to incorporate some of the key insights of postcolonial studies, especially its historical awareness of past forms of empire and the structural connections between colonialism and neo-colonialism. Only then will it be able to trace global inequities in the often-confusing landscape of contemporary economics, politics and culture.

Today, it seems that much of globalization's shine has worn off. The report of the research group cited above will not shock too many people within the academy and outside it. Over the last decade, it has become evident that the new global order does not work against but is facilitated by nation-states and nationalist ideologies, leading to new alliances and conflicts. It is also clearer than ever before that nationalism and national interests, particularly those of the United States, remain at least as important as the interests of particular multinational corporations in shaping conflicts around the globe. As I write this, the US and the EU have refused to co-operate in the process of formulating a UN treaty seeking to prevent human rights abuses by transnational corporations; they did this in spite of a majority of UN member-states voting for such a treaty (Inter Press Service 2014). The United States has started to bomb parts of Iraq, in order to forestall the newly consolidating Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, whose militants are also ranged against Kurdish nationalists seeking to form a national entity of their own. But at the same time, the heart of the new Empire has been beset with enormous problems of its own. There has been dissent on the streets, targetting not just US policies abroad, but the crisis within; the Occupy

Wall Street (OWS) movement was an important landmark in underlining the deep economic disparities that fracture the nation. While some commentators on OWS argued that the ongoing economic crisis should be separated from politics, both grass-roots activists and more astute analysts explained why it cannot be divorced from racial disparities, issues of immigration, and indeed, US actions across the globe (see Byrne 2012 for examples of both views)

What does this new juncture—marked by escalating and naked inequality as well as an increasing proliferation of both US hegemony and other muscular nationalisms—spell for postcolonial studies? Are the insights and perspectives that emerge from our engagements with colonial histories, nationalist and anticolonial movements and the dynamics of a postcolonial world helpful in registering and understanding the present-day shape of global inequalities, as well as of contemporary forms of resistance? Are they of any use in understanding questions posed by climate change and the environmental disasters that threaten our globe? Conversely, can we use these newer concerns to productively re-examine the past and the terms in which we have understood its relation to the present? These are the issues that I will consider in the Conclusion, where I also review recent writing that challenges, and lends continuing substance and relevance to, postcolonial studies.

NOTE

- 1 Robbins is quoted by Barker, Hulme and Iverson (1994: 11) and their discussion of these issues is also useful.

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1

SITUATING COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

DEFINING THE TERMS: COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM, NEO-COLONIALISM, POSTCOLONIALISM

Colonialism and imperialism are often used interchangeably. The word colonialism, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), comes from the Roman ‘colonia’ which meant ‘farm’ or ‘settlement’, and referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still retained their citizenship. Accordingly, the *OED* describes it as

a settlement in a new country ... a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up.

This definition, quite remarkably, avoids any reference to people other than the colonisers, people who might already have been living in those places where colonies were established. Hence it

evacuates the word 'colonialism' of any implication of an encounter between peoples, or of conquest and domination. There is no hint that the 'new locality' may not be so 'new' and that the process of 'forming a community' might be somewhat unfair. Colonialism was not an identical process in different parts of the world but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history. In *The Tempest*, for example, Shakespeare's single major addition to the story he found in certain pamphlets about a shipwreck in the Bermudas was to make the island inhabited before Prospero's arrival (Hulme 1981: 69). That single addition turned the romance into an allegory of the colonial encounter. The process of 'forming a community' in the new land necessarily meant *un-forming* or *re-forming* the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, settlement, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, and enslavement. Such practices generated and were shaped by a variety of writings—public and private records, letters, trade documents, government papers, fiction and scientific literature. These practices and writings are what contemporary studies of colonialism and postcolonialism try to make sense of.

So colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods. But colonialism in this sense did not begin with the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards; it has been a recurrent and widespread feature of human history. At its height in the second century AD, the Roman Empire stretched from Armenia to the Atlantic. Under Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, the Mongols conquered the Middle East as well as China. The Aztec Empire was established when, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, one of the various ethnic groups who settled in the valley of Mexico subjugated the others. Aztecs extracted tributes in services and goods from conquered regions, as did the Inca Empire which was the largest pre-industrial state in the Americas. In the fifteenth century too, various kingdoms in southern India came under the control of the Vijaynagar Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, which began as a minor Islamic principality in what is now western Turkey, extended itself over most of

Asia Minor and the Balkans. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, it still extended from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, and the Chinese Empire was larger than anything Europe had seen. Modern European colonialism cannot be sealed off from these earlier histories of contact—the Crusades, or the Moorish invasion of Spain, the legendary exploits of Mongol rulers or the fabled wealth of the Incas or the Mughals were real or imagined fuel for the European journeys to different parts of the world. And yet, these European travels ushered in new and different kinds of colonial practices which altered the whole globe in a way that previous colonialisms did not.

How can we understand these differences? Was it that Europeans established empires far away from their own shores? Were they more violent or more ruthless? Were they better organised? Or a superior race? All of these explanations have in fact been offered to account for the global power and drastic effects of European colonialisms. Marxist thinking on the subject locates a crucial distinction between the two: whereas earlier colonialisms were pre-capitalist, modern colonialism was established alongside capitalism in Western Europe (see Bottomore 1983: 81–85). Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered—it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. This flow worked in both directions—slaves and indentured labour as well as raw materials were transported to manufacture goods in the metropolis, or in other locations for metropolitan consumption, but the colonies also provided captive markets for European goods. Thus slaves were moved from Africa to the Americas, and in the West Indian plantations they produced sugar for consumption in Europe, and raw cotton was moved from India to be manufactured into cloth in England and then sold back to India whose own cloth production suffered as a result. In whichever direction human beings and materials travelled, the profits always flowed back into the so-called ‘mother country’.

These flows of profits and people involved settlement and plantations as in the Americas, ‘trade’ as in India, and enormous

global shifts of populations. Both the colonised and the colonisers moved: the former not only as slaves but also as indentured labourers, domestic servants, travellers and traders, and the colonial masters as administrators, soldiers, merchants, settlers, travellers, writers, domestic staff, missionaries, teachers and scientists. The essential point is that although European colonialisms involved a variety of techniques and patterns of domination, penetrating deep into some societies and involving a comparatively superficial contact with others, all of them produced the economic imbalance that was necessary for the growth of European capitalism and industry. Thus we could say that colonialism was the midwife that assisted at the birth of European capitalism, or that without colonial expansion the transition to capitalism could not have taken place in Europe.

But the global connections established by modern colonialism were not entirely new. The trade routes that had connected Europe with Asia, and Asia with Africa since antiquity were reworked and expanded as the Americas were 'discovered' by Europeans. Indeed, Fernand Braudel suggested that 'world-economies' existed from the Middle Ages onwards, and embryonic capitalism was evident in many parts of the world (Braudel 1976). Expanding this thesis, Giovanni Arrighi argues that capitalism has developed over the last 700 years, and its centres have moved from Genoa, Holland, Britain and now, America (Arrighi 2010). But many recent scholars have argued that until well into the eighteenth century, Asia and not Europe was the centre of the global economy (Abu-Lughod 1989; Frank 1998; Pomeranz 2000; Bin Wong 1997). What then made Europe metamorphose into what Braudel calls 'the monstrous shaper of world history'? (Braudel 1976: 486). Marx himself argued that the primitive accumulation of wealth necessary for capitalism involved both the alienation of European peasantry from the land, *and* European colonialism. After describing the expropriation of the commons, he writes:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled the

rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation. Hard on their heels follows the commercial war of the European nations, which has the globe as its battlefield.

(Marx 1977: 915)

Nevertheless, as Rosa Luxemburg observed, 'For Marx, these processes are incidental, illustrating merely the genesis of capital, its first appearance in the world. ... As soon as he comes to analyse the capitalist process of production and circulation, he reaffirms the universal and exclusive domination of capitalist production' (1951: 364). She rightly notes that Marx downplayed the history of colonialism and focused on economic and political developments within particular European nations when analysing the genesis as workings of capital. It was not until the 1950s that such a focus began to change and the connections between local, national and global economies began to be more vigorously debated (Aston and Philpin 1985). It was scholars who have come to be known as 'world systems theorists' (the most famous of whom are Fernand Braudel and Immanuel Wallerstein) who paid systematic attention to how the global economy and colonialism ushered in European capitalism. The debates on the precise connections between the genesis of capitalism and colonialism were vigorous, and are especially relevant today when capitalism is often understood to have become a permanent condition rather than a system with a beginning and possibly an end (Moore 2003).

Although European colonialism was part of the creation of a global economic network, it took many forms across the globe over its long history. Although each form was internally variable, it is useful to think about their patterns. One major distinction to be made is between administrative colonialism and settler colonialism. The former involved no large movement of peoples from the colonising country to the colony, which was controlled through a military, administrative and economic apparatus (such as the British had in India). Colonial administrations in this case functioned to a large extent through local authorities and existing power structures. They often incorporated rather than disturbed native hierarchies: in Bengal, for example, taxes were collected

through hereditary Indian collectors who were liable for a fixed sum as laid down in the 'Permanent Settlement' of 1793. Millions of Indians never saw an English person throughout the term of the Raj, although that did not mean their lives had not been woven into the fabric of empire. This kind of 'shallow penetration' can be seen as a prototype for modern imperialism, which functions largely through remote control. But in countries like Namibia and South Africa there was yet another pattern with more direct and powerful intervention, and with fewer spinoffs of power and wealth among the indigenous population.

Settler colonialism varied even more enormously—it could entail colonisers moving in large numbers, subjugating the native populations and mixing (to varied degrees) with them, creating a complex racial hierarchy, as the Spanish and the Portuguese did in Latin America, the Philippines and Goa. In other cases, the settlers did not officially mix with the native populations, as was the case in Africa and North America. Settler colonialism could entail the decimation and/or ghettoisation of native inhabitants along with the takeover of their lands, as in large parts of North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The creation of an Israeli state is regarded by many as a case of settler colonialism, since Jewish settlements resulted in the forced expulsion and ghettoisation of the previous Arab occupants of the land. A third form is plantation colonialism, that can be seen as a variant of settler colonialism, and which involved relatively few white settlers importing slave and indentured populations from different parts of the world to the colony, usually to grow a crop for resale elsewhere. Plantation colonies also resulted in complex mixing of peoples, as in Brazil or the Caribbean. Yet another type of colonialism takes place through territorial annexation, as happened with annexation of Louisiana, Texas, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and other territories by the United States. These differences explain why colonial histories and experiences were so varied, and also why 'postcolonialism' carries different meanings across the world. But they challenge us to examine how such disparate formations were nevertheless all connected to the history of the capitalist world-system.

Departing from these patterns, there are other cases that can nevertheless be thought of as colonial, or quasi-colonial, such as

the United States military takeover of the Philippines. After World War II, formal colonisation gave way to more indirect control, largely through economic intervention (known as 'neo-colonialism', a term that was coined by the Ghanaian anticolonial leader Kwame Nkrumah to describe the condition of Africa in the 1960s), or through puppet regimes, such as the US control of South Vietnam, or through military intervention (such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, or more recently the US occupation of Iraq). These later histories alert us to both the differences as well as the continuities between formal and more oblique forms of colonial control, a subject to which we will return periodically in this book.

One more clarification is in order and it is crucial for understanding not just colonial history, but also our own world, and it has to do with the relationship between trade and colonialism. Often we are told that whereas the Spanish and English presence in the Americas was 'colonial', the English ventures in the East were 'purely' for trade. Certainly there were crucial differences, because as I have already pointed out, the Europeans were not in a position to simply dominate everywhere. But military violence was used almost everywhere, although to different degrees, to secure both occupation and trading 'rights': the colonial genocide in North America and South Africa was spectacular. In the 'scramble for Africa', only Ethiopia held out because of her technological and military superiority. The fact that Asian armies had been equipped with firearms prior to the coming of the Europeans was undoubtedly a crucial factor in shaping the relationship of coloniser and colonised. Gunpowder had been invented in China, and used by the Mughals and the Ottoman Empire. But, even in the East, 'present profit' was not divorced from the use of arms: Irfan Habib has suggested that the 'European triumph' over Asian merchants was 'a matter of men-of-war and gun and shot, to which arithmetic and brokerage could provide no answer ...' (1990: 399). The point is that violence was readily resorted to wherever necessary, and the enormous differences of strategy in different places indicate the flexibility of colonial ideologies and practices, rather than the absence of the desire for conquest in some colonial ventures. The situation could also shift quite

dramatically. In December 1783, Edmund Burke delivered an angry speech to the British Parliament on the humiliating treatment meted out to the Mughal Emperor by officials of the East India Company. Burke observed that when he was born it could not have been believed that 'on this day, in this House, we should be employed in discussing the conduct of those British subjects who had disposed of the power and person of the Grand Mogul' (Parker 1991: 162). The reversal in the relations of power between the English and the Mughals was indeed so swift as to be conceptually bewildering for both parties; my purpose in recalling it is to remind us that if the history of America moved from colonisation to trade, that of India moved the other way around.

The distinction between pre-capitalist and capitalist colonialisms is often made by referring to the latter as imperialism. This is somewhat misleading, because imperialism, like colonialism, stretches back to a pre-capitalist past. Imperial Russia, for example, was pre-capitalist, as was Imperial Spain. Some commentators in fact place imperialism as *prior* to colonialism (Boehmer 1995: 3). Like 'colonialism', imperialism too is best understood not by trying to pin it down to a single semantic meaning but by relating its shifting meanings to historical processes. Early in its usage in the English language it simply means 'command or superior power' (Williams 1976: 131). The *OED* defines 'imperial' as 'pertaining to empire', and 'imperialism' as the 'rule of an emperor, especially when despotic or arbitrary; the principle or spirit of empire; advocacy of what are held to be imperial interests'. As a matter of fact, the connection of *imperial* with *royal* authority is highly variable. While royalty were both financially and symbolically invested in early European colonisations, these ventures were in every case also the result of wider class and social interests. Thus although Raleigh named Virginia after his Queen, and trading privileges to the English in India or Turkey were sought and granted not simply in the name of the East India Company but to Englishmen as representatives of Elizabeth I or James I, it was a base of English merchants, traders, financiers as well as feudal lords that made English trade and colonialism possible. The same is even true of the Portuguese Empire, where royal involvement was more spectacular.

In the early twentieth century, V. I. Lenin and Karl Kautsky (among others) gave a new meaning to the word 'imperialism' by linking it to a particular stage of the development of capitalism. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1947), Lenin argued that the growth of 'finance-capitalism' and industry in the Western countries had created 'an enormous superabundance of capital'. This money could not be profitably invested at home where labour was limited. The colonies lacked capital but were abundant in labour and human resources. Therefore it needed to move out and subordinate non-industrialised countries to sustain its own growth. Lenin thus predicted that in due course the rest of the world would be absorbed by European finance capitalists. This global system was called 'imperialism' and constituted a particular stage of capitalist development—the 'highest' in Lenin's understanding because rivalry between the various imperial wars would catalyse their destruction and the demise of capitalism. It is this Leninist definition that allows some people to argue that capitalism is the distinguishing feature between colonialism and imperialism.

Direct colonial rule is not necessary for imperialism in this sense, because the economic (and social) relations of dependency and control ensure both captive labour as well as markets for European industry as well as goods. Sometimes the words 'neo-imperialism' or 'neo-colonialism' are used to describe these situations. In as much as the growth of European industry and finance-capital was achieved through colonial domination in the first place, we can also see that imperialism (in this sense) is the highest stage of colonialism. In the modern world then, we can distinguish between colonisation as the takeover of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structures of another territory or nation, and imperialism as a global system. But there remains enormous ambiguity between the economic and political connotations of the word. If imperialism is defined as a political system in which an imperial centre governs colonised countries, then the granting of political independence signals the end of empire, the collapse of imperialism. But if imperialism is primarily an economic system of penetration and control of markets, then political changes do not basically

affect it, and may even redefine the term as in the case of 'American imperialism' which wields enormous military and economic power across the globe but without direct political control. The political sense was predominant however in the description of the relations between the former USSR and other Eastern European countries as 'Soviet imperialism'. As we will discuss in later sections, the tensions between economic and political connotations of imperialism also spill over into the understanding of racial oppression, and its relationship with class or other structures of oppression.

One useful way of distinguishing between imperialism and colonialism might be to separate them not in temporal but in spatial terms and to think of imperialism or neo-imperialism as the phenomenon that originates in the metropolis, the process which leads to domination and control. Its result, or what happens in the colonies as a consequence of imperial domination is colonialism or neo-colonialism. Thus the imperial country is the 'metropole' from which power flows, and the colony or neo-colony is the place which it penetrates and controls. Imperialism can function without formal colonies (as in United States imperialism today) but colonialism cannot.

These different understandings of colonialism and imperialism complicate the meanings of the term 'postcolonial', a term that is the subject of an ongoing debate. It might seem that because the age of colonialism is over, and because the descendants of once-colonised peoples live everywhere, the whole world is postcolonial. And yet the term has been fiercely contested on many counts. To begin with, the prefix 'post' complicates matters because it implies an 'after-math' in two senses—temporal, as in coming after, and ideological, as in supplanting. It is the second implication which critics of the term have found contestable: if the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism. A country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time. We cannot dismiss the importance of either formal decolonisation, or the fact that unequal relations of colonial rule are re-inscribed in the contemporary imbalances between 'first' and

'third' world nations. The new global order does not depend upon direct rule. However, it does allow the economic, cultural and (to varying degrees) political penetration of some countries by others. This makes it debatable whether once-colonised countries can be seen as properly 'postcolonial' (see McClintock 1992).

Even in the temporal sense, the word postcolonial cannot be used in any single sense. Formal decolonisation has spanned three centuries, ranging from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to the 1970s in the case of Angola and Mozambique. Pointing to this fact, Ella Shohat trenchantly asks, 'When exactly, then, does the "postcolonial" begin?' (1993: 103). This is not just a rhetorical question; Shohat's point is that these diverse beginnings indicate that colonialism was challenged from a variety of perspectives by people who were not all oppressed in the same way or to the same extent. Thus the politics of decolonisation in parts of Latin America or Australia or South Africa where white settlers formed their own independent nations is different from the dynamics of those societies where indigenous populations overthrew their European masters. The term is not only inadequate to the task of defining contemporary realities in the once-colonised countries, and vague in terms of indicating a specific period of history, but may also cloud the internal social and racial differences of many societies. Spanish colonies in Latin America, for example, became 'mixed' societies, in which local born whites (or 'creoles') and *mestizos*, or 'hybrids', dominated the native working population. Hybridity or *mestizaje* here included a complex internal hierarchy within various mixed peoples. As J. Jorge Klor de Alva explains, one's experience of colonial exploitation depended on one's position within this hierarchy:

In most places, the original inhabitants, who logically grouped themselves into separate cultural units (i.e. ethnicities), all but disappeared after contact, wiped out physically by disease and abuse, and later, genetically and socially by miscegenation, and lastly, culturally, by the religious and political practices of the Europeans and their mixed progeny. Even in the regions where native peoples survived as corporate groups in their own greatly transformed communities, especially in

the 'core' areas of Mesoamerica and the Andes, within two or three generations they were greatly reduced in number and politically and socially marginalised from the new centres of power.

(de Alva 1995: 243)

The term 'postcolonial' does not apply to those at the bottom end of this hierarchy, who are still 'at the far economic margins of the nation-state' so that nothing is 'post' about their colonisation. On the other hand, those elites who won the wars of independence from Spain, de Alva argues, 'were never colonial subjects' and they 'established their own nation-states in the image of the motherland, tinged by the local color of some precontact practices and symbols, framed by many imperial period adaptations and suffused with European ideals, practices and material objects' (1995: 270). The elite creoles, writes Mary Louise Pratt, 'sought esthetic and ideological grounding as white Americans' and attempted to create 'an independent, decolonized American society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy' (1992: 175). The quarrels of these Americans with colonial powers were radically different from anti-colonial struggles in parts of Africa or Asia and so, de Alva concludes, they cannot be considered 'postcolonial' in the same sense.

In Australia, New Zealand or Canada, 'hybridity' is less evident between descendants of white settlers and those of the original inhabitants. Because the former also feel estranged from Britain (or France) they want to be included as postcolonial subjects. However, we cannot explore in what ways they are postcolonial without also highlighting internal differences within these countries (Mishra and Hodge 1991: 413). White settlers were historically the agents of colonial rule, and their own subsequent development—cultural as well as economic—does not simply align them with other colonised peoples. No matter what their differences with the mother country, white populations here were not subject to the genocide, economic exploitation, cultural decimation and political exclusion felt by indigenous peoples or by other colonies. Although we cannot equate its history with those of these other settler-countries, the most bizarre instance of this may be South Africa, where nationalist Afrikaners 'continued to see themselves as victims of English

colonisation and ... the imagined continuation of this victimization was used to justify the maintenance of apartheid' (Jolly 1995: 22).¹

These internal fractures and divisions are important if 'post-colonialism' is to be anything more than a term signifying a technical transfer of governance. But at the same time, we cannot simply construct a global 'white' culture either. There are important differences of power and history between New Zealand or Canada and the European (or later United States) metropolis. Internal fractures also exist in countries whose postcolonial status is not usually contested, such as India. Here the ruptures have to do with class and ethnicity in a different sense. In a moving story, 'Shishu' (Children), the Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi describes how tribal peoples have been literally and figuratively crippled in post-independence India. National 'development' has no space for tribal cultures or beliefs, and the attitude of even the well-meaning government officer, Mr Singh, towards the tribal people replicates colonialist views of non-Western peoples—to him, they are mysterious, superstitious, uncivilised, backward. In other words, they are like children who need to be brought in line with the rest of the country. The rebellious among them have literally been pushed into the forests and have been starving there for years. At the chilling climax of the tale, we are brought face to face with these 'children' who thrust their starved bodies towards Mr Singh, forcing the officer to recognise that they are not children at all but adult citizens of free India, and stunted by free India:

Fear—stark, unreasoning, naked fear—gripped him. Why this silent creeping forward? Why didn't they utter one word? ... Why were they naked? And why such long hair? Children, he had always heard of children, but how come that one had white hair? Why did the women—no, no, girls—have dangling, withered breasts? ... 'We are not children. We are Agarias of the Village of Kuva. ... There are only fourteen of us left. Our bodies have shrunk without food. Our men are impotent, our women barren. That's why we steal the relief [the food Singh brings from the Government to distribute to the more docile among the tribal people]. Don't you see we need food to grow to a human size again?'. ...

They cackled with savage and revengeful glee. Cackling, they ran around him. They rubbed their organs against him and told him they were adult citizens of India. ...

Singh's shadow covered their bodies. And the shadow brought the realization home to him.

They hated his height of five feet and nine inches.

They hated the normal growth of his body.

His normalcy was a crime they could not forgive.

Singh's cerebral cells tried to register the logical explanation but he failed to utter a single word. Why, why this revenge? He was just an ordinary Indian. He didn't have the stature of a healthy Russian, Canadian or American. He did not eat food that supplied enough calories for a human body. The World Health Organization said that it was a crime to deny the human body of the right number of calories.

(Mahasweta Devi 1993: 248–50)

Even as it is careful to demarcate between what is available to citizens of different nations, the story reminds us that anti-colonial movements have rarely represented the interests of all the peoples of a colonised country. After independence, these fissures can no longer be glossed over, which is why, like some of their Indian counterparts, African novelists since the 1960s can also be regarded as 'no longer committed to the nation' (Appiah 1996: 66). The newly independent nation-state makes available the fruits of liberation only selectively and unevenly: the dismantling of colonial rule did not automatically bring about changes for the better in the status of women, the working class or the peasantry in most colonised countries. 'Colonialism' is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within. So that 'postcolonialism', far from being a term that can be indiscriminately applied, appears to be riddled with contradictions and qualifications.

It has been suggested that it is more helpful to think of post-colonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism. Such a position

would allow us to include people geographically displaced by colonialism such as African-Americans or people of Asian or Caribbean origin in Britain as 'postcolonial' subjects although they live within metropolitan cultures. It also allows us to incorporate the history of anti-colonial resistance with contemporary resistances to imperialism and to dominant Western culture. Jorge de Alva suggests that postcoloniality should 'signify not so much subjectivity "after" the colonial experience as a subjectivity of oppositionality to imperializing/colonising (read: subordinating/subjectivizing) discourses and practices'. He justifies this by arguing that new approaches to history have discredited the idea of a single linear progression, focusing instead on 'a multiplicity of often conflicting and frequently parallel narratives'. Therefore, he suggests that we should 'remove postcoloniality from a dependence on an antecedent colonial condition' and 'tether the term to a post-structuralist stake that marks its appearance. That, I believe, is the way postcoloniality must be understood when applied to United States Latinos or Latin American hybrids' (de Alva 1995: 245).

This statement is worth unpacking for it leads us into the heart of the controversy surrounding postcolonial studies today. Although we shall only discuss this controversy later in the book, we can take a quick look at the direction in which some current debates are moving. De Alva wants to de-link the term 'post-coloniality' from formal decolonisation because he thinks many people living in both once-colonised and once colonising countries are still subject to the oppressions put into place by colonialism. And he justifies this expansion of the term by referring to post-structuralist approaches to history which have suggested that the lives of various oppressed peoples can only be uncovered by insisting that there is no single history but a 'multiplicity of histories'. It was not only post-structuralists who discredited master narratives, feminists also insisted that such narratives had hidden women from history. Anti-colonial intellectuals also espoused a similar view. However, the idea has received its most sustained articulation within post-structuralist writing. Thus de Alva suggests that postcoloniality is, and must be more firmly connected to, post-structuralist theories of history.

Many critics of postcolonial theory have in fact blamed it for too much dependence upon post-structuralist or postmodern perspectives (which are often read as identical). They claim that the insistence on multiple histories and fragmentation within these perspectives has been detrimental to thinking about the global operation of capitalism today. The increasing fragmentation and mobility of communities and peoples needs to be contextualised in terms of the new ways in which global capitalism works. According to this argument, an accent on a multiplicity of histories serves to obfuscate the ways in which these histories are being connected anew by the international workings of multinational capital. Without this focus, the global imbalances of power are glossed over, and the world rendered ‘seemingly shapeless’ (Dirlik 1994: 355). A too-quick enlargement of the term post-colonial can indeed paradoxically flatten both past and contemporary situations. All ‘subordinating’ discourses and practices are not the same either over time or across the globe.

Erstwhile colonial powers may be restructured by contemporary imperialism but they are not the same phenomena. Opposition to colonial rule was spearheaded by forms of nationalist struggle which cannot offer a blueprint for dealing with inequities of the contemporary world order. In fact, as the Mahasweta Devi story quoted above exemplifies, many in the postcolonial world are sceptical about precisely those forces and discourses that were responsible for formal decolonisation. For example, Mohandas K. Gandhi can be extolled as the father of Indian decolonisation (Trivedi 2011), or he can be viewed as the person responsible for ensuring its elitist character, as B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of India’s ‘untouchables’ saw him (Ambedkar 2014; Roy 2014; Loomba 2014). And so we might ask not only when does the postcolonial begin, but where is postcoloniality to be found? Although ‘minority’ peoples living in the West (and they may not in every place be literally a minority at all) and the peoples living in ‘third world’ countries share a history of colonial exploitation, may share cultural roots, and may also share an opposition to the legacy of colonial domination, their histories and present concerns cannot simply be merged. African-Americans and South African blacks, for example, may both be engaged in the reconstruction of

their cultures, yet how can we forget that blacks in South Africa are the marginalised majority of the population or that African-Americans are citizens of the world's mightiest state although their own position within it might be marginal?

These differences are highlighted by a production of Shakespeare's *Othello* by the South African actress Janet Suzman. Suzman had been living in Britain for many years when she returned home to mount the play for the Market Theatre in Johannesburg, in which she cast a black actor in the central role. In the context of a long history of *Othello* productions where the hero is played by a white man, or which simply gloss over the racial politics of the play in favour of the 'universal' themes of male jealousy, doomed love, and devoted female victims, and especially in the context of South Africa's laws against mixed marriages, this production was radical. And to place *Othello* in one of the cultures of 'his' origin is to allow us to rethink the entire history of the play. But at the same time, Shakespeare's drama is about a black man trying to live in a white society, assimilating yet maintaining his identity. His loneliness is an integral feature of the play—he is isolated from other black people, from his history and culture. To place Shakespeare's *Othello* in South Africa is to open up a powerful new reading of the play, but also to elide two different kinds of marginality: the one which arises out of displacement and another in which black people and cultures were victimised but not literally isolated from each other.

Othello's situation does not translate exactly into today's European context because so-called metropolitan societies are now literally changing their colours. *Othello*'s successors are not so alone. And yet British Asians face a different sort of pressure on their self-definition than people within India or Pakistan or Bangladesh. Further, there are as many differences between each of these groups as there are similarities. The point is that anti-colonial positions are embedded in specific histories, and cannot be collapsed into some pure oppositional essence. They also depended on the nature of colonial rule so that nationalist struggles in Algeria against the French were different from Indian resistance to the British, and neither can be equated to Vietnamese opposition to French and United States imperialism. As we will see, although many

writings on postcolonialism emphasise the 'hybridity', fragmentation and diversity of colonised peoples, they also routinely claim to be describing 'the postcolonial condition', or 'the postcolonial subject' or 'the postcolonial woman'. At best, such terms are no more than a helpful shorthand, because they do not allow for differences between distinct kinds of colonial situations, or the workings of class, gender, location, race, caste or ideology among people whose lives have been restructured by colonial rule.

As mentioned earlier, by the 1930s colonialism had exercised its sway over 84.6 per cent of the land surface of the globe. This fact alone reminds us that it is impossible for European colonialism to have been a monolithic operation. Right from its earliest years it deployed diverse strategies and methods of control and of representation. European discourses about 'the other' are accordingly variable. But because they produced comparable (and sometimes uncannily similar) relations of inequity and domination the world over, it is sometimes overlooked that colonial methods and images varied hugely over time and place. Most contemporary commentators continue to generalise about colonialism from their specific knowledge of it in a particular place or time. Thus, for some critics such as Gayatri Spivak, nineteenth-century India, and particularly nineteenth-century Bengal, has become a privileged model for the colonised world. Laura Chrisman finds that 'an Oriental/Occidental binarism, in which continents and colonies which do not belong to this West/East axis are nonetheless absorbed into it' is detrimental to recovering the specificity of certain situations in Africa. Although such homogenising might partially have arisen from the desire to emphasise how colonial discourses themselves blur difference, its effect, as Chrisman points out, is to overlook how these discourses also deploy strategies of exaggerating and playing off differences among diverse others:

It is just as important to observe differences between imperial practices—whether it be geographical/national (for example, the differences between the French imperialism of Baudelaire and the English imperialism of Kipling) or historical (say the differences between the early-nineteenth-century imperialism, prior to its formal codification,

and late-nineteenth-century imperialism)—as it is to emphasize what all these formations have in common.

(Chrisman 1994: 500)

The legacies of colonialism are thus varied and multiple even as they obviously share some important features.

If the term postcolonial is taken to signify an oppositional position or even desire, as de Alva suggests, then it has the effect of collapsing various locations so that the specificities of all of them are blurred. Moreover, thought of as an oppositional stance, 'postcolonial' refers to specific groups of (oppressed or dissenting) people (or individuals within them) rather than to a location or a social order, which may include such people but is not limited to them. Postcolonial theory has been accused of precisely this: it shifts the focus from locations and institutions to individuals and their subjectivities. Postcoloniality becomes a vague condition of people anywhere and everywhere, and the specificities of locale do not matter. In part the dependence of postcolonial theory upon literary and cultural criticism, and upon post-structuralism, is responsible for this shift. So we are back to the critique articulated earlier—that post-structuralism is responsible for current inadequacies in theorising postcoloniality. We will return to this issue when some of the terms in the debate have been further clarified. For now, we can see some of the problems with expanding the term postcolonial to signify a political position.

There is yet another issue at stake in the term, and this time the problem is not with 'post' but with 'colonial'. Analyses of 'post-colonial' societies too often work with the sense that colonialism is the only history of these societies. What came before colonial rule? What indigenous ideologies, practices and hierarchies existed alongside colonialism and interacted with it? Colonialism did not inscribe itself on a clean slate, and it cannot therefore account for everything that exists in 'postcolonial' societies. The food, or music, or languages, or arts of any culture that we think of as postcolonial evoke earlier histories or shades of culture that elude the term 'colonial'. Critics such as Gayatri Spivak have repeatedly cautioned against the idea that pre-colonial cultures are something that we can easily recover, warning that 'a

nostalgia for lost origins can be detrimental to the exploration of social realities within the critique of imperialism' (1988: 291). Spivak is suggesting here that the pre-colonial is always reworked by the history of colonialism, and is not available to us in any pristine form that can be neatly separated from the history of colonialism. She is interested in emphasising the 'worlding' (i.e. both the violation and the creation) of the 'third world' by colonial powers and therefore resists the romanticising of once-colonised societies 'as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact heritages waiting to be recovered'. Kwame Anthony Appiah (1991) (among others) has also criticised the tendency to eulogise the pre-colonial past or romanticise native culture. Such 'nativism', he suggests, is espoused by both certain intellectuals within postcolonial societies and some First World academics. But while such caution is necessary, it can also lead to a reverse simplification, whereby the 'Third World' is understood to be defined entirely by its colonial past. Indeed, in several parts of the once-colonised world, historians are inclined to regard colonialism 'as a minor interruption' in a long, complex history (Vaughan 1993: 47).

Postcolonialism, then, is a word that is useful only if we use it with caution and qualifications. In this it can be compared to the concept of 'patriarchy' in feminist thought, which is a useful shorthand for conveying a relationship of inequity that is, in practice, highly variable because it always works alongside other social structures. Thus feminist theory has had to weave between analysing the universals and the particulars in the oppression of women. Similarly, the word 'postcolonial' is useful as a generalisation to the extent that 'it refers to a *process* of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome, which takes many forms and is probably inescapable for all those whose worlds have been marked by that set of phenomena: "postcolonial" is (or should be) a descriptive not an evaluative term' (Hulme 1995: 120).

Postcolonial studies have shown that both the 'metropolis' and the 'colony' were deeply altered by the colonial process. *Both* of them are, accordingly, also restructured by decolonisation. This of course does not mean that both are postcolonial *in the same way*. Postcoloniality, like patriarchy, is articulated alongside other

economic, social, cultural and historical factors, and therefore, in practice, it works quite differently in various parts of the world. Frankenburg and Mani (1996) and Hulme (1995) make this point by tracing some of the ways in which the meaning of the term shifts across different locations. Hulme argues that, contrary to de Alva's suggestion, the American continent is postcolonial, even though its anti-colonial wars were not fought by the indigenous peoples. American postcoloniality, in Hulme's argument, is simply *different* from the one that operates in India, and it also includes enormous variety within itself (the USA is the world's leading imperialist power but it once was anti-colonial in a limited sense; the Caribbean and Latin America still struggle with the effects of colonial domination and neo-colonialism). To impose a single understanding of decolonisation would in fact erase the differences within that term. In this view, there is a productive tension between the temporal and the critical dimensions of the word post-colonial, but postcoloniality is not, Hulme points out, simply a 'merit badge' that can be worn at will. Although the word 'post-colonial' is useful in indicating a general process with some shared features across the globe, if uprooted from specific locations, 'post-coloniality' cannot be meaningfully investigated, and instead, the term begins to obscure the very relations of domination that it seeks to uncover.

FROM COLONIALISM TO COLONIAL DISCOURSE

What is new about the current ways of discussing colonialism and its aftermath? In order to answer this, it is necessary to place post-colonial studies within two broad (and overlapping) contexts. The first, and most important, is the history of decolonisation itself. Intellectuals and activists who fought against colonial rule, and their successors who now engage with its continuing legacy, challenged and revised dominant definitions of race, culture, language and class in the process of making their voices heard. The second context is the revolution, within 'Western' intellectual traditions, in thinking about some of the same issues—language and how it articulates experience, how ideologies work, how human subjectivities are formed, and what we might mean by culture. These

two revolutions are sometimes counterposed to one another, but it is impossible to understand the current debates in postcolonial studies (whether or not we approve of them) without making the connections between them. It is difficult to summarise these developments for they entail not only the history of the social sciences in the West over the last hundred years, but also political movements that cover most of the globe. However, this section will outline some of the key areas of debate and conceptual innovation around issues of ideology, language and culture in order to indicate their intersections with anti-colonial thought and practice.

So far, we have defined colonialism as the forcible takeover of land and economy, and, in the case of European colonialism, a restructuring of non-capitalist economies in order to fuel European capitalism. This allows us to understand modern European colonialism not as some trans-historical impulse to conquer but as an integral part of capitalist development. But such a definition leaves many questions unanswered. In placing colonialism within the trajectory of capitalism, some Marxist thinkers tended to regard colonialism, as indeed they did capitalism, as an exploitative yet necessary phase of human social development. History, in their view, was a teleological movement that would culminate in communism. This would not happen automatically, but as a result of a fierce struggle between opposing classes. In certain respects, 'progress' was understood in similar ways by capitalists as well as socialists—for both, it included a high level of industrialisation, the mastery of 'man' over 'nature', the modern European view of science and technology. Colonialism, in as much as it was the vehicle for the export of Western technologies, also spelt the export of these ideas. Hence Marx himself regarded colonialism as a brutal precondition for the liberation of these societies: 'England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindustan was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfil its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution' (1973: 306).

Many nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers equated the advance of European colonisation with the triumph of science and reason over the forces of superstition, and indeed many colonised peoples took the same view. A British Education Despatch of 1854 explicitly connected 'the advance of European knowledge' in India to the economic development of the subcontinent. English education would 'teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital', and 'rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of the country' (quoted in Adas 1989: 284). The Indian reformer Raja Rammohan Roy had already written to the Governor-General Lord Amherst some thirty years earlier that the government policy of support to Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian education would serve only to 'keep [India] in darkness'. Thus, across the colonial spectrum, European technology and learning was regarded as progressive.

However, Marxism's penetrating critique of colonialism as capitalism was inspirational for many anti-colonial struggles. In India, the young revolutionary Bhagat Singh and his comrades declared that they wanted nothing less than 'a new social order' that 'will ring the death knell of capitalism and class distinctions and privileges. It will bring joy and prosperity to the starving millions who are seething today under the terrible yoke of both foreign and Indian exploitation' (Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) 1937: 200). Aimé Césaire's moving and powerful *Discourse on Colonialism* (first published in 1950) indicts colonial brutality in terms that are clearly inflected by Marxist analysis of capitalism. Marx emphasised that under capitalism money and commodities begin to stand in for human relations and for human beings, objectifying them and robbing them of their human essence. Similarly, Césaire claims that colonialism not only exploits but dehumanises and objectifies the colonised subject, as it degrades the coloniser himself. He explains this by a stark 'equation: colonisation = "thingification"' (1972: 21). But at the same time, for anti-colonial intellectuals, the Marxist understanding of class struggle as the motor of history had to be revised because in the colonial context the division between the haves and the have-nots was inflected by race. Thus, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon writes:

this world cut in two is inhabited by two different species. The originality of the colonial context is that economic reality, inequality and the immense difference of ways of life never come to mask the human realities. When you examine at close quarters the colonial context, it is evident that what parcels out the world is to begin with the fact of belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species. In the colonies the economic sub-structure is also a super-structure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do with the colonial problem.

(Fanon 1963: 32)

Here Fanon maps race and class divisions on to one another. But such mapping is extremely difficult to grasp in all its complexity without a specific understanding of race, which did not find much space in classical Marxism. If in the colonies, whiteness and wealth dovetailed, they clearly did not do so within European countries. And yet, white working classes could display as much racism as their masters. In the colonies, as the Prime Minister of Cape Colony remarked in 1908, white workers were 'delighted on arrival ... to find themselves in a position of an aristocracy of colour' (Ranger 1983: 213). Was such racial consciousness created by colonial hierarchies, or was it integral to the whiteness of the European working classes?

These questions obviously demanded more than a 'slight stretching' of Marxist analysis. But such 'stretching' did not come easily: while some analysts emphasised class as primary, others insisted that the world was basically split along racial lines. For example, although he was a staunch member of the Martiniquan Communist Party, Césaire places 'Africa' as the binary opposite of 'Europe', a Europe that is 'decadent', 'stricken' and 'morally, spiritually indefensible' (1972: 9). For Césaire was also one of the founders of the Negritude movement, which emphasised the cultural antagonism between Europe and its 'others'. If, in Kipling's words, 'East is East, and West is West and ne'er the twain shall meet', then Negritude angrily endorsed this conceptual distance. Césaire issues a sweeping indictment of Europe on the one hand,

and a 'systematic defense of the non-European civilizations' on the other, claiming that they were 'communal', 'anti-capitalist', 'democratic', 'co-operative' and 'federal' before they were invaded by European colonialism, capitalism and imperialism. The difference between Europe and its others is understood as a difference between capitalist and non-capitalist societies. Césaire shares something here with his fellow Martiniquan Fanon, who also emphasised the dehumanising aspect of colonialism, pushing its analysis into the realm of the psyche and the subjectivity of colonised people, as well as of their masters. *Black Skin, White Masks* thus defines colonised people as not simply those whose labour has been appropriated but those 'in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality.' Colonised people 'must wage war on both levels'—the economic and the psychological since 'historically they influence each other, and any unilateral liberation is incomplete' (Fanon 1967: 18, 11).

Analogous debates have marked the relationship of class and gender. Although Marxist thought had paid a great deal of attention to the oppression of women, it failed to theorise the *specificity* of gender oppression. For feminists, the question of culture and ideologies was vital for a variety of reasons: women's oppression had hitherto been seen as simply a matter of culture and as taking place within the family, but there was little analysis of how culture or sexuality worked within different types of families. Moreover, the exploitation of their labour power within the home was obscured by a gender-blind economic analysis which could not integrate class with other forms of social division. Women's oppression was, consequently, seriously under-theorised within Marxism, but also of course in the wider intellectual sphere. The crucial question—how does the oppression of women connect with the operations of capitalism (or other economic systems)—remained unanswered till feminists began to interrelate the economic and the ideological aspects of women's oppression. The question of race and colonialism demanded rethinking for similar reasons. The impact of colonialism on culture is intimately tied up with its economic processes but the relationship between them cannot be understood unless cultural processes are theorised as fully and deeply

as the economic ones. In recent years, some of the fiercest disagreements among scholars are about this interrelation. Colonised intellectuals consistently raised the question of their cultures, both as the sites of colonial oppression, and as vital tools for their own resistance. Thus the analysis of colonialism demanded that the categories developed for understanding capitalism (such as class) be revised, but also that the relation between the realm of 'culture' or 'ideology' and the sphere of 'economics' or 'material reality' be re-examined.

Ideology does not, as is often assumed, refer to political ideas alone. It includes all our 'mental frameworks', our beliefs, concepts, and ways of expressing our relationship to the world. It is one of the most complex and elusive terms in social thought, and the object of continuing debates. Yet the central question at the heart of these debates is fairly straightforward: how can we give an account of how our social ideas arise? Here we shall discuss in an extremely condensed fashion only those strands that are especially important for understanding developments in discussions of colonialism and race.²

In *The German Ideology* (written in 1846), Marx and Engels had suggested that ideology is basically a distorted or a false consciousness of the world which disguises people's real relationship to their world. This is so because the ideologies that most circulate or gain currency in any society reflect and reproduce the interests of the dominant social classes. Hence, for example a factory worker, the fruits of whose hard labour are appropriated daily by his or her master still believes in the virtue of hard work or of being rewarded in heaven. These beliefs both persuade workers to continue to work and blind them to the truth about their own exploitation; hence they reflect the interests of their master, or of the capitalist system. Similarly, a battered wife (although Marx and Engels do not consider such an example) may believe that single women are more vulnerable to danger and violence, and more lonely and unhappy than married women, and this belief impels her not to rebel against her situation, and even allows her to expound on the necessity for women to be married. Or a white worker might mistakenly think that his joblessness is the fault of black immigrants. Thus ideology has the function of

obscuring from the working (and other oppressed) classes the 'real' state of their own lives and exploitation.

Marx and Engels used the metaphor of the *camera obscura* to explain the processes of such obfuscation or misrepresentation: 'If in ideology men and their realizations appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on their retina does from the physical life-process' (Marx and Engels 1976, vol. 5: 37). This comparison implies that the human mind spontaneously and necessarily inverts reality. Marx and Engels emphasised strongly that our ideas come from the world around us, that 'It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness' (1976, vol. 5: 36). All our ideas, including our self-conceptions, spring from the world in which we live. And this world, under capitalism, itself gives rise to a series of illusions. Money has the power to distort, even invert reality. Marx illustrated this with a speech from Shakespeare's play *Timon of Athens* in which Timon, outcast and abandoned by his friends after he has lost his wealth speculates that 'yellow glittering gold' is a 'visible god' which has the power to make

Black white, foul fair, wrong right,
Base noble, old young, coward valiant. ...
... This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless th'accurs'd,
Make the hoar leprosy ador'd, place thieves
And give them title, knee and approbation
With senators on the bench. ...

(IV, iii, 26–38)³

As capitalism advances, money and commodities increasingly displace, stand in for, and are mistaken for human values. Thus they become fetishised (fetishes being objects which we invest with human qualities). In this view, ideology is not a failure to perceive reality, for reality (capitalism) itself is ideological, disguising its essential features in a realm of false appearances.

If reality itself leads us to a distorted perception of it, is it at all possible to hold subversive ideas, or to see things as they are? If

our material being holds the key to our ideas, then the latter cannot change unless the former does. Marx does not regard all ideas as ideological or false. He contrasts ideology to science, which has the capacity to cut through illusions. The Hungarian theoretician Georg Lukács offered an alternative view of ideology. Ideology is not always false consciousness; its validity or falsity depends upon the 'class situation' of the collective subject whose view it represents. Thus, bourgeois ideology expresses the distorted nature of capitalism, whereas the proletariat is capable of a more scientific view which grasps its real nature. In this view, ideologies are not always false but they are still always the product of economic and social life. The problem with such reasoning was of course that it simply asserted, rather than demonstrated, the cognitive superiority of the proletarian view. It also posited a very formulaic correspondence between particular classes and ideologies.

In fact, no correspondence between ideologies and classes can be taken for granted. Classes are heterogeneous groups, fissured by gender, race and other divides. Different people within the same class do not hold the same relationship to the production process, or to other aspects of reality. Their ideologies cannot, accordingly, be the same. There could be no uniform ideology of the working class, for example, since this class was split along racial lines. Moreover, as the Russian critic Volosinov wrote, 'different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes the arena of class struggle' (1973: 23). This insight has obvious implications for the question of racial and colonial difference, where 'differently oriented accents' have laid claim to and appropriated not only different languages such as English or French, but also other 'signs' such as art, music, food and politics. Similarly, ideologies are also fields of 'intersecting accents' coming from several different directions. For example, men on both sides of the colonial divide could share certain patriarchal assumptions about women and their sexuality. Thus languages and ideologies are 'multi-accentual'.

In many ways, it was the work of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci that made it possible to think about how ideologies can cut across different classes and how, also, the same class can hold

many, even contradictory, ideologies. Gramsci's views do not form part of a finished philosophy and are scattered in his various prison diaries or *Prison Notebooks*, written between 1929 and 1935 (1971). Gramsci questioned the primacy of the economic (conceptualised as 'base' in classical Marxist thought) over the ideological (conceived of as 'superstructure') because he was trying to understand the failure of the revolution in Western Europe, despite the economic conditions being ripe for it. This does not mean that Gramsci ignored the role of economic changes. But he did not believe that they alone create historic events; rather, they can only create conditions which are favourable for certain kinds of ideologies to flourish.

Gramsci drew a distinction between various kinds of ideologies, suggesting that while ideology in general works to maintain social cohesion and expresses dominant interests, there are also particular ideologies that express the protest of those who are exploited. The proletariat or oppressed subject possesses a dual consciousness—that which is beholden to the rulers, and complicit with their will, and that which is capable of developing into resistance. If social realities, including social conflicts, are grasped by human beings via their ideologies, then ideologies are also the site of social struggle. (Later, Raymond Williams discussed how these ideological contradictions could fuel resistance on the part of individual and collective subjects.)

In trying to probe these nuances within the 'class subject' (which had previously been seen in rather unitary terms) Gramsci makes a crucial distinction between 'philosophy' and 'common sense'—two floors or levels on which ideology operates. The former is a specialised elaboration of a specific position. 'Common sense', on the other hand, is the practical, everyday, popular consciousness of human beings. Most of us think about 'common sense' as that which is obviously true, common to everybody, or normative. Gramsci analyses how such 'common sense' is formed. It is actually a highly contradictory body of beliefs that combines 'elements from the Stone Age and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of the human race united the world over'. Common sense is thus an amalgam of

ideas 'on which the practical consciousness of the masses of the people is actually formed' (Hall 1996b: 431).

But if ideologies and classes do not neatly overlap, why is it that, as Marx and Engels put it, 'the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas' (1976: 59)? How is it that ordinary people come to be persuaded of a specific view of things? In other words, the crucial question about ideology is not whether it is 'real' or 'false' but how it comes to be believed in, and to be lived out. It was in trying to understand these questions that Gramsci formulated his concept of 'hegemony'. Hegemony is power achieved through a combination of coercion and consent. Playing upon Machiavelli's suggestion that power can be achieved through both force and fraud, Gramsci argued that the ruling classes achieve domination not by force or coercion alone, but also by creating subjects who 'willingly' submit to being ruled. Ideology is crucial in creating consent, it is the medium through which certain ideas are transmitted and more important, held to be true. Hegemony is achieved not only by direct manipulation or indoctrination, but by playing upon the common sense of people, upon what Williams calls 'their lived system of meanings and values' (1977: 110). Gramsci thus views ideologies as more than just reflections of material reality. Rather, ideologies are conceptions of life that are manifest in all aspects of individual and collective existence. By suggesting this, Gramsci is not simply interested in *expanding* the meaning of ideology, but in understanding also how ideologies animate social relations, 'organize human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc.' (Gramsci 1971: 324, 377).

Stuart Hall perceptively draws out the importance of these ideas for thinking about the relationship between race, ethnicity and colonialism on the one hand, and capital and class on the other (see Hall 1996b). In trying to formulate reasons for the failure of the Italian revolution, Gramsci needed to differentiate between Italy and the rest of Europe as well as different regions in Italy, laying the ground for thinking about national and regional issues as an important part of capitalist development. Thus he did not treat 'labour' as a homogeneous category (Hall 1996b: 436). Capitalism works *through* and because of 'the culturally specific character of

labour power' or, to put it more simply, class and race are mutually constitutive and shaping forces. Gramsci's attempt to think about the so-called backwardness of his own birthplace, Sardinia (and of southern Italy in general) in relation to a more affluent north, is useful for us in considering how racial and cultural differences operate within the same class or mode of production. How did colonial regimes differentiate between races and groups but also simultaneously incorporate them all within a general system? For example, how did Bantustans function to spur the development of advanced capitalism in South Africa? The next chapter examines the interlocking of race and class in greater detail; here I only want to observe that Gramsci's notion that ideologies 'create the terrain on which men move' helps us to locate racism not just as an *effect* of capitalism but as complexly intertwined with it.

Gramsci's ideas have been employed by a wide range of writers to analyse race and colonialism. Errol Lawrence (1982), for example, has used them to discuss the 'common-sense' ideas about black people in post-war Britain, which he shows to be a combination of older prejudices and newer responses formulated within contemporary economic and cultural crisis. Scholars at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies have used Gramsci to analyse contemporary political formations in Europe, as has the Subaltern Studies group of Indian historians to revise existing theories of nationalism and postcolonial social formations (Hall *et al.* 1978; Guha 1982). Similarly Latin American and South African historians find Gramsci useful in thinking about the nature of the colonial and postcolonial state (Mallon 1994; Cooper 1994). Today, historians are increasingly interested in probing how colonial regimes achieved domination through creating partial consent, or involving the colonised peoples in creating the states and regimes which oppressed them. Gramsci's notion of hegemony is of obvious interest to these scholars, even though they often invoke it in order to emphasise how *dissimilar* colonial situations were from the European ones analysed by Gramsci (see Engels and Marks 1994). Even though colonial domination was often brutally repressive, recent scholarship has suggested that harsh coercion worked 'in tandem with a "consent" that was part voluntary, part

contrived' (Arnold 1994: 133). Colonial regimes tried to gain the consent of certain native groups, while excluding others from civil society. But even the most repressive rule involved some give-and-take. Gramscian notions of hegemony stress the incorporation and transformation of ideas and practices belonging to those who are dominated, rather than simple imposition from above. Such transformations are being increasingly seen as central to colonial rule. The dimension of Gramsci's work that has most inspired revisionary analyses of colonial societies is his understanding that subjectivity and ideology are absolutely central to the processes of domination. We will return later to this question; for now let us trace how debates about ideology have shaped key 'post-structuralist' notions of power, whose place within postcolonial studies is so contentious today.

The work of the French communist theorist Louis Althusser on ideology has been central in this regard. Althusser opened up certain important and new areas of inquiry such as *how* ideologies are internalised, how human beings make dominant ideas 'their own', how they express socially determined views 'spontaneously'. Althusser was interested in how subjects and their deepest selves are 'interpellated' (the term is borrowed from Freud), positioned (the term is Lacan's), and shaped by what lies outside them. Ideologies may express the interests of social groups, but they work through and upon individual people or 'subjects'. In fact subjectivity, or personhood, Althusser suggested, is itself formed in and through ideology. For him, psychoanalysis was most valuable in suggesting that the human being has no essential 'centre', except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e. in the ideological formations in which it 'recognizes' itself. This 'structure of misrecognition' was, for Althusser, most important in understanding ideology (1971: 218–19). He explicitly borrowed from Lacanian psychoanalysis and its account of subject-formation through language (and its slippages) in probing how ideology might work.

It still remains extremely difficult to bring together questions of human subjectivity with those of human collectivity. There is still a split between psychoanalytically inflected critiques of the 'insides' of people, and the Marxist discourses of their 'outsides'. Stuart Hall astutely suggests that Althusser's influential essay 'Ideological

State Apparatuses' may in fact have contributed to such a bifurcation by adopting a two-part structure, the first addressing ideology and the reproduction of the social relations of production, and the second how ideology creates us as subjects (1985: 91–114). But we can also argue that it was Althusser's very juxtaposition of these disparate vocabularies which put their interrelation on the agenda. However, Althusser's work was also deeply problematic and contradictory in its effects. He tried to explore further Gramsci's suggestion that ideas are transmitted via certain social institutions. Gramsci had suggested that hegemony is achieved via a combination of 'force' and 'consent'—Althusser argued that in modern capitalist societies, the former is achieved by 'Repressive State Apparatuses' such as the army and the police, but the latter is enforced via 'Ideological State Apparatuses' such as schools, the Church, the family, media and political systems. These ideological apparatuses assist in the reproduction of the dominant system by creating subjects who are ideologically conditioned to accept the values of the system. Such an idea is immensely useful in demystifying certain apparently innocent and apolitical institutions and has subsequently influenced analyses of schools, universities, family structures, and (via the work of Althusser's friend Pierre Macherey) literary texts. But it also effects a closure by failing to account for ideological struggle and oppositional ideas. If subjects are entirely the creation of dominant ideologies then there is no scope for any ideas outside of these ideologies, and thus no scope for social change. Thus we can say that Althusser's ideas about ideological apparatuses are too functionalist: they stress the function but not the complexity of either institutions or human subjects.

In pursuing Gramsci's suggestion that ideas can mould material reality Althusser argued that ideology has a 'relative autonomy' from the material base. He then expanded this idea and suggested that ideology 'has a material existence' in the sense that 'an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices' (1971: 166). Some of Althusser's admirers began to employ the notion of the material effect of ideology in a way that suggested that ideology and material practices were practically identical. This blurring stems from some of Althusser's own

formulations.⁴ In many post-Althusserian formulations, however, 'material in its effect' begins to be read as 'material in itself'. This shift in meaning is problematic; after all, it makes no sense to say that ideology is material in its effect if the two terms are the same thing to begin with. The problem is an important one for post-colonial theory, which, as we shall see, has been accused of being unable to maintain any distinction between questions of representation, language and culture on the one hand, and material and economic realities on the other. This is a difficult issue because while there is the obvious need to interrelate the two ('culture', for example, is shaped by both representations and economics, and economic questions are not free of ideologies), there is also the need to maintain some distinction so that the specificity of each is not eroded.

Althusser's work and the renewed interest it sparked in issues of ideologies, language and subjectivity have had a somewhat contradictory effect. It certainly opened up innovative ways of analysing institutions as well as ideas. At the same time, following upon Althusser's interest in language and psyche, subject-formation is often taken to be an effect of language and ideas, and a matter of individual psychic development alone. These innovative as well as reductive effects are both visible in postcolonial studies, often refracted through the writings of Althusser's student Michel Foucault. Foucault's work stands at the intersection of innovations in theories of ideology, subjectivity and language, and has exerted an important (some would say even definitive) influence on the shaping of postmodernist and post-structuralist ideas and, via Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), on postcolonial studies.

Foucault pushed to an extreme the idea of human beings being determined by the conditions of their existence. Like Marx and Engels, and Althusser after them, he tried to understand how the human subject is not an autonomous, free entity. However, his search led him to reject the distinction between ideas and material existence altogether and to abandon entirely the category of 'ideology'. All human ideas, and all fields of knowledge, are structured and determined by 'the laws of a certain code of knowledge' (Foucault 1970: ix). Thus no subject is 'free' and no utterance undetermined by a predetermined order or code. It is in this sense

that Foucault pronounces the death of the author, for no single individual is the sole source of any utterance. This view intersects with certain important innovations in linguistics which also challenged conventional ways of thinking about human utterance. According to one critic, it is 'the triple alliance' between Althusserian Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Saussurean linguistics which spawns discourse analysis (Elliot 1996: 255).

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure had argued that the relation between the 'signifier' (which is a sound image) and the 'signified' (which is the concept to which it refers) is arbitrary, which is to say that words achieve their meaning from an association in the mind, not from any natural or necessary reference to entities in the real world. These associations work through the principle of exclusion, which is to say that any sign achieves meaning diacritically, or through a system of differentiation from other signs. Thus, language is not a nomenclature, or a way of naming things which already exists, but a system of signs, whose meaning is relational. Only a social group can produce signs, because only a specific social usage gives a sign any meaning. So, if 'in Welsh the colour *glas* (blue), like the Latin *glaucus*, includes elements which the English would identify as green or grey', the different meanings are put into place by the different communities using these words (Belsey 1980: 39). The sign, or words, need a community with shared assumptions to confer them with meaning; conversely, a social group needs signs in order to know itself as a community. On this basis, we can think of language as ideological rather than as objective.

Several influential thinkers such as Lévi-Strauss attempted to systematise Saussure's ideas and suggest that there were general laws that governed how any and all signs worked, so that with the same general understanding, any cultural or signifying practice—from hair styles to myths—could be studied. This assumption, that there are general and 'scientific' laws underlying all cultural production (known as structuralism) was criticised from several different directions. The French Marxist Pierre Macherey objected to it on the grounds that no single system of meaning can work in every place and at every time. To find such a system would be to imply that texts acquire meaning even before they are written.

Instead, Macherey suggested that texts can only be understood in the context of their utterance. The literary text 'is not created by an intention (objective or subjective); it is produced under determinate conditions' (1978: 78). When and where a text is written, the language in which it is inscribed, the traditions and debates within which it intervenes all come together to create a textual fabric. What a text can say is as determined by these factors as what it cannot say. Jacques Derrida also criticised Lévi-Strauss for implying that there was a secure outside ground from which different representations could be studied, but the grounds of his criticism are different. He said that Lévi-Strauss had not gone far enough in confronting the implications of the instability of the sign. Instead, Derrida read Saussure more radically to suggest that no sign is identical with what it signifies, and there is always a gap between the two. The slippage between words or signs and their meaning is evident in every representation, every utterance. Accordingly, no utterance or text is capable of perfectly conveying its own meaning. But all texts, if analysed closely enough, or deconstructed, reveal their own instability, and their contradictions (Derrida 1994: 347–58). Meaning, in other words, is not self-present in the sign, or in text, but is the result of this gap, slippage or what Derrida calls 'différance'.

These are complex questions, which provoked sprawling and nuanced responses. For our purposes, the important point is that although these thinkers differ from each other on questions of politics as well as method, they share some important features. All of them question the humanist assumption that individuals are the sole source of meaning or action.⁵ Language emerges not as the creation of the speaking subject; rather the subject becomes so only by schooling his speech to a socially determined system of linguistic prescriptions. The primacy of language over subjectivity was also confirmed by Lacanian psychoanalysis, according to which the child learns to see itself as distinct from the rest of the world by regarding its own mirror image, but becomes a full subject only when it enters the world of language. Thus from a variety of different intersecting perspectives, language is seen to *construct* the subject. Perhaps the most radical result of these interconnecting but diverse ways of thinking about language was that no human

utterance could be seen as innocent. Any set of words could be analysed to reveal not just an individual but a historical consciousness at work. Words and images thus become fundamental for an analysis of historical processes such as colonialism.

We can see the ways in which these intellectual developments dovetail with the ideology debates. Together, they suggested that ideological and social practices are interconnected, indeed that they constitute each other. The place of language, culture and the individual in political and economic processes could no longer be seen as simply derivative or secondary, even though the exact ways in which they come together are still a matter of sharp controversy and debate. I want to emphasise that the intellectual positions I have summarised do not always share a political agenda or methodology. They do intensify and sharpen debates about the social fabric, and make it imperative for us to weave the economic realities of colonialism into all that was hitherto excluded from 'hard' social analysis—sexuality, subjectivity, psychology and language. They remind us that the 'real' relations of society do not exist in isolation from its cultural or ideological categories. And these various radical ways of thinking about language and ideology do share this much: they challenge any rigid demarcation of event and representation, or history and text.

This brings us back to Foucault, for whom such a demarcation is impossible. We have already discussed how Foucault collapses the notion of ideology. All ideas are ordered through 'some material medium' (1970: 100). This ordering imposes a pattern on them: a pattern which Foucault calls 'discourse'. The *OED* tells us that 'discourse', after the Latin *cursus* or 'running to and fro', carries several meanings—onward course, process or succession of time, events, actions; the faculty of reasoning or rationality; communication of thought by speech or conversation; a narrative, tale or account; familiarity, and a spoken or written treatment of a subject in which it is treated or handled at length. This last meaning, the dictionary tells us, is the prevailing sense of the word today. In the work of Michel Foucault, some of the earlier meanings are restored and others added to the word. It is in this expanded sense that 'discourse' has currently become central to critical theory and postcolonial criticism, especially after Said's use of it in *Orientalism*.

Foucault's notion of discourse was born from his work on madness, and from his desire to recover an inner perspective on the subject, or the voice of insane people, rather than what others had said about them. This was a difficult task—how might one recover voices that have been deemed not worthy of social circulation? Foucault found that literary texts were one of the rare places where they might be heard. He started to think about how madness as a category of human identity is produced and reproduced by various rules, systems and procedures which create and separate it from 'normalcy'. Such systems form what he called 'the order of discourse', or the entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is formed and produced. This includes not just what is thought or said but the rules which govern what can be said and what not, what is included as rational and what left out, what is thought of as madness or insubordination and what is seen as sane or socially acceptable.

'Discourse' in this sense is a whole field or domain within which language is used in particular ways. This domain is rooted (as is Gramsci's or Althusser's notion of ideology) in human practices, institutions and actions. Thus, the discourse on madness in modern society is anchored in institutions such as madhouses, and in practices such as psychiatry. Discursive practices make it difficult for individuals to think outside them—hence they are also exercises in power and control. This element of control should not be taken to mean that a discourse as a domain of utterance is either static or cannot admit of contradictions. Consider as an example the discourse on the burning of widows on their husbands' pyres in India. This would include the entire spectrum of writing or utterance upon this subject: those in favour of widow immolation and those against it, Hindu reformers and nationalists, the Hindu orthodoxy and British administrators. All of these groups engaged in contentious debates with one another, but at the same time they all worked within a shared conceptual order in which women's burning was seen as part of the Hindu tradition, and women were regarded as creatures whose interests needed to be represented by men. As a result, women's own voices could find no representation during the colonial debates on this subject. Today, the discourse on widow burning in India reveals both a continuity

from the colonial times and some radical changes. A whole spectrum of women are very much part of contemporary discussions. To analyse the changes between nineteenth-century and recent debates is to map the historical, cultural and political shifts between then and now as well as between India and the West (Mani 1989; Loomba 1993). As Hayden White puts it in a different context, discourse constitutes 'the ground whereon to decide what shall count as a fact in the matters under consideration and to determine what mode of comprehension is best suited to the understanding of the facts thus constituted' (1987: 3). The historian and the critic, then, are also part of a discursive order rather than outsiders—what they say, indeed what they *can* say is also determined and shaped by their circumstances. Thus the concept of discourse extends the notion of a historically and ideologically inflected linguistic field—no utterance is innocent and every utterance tells us something about the world we live in. But equally, the world we live in is only comprehensible to us via its discursive representations.

In various permutations and combinations, the intellectual developments outlined in this section (and various crucial strands have been excluded) had a revolutionary impact on different disciplines—for literary criticism, it meant that history does not just provide a background to the study of texts, but forms an essential part of textual meaning; conversely, texts or representations have to be seen as fundamental to the creation of history and culture. For historical study it meant that claims to objectivity and truth would have to be tempered as historical writing could now be seen as subject to the same rules, slippages and strategies as other narratives. The lines between 'fact' and 'fiction' were becoming blurred, or at least were subject to intense scrutiny. Such a move was perhaps especially liberating for Anglo-American literary studies, which had been dominated by different versions of idealist criticism according to which literary texts were stable carriers of culture and meaning.

Finally, the point from which we began: these developments cannot be seen in isolation from the growth of certain political movements such as feminism or anti-colonial struggles. Both women and colonised peoples functioned in economies which rested on their labour, and both were subject to ideologies which justified or

obscured this exploitation. So both feminist and anti-colonial movements needed to challenge dominant ideas of history, culture and representation. They too questioned objectivity in dominant historiography, they too showed how canonical literary texts disguised their political affiliations, and they too broke with dominant Western, patriarchal, philosophies. Post-structuralists' suspicion of established truths was shared by various new social movements which also challenged the 'meta-narratives' that excluded them. Anti-colonial or feminist struggles emphasised culture as a site of conflict between the oppressors and the oppressed. The decentring of the human subject was important to them because such a subject had been dominantly theorised by European imperialist discourses as male and white. They also paid attention to language as a tool of domination and as a means of constructing identity.

But, on the other hand, anti-colonial and feminist activists and intellectuals were invested not only in questioning totalising frameworks but also in the possibility of social change. Foucault's notion of discourse, and his ideas about social power were useful and yet limited in this regard. Foucault argued that after the beginning of the nineteenth century (which he characterises as inaugurating the 'modern' epoch), the dominant structures of Western societies reproduce themselves by working insidiously rather than spectacularly upon the human subject and especially the human body. Human beings internalise the systems of repression and reproduce them by conforming to certain ideas of what is normal and what is deviant. Thus our ideas about madness, criminality or sexuality are regulated through institutions such as the madhouse or the prison, and also by certain ideological 'regimes'. Power does not emanate from some central or hierarchical structure but flows through society in a sort of capillary action: 'Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault 1990: 93).

Such a conception of power was useful for feminists and others who were interested in focusing upon the repressive aspects of everyday life and of institutions such as the family. But it did not help explain how various institutions and discursive formations, different 'regimes of truth' come together to create a social fabric. While Foucault breaks away from a reductive conception of

social unity, he does not present an alternative, more complex, consideration of a social *formation*. As soon as we think about society not as a unitary whole but as a complex amalgam, or a formation, we are obliged to think about the relations of power *between* different social structures as well as *within* each social structure:

The question of the relative power and distribution of different regimes of truth in the social formation at any one time—which have certain effects for the maintenance of power in the social order—that's what I call 'the ideological effect'. So I go on using the term 'ideology' because it forces me to continue thinking about that problem. By abandoning the term, I think that Foucault has let himself off the hook of having to re-theorise it in a more radical way: i.e. he saves for himself 'the political' with his insistence on power, but he denies himself *a politics* because he has no idea of the 'relations of force'.

(Hall 1996d: 136)

This is an important point, because without thinking about such relations, it is hard to think about resistance in any systematic way. Thus Stuart Hall calls Foucault's position 'proto-anarchist' because it makes resistance an arbitrary affair. Accordingly, in various Foucaultian analyses, emancipation is often conceptualised as a personal affair, understandable only to those who resist, something that cannot be analysed or represented by anyone else. At other times the idea of power is rendered so diffuse that it cannot be either understood or challenged: one feminist argues that in Foucault, 'Power is everywhere, and so ultimately nowhere' (Hartsock 1990: 170).

In certain postmodern writings, these tendencies are taken even further. The human being is decentred, society is conceptualised as totally fragmented and utterance as unstable. When plurality, slippage and deferral of meaning become enshrined as philosophical beliefs they can deny the very possibility of human understanding. Decentring the subject allows for a social reading of language and representations, but it can also make it impossible to think about a subject capable of acting and challenging the *status quo*. These issues are again open to multiple interpretations,

and we will return to them later. The important point is that these tensions about power and subjectivity have become central to the study of colonialism. Edward Said alleges that 'all the energies poured into critical theory, into novel and demystifying theoretical praxes like the new historicism and deconstruction and Marxism have avoided the major, I would say determining, political horizon of modern Western culture, namely imperialism' (1995: 37). This critique is somewhat ironic, given that it was Said's earlier book, *Orientalism* (1978) which used some of these new perspectives (including Foucault's insights) to offer a new critique of colonialist thought, and to become a foundational text for a new area of inquiry—that of 'colonial discourse'.

COLONIAL DISCOURSE

Knowledge is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power. This Foucaultian insight informs Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which points out the extent to which 'knowledge' about 'the Orient' as it was produced and circulated in Europe was an ideological accompaniment of colonial 'power'. This is a book not about non-Western cultures, but about the Western representation of these cultures, particularly in the scholarly discipline called Orientalism. Said shows how this discipline was created alongside the European penetration into the 'Near East' and how it was nurtured and supported by various other disciplines such as philology, history, anthropology, philosophy, archaeology and literature.

Orientalism uses the concept of discourse to re-order the study of colonialism. It examines how the formal study of the 'Orient' (what is today referred to as the Middle East), along with key literary and cultural texts, consolidated certain ways of seeing and thinking which in turn contributed to the functioning of colonial power. These are not materials that traditional analysts of colonialism considered, but which are now, thanks both to *Orientalism* and to the changing perspectives on ideology and culture outlined above, understood as central to the making and functioning of colonial societies. Said explains that certain texts are accorded

the authority of academics, institutions, and governments. ... Most important, such texts can create not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it.

(Said 1978: 94)

Said accords a greater importance to individual authors than does Foucault, but, like Foucault, he also wishes to connect them to structures of thought and to the workings of power. Accordingly, he brings together a range of creative writers, statesmen, political thinkers, philologists and philosophers who contributed to Orientalism as an institution which then provided the lens through which the 'Orient' would be viewed, and controlled; but equally this control itself spawned these ways of knowing, studying, believing and writing. Thus knowledge about and power over colonised lands are related enterprises.

Orientalism inaugurated a new kind of study of colonialism. Said argues that representations of the 'Orient' in European literary texts, travelogues and other writings contributed to the creation of a dichotomy between Europe and its 'others', a dichotomy that was central to the creation of European culture as well as to the maintenance and extension of European hegemony over other lands. Said's project is to show how 'knowledge' about non-Europeans was part of the process of maintaining power over them; thus the status of 'knowledge' is demystified, and the lines between the ideological and the objective blurred. It was not, Said suggests, that Europeans were 'telling lies', or that they individually disliked non-Western peoples or cultures. In the case of Richard Burton (the translator into English of books like *The Arabian Nights*, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and *The Kama Sutra*) for example, Said points out that

no man who did not know Arabic and Islam as well as Burton could have gone as far as he did in actually becoming a pilgrim to Mecca and Medina. So what we read in Burton's prose is the history of a consciousness negotiating its way through an alien culture by virtue of having

successfully absorbed its systems of information and behaviour. ... [Yet] every one of Burton's footnotes, whether in the *Pilgrimage* or in his translation of *The Arabian Nights* ... was meant to be testimony to his victory over the same scandalous system of Oriental knowledge, a system he had mastered by himself.

(Said 1978: 195–96)

So the impressive knowledge of Orientalists was filtered through their cultural bias, for the 'study' of the Orient was not objective but

a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, 'us') and the strange (the Orient, the East, 'them'). ... When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy ... the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.

(1978: 45–46)

Said argued that knowledge of the East could never be innocent or 'objective' because it was produced by human beings who were necessarily embedded in colonial history and relationships. Precisely this point had also been made, albeit less 'theoretically', by the Indian nationalist Bipin Chandra Pal earlier in the twentieth century. Pal pointed out that:

When ... the European scientist studies the physical features of our land, when he mensurates our fields, trigonometrates our altitudes and undulations, investigates our animal, our vegetable or our mineral kingdoms, the records of his study are accepted as true and authoritative. But the study of man belongs altogether to a different plane. ... Here also the eye sees, the ear hears, but the real meaning of what is seen or heard is supplied not by the senses but by the understanding, which interprets what is heard in the light of its own peculiar experiences and associations.

(Pal 1958: 8–9)

Many years before Said, Frantz Fanon had concluded his indictment of colonialism by pronouncing that it was Europe that 'is literally the creation of the Third World' in the sense that it is material wealth and labour from the colonies, 'the sweat and the dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians and the yellow races' that have fuelled the 'opulence' of Europe (1963: 76–81). European intellectuals such as Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt had also explored the connections between the intellectual production of the colonial world and its growing global domination (Williams and Chrisman 1994: 7). But although Said's critique was anticipated by others, it was new in its wide-sweeping range and focus, in its invocation of Foucault's work to make connections between the production of knowledge and the exercise of power, and innovative also in its use of literary materials to discuss historical and epistemological processes. In many ways Said's use of culture and knowledge to interrogate colonial power inaugurated colonial discourse studies.

Discourse analysis, as we have previously discussed, makes it possible to trace connections between the visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalised, ideas and institutions. It allows us to see how power works through language, literature, culture and the institutions which regulate our daily lives. Using this expanded definition of power, Said could move away from a narrow and technical understanding of colonial authority and show how it functioned by producing a 'discourse' about the Orient—that is, by generating structures of thinking which were manifest in literary and artistic production, in political and scientific writings and more specifically, in the creation of Oriental studies. Said's basic thesis is that Orientalism, or the 'study' of the Orient, 'was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted a binary opposition between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them")' (Said 1978: 43).

Said shows that this opposition is crucial to European self-conception: if colonised people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilisation itself, with its sexual appetites under control and its dominant ethic that of hard work; if the Orient is static, Europe can be seen

as developing and marching ahead; the Orient has to be feminine so that Europe can be masculine. This dialectic between self and other, derived in part from deconstruction, has been hugely influential in subsequent studies of colonial discourses in other places—critics have traced it as informing colonial attitudes towards Africans, Native Americans, and other non-European peoples. Since *Orientalism*, colonial discourse studies have analysed a wide range of cultural texts and practices such as art works, atlases, cinema, scientific systems, museums, educational institutions, advertisements, psychiatric and other medical practices, geology, patterns of clothing and ideas on beauty. According to one critic, ‘colonial discourse analysis ... forms the point of questioning of Western knowledge’s categories and assumptions’ (Young 1990: 11).

Said’s book denies the claim of objectivity or innocence not only within Oriental studies but on the part of any Western scholarship. It also implicates other human and social sciences as they were traditionally constituted—anthropology, philology, art history, history, economic and cultural studies, and literary studies. All of these disciplines, for various reasons, were inadequate for analysing the colonial construction of knowledge and culture in Said’s sense. Anthropological studies rested upon the assumption that non-European peoples were backward, primitive, quaint, sometimes even ‘noble’, but always different from the products of Western civilisation. Historical scholarship claimed ‘objectivity’ while being riddled with cultural bias, and its crude separation of ‘fact’ from fiction had precluded its ability to probe the ideologies that informed Western scholarship’s claim to ‘truth-telling’. ‘Classical’ economics was notoriously culture-blind, and even the study of art was premised on cultural generalisations that masqueraded as ‘aesthetic taste’. Orthodox literary studies claimed to be ‘above’ politics altogether, interested only in something called ‘the human condition’, and, as Said points out, certainly hostile to any discussion of cultural difference, colonialism and imperialism. Colonial discourse studies entail inter-disciplinary work which was only made possible by radical changes within many of these disciplines.

Despite its enormous influence, *Orientalism* evoked much hostility as well as criticism, especially from Orientalists themselves, but

also from others fundamentally sympathetic to Said's project. One recurring critique is that *Orientalism* suggests that a binary opposition between East and West has been a more or less static feature of Western discourses from classical Greece to the present day. Thus Said's book is seen to flatten historical nuances into a fixed East versus West divide (D. Porter 1983). Scholars who work in earlier periods have repeatedly made this point in order to trace the ways in which the East was not the silent 'Other' of Europe before the eighteenth century (Loomba 1996; Brotton 1997; Vitkus 2002). Aijaz Ahmad (1992) also accuses Said of homogenising the West, but on the grounds that Said does not sufficiently connect Orientalist knowledge production to colonial history and its connections with capitalism; he inflates the importance of literary, ideological and discursive aspects at the expense of more institutional or material realities, implying that colonialism was largely an ideological construct. Critics have pointed out, too, that Said's analysis concentrates, almost exclusively, on canonical Western literary texts. A third, most frequent charge is that Said ignores the self-representations of the colonised and focuses on the imposition of colonial power rather than on the resistances to it. By doing so, he promotes a static model of colonial relations in which 'colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer' and therefore there is no room for negotiation or change (Bhabha 1983: 200).

The nature of colonial power remains a vexed question for postcolonial studies. Some scholars criticise the entire field for adopting a Foucaultian view of colonial power as all pervasive. *Orientalism* is held responsible for this bias by suggesting that Western tests create not only knowledge about the Orient but the very reality they appear to describe and thus implying that

the historical experiences of colonial peoples themselves have no independent existence outside the texts of *Orientalism*. ... At a theoretical level, then, Said appears to have placed himself in the position of denying the possibility of any alternative description of 'the Orient', any alternative forms of knowledge and by extension, any agency on the part of the colonised. The fact that this theoretical position runs counter to Said's professed political aim of effecting the dissolution of

'Orientalism' could be seen as an ironic validation of his own theory, since even he seems trapped within the frame of Orientalism, unable to move outside it.

(Vaughan 1994: 3)

Foucault, you will recall, argues that power manifests itself not in a downward flow from the top of the social hierarchy to those below but extends itself laterally in a capillary fashion—it is part of daily action, speech and everyday life.

Is such a notion of power useful for re-conceptualising social domination, or does it render it all-pervasive and therefore difficult to challenge? Edward Said has himself said he finds such an understanding of power disabling for politically engaged criticism (1984: 245). Some commentators find an irreconcilable contradiction between Said's use of Foucaultian perspectives to critique the operations of colonial discourse, and his political commitment to the possibility of social change. Others suggest that in his later work, Foucault began to emphasise the instability and contradictions within discourses, and the possibility of resisting this control. But Foucault also discusses how dominant structures legitimise themselves by allowing a controlled space for dissidence—resistance, in this view, is produced and then inoculated against by those in power. Certain influential bodies of literary and cultural criticism inspired by his work, such as new historicism, emphasise the ways in which, in the final analysis, all manner of oppositional ideologies or resistant groups or individuals are contained by power structures. One can see how such a pessimistic theoretical framework would be criticised by those who are beginning to uncover the histories of women or colonised subjects as histories of resistance and opposition and not just as stories about oppression. But other theorists have appropriated Foucaultian ideas to conceptualise multiple challenges to authority.

These are matters of ongoing debate. It is true that *Orientalism* is primarily concerned with how the Orient was 'constructed' by Western literature, travel writing and systems of studying the East, and not with how such a construction was received or dismantled by colonial subjects. However, it would be unfair to conclude that just because Said does not venture into the latter territory he

necessarily suggests that the colonialist's discourse is all pervasive. By studying modes and ideas of domination, scholars do not automatically underline it—Said's own critique, and the work of others (such as Raymond Schwab) before him, are themselves proof that Orientalist thought can be challenged. Elsewhere Said discusses anti-imperialist theorists such as Fanon in order to think about resistance in the present context (1989). At the same time, colonial authority constantly has to negotiate with the people it seeks to control, and therefore the presence of those people, oppositional or otherwise, is a crucial factor in studying authority itself. Foucault's own work suggests that domination and resistance are inextricably linked. So Said's story about how a body of texts constructed the East is necessarily incomplete without some sense of the specific peoples and cultures it re-wrote, and situations into which it intervened.

Colonial discourse studies today are not restricted to delineating the workings of power. They have tried to locate and theorise oppositions, resistances and revolts (successful and otherwise) on the part of the colonised. Sharp debates continue to be waged over these questions. Critics such as Gayatri Spivak are wary of too easy a 'recovery' of the 'voice' or 'agency' of colonised peoples or 'subaltern' subjects. ('Subaltern' was a military term used for officers under the rank of captain and its origin is somewhat inconsistent with its current usage, borrowed from Gramsci, as a shorthand for any oppressed person.) She argues that to do so would be to undermine the devastating effects of colonial power which was so pervasive that it re-wrote intellectual, legal and cultural systems. Others criticise her position by calling attention to nationalist and anticolonial struggles which did succeed in dismantling formal colonial structures (Parry 1987, 1994a).

Although colonial discourse studies are indebted to the Foucaultian concept of discourse, Foucault himself did not pay any attention to colonial expansion as a feature of the European civil society or consider how colonialism may have affected the power/knowledge systems of the modern European state. His analysis of power is predicated upon a specifically European modernity wherein physical punishment and torture lose their spectacular forms and the state's power over the human body

operates far more obliquely through the prison or the asylum. But colonial power did not necessarily operate in that fashion, as Megan Vaughan demonstrates in her analysis of bio-medicine in colonial Africa (1991: 8–10). Vaughan argues that whereas Foucault talks about the ‘productive’ as opposed to ‘repressive’ power of the modern state, colonial states were hardly ‘modern’ in the European sense, and relied on a large measure of repressive power. Secondly, whereas Foucault outlines how modern European states created normative as well as ‘abnormal’ subjects in order to police both, ‘the need to objectify and distance “the Other” in the form of the madman or the leper was less urgent in a situation in which every colonial person was in some sense, already “Other”’. The individuation of subjects that took place in Europe was denied colonised people. Colonial medical discourse conceptualised Africans as members of groups ‘and it was these groups, rather than individuals, who were said to possess distinctive psychologies and bodies. In contrast to the European developments described by Foucault, in colonial Africa group classification was a far more important construction than individualization’ (Vaughan 1991: 11). Vaughan concludes that colonial power was different from its European counterpart because of the uneven development of capitalism in Africa and its relation to discourses on ‘the African’:

Medical discourses both described and helped create the ‘contradictions’ of capitalism (‘mediated’ them, if you like). Africans were expected to move in and out of the market, as conditions dictated. They were to be single-minded cotton producers at one moment, and at another they were prohibited from growing the crop. They were to be ‘docile bodies’ for mining capital when the conditions of labour supply demanded it, but not for the whole of their lives. They were created as consumers of products for the new, modern bodies at one moment, and at the next they were told to revive their ‘traditional’ knowledge of soap-producing plants. By relying so heavily on older modes of production for its very success, colonial capitalism also helped create the discourse on the ‘traditional’, non-individualised and ‘unknowing’ collective being—the ‘African’, a discourse to which the idea of difference was central.

(Vaughan 1991: 12)

Jenny Sharpe (1993) offers an analogous critique of Foucault on the basis of her analysis of the 1857 uprisings against the British in India. Sharpe argues that whereas for Foucault modern mechanisms of punishment and control are insidious rather than spectacular, the punishment of Indian rebels by the colonial authorities was excessive, ritualised and ceremonial. It was designed to “‘strike terror’ in the rebellious native’ and it reduced the rebels ‘to the corporeality of their bodies’ in a manner ‘out of Europe’s own “barbaric” past’. Because Foucault ‘derives his theory of disciplinary power from a Euro-centric model of prison reforms, it cannot be used to address the colonial situation, in which technologies of discipline are overdetermined by imperial structures of power’ (Sharpe 1993: 79). Although they deal with very different colonial situations, and in fact work from different methodological perspectives, Vaughan and Sharpe’s overlapping critiques of Foucault serve to demonstrate the complex interaction between postmodern or post-structuralist thought and colonial discourse analysis.

‘Colonial discourse’, then, is not just a fancy new term for colonialism; it indicates a new way of conceptualizing the interaction of cultural, intellectual, economic or political processes in the formation, perpetuation and dismantling of colonialism. It seeks to widen the scope of studies of colonialism by examining the intersection of ideas and institutions, knowledge and power. Consequently, colonial violence is understood as including an ‘epistemic’ aspect, i.e. an attack on the culture, ideas and value systems of the colonised peoples. As we have seen, such a perception is not entirely new, and was in circulation among nationalist ideologues. Colonial discourse studies, however, seek to offer in-depth analyses of colonial epistemologies, and also connect them to the history of colonial institutions. For example, Gauri Viswanathan (1990) and David Johnson (1996) situate the institutionalisation of English education, and particularly the study of English literature, within the politics of colonial rule in India and South Africa respectively. In a very different kind of study (mentioned above) Megan Vaughan shows how medicine in colonial Africa constructed ‘the African’ in particular ways which were intrinsic to the operations of colonial power. David Arnold (1993) has analysed

the imperial medical system in British India in an analogous vein. More generally, colonial discourse studies are interested in how stereotypes, images, and 'knowledge' of colonial subjects and cultures tie in with institutions of economic, administrative, judicial and bio-medical control.

One of the sharpest criticisms of colonial discourse studies is that they present a distorted picture of colonial rule and decolonisation, as well as postcolonial landscapes, by inflating culture and literature at the expense of economic and political institutions. In other words, colonial discourse studies erase any distinction between the material and the ideological because they concentrate on the latter. We have already discussed a version of this problem in relation to revisionist theories of ideology. The concept of 'discourse', as we saw earlier, was meant to uncover the inter-relation of the ideological and the material rather than to collapse them into each other. But of course, in practice, this ideal does not always work, perhaps because so many of those who work in this area have been trained in fields where representation is privileged such as literary studies, art history, film, and media and cultural studies. Even though disciplinary boundaries have been disintegrating, and colonial discourse studies, like feminist studies, are astonishingly inter-disciplinary, the areas from which they have sprung exert their own bias, and mould them in ways that we will examine in subsequent sections.

Scholars also accuse colonial discourse studies of not paying enough attention to previous analytical methods. For example, Megan Vaughan writes that, much before colonial discourse theorists talked about it, historians of Africa were discussing the ways in which custom and tradition are 'constructed' and 'invented' by both colonialists and their opponents (Vaughan 1994: 1–23). Long before Foucault, they were discussing how the colonisers and the colonised cannot represent neat binaries but are active in constructing each other. Similar arguments have been advanced by feminists with respect to postmodern theory. Judith Newton has rightly suggested that feminist historians had emphasised the centrality of 'representation, role prescription, ideas, values, psychology and the construction of subjectivity', the importance of sexuality and reproduction, and the necessity of inter-disciplinary

work long before these ideas were made fashionable as 'new historicism' (Newton 1989: 154).

Certainly, it would be a mistake to detach either 'colonial discourse' analysis or post-structuralist theoretical innovations from previous intellectual and political histories. Various political movements, such as those for decolonisation or for women's equality, are as important as earlier modes of analysis in constructing the genealogy of current debates on the subject. At the same time, it would be a caricature of recent theoretical innovations to reduce them to a matter of 'the linguistic turn' and 'textuality' or to claim that they simply re-circulate what historians already knew. The question of the usefulness or otherwise of something called 'postmodern' or post-structuralist theory for 'postcolonial' societies can continue to be debated and we will return to that towards the end of this book. Here I want to emphasise that there is no consensus or homogeneity within 'colonial discourse analysis' which is the site of much debate and controversy precisely because it has drawn from a wide range of intellectual and political histories and affiliations. To pit 'colonial discourse analysts' against 'social historians', or historians against literary critics is to simply resurrect older disciplinary and intellectual divisions, and thus to miss the debates *within* 'colonial discourse analysis', as well as the real innovations within the field. It is far more helpful to engage with different approaches to questions of colonial subjects and power relations, and to see where the real differences of method lie. Viewed this way, the work of someone like Vaughan contributes to and is made possible by current debates on 'discourse' and power. Modern European colonialism has been a historically and geographically nuanced rather than a monolithic phenomenon. How can we be attentive to these nuances, and at the same time find shared attributes and features of power and resistance? Such a task requires an expanded vocabulary, and current debates on colonial discourse are precisely about the nature of that expansion.

COLONIALISM AND KNOWLEDGE

Colonialism reshaped existing structures of human knowledge. No branch of learning was left untouched by the colonial experience.

A crucial aspect of this process was the gathering and ordering of information about the lands and peoples visited by, and later subject to, the colonial powers. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European ventures to Asia, America and Africa were not the first encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans but writings of this period do mark a new way in thinking about and categorizing the peoples of the world. Travel writing was an important means of producing 'Europe's differentiated conceptions of itself in relation to something it became possible to call "the rest of the world"' (Pratt 1992: 5; see also Spurr 1993).

The definition of civilisation and barbarism rests on the production of an irreconcilable difference between 'black' and 'white', 'Christian' and 'heathen infidel', self and other. The late medieval European figure of the 'wild man' who lived in forests, on the outer edges of civilisation, and was hairy, nude, violent, lacking in moral sense and excessively sensual, expressed all manner of cultural anxieties. He and his female counterpart were 'others' who existed outside civil society, and yet they constantly threatened to enter and disrupt this society. Such myths intersected with images of foreigners (from Africa, the Islamic world and India) with whom medieval Europeans (and earlier Greco-Roman societies) had some contact. It is important to remember that images of Africans, Turks, Muslims, barbarians, anthropophagi, 'men of Inde' and other outsiders had circulated within Europe for a long time before colonialism. These images often appear to coincide with the constructions of the 'other' in colonialist discourse. For example, the twelfth- and thirteenth-century image of Muslims as barbaric, degenerate, tyrannical and promiscuous seems identical with the Orientalist images Said identifies in *Orientalism*. Therefore, at times, discussions of 'colonial discourse' treat such images as the static product of a timeless opposition between 'Western' and 'non-Western' peoples and ideas. As a matter of fact, all these images about the other were moulded and remoulded through various histories of contact. Colonialism was perhaps the most important crucible for their affirmation as well as reconstruction.

Colonialism expanded the contact between Europeans and non-Europeans, generating a flood of images and ideas on an unprecedented scale. Previously held notions about the inferiority

of non-Europeans provided a justification for European settlements, trading practices, religious missions and military activities; but they were also reshaped in accordance with specific colonial practices. Thus, for example, the old term 'anthropophagi' (used by the Roman writer Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History* to refer to human beings who ate their own kind) was applied by Columbus to those Indians who were called 'Caribs'. A subsequent linguistic transformation of 'Carib' resulted in the term 'cannibal' which absorbed the connotations of the earlier term 'anthropophagi'. It is interesting to note that Spanish colonists increasingly applied the term 'cannibal' and attributed the practice of cannibalism to those natives within the Caribbean and Mexico who were *resistant* to colonial rule, and among whom no cannibalism had in fact been witnessed. The idea of cannibalism was directly applied to justify brutal colonialist practices (Hulme 1986; Miles 1989: 25).

These new images were also widely circulated for consumption at home. Martin Frobisher even carried an Inuit and put him on display in England. In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Trinculo speculates on the money he could make if he were to do the same with Caliban, since people 'will lay out ten (coins) to see a dead Indian' (II, i, 32–33). Another very different kind of 'Indian' was also viewed by contemporary English people—the American 'princess' Pocahontas, who was presented at court as the wife of the colonist John Rolfe. These two natives of America could not easily be regarded as the same—one was offered as evidence (like Caliban himself) of a people outside of culture altogether, the other as worthy of assimilation into European society. These differences are important for understanding the production of colonial stereotypes. The most extensive pictures of all the different kinds of people of the New World were gathered together in the folios of Theodore de Bry's five volume *America*, issued from the 1590s. But Theodore de Bry also issued another set of volumes that depicted people from the other Indies—*India Orientalis* (1599) documented life in various parts of the East. The two volumes testify to an awareness of the differences between various non-European peoples, differences which were also recorded in the travel narratives collected in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by

editors such as Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas, or manifested in the growing European collections of objects from different parts of the world. How then can we reconcile increasing knowledge about the diversity of peoples and lands with colonial stereotypes about Europe and its others?

Stereotyping involves a reduction of images and ideas to a simple and manageable form; rather than simple ignorance or lack of 'real' knowledge, it is a method of processing information. The function of stereotypes is to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between 'self' and 'other' (Gilman 1985b: 18). The travel collections produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries do not actually reproduce non-Europeans as monoliths. They note specific eating habits, religious beliefs, clothing and social organisation in ways that mark the beginning of anthropological studies. This 'noting' includes, in the case of de Bry's pictures in America, the figure of a man whose head is painted between his shoulders as one of the residents of the 'new' continent. Exactly this image is recalled by Othello in Shakespeare's play—on his travels, he says, he has seen 'men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders'. While, in *Othello*, this image may be considered as the work of a fictional imagination, in de Bry it passes for observed fact. What is even more important, in Shakespeare's play such images function to indicate Othello's *difference* from the monstrous non-Europeans he has seen on his travels. References to Othello's 'thick lips', 'sooty bosom' and animal lust (he's called 'an old black ram') mark him out as both inferior and alien, but he himself is careful to distinguish himself from men 'whose heads grow beneath their shoulders'. European travel accounts and literatures were acutely conscious of these differences. The 'wild man' and the 'barbarian' were not identical—the former lived outside civil society, the latter was part of an alien social system (White 1987: 165). De Bry's volumes graphically portrayed America as a land of cannibalism as well as of noble savages. The point is that both images posited an irreducible difference between Americans and Europeans, and that this difference was reproduced in a wide range of materials, some obviously fictional and some passing as fact.

It is easier to accept such blurring of 'fact' and 'fiction' in older texts, but we often assume that with scientific advances,

misrepresentation decreases. But far from being an objective, ideology-free domain, modern Western science was deeply implicated in the construction of racist ways of thinking about human beings and the differences between them (Stepan 1982; Gould 1996). Mary Louise Pratt has argued that, from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, science 'came to articulate Europe's contacts with the imperial frontier, and to be articulated by them'. Pratt places the emergence of natural history as a structure of knowledge within a 'new planetary consciousness' which emerged in Europe at this time as a result of colonial expansion. Linnaeus's *System of Nature* (1735) which inaugurated a system of classifying plants that is still current, was born of a new totalising conception of the world:

One by one the planet's life forms were to be drawn out of the tangled threads of their life surroundings and rewoven into European-based patterns of global unity and order. The (lettered, male, European) eye that held the system could familiarise ('naturalise') new sites/sights immediately upon contact, by incorporating them into the language of the system. The differences of distance factored themselves out of the picture: with respect to mimosas, Greece could be the same as Venezuela, West Africa, or Japan; the label 'granite peaks' can apply identically to Eastern Europe, the Andes, or the American West.

(Pratt 1992: 31)

However, Richard H. Grove's *Green Imperialism* points out that Linnaeus's classificatory system, which he thought of as a large map of the world, was also profoundly indebted to the South Indian Ezhava system of classifying plants (1995: 90). Grove shows how 'the seeds of modern conservationism developed as an integral part of the European encounter with the tropics and with local classifications and interpretations of the natural world and its symbolism' (1995: 3). British engineers in India could only complete their bridges and dams by consulting local experts. According to Major Arthur Cotton, who is called the 'founder' of modern irrigation programmes, when he first arrived in India, the natives spoke 'with contempt' of the English, calling them 'a kind of civilized savages, wonderfully expert about fighting, but so inferior to their great men

that we would not even keep in repair the works they had constructed, much less even imitate them in extending the system'. The East India Company was unable to check the rising river bed of the Kaveri Delta: Cotton finally solved the problem by learning from indigenous experts 'how to secure a foundation in loose sand of unmeasured depth. ... With this lesson about foundations, we built bridges, weirs, aqueducts and every kind of hydraulic work' (Shiva 1988: 187). Many of Western science's debts to non-European forms of knowledge were subsequently obscured; worse, the exchange of scientific ideas between African, Asian, and indigenous American societies was, after European colonisation, severely truncated, or only routed through the colonial system (Harding 2006). During this period, as Vandana Shiva and many other scientists have documented, colonial science brutally altered the ecological and natural landscape of colonised societies. Crops such as indigo, opium and sugar, grown to fuel global trade, were mass produced and eroded the rich biodiversity of many parts of the world.

At the same time, the modern discourse of 'race' was deeply indebted to Western science. The nature of and reason for differences in skin colour had been debated for centuries within Europe: was blackness a product of climate and environment, or was it a God-ordained sign of sinfulness? Over time, as the next chapter will show, Western scientific discourse came to argue that skin colour connoted a difference that was pathological; that is, it was not superficial to human identity but constitutive of it. The important point is that science did not shed earlier prejudices about inferior races even as it explained them with a new vocabulary. Thus, in the discourse of science, race explained not simply people's skin colour, but also their civilizational and cultural attributes. 'Nature' was now invoked to 'explain' and connect black skin, a small brain and savage behaviour. The important thing to understand is that science is necessarily shaped by cultural attitudes—thus, Darwin's theory of the evolution of the species represented a genuine advance for science and yet it was used to bolster ideas of racial supremacy. In his *Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin wrote: 'Extinction follows chiefly from the competition of tribe with tribe, and race with race. ... When civilized nations

come into contact with barbarians the struggle is short' (quoted by Young 1995: 18). Hence, races and nations were concepts that developed in connection with one another.

Over time, colour, hair type, skull shape and size, facial angles, or brain size were variously taken up by scientific discourses as the most accurate index of racial differences. As recently as 1994, Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein's *The Bell Curve* suggested that discrepancy between black and white Americans on the standardised IQ tests was due to natural or genetic causes. These authors claimed their 'findings' were objective, scientific and therefore ideologically neutral and did not detract from their own commitment to multiculturalism, but critics pointed out that precisely such arguments about natural inferiority are used to explain away the continuing cycle of poverty in which almost 45 per cent of black children are trapped in the United States (Gates 1994: 10). However, others were swayed precisely because cognitive functioning is regarded as a 'scientific' matter, and thus beyond the realm of ideology. In the debates on women's intelligence and psychology too, we can see how scientific knowledge is refracted through the prism of prejudice, so that age-old ideas about women's instinct as opposed to men's rationality, or about female behavioural patterns, are regularly recycled as 'latest' scientific discoveries.

Dominant scientific ideologies about race and gender have historically propped up each other. In the mid-nineteenth century, the new science of anthropometry pronounced Caucasian women to be closer to Africans than white men were, and supposedly female traits were used to describe 'the lower races' (Stepan 1990: 43). Accordingly, African women occupied the lowest rung of the racial ladder. When African men began to be treated for schizophrenia and confined to lunatic asylums, 'African women ... were said not to have reached the level of self-awareness required to go mad, and in colonial literature on psychology and psychopathology, the African women represented the happy "primitive" state of pre-colonial Africa' (Vaughan 1991: 22). Thus, even madness (here seen as an attribute of a 'complex' mind) becomes an index of the ascent of human beings towards modernity, in which African women are seen to lag behind their men who themselves slowly

follow Europeans. Scientific language was authoritative and powerful precisely because it presented itself as value-free, neutral and universal (Stepan and Gilman 1991). For this reason, it was extremely difficult to challenge its claims. To some extent, European scientists' own racial and political identities prevented them from radically questioning scientific theories of racial difference, and on the other hand, people who were constructed as inferior by these theories had little access to scientific training, and their objections were dismissed as unscientific. The scientific text was increasingly purged of figurative language and overtly moral and political arguments in order to present itself as purely 'factual'. Thus its biases with respect to both gender and race could be aggressively presented as objective truths. We will revisit the intersection of race, gender and colonialism at greater length a little later in this book.

Lecturing at the University of Delhi, the Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o expressed his surprise at the idea that the European 'Renaissance' or 'Enlightenment' could still be taught in some places without reference to the intersection of these periods with the history of colonialism.⁶ In fact the growth of modern Western knowledge systems and the histories of most 'disciplines' can be seen to be embedded within and shaped by colonial discourses. Martin Bernal's well-known book *Black Athena* demonstrates this most forcefully in the case of classics. It argues that the history of black Egypt and its centrality to ancient Greek culture was erased by nineteenth-century scholarship in order to construct a white Hellenic heritage for Europe. Bernal goes further than that: he suggests that the rise of professional scholarship and its bifurcation into 'disciplines' are profoundly connected with the growth of racial theory (1987: 220). Thus he questions the objectivity of not just the writing of history but of all knowledge produced in Europe during the colonial era.

The 'complicity' of individuals with ideological and social systems is not entirely a matter of their intentions. Take the case of Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, whose *A Key into the Languages of America* (1643) displays astonishing knowledge of, and respect for, native languages and even vindicates Indian rights to the land. Gordon Brotherstone discusses

how Williams was regularly harassed by the Massachusetts Bay Company for his critique of colonial practices. But, despite that, the *Key* betrays loyalty to Puritan attitudes to both wealth and religion. Its deep knowledge of native cultures and languages ultimately works to justify English intrusion into Algonquin life and territory. In this book, familiarity with local languages becomes the key to unlocking their culture and facilitating colonial enterprises in New England (Brotherstone 1986).

The connections between economic processes, social processes and the reordering of knowledge can be both obvious and oblique. The development or reproduction of even those knowledge systems that appear to be too abstract to have an ideological inflection, such as mathematics, can also be connected to the imperialist project (Bishop 1990). At one level, such a conclusion simply underlines the Marxist notion that all ideas are inter-dependent with economic and social reality. But at another level, it also alerts us to an aspect of social reality—i.e. colonially honed ideas of cultural and racial difference—which does not sufficiently inflect Marxist history. It in fact highlights how ideas contribute to the creation of (instead of merely replicating) social systems. By pointing out how deeply its knowledge systems were imbricated in racial and colonialist perspectives, scholars of colonialism have contributed to, indeed extended, the discrediting of the project of the European Enlightenment by post-structuralists such as Foucault. The central figure of Western humanist and Enlightenment discourses, the humane, knowing subject, now stands revealed as a white male colonialist. Through its investigations, colonial discourse analysis adds this powerful historical and concrete dimension to the post-structuralist understanding that meaning is always contextual, always shifting.

Is all this going too far? Does this imply too much ideological closure, or take away from the possibility of alternative intellectual thought, dissident or revolutionary ideas? Despite their belief in the social grounding of ideas, many intellectuals are not willing to abandon the notion of a human subject capable of knowing, acting upon and changing reality. But innocence and objectivity do not necessarily have to be our enabling fictions. The more we work with an awareness of our embeddedness in historical

processes, the more possible it becomes to take carefully reasoned oppositional positions, as the work of critical thinkers such as Marx, or Gramsci, or indeed Bernal himself, testifies. Dominant ideologies are never total or monolithic, never totally successful in incorporating all individuals or subjects into their structures. So, to uncover the rootedness of 'modern' knowledge systems in colonial practices is to begin what Raymond Williams called the process of 'unlearning' whereby we begin to question received truths.

It is important to remember that the colonialist production of knowledge was not a simple process. It included a clash with, and a marginalisation of, the knowledge and belief systems of those who were conquered. But colonialist knowledge also involved a constant negotiation with or an incorporation of indigenous ideas. As Caliban reminds Prospero, it was he who showed the European 'all the qualities o'th'isle,/ The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile' (I, ii, 337–39). Even colonial stereotyping was sometimes based on native images. For example, Mary Louise Pratt tells us that the primal America projected by European travellers such as Alexander von Humboldt was not a pure invention, although it fits in so well with the nature/culture, primeval/developed binaries of colonialist discourses. It already existed within some sectors of American creole culture which, seeking to differentiate itself from Europe, glorified its own country as a vast spectacle of nature:

In a perfect example of the mirror dance of colonial meaning-making, Humboldt transculturated to Europe knowledges produced by Americans in a process of defining themselves as separate from Europe. Following independence, Euroamerican elites would reimport that knowledge as European knowledge whose authority would legitimate Euroamerican rule.

(Pratt 1992: 137)

Pratt's use of the word 'transculturated' here is important. 'Transculturation' was a term coined in 1947 by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz to describe the mixing of different groups in Cuba, and the way in which marginal groups selectively

appropriate materials transmitted to them by a dominant culture. Ortiz used it to complicate earlier models of colonial interaction which downplayed the agency of the marginalised (Ortiz 1995). The result of such transculturation was a mixing, a 'hybridity', which has become an important issue in colonial discourse theories, and one to which we will return later. Pratt also employs the idea of 'transculturation' to indicate inter-cultural negotiation that is a constant feature of what she calls 'the contact zone' or the social spaces 'where disparate cultures meet, clash, grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination'. She follows Ortiz in underscoring the borrowing and lending in both directions which trouble any binary opposition between Europe and its 'others'. The interactions between colonising and colonised peoples constantly challenged any neat division between races and cultures.

Some critics argue that to present the antagonistic and fraught arena of colonialism in these terms is to downplay colonial violence and the boundaries it enforced. As Aimé Césaire asks, 'has colonialism really *placed civilizations in contact*? ... I answer no. ... No human contact, but relations of domination and submission ...' (1972: 11, 21). We also need to remember in many parts of the world most colonised subjects had little direct 'contact' with their foreign oppressors, even though their lives were materially and ideologically reshaped by the latter. But no matter how we assess the colonial interactions, it is clear that colonialism refracted the production of knowledge and structured the conditions for its dissemination and reception. The processes by which it did so testify both to colonial power and to its complex interactions with 'other' epistemologies, ideologies and ways of seeing.

COLONIALISM AND LITERATURE

Humanist literary studies have long been resistant to the idea that literature (or at least good literature) has anything to do with politics, on the grounds that the former is either too subjective, individual and personal or else too universal and transcendent to be thus tainted. Accordingly, the relationship between colonialism and literature was not, until recently, dealt with by literary criticism.

Today, the situation seems to be rapidly reversing itself as many, if not a majority of, analysts of colonial discourse are trained in literary studies. This does not mean that the orthodoxies within literary studies have simply evaporated: often analyses of colonialism, or race, like those of gender, are still regarded as 'special interest' topics which do not seriously alter teaching and research in the rest of the discipline. Still, recent attention to the relationship between literature and colonialism has provoked serious reconsiderations of each of these terms.

Firstly, literature's pivotal role in both colonial and anti-colonial discourses has begun to be explored. Ever since Plato, it has been acknowledged that literature mediates between the real and the imaginary. Marxist and post-structuralist debates on ideology increasingly try to define the nature of this mediation. If, as we suggested earlier, language and 'signs' are the sites where different ideologies intersect and clash with one another, then literary texts, being complex clusters of languages and signs, can be identified as extremely fecund sites for such ideological interactions. Moreover, they are the complex articulation between a single individual, social contexts and the play of language. Literary texts circulate in society not just because of their intrinsic merit, but because they are part of other institutions such as the market, or the education system. Via these institutions, they play a crucial role in constructing a cultural authority for the colonisers, both in the metropolis and in the colonies.

However, literary texts do not simply reflect dominant ideologies, but encode the tensions, complexities and nuances within colonial cultures. Literature is a place where 'transculturation' takes place in all its complexity. Literature written on both sides of the colonial divide often absorbs, appropriates and inscribes aspects of the 'other' culture, creating new genres, ideas and identities in the process. Finally, literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging dominant means of representation and colonial ideologies. Let us examine some of these interactions between literature and colonialism.

We have already seen how travel tales in the European Renaissance were an amalgam of fiction, attitudes received from earlier times, and fresh observations. Encounters with what lies outside its

own boundaries are central to the formation of any culture: the line that separates inside and outside, the 'self' and the 'other' is not fixed but always shifting. The outside worlds encountered by European travellers were interpreted by them through ideological filters, or ways of seeing, provided by their own cultures and societies. But the impetus to trade with, plunder and conquer these lands also provided new frameworks through which they would interpret other lands and peoples. Hence, medieval Christian associations of blackness with sin and dirt were put to new use during the seventeenth century because they provided a justification for colonising and enslaving blacks. This dialectic also shaped 'European' self-conceptions. For example, it was not the case that whiteness had always been central to English views of beauty and that black people, when first seen by English people, were automatically regarded as ugly. Rather, English Renaissance notions of beauty developed in tandem with early modern conquest and exploitation were a crucial aspect of English contact with black peoples (see Hall 1995). English nationalism relied upon cultural distinctions between Europeans and blacks, but it also sought to demarcate English from the supposedly jealous Italians or the uncultured Irish. An aggressive English nationalism was both fuelled and shaped by England's overseas expansion.

Even those pieces of writing which appear to be inward looking, or deal with private rather than public concerns, were shaped by such expansion. The lovers in John Donne's poems, for example, explicitly demarcate their private space from the fast expanding outer world. In 'The Sunne Rising', even the sun becomes a peeping Tom, a 'busy olde fool'. Such a retreat both testifies to the growing ideology of coupledness in this period and challenges (via its blatant sexuality and extra-marital connotations) its Protestant version. But the withdrawal into privacy and the celebration of sexuality can only be expressed by images culled from contemporary geographical expansion. The female body is described in terms of the new geography, as in Donne's 'Love's Progress':

The Nose (like to the first Meridian) runs
Not 'twixt an East and West, but 'twixt two suns:

It leaves a Cheek, a rosie Hemisphere
 On either side, and then directs us where
 Upon islands fortunate we fall,
 Not faynte Canaries, but Ambrosiall,
 Her swelling lips ... and the streight Hellespont betweene
 The Sestos and Abydos of her breasts ...
 And Sailing towards her India, in that way
 Shall at her fair Atlantick Navell stay ...

(Donne 1985: 181)

The lovers' relationship is worked out in terms of the colonialists' interaction with the lands they 'discover', as in 'To his Mistris going to Bed':

Licence my roaving hands, and let them go,
 Before, behind, between, above, below.
 O my America! my new-found-land,
 My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man'd,
 My Myne of precious stones: My Emperie,
 How blest am I in this discovering thee.

(Donne 1985: 184)

The colonial contact is not just 'reflected' in the language or imagery of literary texts, it is not just a backdrop or 'context' against which human dramas are enacted, but a central aspect of what these texts have to say about identity, relationships and culture. Moreover, in the second poem by Donne, sexual and colonial relationships become analogous to each other. Donne's male lover is the active discoverer of the female body, and desires to explore it in the same way as the European 'adventurer' who penetrates and takes possession of lands which are seen as passive, or awaiting discovery. Here, the sexual promise of the woman's body indicates the wealth promised by the colonies—hence, in the first poem the lover/colonist traverses her body/the globe to reach her 'India', the seat of riches. But the woman/land analogy also employs a reverse logic as the riches promised by the colonies signify both the joys of the female body as well as its status as a legitimate object for male possession.

Language and literature are together implicated in constructing the binary of a European self and a non-European other, which, as Said's *Orientalism* suggested, is a part of the creation of colonial authority. Peter Hulme's work on the formation of a colonial discourse in sixteenth-century America is illuminating in this regard. Hulme shows how two words—'cannibal' and 'hurricane'—were lifted from Native American tongues and adopted as new words into all major European languages in order to 'strengthen an ideological discourse' (1986: 101). Both words came to connote not just the specific natural and social phenomenon they appear to describe but the boundary between Europe and America, civility and wildness. 'Hurricane' began to mean not simply a particular kind of a tempest but something peculiar to the Caribbean. Thus, it indicated the violence and savagery of the place itself. Similarly, 'cannibalism' is not simply the practice of human beings eating their own kind, not just another synonym for the older term 'anthropophagi'. 'Anthropophagi' referred to savages eating their own kind, but 'cannibalism' indicated the threat that these savages could turn against and devour Europeans. Hulme further shows that there was a blurring of boundaries between these two terms; although hurricane supposedly referred to a natural phenomenon and cannibalism to a cultural practice, they both came to designate whatever lay outside Europe. Moreover, 'cannibal' was etymologically connected to the Latin word *canis* (dog), reinforcing the view that 'the native cannibals of the West Indies hunted like dogs and treated their victims in the ferocious manner of all predators'. Hulme discusses how a play like Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (far from being a romantic fable removed from the real world) is implicated in these discursive developments, and in the formation of colonial discourse in general, how its tempests are hurricanes in this new sense, and why Caliban's name is an anagram for cannibal, and why also Prospero turns a dog called Fury on to the rebels (Hulme 1986: 89–134).

Thus literature and language bear the impress of colonial encounters. Consider too the word 'amok' which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as both 'a murderous frenzy' and 'a frenzied Malay'. This double meaning arises because English colonists imported the word 'amok' from Malay, in which it

carried the first meaning, and turned it around to mean the latter, *especially when they showed anger against the English*. By 1849 they were using it to describe ‘an idiosyncrasy or peculiar temperament common amongst Malays’. Thus the binary between Europe and its others was itself inscribed with borrowed words. Of course, not just ‘cannibal’ and ‘amok’, but hundreds of English everyday words (including magazine, calico, caravan, carpet, coffee, boutique, shampoo, shawl, khaki, chintz, and tank) are of foreign derivation, and each tells a story of cross-cultural encounters, both mercantile and colonial (see Yule and Burnell 2013). Literary and cultural practices are also the result of, or carry the imprint of such interactions. Morris dancing, usually regarded as quintessentially English, evolved from Moorish dances brought back to Europe through the Crusades. In fact, throughout the medieval and early modern periods we can see the European appropriation of non-European texts and traditions, so that it is impossible to neatly demarcate European literature from non-European literature (see Cohen 2007).

Literature both reflects and creates ways of seeing and modes of articulation that are central to the colonial process. It is especially crucial to the formation of colonial discourses because it influences people as individuals. But literary texts can also militate against dominant ideologies, or contain elements which cannot be reconciled to them. Such complexity is not necessarily a matter of authorial intention. Plays such as *Othello* and *The Tempest* thus evoke contemporary ideas about the bestiality or incivility of non-Europeans. But do they do so in order to endorse dominant attitudes to ‘race’ and culture or to question them? Does *Othello* serve as a warning against inter-racial love, or an indictment of the society which does not allow it? Does *The Tempest* endorse Prospero’s view of Caliban as a bestial savage, or does it depict the dehumanisation of colonial rule? Both plays have been interpreted and taught in ways that endorse colonialist ways of seeing, but both have also inspired anti-colonial and anti-racist movements and literatures as texts that expose the workings of colonialism. The syncretic nature of literary texts or their ideological complexities should not lead to the conclusion that they are somehow ‘above’ historical and political processes.

Rather, we can see how literary texts, both through what they say, and in the process of their writing, are central to colonial history, and in fact can help us towards a nuanced analysis of that history. Even a discipline like comparative literature which acknowledged the profound interaction of various literatures and cultures, was hierarchically organised, and its central assumption was that 'Europe and the United States together were the centre of the world, not simply by virtue of their political positions, but also because their literatures were the ones most worth studying'. Instead, Said suggests that Western cultural forms be placed 'in the dynamic global environment created by imperialism' (1995: 22–28).

But what about non-Western forms of writing? These too did not develop in isolation but were shaped by foreign, including colonial, encounters. For example, O. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* (1889), one of the earliest novels written in Malayalam, was, its author claims, an attempt to fulfil his wife's 'oft-expressed desire to read in her own language a novel written after the English fashion' and to see if he could create a taste for that kind of writing 'among my Malayalam readers not conversant in English' (Pannikar 1996: 97–98). This novel documents the transformation of marital relations in the Malabar region of India and articulates some of the tensions and desires of the new middle classes in the region through what was initially an alien literary form. In another part of the world, George Lamming, in his famous essay 'The Occasion for Speaking', claimed that there were 'for me, just three important events in British Caribbean history'—Columbus's journey, 'the abolition of slavery and the arrival of the East—India and China—in the Caribbean Sea' and 'the discovery of the novel by West Indians as a way of investigating and projecting the inner experiences of the West Indian community' (1960: 36–37). Published in 1960, Lamming's essay was one of the earlier attempts to understand how important literature can be in devaluing and controlling colonial subjects but also in challenging colonialism.

This may be a good place to ask ourselves how exactly we would demarcate literary texts from other forms of representation. If we go back to a period when European colonial discourse was in its

formative stages, we can chart the fairly dramatic overlaps between literary texts, visual representations and other writings. Let me begin with a picture that has become, following a seminal essay by Peter Hulme, central to the discussion of the place of women and gender in colonial discourse—it is *Vespucci discovering America*, engraved in the late sixteenth century by Stradanus. In this picture, Vespucci holds a banner with the Southern Cross in one hand and a mariner's astrolabe in the other. He stands looking at America, who is a naked woman half rising from a hammock. Hulme analyses this picture to show how it encodes aspects of the colonial drama: America as a naked woman 'lies there, very definitely discovered' (1985: 17). The cannibals in the background signify the supposed savagery and violence of New World natives, which the colonisers used to 'justify' their taking over of American lands. Vespucci is a historical individual, America a whole continent, their 'meeting' enacts a colonial paradigm whereby the European subject achieves individuation precisely in opposition to colonised peoples who represent land (as in this picture), or nature, ideas (commerce, labour, or pain) or a group (Zulu warriors, or Hindu women).

The first of the great sixteenth-century atlases, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, drawn up by Abraham Ortelius in 1570 (published in English in 1606 as *The Theatre of the Whole World*) encodes the colonial encounter in similar ways. Its frontispiece depicts the figure of America and the accompanying lines tell us:

The one you see on the lower ground is called AMERICA,
whom bold Vespucci recently voyaging across the sea
seized by force, holding the nymph in the embrace of gentle love.
Unmindful of herself, unmindful of her pure chastity,
she sits with her body all naked, except that a feather headdress
binds her hair, a jewel adorns the forehead,
and bells are around her shapely calves.
She has in her right hand a wooden club, with which she sacrifices
fattened and gluttoned men, prisoners taken in war.
She cuts them up into quivering pieces, and either
roasts them over a slow fire or boils them in a steaming cauldron,
or, if ever the rudeness of hunger is more pressing,

she eats their flesh raw and freshly killed ...
 a deed horrible to see, and horrible to tell ...
 At length ... wearied with hunting men and wanting to lie down
 to sleep, she climbs into a bed woven in a wide mesh like a net
 which she ties at either end to a pair of stakes. In its weave,
 she lays herself down, head and body, to rest.

(Quoted by Gillies 1994: 74–75)

The lines seem virtually a commentary on the Stradanus picture and other visual representations showing America. The birth of a new cartography in the early seventeenth century was made possible and imperative by travels to the new lands. Maps claim to be objective and scientific, but in fact they select what they record and present it in specific ways, which are historically tied in with colonial enterprises (Harley 1988; Ryan 1994; Rabasa 1985). During the Renaissance, the new artwork and the new geography together promised the ‘new’ land to European men as if it were a woman; not to mention the women of the new land who were regarded as literally up for grabs.

Not surprisingly then, Sir Walter Raleigh, who led the first English voyages to Guiana, described the latter as a country that ‘hath her maidenhead yet’. America was ready to be deflowered by Europe. Attached to Raleigh’s narrative was a poem by George Chapman, ‘De Guiana’ in which Guiana is an enormous Amazonian female who defers to England, also personified as a woman:

Guiana, whose rich feet are mines of golde,
 Whose forehead knocks against the roofo of Starres,
 Stands on her tip-toes at fair England looking,
 Kissing her hand, bowing her mightie breast,
 And every signe of all submission making.

But if England is also female, and if the imperial project is carried out in the name of a female monarch (in this case Elizabeth I), colonial relations cannot be projected always or straightforwardly in terms of patriarchal or heterosexual domination. These tensions between the female monarch, the male

colonists and colonised people were to be revisited and reworked during the heyday of British imperialism when Victoria was Empress. These different kinds of 'texts'—poetry, travelogues, atlases—use different languages and codes to project overlapping images, create a common vocabulary and construct America as an attractive land ripe for colonisation.

Such interrelatedness of literary with non-literary texts, and the relation of both to colonial discourses and practices, can be unravelled in later periods too, often even more sharply. We have seen how a wide spectrum of representations encode the rape and plunder of colonised countries by figuring the latter as naked women and placing colonisers as masters/rapists. But the threat of native rebellion produces a very different kind of colonial stereotype which represents the colonised as a (usually dark-skinned) rapist who comes to ravish the white woman who in turn comes to symbolise European culture. One of the earliest such figures is Caliban in *The Tempest*, who, Prospero alleges, threatens to rape his daughter Miranda. This stereotype reverses the trope of colonialism-as-rape and thus, it can be argued, deflects the violence of the colonial encounter from the coloniser to the colonised. Understood variously as either a native reaction to imperial rape, or as a pathology of the darker races, or even as a European effort to rationalise colonial guilt, the figure of the 'black' rapist is commonplace enough to be seen as a necessary/permanent feature of the colonial landscape.

In the very different context of nineteenth-century colonial India, Jenny Sharpe (1993) demonstrates that the dark-skinned rapist is not an essential feature at all but discursively produced within a set of historically specific conditions. Sharpe shows that though such a figure comes to be a commonplace during and after what the British called 'The Mutiny' of 1857 (a revolt which spread from the Sepoys of the army and involved local rulers as well as peasants, and which nationalist historiography was to call the First War of Indian Independence). This event inaugurated the transformation of an existing colonial stereotype, that of the 'mild Hindoo', into another, that of the savage rapist of British women. Before the revolt, there were no stories of rape. The imperialists had for long scripted Indians as mild and ripe for colonial

education. Through a reading of various reports, memoirs and other Mutiny narratives written by men as well as women, Sharpe suggests that the rebellion shook the British and left them 'without a script on which they could rely'. Sharpe demonstrates what she calls 'the truth effects' of stories about white women's violation and mutilation. Even though there was no evidence of systematic violence of this sort, she suggests that the 'fear-provoking say, they violently reproduce gender roles in the demonstration that women's bodies can be sexually appropriated' (1993: 67). This idea of 'truth-effects', where discourses can produce the same effects as actual events, is Foucaultian in origin and it is useful in expressing the material effects of ideology without conflating the two. Sharpe discusses how these rape stories allowed a shaken British administration not only to consolidate its authority but to project itself as part of a civilising mission. Thus 'a crisis in British authority is managed through the circulation of the violated bodies of English women as a sign for the violation of colonialism' (1993: 4).

A whole range of English novels about India play with this history: E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, in which an Indian man is wrongly accused of raping a British woman, evokes the same 'racial memory that echoes across the Mutiny novels as a horrific nightmare' (Sharpe 1993: 123). But the book was written much later, in the 1920s, during a period haunted by the massacre by the British of hundreds of defenceless Indians who had assembled for a non-violent public meeting at Jallianwallah Bagh at Amritsar in March 1919, an event which challenged the usual British claim to a civilising presence. Similarly Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* most explicitly offers rape as a metaphor for imperialism by depicting how an Indian man accused of raping a British woman is in turn violated by the colonial machinery. This novel too was written during the height of the nationalist struggles, at which time there was no threat of inter-racial rape analogous to that which was evoked and circulated during the Mutiny. Thus, at a time when the crisis of colonial authority is at fever pitch, both these books evoke an earlier discourse which had tried to establish the moral value of colonisation. According to Sharpe, this harking back in *The Jewel in the Crown* works to suggest that 'imperialism is a

violation only at the moment of an organized opposition to British rule' (1993: 141). Thus, while 'exposing the British abuse of power in India, the novel also consolidates a colonial discourse of rape' (1993: 146). In this reading, specific texts are not always simply pro- or anti-colonial, but can be both at the same time.

Sharpe's book is part of the growing body of work that warns us against abstracting literary from other writings, but also reminds us that non-literary texts such as newspaper stories, government records and reports, memoirs, journals, historical tracts or political writings are equally open to an analysis of their rhetorical strategies, their narrative devices. They are not necessarily 'objective' but represent their version of reality for specific readers. So not only are literary texts useful for analysing colonial discourse, but the tools of literary analysis can also be used for understanding the other 'texts' of empire. Gayatri Spivak endorses Foucault's suggestion that 'to make visible the unseen can also mean a change of level, addressing oneself to a layer of material which hitherto had no pertinence for history and which had not been recognized as having any moral, aesthetic or historical value' (Spivak 1988: 285). In this sense, literary texts have become more widely recognised as materials that are essential for historical study.

Today, even those works where the imperial theme appears to be marginal are being reinterpreted in the context of European expansion. As Spivak pointed out in an early essay, 'It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English' (1985a: 243). Thus, no work of fiction written during that period, no matter how inward-looking, esoteric or apolitical it announces itself to be, can remain uninflected by colonial cadences. Although 'the Victorian novel turned its face from ... unpalatable colonial details', such details cannot be excluded from our readings of these novels. In Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas Bertram's estate which seems so sheltered in its English provincialism is propped up by Antiguan sugar plantations which were run by slave labour (Boehmer 1995: 25). Of course, the colonies are not marginal in all European literature; on the contrary, English fiction becomes fairly obsessed

with colonial travel, an obsession which resulted in bestsellers such as G. A. Henty's novels for young adults (*With Clive in India*, or *With Wolfe in Canada*), Rider Haggard's adventure stories or Kipling's fictions. But here let us examine, via recent discussions of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, how attention to the colonial dimension alters our understanding of European literature and culture.

Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton read Jane's passage from an impoverished orphan and governess to the wife of wealthy Mr Rochester in terms of social mobility and the ambiguous class position of the governess; feminist critics such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar appropriated the novel as a landmark text about the birth of a female individualism and the rise of the female subject in English fiction. But this reading had already been disturbed in 1966 by Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which amplified a figure that is hauntingly marginal to *Jane Eyre*—that of Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester's 'mad' first wife who is burnt to death, clearing the way for Jane's marriage to Mr Rochester. Rhys rewrote Bertha's 'madness' as the misery and oppression of a white Creole woman married for her plantation wealth, then dislocated from her island home in the Caribbean and locked up in an English manor. Going back to Rhys, Gayatri Spivak (1985a) criticised feminist critics for reading 'Bertha Mason only in psychological terms, as Jane's dark double'; she suggested instead that nineteenth-century feminist individualism was necessarily inflected by the drama of imperialism, and that it marginalised and dehumanised the native woman even as it strove to assert the white woman as speaking and acting subject.

This position was criticised by Benita Parry (1987), who pointed out that Bertha Mason, tormented Caribbean woman as she is, is not the real 'woman from the colonies' in Rhys's novel. Bertha, first called Antoinette, is the white mistress of Christophine, a black plantation slave who is exploited but not silenced or reduced to the margins as she articulates her critique of Rochester, and of race and class relations on the island. Christophine is not present in *Jane Eyre*, but we can see how the world she occupies is necessary to the construction of English domestic peace and prosperity in that novel. However, in a fine essay on *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Peter

Hulme suggests that while such a move is enormously useful in re-reading the European canon, we need to pay simultaneous attention to the historical and political nuances of texts produced in the erstwhile colonies. Jean Rhys's novel cannot be read simply alongside, and in opposition to *Jane Eyre*, and celebrated as 'post-colonial' in opposition to 'colonial'. For *Wide Sargasso Sea* was 'written by, in West Indian terms, a member of the white colonial elite, yet somebody who always defined herself in opposition to the norms of metropolitan "Englishness"; a novel which deals with issues of race and slavery, yet is fundamentally sympathetic to the planter class ruined by Emancipation' (Hulme 1994: 72). Hulme makes the important point that returning this novel to its local context complicates the term 'postcolonial' which is in some danger of being homogenised and flattened if simply pitted against the 'colonial'. Instead, he suggests, 'postcolonial theory, if it is to develop, must produce "native" terminology', by which he means terms of reference that are local, rooted in specific histories. In this particular case, it would mean returning Rhys's novel not just to a generalised 'West Indian' context but teasing out its Dominican and Jamaican strands as well. In this series of critical exchanges, we can see that a focus on colonialism productively re-opens Marxist and feminist readings of canonical English fiction to a new debate, but also demands that we widen our understanding of the terms colonial and postcolonial.

The dominant meanings given to literary texts often emerge from and are perpetuated within educational systems. Take, for example, Shakespeare's *Othello*, a standard text in schools and colleges in many parts of the world. For years critics refused to address the implications of Othello's blackness. The play was read as making a statement about masculine jealousy, understood as a 'universal' attribute that is provoked by the real or potential transgression of women. If Othello's blackness was ever acknowledged, it was only in order to suggest that his 'race' somehow explained his jealousy and his irrationality. These readings may be contradictory, but they can be and were reconciled within racist readings of the play which needed to argue that Shakespeare's hero was somehow not black, and simultaneously read blackness in terms of certain stereotypes. But if we seriously consider the race relations in the

play, the theme of sexual jealousy cannot be seen as a universal statement about human relations in general, but is a crucial aspect of the racist context in which Othello and Desdemona live and love. Iago's machinations then are not 'motiveless malignity' (Samuel Taylor Coleridge's phrase endorsed by generations of literary critics) but born out of racial hatred and insecurity. Of course, we can read Shakespeare's play either as a passionate defence of, or as a warning against, inter-racial love, but the crucial point is that on the stage, in critical evaluations and within classrooms all over the world, its racial theme was read to *bolster* racist ideologies existing in different contexts—in Britain, in South Africa and in India among other places (see Cowhig 1985; Orkin 1987; Loomba 1989 and 2002; Johnson 1996). In all these places, Shakespeare's play worked to reinforce the cultural authority of not just Shakespeare, but 'Englishness'.

Even those literary texts that are, arguably, distant from or even critical of colonial ideologies can be made to serve colonial interests through educational systems that devalue native literatures, and by Euro-centric critical practices which insist on certain Western texts being the markers of superior culture and value. The rise of literary studies as a 'discipline' of study in British universities was in fact linked to the perceived needs of colonial administrators: English literature was instituted as a formal discipline in London and Oxford only after the Indian Civil Service examination began to include a 1000 mark paper in it, on the assumption that knowledge of English literature was necessary for those who would be administering British interests. Soon after, it was also deemed important that the natives themselves be instructed in Western literatures. Thomas Babington Macaulay, the architect of English education in India, put the case succinctly in his famous 'Minute on Indian Education' written in 1835: English education, he suggested, would train natives who were 'Indian in blood and colour' to become 'English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'. These people would constitute a class who would in fact protect British interests and help them rule a vast and potentially unruly land (Macaulay 1972: 249).

Literary studies were to play a key role in attempting to impart Western values to the natives, constructing European

culture as superior and as a measure of human values, and thereby in maintaining colonial rule. Gauri Viswanathan's book, *Masks of Conquest*, argues this by examining British parliamentary papers and debates on English education in India. The book (like its title) suggests that English literary studies became a mask for economic and material exploitation, and were an effective form of political control. Not only was the colonial classroom one of the testing grounds for developing attitudes and strategies which became a fundamental part of the discipline itself, but

certain humanistic functions traditionally associated with literature—for example, the shaping of character or the development of the aesthetic sense or the disciplines of ethical thinking—were considered essential to the processes of sociopolitical control by the guardians of the same tradition.

(Viswanathan 1990: 3)

Like Said, Viswanathan has been criticised on the grounds that she does not take into account the role of Indians in either resisting or facilitating such literary studies. In fact, many Indians themselves *demand*ed English education, including reformers and nationalists who were opposed to British rule in India. British educational policy was also moulded by indigenous politics, and was not simply exported from England.

Macaulay's remark that a single shelf of European literature was worth all the books of India and Arabia is notorious but not unique. Even when Orientalists defended some indigenous works, such as the ancient cultural artefacts and literary texts of India, they too did so at the explicit expense of contemporary works of art—thus indigenous intellectual production was either completely disparaged (as in Africa) or seen as an attribute of a hoary past (as in India). What *was* this culture that was constructed as the authoritative measure of human values? As the Scottish writer James Kelman puts it:

when we talk about the hegemony of English culture we aren't referring to the culture you find down the Old Kent Road in London, we aren't

talking about the literary or oral traditions of Yorkshire or Somerset: we are speaking about the dominant culture within England; the culture that dominates all other English-language based cultures, the one that obtains within the tiny elite community that has total control of the social, economic and political power-bases of Great Britain. ... There is simply no question that by the criteria of the ruling elite of Great Britain so-called Scottish culture, for example, is inferior, just as *ipso facto* the Scottish people are also inferior. The logic of this argument cannot work in any other way. And the people who hold the highest positions in Scotland do so on that assumption. Who cares what their background is, whether they were born and bred in Scotland or not, that's irrelevant, they still assume its inferiority. If they are native Scottish then they've assimilated the criteria of English ruling authority.

(Kelman 1992: 71–72)

Kelman is here making the important point that neither the colonisers nor the colonised are homogeneous categories. The process of devaluation was not confined to colonies far away but also drew upon and attempted to calcify divisions of gender, class and ethnicity at or nearer home: thus, for example, as Robert Crawford has shown, the marginalisation of the Scottish language and literatures was an important feature of the 'invention of English literature' (1992: 16–44).

Various accounts of the colonial ideologies of English literary studies extend Althusser's point that educational systems are important means for the dissemination of dominant ideologies. But did such a process of control work? Countless colonial intellectuals certainly parroted the lines of their masters; here is an extract from a prize-winning essay written in 1841 by an Indian student at Hindu College, Calcutta titled 'The Influence of Sound General Knowledge on Hinduism':

With the Hindus everything and all things are incorporated in their religion. Their sciences, their arts are all revealed from heaven. If, therefore, their science is overthrown, their religion is also overthrown with it. ... The citadel of Hinduism is the religion of the country. Attack, capture that citadel, the system of Hinduism lies a

conquered territory. And it is the science and religion of Christendom which have now encompassed round about that citadel. Several of its walls are beaten down, but still it is not surrendered: but we hope ere long the faith and science of Christendom shall fully be established in India. ... But, alas, alas our countrymen are still asleep—still sleeping the sleep of death. Rise up, ye sons of India, arise, see the glory of the Sun of Righteousness! ... And we who have drunk in that beauty, we who have seen that life—shall we not awake our poor countrymen?

(Quoted in Majumdar 1973: 201)

The author echoes Macaulay's opinion that, in India, literature, science and religion were intermixed (while each was distinct in the West) and willingly adopts the role of Macaulay's English educated Indian who acts as a surrogate Englishman and awakens the native masses.

But is mimicry an act of straightforward homage? Homi Bhabha suggests that it is possible to think of it as a way of eluding control (1994: 125–33). He draws upon recent theories of language, enunciation and subjectivity which point out that communication is a process that is never perfectly achieved and that there is always a slippage, a gap, between what is said and what is heard. As we have been discussing, in the colonial context 'the English book' (the Western text, whether religious like the Bible, or literary like Shakespeare) is made to symbolise English authority itself. But this process is a complex, and ultimately fraught exercise. The process of replication is never complete or perfect; because of the context in which it is reproduced, the original can never be exactly replicated. Bhabha suggests that colonial authority is necessarily rendered 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' when it is imitated or reproduced, thus opening up spaces for the colonised to subvert the master-discourse, a question to which we will return when we discuss colonial identities and anti-colonial rebellion; for now let us turn to the study of literature in the colonies.

The process by which Christianity is made available to heathens, or indeed Shakespeare made available to the uncultured, is designed to assert the authority of these books and, through these books, the authority of European (or English) culture. Within England, too,

literary education was designed to reinforce inferiority; in the words of one H. G. Robinson

As a clown will instinctively tread lightly and feel ashamed of his hob-nailed shoes in a lady's boudoir, so a vulgar mind may, by converse with minds of high culture, be brought to see and deplore the contrast between itself and them.

(Quoted in Baldick 1983: 66)

In the colonies, too, literature could indicate an unbridgeable gap between colonisers and colonised peoples. But the effort to convert the natives also assumes that the latter can be transformed by the religious or cultural truths enshrined in the colonial texts. Thus there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the attempt to educate, 'civilise' or co-opt the colonial 'other'.

Such a contradiction is seized upon and used by colonised peoples. Lala Hardayal, a founder of the anti-colonial Ghadar Association, used Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, which begins 'I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes?' (III, i, 51–57) to argue that Shakespeare stood for human equality and that we should remember Shylock if we are 'ever tempted to scorn or wrong a brother man of another race or creed' (Hardayal 1934: 238). Now, at one level, such an invocation of Shakespeare might be seen to prop up the authority of the Bard. But at another level, it certainly challenges rather than accepts colonialist views of racial difference. Thus Hardayal mimics the English uses of Shakespeare in order to contest the legitimacy of English rule in India.

We can also trace a wider pattern here. Hindu college was not just a seat for English mimicry but a hotbed of Indian nationalism. Many of the early nationalists were English educated, and even used English literature to argue for independence. Imperial historians even claimed that English literature (especially Shakespeare) and English education in general, had fostered ideas of liberty and freedom in native populations and that it took Western Enlightenment notions of democracy and fraternity to make Indians or Africans demand equality for themselves! This dynamic is perhaps best symbolised by Shakespeare's Caliban, who tells Prospero and Miranda:

You gave me language, and my profit on't
 Is, I know how to curse. The red-plague rid you
 For learning me your language!

(*The Tempest*: I, ii, 363–65)

Caliban can curse because he has been given language by his captors. But one problem with such a line of reasoning is that subversion, or rebellion, is seen to be produced entirely by the malfunctioning of colonial authority itself. In Bhabha's view, too, it is the *failure* of colonial authority to reproduce itself that allows for anti-colonial subversion.

Whether the dominant language, literature, culture and philosophic ideas can be used for subversive purposes has been much debated within postcolonial, feminist, and other oppositional discourses. Within literary studies, one of the best known exchanges on the subject is the one between Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe. Achebe suggests that given the multilingual nature of most African states as well as the colonially generated presence of the English language there, 'the national literature of Nigeria and of many other countries of Africa is, or will be, written in English'. Achebe invokes the creative hybridity of African writers who moulded English to their experience rather than the other way round, and concludes that

for me there is no other choice. I have been given this language and I intend to use it. ... I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

(Achebe 1975: 103)

A similar position has been taken by writers and critics of African origin or ancestry who live within metropolitan cultures such as James Baldwin or David Dabydeen. In reply to Achebe, and explaining his own decision to write in Gikuyu rather than English, Ngugi wa Thiong'o invokes the multiple connections between language and culture, and argues that colonialism made inroads into the latter through control of the former. For him, the 'literature

by Africans in European languages was specifically that of the nationalistic bourgeoisie in its creators, its thematic concerns and its consumption' (1986: 20). This literature was part of the 'great anti-colonial and anti-imperialist upheaval' all over the globe, but became increasingly cynical and disillusioned with those who came to power in once-colonised countries, and then bedevilled by its own contradictions because it wanted to address 'the people' who were not schooled in European languages (1986: 21). Ngugi casts a division between writers who were part of these people and wrote in indigenous languages and those who clung to foreign languages, thus suggesting an organic overlap between political and cultural identities and the medium of literary expression.

How can we unravel these issues? Powerful anti-colonial writings have adopted both these perspectives. Interestingly, choice of language does not neatly reflect any particular political position. Solomon T. Plaatje, founder member of the ANC, wrote a novel in English called *Mhudi* (1930) which he said would be 'just like the style of Rider Haggard when he writes about the Zulus'. Plaatje raises his voice against colonial dispossession of Africans in vocabularies inspired by Shakespeare, African oral forms, and the Bible. Similarly George Lamming's writing of a novel seizes a colonial form of writing and uses it to challenge the coloniser's claim to culture. On the other hand, writers who express themselves in indigenous tongues are not necessarily anticolonial or revolutionary, and they may be 'contaminated' by Western forms and ideas in any case, as is the case with the writer of the Malayalam novel *Indulekha*, discussed earlier. Nevertheless, turning away from colonial culture is often a necessary precondition for paying serious attention to the literatures and cultures devalued under colonialism.

Literary studies also evoke a range of strategies. Historically, Shakespeare was used in South Africa to contest as well as foster racism. The contestations took place both from within and outside the education system, with African political leaders and intellectuals often using Shakespeare either to express their own psychological and political conflicts, or to challenge divisive ideologies. But how effective is such a strategy—do we need to use Joseph Conrad, whom Achebe called a 'bloody racist', to challenge colonialism? To the extent that Shakespeare and Conrad are still taught and

still read in the postcolonial world, why not? Thus, Martin Orkin argues that Shakespeare can be used progressively within the South African context. But at the same time, it is also necessary to challenge the Euro-centric canons that are still taught in many parts of the once-colonised world (and schools and universities within Europe and the United States). So, for David Johnson, the effort to appropriate Shakespeare will only retard the move towards a fresh, more meaningful curriculum. Of course, simply reshuffling texts does not entail a shift of political or theoretical perspective, and decolonisation will demand more than teaching African or Asian or Latin American texts. These texts are also written across a huge political spectrum and can be taught from a variety of perspectives. Still, it is significant that many recent books on 'postcolonial literature' only consider literatures written in English, or widely available in translation, or those that have made the best-seller lists in Europe and the United States. We certainly need to widen our perspective on postcoloniality. For Edward Said, it is as crucial to read outside Western culture, to become comparative in a new sense: 'to read Austen without also reading Fanon and Cabral ... is to disaffiliate modern culture from its engagements and attachments' (1995: 38). For many third world intellectuals and artists, however, such an exercise is not enough. Non-Western literatures need to be recovered, celebrated, re-circulated, reinterpreted not just in order to revise our view of European culture but as part of the process of decolonisation.

The study of colonialism in relation to literature and of literature in relation to colonialism has thus opened up important new ways of looking at both. Even more important perhaps is the way in which recent literary and critical theory has influenced social analysis. They have not only demanded that literary texts be read in fuller, more contextualised ways, but have also suggested that social and historical processes are textual in the sense that they can only be recuperated through their representations. These representations involve ideological and rhetorical strategies as much as do fictional texts. The analogy of text and textile may be useful here: critical analysis teases out the warp and woof of any text, literary or historical, in order to see how it was put together in the first place. Colonialism, according to these ways of reading,

should be analysed as if it were a text, composed of representational as well as material practices and available to us via a range of discourses such as scientific, economic, literary and historical writings, official papers, art and music, cultural traditions, popular narratives, and even rumours.⁷

TEXTUALITY, DISCOURSE AND MATERIAL PROCESSES

If literary and cultural theory has widened the scope of studies on colonialism, it also poses real problems for a historically specific materialist critical practice. The idea that historical processes and practices can be analysed by looking at them as ‘texts’ has proved to be both enabling and problematic. In recent postcolonial theory and criticism, some critics allege, literary texts begin to stand in for all social processes; analysis of representation and discourse replaces all discussion of events and material reality. It has been suggested that this tendency emanates from *Orientalism*, which situates literary texts as a colonial battlefield. But if *Orientalism* analyses political centrality of texts, in later colonial discourse studies, quite a different notion of discourse as ‘text’ emerges, as can be seen in the following statement by two leading scholars of the field:

Imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpellative phase largely by textuality, both institutionally ... and informally. Colonialism (like its counterpart racism), then, is a formation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates colonial subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation.

(Tiffin and Lawson 1994: 3)

The counterpoising of ‘guns, guile and disease’ to ‘textuality’ is precisely what disturbs some scholars: Sumit Sarkar, for example, finds Gauri Viswanathan’s assertion that English studies ‘became the core of colonial hegemony whereas “the exercise of direct force [was] discarded as a means of maintaining social control”’ untenable in the face of continuing English brutality in India (1994: 218, 223). By the 1890s aesthetic display was central to the

operations of imperialism (Morris 1982). But, as Elleke Boehmer suggests, 'discussions of text and image mask this reality of empire: the numbers who died in colonial wars and in labour gangs, or as a result of disease, starvation, and transportation' (1995: 20). Many writings on colonial or postcolonial discourse may not expressly privilege the textual, but they implicitly do so by interpreting colonial relations through literary texts alone. Others do not necessarily concentrate on literature alone but their analysis of colonial discourse blurs the relationship between the material and the ideological, leading one critic to warn that 'in calling for the study of the aesthetics of colonialism, we might end up aestheticizing colonialism, producing a radical chic version of raj nostalgia' (Dirks 1992: 5).

Abdul JanMohamed (1985), Benita Parry (1987) and other critics have accused postcolonial theorists like Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak of an 'exhorbitation of discourse'—of neglecting material conditions of colonial rule by concentrating on colonial representations. I want to suggest that this tendency has something to do with the fact that what is circulated as 'postcolonial theory' has largely emerged from within English literary studies. The meaning of 'discourse' shrinks to 'text', and from there to 'literary text', and from there to texts written in English because that is the corpus most familiar to the critics. The *Post-colonial Studies Reader*, for example, aims 'to assist in the revision of teaching practice within literary studies in English' and therefore it is primarily interested in 'the impact of postcolonial literatures and criticism on the current shape of English studies' (Ashcroft *et al.* 1995: 4). The first problem with this approach is that it limits 'postcolonial literatures' to texts written in various Englishes. Secondly, postcolonial studies are located entirely within English studies, a location that not only seriously circumscribes the scope of the former, but also has serious implications for its methodology. The isolation of text from context is an old and continuing problem in literary studies. The liberal-humanist orthodoxy placed great literature 'above' politics and society; new criticism privileged words-on-the-page, and even some recent approaches such as deconstruction can continue to think about literary texts in isolation from their contexts. Revisionary English studies, although

more inter-disciplinary and contextual, are not automatically rid of the isolationist tendency, partly because it is indeed very difficult to work out the connections between representation and reality. And so we have a somewhat paradoxical situation: on the one hand, we can see the power of texts, and read power as a text; on the other hand, colonialism-as-text can be shrunk to a sphere away from the economic and the historical, thus repeating the conservative and humanist isolation of the literary text from the contexts in which it was produced and circulated.

Recently, however, it is not literary critics but historians who have discussed aesthetic display and taste to downplay the asymmetry of imperial rule. Maya Jasanoff's book, *Edge of Empire*, examines imperial collections of objects and curiosities, claiming that such an approach will 'counterbalance the tendency in post-colonial scholarship to portray imperial collision with the rest of the world as a fundamentally oppositional, one-sided affair' (2005: 7). Similarly, David Cannadine's *Ornamentalism* (2001) argues that racial hierarchies and colonial exploitation were undermined by commonalities between the upper classes on both sides of the colonial divide. Thus individual tastes and desires, as well as 'cosmopolitanism' and 'hybridity' become arguments against the very existence of colonial structures of exploitation. As its title suggests, Cannadine's book is positioned against Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Thus, postcolonial studies is accused by some of forgetting the harsh reality of empire, but by others of over-emphasizing it. The fact is that, in any colonial context, economic plunder, the production of knowledge and the strategies of representation depended heavily upon one another. Specific ways of seeing and representing racial, cultural and social difference were essential to the setting up of colonial institutions of control, and they also transformed every aspect of European civil society. Guns and disease, as a matter of fact, cannot be isolated from ideological processes of 'othering' colonial peoples. The gathering of 'information' about non-European lands and peoples and 'classifying' them in various ways determined strategies for their control. The different stereotypes of the 'mild Hindoo', the 'warlike Zulu', the 'barbarous Turk', the 'New World cannibal', or the 'black rapist' were all generated through particular colonial

situations and were tailored to different colonial policies. In Africa and India, by attributing particular characteristics to specific tribes and groups, colonial authorities not only entrenched divisions between the native population, but also used particular 'races' to fill specific occupations such as agricultural workers, soldiers, miners, or domestic servants. In Bulawayo, Tonga, people were forced into a critical dependence on wage labour because they were far away from mines and other markets. Thus they became associated with the dirtiest, most physically exacting and lowliest paid kinds of labour, and after a while Europeans maintained that 'the Tonga had an "in-born" affinity to manual labour' (Ranger 1982: 129).

Stereotypes of races or groups changed according to the situation on the ground: following the 1857 rebellion, as discussed earlier, the 'mild Hindoo' figure gave way to an image of the Hindu rapist which came much closer to the stereotype of the brute black man generated in the African context. The so-called Cape Boys were initially used by whites in military actions against the Shona and the Ndebele peoples, but once they began to compete with whites as market-gardeners, artisans or transport-drivers, they were stereotyped as uncontrollable drunks (Ranger 1982: 127–28). Stereotypes also work in tandem with pre-colonial power relations. In India they carried strong underpinnings of caste divisions; for instance, wiliness and cunning were attributed to upper caste Brahmins, traditionally the keepers of education and learning. Various tribal peoples, historically repressed by the upper-castes and already relegated to the margins of Hindu society, were also regarded by the British authorities as less sophisticated, more warlike, child-like and gullible.

Colonial ethnographies and catalogues of colonial peoples codified some of these divisions and fed into policy making at various levels. Various institutions and practices were implicated in such a process. For example, photography was pressed into the service of colonial ethnography in the famous *The People of India*, an eight volume series published in 1868–75 by the Politics and Secrets Department of the India Office in London which became fundamental reading for colonial administrators. Pre-existing notions of difference were now freshly articulated through nearly 500 photographs supplied by amateurs employed by either the military or

the civil government, each accompanied by a brief 'descriptive letterpress'. These volumes attempt to squeeze the bewildering varieties of Indian peoples into categories of caste, race, religion, and occupation seen not as dynamic and evolving but as a more or less static inheritance from the distant past. *The People of India* reveals the attempt both to master colonial subjects and to represent them as unalterably alien; it thus represents both the intrusiveness of the colonial gaze and an inability to comprehend what it seeks to codify. These ways of codification were not, however, confined to the British and colonial and native ways of representation played upon and against each other: the Jodhpur census of 1891, commissioned by the Maharajah of Marwar was also organised upon similar caste and tribal divisions and illustrated by black and white photographs.

The linkage between photographic images, ethnographic and quasi-scientific data gathering, census taking and colonial policy underlines the intricate, subtle, and even contradictory, connections between colonial representations, institutions and policies. Recent research has established such connections with respect to scientific knowledge and establishments, theatre and cinema, art, cartography, city planning, museums, educational, legal, and medical institutions, prisons and military establishments, to mention just a few areas. Such studies underline the fact that the cultural, discursive or representational aspects of colonialism need not be thought of as functioning at a remove from its economic, political or even military aspects. From the very beginning, the use of arms was closely connected to the use of images: English violence in colonial Virginia, for example, was justified by representing the Native Americans as a violent and rebellious people. Hence from the beginning there was what Abdul JanMohamed calls 'a profoundly symbiotic relationship between the discursive and the material practices of imperialism' (1985: 64).

In Brian Friel's play *Translations*, the colonial struggle in Ireland is represented as a contest over words and language. Set in a hedge-school in Donegal in 1833, it shows how British cartographers, with Irish help, attempted to transliterate and Anglicise Gaelic names for various places in Ireland. At the same time, the hedge-school's days are numbered for a national educational system in English is

in the offing. In this powerful play, the linguistic mutilation of Ireland overlaps with the penetration and ‘mapping’ of the land. English incomprehension of Gaelic is a measure of the distance between the colonisers and the colonised, and their dependence upon Irish subordinates is a comment both on the nature of colonial authority and on the complex positioning of the colonial subject. The English Yolland needs the Irish Owen’s help to rename Irish place-names, but cannot get even the latter’s name right:

OWEN: I suppose we could Anglicise it [Bun na hAbhann] to Bunowen; but somehow that’s neither fish nor flesh. (*Yolland closes his eyes again*)

YOLLAND: Give up.

OWEN: (at map) Back to first principles. What are we trying to do?

YOLLAND: Good question.

OWEN: We are trying to denominate and at the same time describe that tiny area of soggy, rocky, sandy ground where that little stream enters the sea, an area known locally as Bun na hAbhann ... Burnfoot! What about Burnfoot?

YOLLAND: (Indifferently) Good, Roland, Burnfoot’s good.

OWEN: George, my name isn’t ...

YOLLAND: B-u-r-n-f-o-o-t?

(Friel 1984:410)

Friel was accused by some critics of dissolving economic issues into the politics of language, but, says Declan Kiberd in his monumental book on Irish colonialism,

The struggle for the power to name oneself and one’s state is enacted fundamentally within words, most especially in colonial situations. So a concern with language, far from indicating a retreat, may be an investigation into the depths of the political unconscious.

(Kiberd 1995: 615)

Kiberd reminds us too that ‘A root meaning of “translate” was “conquer”’ (1995: 624). Gaelic was virtually wiped out as a language, and this play, even though it is imagined as taking place in Gaelic, was written and enacted in English. This is a

clever way of making the 'postcolonial' audience critique its own lack of Irish, and reflect upon the legacy of colonisation.

Colonial rule restructured, often violently, the world of the colonised, and birthed new words and new practices; the inter-relation of the two is brilliantly illustrated by Gananath Obeyesekere's account of the contact between James Cook and his men and the Pacific islanders. Obeyesekere shows how 'statements about cannibalism' in the diaries and writings of Cook and his companions, some of whom were ethnographers of the Royal Society, 'reveal more about the relations between Europeans and Savages' than 'about the nature of Savage anthropophagy' (1992: 630). On all the South Sea islands that they visited, the British sailors obsessively inquired about the cannibalism of the natives because 'cannibalism is what the English reading public wanted to hear. It was their definition of the Savage' (635). Strangely, both those natives who did eat human flesh and those who did not appeared to agree that they were cannibals. Obeyesekere suggests that the native responses were based on their counter-assumption that the British themselves were cannibals:

The Hawaiians' hypothesis was based on the pragmatics of common sense. Here were a ragged, filthy, half-starved bunch of people arriving on their island, gorging themselves on food, and asking questions about cannibalism. Since Hawaiians did not know that the British inquiry was a scientific hypothesis, they made the pragmatic inference that these half-starved people were asking questions about cannibalism because they were cannibals themselves and might actually eat the Hawaiians. If the British could ask what seemed to the Hawaiians an absurd question—whether they ate their enemies slain in battle—it is not unreasonable for the Hawaiians to have made a further inference: that since the British had slaughtered so many Hawaiians, it is they who ate their slain enemies.

(Obeyesekere 1992: 634)

Whereas those people who did not eat human flesh (like the Hawaiians) feigned cannibalism, those who did (like the Maoris) exaggerated it in order to 'terrify [the Europeans] in the context of unequal power, where their real weapons were nothing in

comparison to European guns' (1992: 646). The Maoris, Obeyesekere speculates, once ate human flesh simply as part of human sacrifice rituals, but in response to the colonial presence, it became a method of counter-attack and became 'conspicuous anthropophagy' where their enemies were consumed in large numbers. Thus, 'large-scale anthropophagi was a reaction to the European presence'. Older beliefs that consuming one's enemy was empowering for the victor are reworked and become a testimony to colonial struggle for power. In this way, the British presence was a 'new and traumatic event' in the history of the region, and it 'produced a new discourse on cannibalism'. As Obeyesekere reminds us,

A discourse is not just speech; it is imbedded in a historical and cultural context and expressed often in the frame of a scenario or cultural performance. It is about practice: the practice of science, the practice of cannibalism. Insofar as the discourse evolves it begins to affect the practice.

(Obeyesekere 1992: 650)

Colonial attempts to classify, record, represent, and educate non-European societies were efforts to re-order worlds that were often incomprehensible to the masters and make them more manageable and available for imperial consumption and exploitation.

Legal, medical, military, bureaucratic and economic institutions are readily recognised as part of the repressive apparatus of any society, but in recent years there has been rich scholarship showing how ethnography, cartography, translation, and education were also crucial to colonial control and governance, as indeed were museums and other collections. Even though not all of it is undertaken by scholars who work within postcolonial studies, this work testifies to a serious concern with culture, language and representation, and their crucial place in understanding colonial structures of power.

NOTES

- 1 For a fascinating account of how Afrikaner nationalism constructed its difference with Western capitalism as well as communism see Nixon 1994.

- 2 Eagleton (1991) and Hawkes (1996) provide useful general introductions to ideology.
- 3 All references to Shakespeare's plays are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*.
- 4 Stuart Hall rightly points out that Althusser's cryptic and condensed formulation 'Disappear; the term ideas' leads to such a conflation (Hall 1985:100).
- 5 For an excellent introduction to new critical perspectives see Belsey (1980).
- 6 He was delivering the V. Krishna Memorial Lecture on 'Literature and Politics' at Miranda House College, Delhi University, on 19 February 1996.
- 7 Jenny Sharpe (1993) uses the term 'colonial text' as a subtitle of her book. For a perceptive analysis of rumour see Shahid Amin's discussion of the construction of Gandhi as 'Mahatma' or a 'great soul' among the peasantry (1988).

2

COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES

CONSTRUCTING RACIAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Racial difference has functioned as one of the most powerful yet most fragile markers of human identity, difficult to police and maintain yet persistent, a constructed idea yet all too real in its devastating effects. Are human beings essentially the same or different? Is difference defined primarily by racial or cultural attributes? Colonial and racial discourses and their attendant fictions and sciences, as well as anticolonial thought, have been preoccupied with these questions. The construction of vast numbers of people as inferior, or 'other', was crucial for constructing a European 'self' and justifying colonialist practices. In reality any simple binary opposition between 'colonisers' and 'colonised' or between races is undercut by the fact that there are enormous differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs between them. Several early postcolonial critics, such as Homi K. Bhabha, emphasised the failure of colonial regimes to produce stable and fixed identities, and suggested that 'hybridity' of identities and the

‘ambivalence’ of colonial discourse more adequately describe the dynamics of the colonial encounter. But Abdul JanMohamed argues that ambivalence is itself a product of ‘imperial duplicity’ and that a ‘Manichean allegory’, in which a binary and implacable discursive opposition between races is produced, is what really structures colonial relations (1985: 60).

Today, we live in a world that is sometimes described as ‘post-racial’—one in which older ideas of racial difference are supposed to have all but vanished. But despite such ‘multiculturalism’, we are witnessing sharpening battles around the question of immigration. In the US the prison system has arguably re-entrenched the colour line (see Alexander 2012). Islamophobia is on the rise, not just in the US and Europe, but also in countries like India and Israel. Christian–Muslim differences have resulted in violent clashes in many parts of Africa. In many countries, indigenous discourses of difference, such as caste, are being understood as racial in effect (see Loomba 2009). In such a situation, it is all the more important to examine the question of racial difference and to understand its relationship to European colonialism, as well as to consider how it intersects with religion, class, gender, sexuality and other social hierarchies.

First of all, racial stereotyping is not the product of modern colonialism alone, but goes back to the Greek and Roman periods which provide some abiding templates for subsequent European images of ‘barbarians’ and outsiders. These were reworked in medieval and early modern Europe, where Christianity became ‘the prism through which all knowledge of the world was refracted’ (Miles 1989: 16). While it is true that Europe was not exactly colonial in these periods, and its ideas of ‘difference’ were not identical to later colonial constructions, the latter did not arise out of a vacuum, but were an amalgamation of older beliefs, ideologies shaped by newer histories of contact, as well as internal developments within Europe. Since the Bible held that all human beings were brothers descended from the same parents, the presence of ‘savages’ and ‘monsters’ was not easy to explain. One response was to locate them as creatures who had incurred God’s wrath – hence the Biblical association of blackness with the descendants of Ham, Noah’s bad son, and with the forces of evil. However,

such an explanation created more conceptual problems than it solved. If there was a single origin for all humanity then presumably these fallen people could be brought back into the fold, and converted to Christian ways. But could such difference be so easily erased? In early modern times, aphorisms such as the impossibility of ‘washing the Ethiop white’ were commonplace. For example, Thomas Palmer’s *Two Hundred Posies*, England’s earliest known emblem book (first published 1565), depicts, under the title ‘Impossible things’, two white men washing a black man. The accompanying lines read:

Why washeste thou the man of Inde? ...
 Indurate heart of heretics
 Much blacker than the mole;
 With word or writte who seeks to purge
 Starke dead he blows the coal.

(Palmer 1988: 56)

This image was extremely common throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the permanence of black skin being used to indicate the idea of wasted labour. But note that it is the stubborn ‘heart of heretics’ that is described as black and impossible to wash clean. Thus dark skin and lack of faith are equated. In later books, ‘man of Inde’ became ‘blackamore’—this shift was also paralleled in stories about Ham’s descendants who were located first in Asia and then in Africa. Jews and Muslims were regularly described as dark-skinned, as were other pagans (see Loomba and Burton 2007). Above all, it was Islam that functioned as the predominant binary opposite of and threat to Christianity (Chew 1937). Religious difference thus became an index of and metaphor for racial, cultural and ethnic differences. Shylock’s reference to his ‘tribe’ thus includes all these shades of meaning.

With European colonial expansion, and nation-building, these earlier ideas (and their contradictions) were intensified, expanded and reworked (see Loomba 2002). Despite the enormous differences between the colonial enterprises of various European nations, they seem to generate fairly similar stereotypes of ‘outsiders’—both those outsiders who roamed far away on the edges of the

world, and those who (like the Irish) lurked uncomfortably nearer home. Thus laziness, aggression, violence, greed, sexual promiscuity and deviance, female masculinity and male effeminacy, bestiality, primitivism, innocence and irrationality are attributed (often contradictorily and inconsistently) by the English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonists to Turks, Africans, Native Americans, Jews, Indians, the Irish, and others. It is also worth noting that some of these descriptions were used for working-class populations or women within Europe.

But, at the same time, travel writings of the period do not simply project some generalised 'other', but also begin to shape particular groups of 'Indians': Americans as opposed to 'Turks' or Africans as opposed to the people of 'Indoostan'. They are early ethnographies that simultaneously note, blur and produce the specific features of different non-European peoples. Note the contradiction here: the subtleties of each encounter recorded by collectors of early travel narratives like Richard Eden, Gian Battista Ramusio, Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas contributed to the consolidation of various European national cultures, a pan-European 'Western' culture and a central division between Europe and its 'others'. Columbus's 'mistake' about the location of India swelled to become a metaphor for this division. As Samuel Purchas noted in 1614, the 'name of India is now applied to all farre-distant Countries, not in the extreeme limits of Asia alone; but even to whole America, through the error ... in the Western world' (1614: 451). In unravelling the histories of 'race', the real difficulty lies in understanding both the specificity of various images and how they overlapped and intersected to create larger stereotypes.

Contact with non-Europeans was structured by the imperatives of different colonial practices, and the nature of pre-colonial societies. Early colonial discourses distinguished between people regarded as barbarous infidels (such as the inhabitants of Russia, Central Asia, Turkey) and those who were constructed as savage (such as the inhabitants of the Americas and Africa). Peter Hulme identifies a central division between colonial 'discursive practices which relate to occupied territory where the native population has been, or is to be, dispossessed of its land by

whatever means' and 'those pertaining to territory where the colonial form is based primarily on the control of trade. ... America and India', he says, 'can exemplify very roughly this division' which also manifests itself as 'a discursive divide between those native peoples perceived as being in some sense "civilized" and those not' (1986: 2–3). With respect to the Americas, Columbus's arrival functions as an 'originary moment' that diminishes native histories and cultures which precede it and that is endlessly revisited by subsequent encounters (Greenblatt 1991: 52–53). In the East, however, each journey only adds another layer to a thick and confused pre-history: not only had other Europeans always gone before, but before Europeans other foreigners had trodden so that no one could say of India, as Raleigh did of Guiana, that she still had her 'maidenhead'. No one encounter could be discursively enshrined as primary.

These differences feed into colonial stereotyping. 'New World natives' have been projected as birthed by the European encounter with them; accordingly, a discourse of primitivism surrounds them. On the other hand, 'the East' is constructed as barbaric or degenerate. Europeans travelled in both directions in search of wealth. But if, in the New World, to use Stephen Greenblatt's words, 'the European dream, endlessly reiterated in the literature of exploration, is of the grossly unequal gift exchange: I give you a glass bead and you give me a pearl worth half your tribe' (1991: 110), in the Ottoman or Mughal territories, that dream turned into an endless nightmare in which the European pearls were treated as baubles by Eastern emperors. In a letter to his employers, the East India Company, Sir Thomas Roe, resident for many years at the court of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, complained that the presents sent by the Company 'are extremely despised by those [who] have seen them ... they laugh at us for such as wee bring' (1926: 76–77). In 1605 James I allocated £5,332 to the Levant Company for a present to the Turkish Sultan, who was, like the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, always unimpressed. The English turned their feeling of inadequacy into an account of Oriental greed or lack of manners. Edward Terry described the Mughal Jahangir's heart as 'covetous' and 'so unsatiable, as that it never knows when it hath enough; being like a bottomless purse, that

can never be fill'd' (1655: 378–79). Medieval notions of wealth, despotism, and power attaching to the East (and especially to the Islamic East) were thus reworked to create an alternative version of savagery understood not as lack of civilisation but as an excess of it, as decadence rather than primitivism.

Differences were 'noted' *within* each group as well. Columbus distinguished between 'canibales' and 'indios'—the former were represented as violent and brutish, the latter as gentle and civil. If in some cases, blackness signified racial difference (as in the representations of Africans), in others, whiteness intensified its horror: thus Charles Kingsley observed after his first trip to Ireland:

I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country. ... But to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black, one would not feel it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours.

(Quoted by Gibbons 1991: 96)

The construction of racial differences had to do both with the nature of the societies which Europeans visited, the class of people who were being observed, as well as whether trade or settlement was the objective of the visitors. 'Construction' should not thus be understood as a process which totally excludes those who were being represented, although this does not mean that the vast populations that were stereotyped in colonial discourses were responsible for their own images. Rather, the very process of misrepresentation worked upon certain specific features of the situation at hand. Thus misrepresentations or constructions need to be unravelled rather than simply attributed to some timeless, unchanging notion of racism or Orientalism. Obeyesekere's analysis of cannibalism in the Pacific islands (discussed in the previous chapter) is a good example of such unravelling.

Colonisers differed in their modes of interacting with the local populations. The Spanish in America and the Portuguese in India, for example, settled down in the lands they colonised, adopted local manners and inter-married in a way that the English derided. Eventually, inter-marriages and concubinage complicated racial identities and created a creole population which acted

as a strong base for colonial rule. According to some commentators, this showed a 'lack of racial feeling' on the part of Iberian colonists. But in fact colour and race consciousness marked the policy of cohabitation and continued to inform the subsequent 'mixed' social order. Albuquerque invited his men to marry 'the white and beautiful' widows and daughters of the defenders of Goa, making a distinction between them and the darker South Indian women whom he called 'Negresses'. The Jesuit priest Francis Xavier, who worked in both India and the Spice Islands, drew sharp colour lines even as he urged the *casados* to marry their local concubines, encouraging the men to abandon the dark ones and even offering to find lighter-skinned substitutes for them. Class was also an important factor in interracial marriages, with poorer *casados* marrying locally and the elite keeping mistresses, but also maintaining their marriages in Portugal. Similar fine-tuning is evident in Latin America where the hybrid population resulting from Spanish and Indian sexual contact encoded a complex hierarchy of colour, class and gender.

British colonialism, on the other hand, did not allow for easy social or sexual contact with local peoples. Most recently, William Dalrymple (2002) has argued that this was not always the case; he offers the lives of several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Englishmen in India, whom he calls the 'White Mughals', men who 'went native' by living with native *bibis* and adopting Indian lifestyles, as proof of a more benign, non-racial, phase of the British presence in India. Such individual choices do not betoken the lack of systemic racial ideologies, but invite us to scrutinise how such ideologies work. An appropriation of native food and clothes is also an expression of power—when Isabella and Ferdinand entered the Alhambra to take the keys of the palace from Boabdil, the last Moorish king, they were dressed in Moorish clothes. Their triumphant identities could only be fashioned by impersonating their 'others'. These were not merely sartorial or lifestyle issues. British rule in India consolidated itself by both appropriating and flouting existing codes of authority; in 1755, Robert Clive, who was to become the first British Governor-General of India, wrote to a friend that instead of wielding power through the local rulers, 'We must ... become Nabobs ourselves, in fact if

not in name ... ' (Clive 2013: 100). And as Edward Said's *Orientalism* emphasises, the 'love' of individual scholars for native culture co-existed with, and fed into, colonial doctrine.

It is, of course, true that colonial discourses fluctuated in tandem with changes in political situations within the same place over time. Constructions of the 'other' shifted in response to these changes—the same Indian men who were stereotyped as meek and effeminate began to be viewed as barbaric rapists after the 1857 uprising against the British. In Australia, images of the Aboriginal population changed drastically (from meekness, savagery became its supposed attribute) as the colonists encountered Aboriginal resistance to working as manual labourers. Heterogeneity, variety and diversity are sometimes understood as lack of purpose or ideology: Jan Morris contends that the British Empire 'never really possessed an ideology—was temperamentally opposed, indeed, to political rules, theories and generalizations. It was the most important political organism of its time, yet it was seldom altogether sure of itself or its cause' (1994: 2). Analyses of colonial discourses are most useful in deconstructing precisely this assumption that only a tightly controlled and entirely self-conscious operation could be ideologically motivated. Colonial ideologies, like other ideologies of power, were often contradictory, were never simply monolithic but, precisely through this 'diversity', they propped up a global imbalance. Similarly, colonialism did have an economic as well as philosophic imperative, although it did not always succeed in either making money or entirely suppressing the peoples it exploited.

I have been suggesting that representations of the 'other' vary according to the exigencies of colonial rule. At the same time, racial ideologies do not simply *reflect* economic and material factors. European discourses about Africans make it clear that even before the actual enslavement and colonial plunder of Africans began, racist stereotypes which were obsessed with colour and nakedness were well in place. In fact in several colonial situations these stereotypes provided an ideological *justification* for different kinds of exploitation. Therefore the relationship between racial ideologies and exploitation is better understood as dialectical, with racial assumptions both arising out of and structuring economic exploitation (Miles 1989: 27).

During colonial expansion and consolidation, the contradiction between universalism and racist thought intensified as Europeans seemed bent on the supposedly impossible task of washing black people white. The efforts to convert natives accompanied most colonial endeavours, even though they were often unsuccessful. Slavery and colonialism were often facilitated by the fiction that they were attempts to convert infidels, but in actual practice, because of the declared prohibition against Christians enslaving other Christians, slaves were often deliberately not converted, or they were converted but their papers showed their original names so that they could be bought and sold. Medieval and Renaissance literature as well as travelogues and religious texts often depicted 'good' Turks, Moroccans, 'Indians' and others as willingly embracing Christianity. In fact, religious conversion begins to figure as a justification for economic plunder: for example, in Thomas Middleton's *The Triumphs of Honour and Virtue*, a pageant presented at the Lord Mayor of London's inaugural ceremonies in 1622, an Indian Queen celebrates her own conversion to Christianity which, she says, 'settles such happiness' on her that the 'gums and fragrant spices' which the English traders take away with them, indeed all 'the riches and the sweetness of the east' are only fair exchange for the 'celestial knowledge' that is now hers. As in other writings of the period, the Indian Queen's speech intricately mixes the language of religion with that of commerce: it is 'blest commerce' that becomes a crusader for Christianity.

Two points are important here. Firstly, what was once deemed impossible—the whitening of blacks—is now rendered feasible by Christianity. But in the process, skin colour is unyoked from moral qualities. The black queen must now be recognised as good. Secondly, colonial plunder of goods is justified by the gift of Christianity. But if blackness can be washed white, that means whiteness is also vulnerable to pollution. The recurrent images of black people, Moors and heathens and other outsiders converting to Christianity try to keep at bay another set of anxieties—those generated by the possibility of Christians 'turning Turk' (a phrase that also enters the English language during the Renaissance and begins to stand in for all betrayals and desertions) and Europeans 'going native'. Christian conversions to Islam were part of

Crusading lore, but during the Renaissance they were seen as an alarming feature of the growing English trade with Ottoman and North African territories.

Until recently, religious prejudice was understood as distinct from racism, which meant that histories of Christian interactions with Jews and Muslims were neglected. Consequently, race became equated with colour prejudice only. As a matter of fact, historically, the 'modern' discourse of race, that understands difference to be biological, arose in the context of religious strife, and especially in the context of mass conversions in Iberia. As I have already suggested, in medieval Europe blackness and other bodily 'deformities' were understood to be markers of godlessness. But religious difference was even more troublesome when one could not easily map it onto physical characteristics. Spain expelled Jews in 1492, as did Portugal shortly afterwards; only converts to Christianity, derogatorily called 'Marranos' (or swine) could stay on. From that year on, forcible conversions of the Moors also began all over Spain, and from 1609, over a million converts (called 'Moriscos') were expelled. In 1480, the Inquisition introduced the idea that religious faith was manifested in 'purity of blood' (*limpeza de sangue*). Those among the Spanish nobility who had fought to keep out Moorish invaders in the eighth century were regarded as the purest, those who had nurtured Moors or Jews at any point were seen as less pure, and the most tainted were converted Jews and Moors. The converts could hardly prove their purity of blood and many fled the country.

Many commentators regard these blood laws as the crucial turning point in the history of race (Friedman 1987). Religious faith was now seen as an inner essence that transmitted itself over generations, as is made clear in this passage from a Spanish biography of Charles V:

Who can deny that in the descendants of the Jews there persists and endures the evil inclination of their ancient ingratitude and lack of understanding, just as in Negroes [there persists] the inseparability of their blackness? For if the latter should unite themselves a thousand times with white women, the children are born with the dark colour of the father. Similarly, it is not enough for a Jew to be three parts

aristocratic or Old Christian for one family-line alone defiles and corrupts him.

(Quoted in Friedman, 1987: 17)

Here, an internal essence is seen to be responsible for the Jews' 'ingratitude' as well as the Negroes' blackness, an essence that survives even when mixed with white Christian blood. At the most obvious level, Jews and 'Negroes' pose *opposite* kinds of problems. Because most European Muslims and Jews were not darker than Christians, conversions between these religions could be both easily imagined and considered slippery: how could a Spanish Moor (or indeed an English Jew) be detected after conversion? On the other hand, the black Moor or 'Negro' always stood out, and in this case the problem is heightened not by a false conversion but a real one, since a black Christian would throw into crisis the equation of whiteness with true faith. In neither case is a correspondence between outer appearance and inner being suggested, but by comparing the persistence of Jewish 'ingratitude' with black skin colour, one 'inner' quality with another 'outer' one, the passage renders both congenital. Women were at the centre of such discourses, and it was feared that the milk of Jewish wet-nurses would infect the Christian children they suckled.

It is important to remember that these events coincided with Spanish imperial expansion—Christopher Columbus secured the funding for his overseas travels in January 1492, the same month in which his monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand took over the Alhambra, the last Moorish palace in Granada. Thus the drive to overseas expansion and the desire to create a 'pure' national self were two sides of the same coin. Competition between European nations also shaped colonialism—a year later, in May 1493, a Papal Bull split the world in half, awarding the Eastern Hemisphere to Portugal, and the Western to Spain. As colonialism advanced, missionary activities expanded, as did intermingling between coloniser and colonised, but so did European fears of contamination.

In an influential article, Etienne Balibar goes back to this history in analysing present-day Europe, which, he says, is witnessing a

kind of 'neo-racism' or a 'racism without race' (1991a: 17) This form of racism, which is currently directed at (largely Muslim) immigrants into Europe 'does not have the pseudo-biological concept of race as its main driving force'. It believes that Muslims are culturally, rather than biologically, different from Christians. Balibar suggests that such forms of racism can be traced back to the anti-Semitism of the early modern period. He reminds us that 'biological or genetic naturalism is not the only means of naturalizing human beings and social affinities' and that 'culture can also function like a nature' (22). Thus, culture can also function as an inflexible barrier. Indeed, it always did—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, differences were understood to be cultural, but they were pretty inflexible—we don't see paupers becoming princes, or black people becoming white. This point—the supposed difference between culture and biology—helps us revise certain orthodoxies about the history of race, and it also helps us reconceptualise race, a point to which I will return after examining the place of science in racial thought.

Ideologies of racial difference were transformed by their incorporation into the discourse of science, which intensified the supposed connection between the biological features of each group and its psychological and social attributes. Linnaeus had drawn a distinction between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo monstrosus*; by 1758, Mary Louise Pratt points out, the first category had been further bifurcated in John Burke's *The Wild Man's Pedigree* into the following:

- a. Wild Man. Four footed, mute, hairy.
- b. American. Copper coloured, choleric, erect. Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide; face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content, free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs.
- c. European. Fair, sanguine, brawny; hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestments. Governed by laws.
- d. Asiatic. Sooty, melancholy, rigid. Hair black; eyes dark; severe, haughty, covetous. Covered with loose garments. Governed by opinions.

- e. African. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed. Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat, lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice.

(Pratt 1992: 32)

Three points about scientific theories of race should be noted. Firstly, the idea of race as biologically constituted amplified the contradiction between racial difference and the Biblical notion of the human species as a unitary creation of God. Many scientists attempted to erase this contradiction by suggesting that environmental factors such as climate had mutated the single original species. However, science itself revived an older objection to this argument by pointing out that when people were moved to new locations their racial attributes did not change. The movement of African slaves to the Americas and elsewhere was cited as an example (Miles 1989: 33). Robert Young discusses how the question 'Are human beings a single species or not' was the central issue at the heart of anthropological, cultural and scientific debates throughout the nineteenth century. Different species were supposed to be unable to sexually reproduce with each other. Thus the interpretation of 'race' as 'species' tries to deny the possibility of inter-mixing between races, and the inevitable dissolution of racial difference. But the mixed populations of places like the West Indies and parts of the United States obviously gave the lie to any notion of black and white as distinct species. One response was to argue that intermixtures between races led to diminishing fertility. Another was to suggest that racial difference indicated variety *within* a single species, rather than different species altogether. Young traces some of the tensions between Enlightenment ideals of universality and equality and theories of racial difference, pointing out that

debates about theories of race in the nineteenth century, by settling on the possibility or impossibility of hybridity, focused explicitly on the issue of sexuality and the issue of sexual unions between whites and blacks. Theories of race were thus also covert theories of desire.

(Young 1995: 9)

Secondly, scientific discussions of race, rather than challenging earlier negative stereotypes of savagery, barbarism, and excessive sexuality, extended and developed these. By attributing racial characteristics to biological differences such as skull and brain sizes, or facial angles, or genes, and by insisting on the connection between these factors and social and cultural attributes, science entrenched the idea that 'savagery' and 'civilisation' were fixed and immutable attributes. Such fixity seems to contradict the imperial claim of civilising the natives: if savagery is a biological condition then improvement by social means seems pointless. Thus, in 1859, the German anthropologist Theodor Waitz's *Introduction to Anthropology* pronounced:

If there be various species of mankind, there must be a natural aristocracy among them, a dominant white species as opposed to the lower races who by their origin are destined to serve the nobility of mankind, and may be tamed, trained, and used like domestic animals, or ... fattened or used for physiological or other experiments without any compunction. To endeavour to lead them to a higher morality and intellectual development would be as foolish as to expect that lime trees would, by cultivation, bear peaches, or the monkey would learn to speak by training. Wherever the lower races prove useless for the service of the white man, they must be abandoned to their savage state, it being their fate and natural destination. All wars of extermination, whenever the lower species are in the way of the white man, are fully justifiable.

(Quoted in Young 1995: 7)

Thirdly, science extended the association of 'race' and 'nation'. From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the word 'race' was often read as synonymous with other social groupings such as 'kinsfolk', 'lineage', 'home' and 'family'. At other times, 'race' and 'caste' were used as interchangeable terms. 'Race' thus became a marker of an 'imagined community', a phrase that Benedict Anderson has used in relation to the nation. Both nations and races are imagined as communities that bind some fellow human beings together, and demarcate them from others. Both speak to members of all classes and genders (although this does not mean

Table 2.1 W. B. Stevenson's chart of different 'castes' and their mixtures

| <i>Father</i> | <i>Mother</i> | <i>Children</i> | <i>Colour</i> |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| European | European | Creole | White |
| Creole | Creole | Creole | White |
| White | Indian | Mestiso | 6/8 White, 2/8 Indian—Fair |
| Indian | White | Mestiso | 4/8 White, 4/8 Indian |
| White | Mestiso | Creole | White—Often Very Fair |
| Mestiso | White | Creole | White—But Rather Sallow |
| Mestiso | Mestiso | Creole | Sallow—Often Light Hair |
| White | Negro | Mulatto | 7/8 White, 1/8 Negro—Often Fair |
| Negro | White | Zambo | 4/8 White, 4/8 Negro—Dark Copper |
| White | Mulatto | Quarteron | 6/8 White, 4/8 Negro—Fair |
| Mulatto | White | Mulatto | 5/8 White, 3/8 Negro—Tawny |
| White | Quarteron | Quinteron | 7/8 White, 1/8 Negro—Very Fair |
| Quarteron | White | Quarteron | 6/8 White, 2/8 Negro—Tawny |
| White | Quinteron | Creole | White—Light Eyes, Fair Hair |
| Negro | Indian | Chino | 4/8 Negro, 4/8 Indian |
| Indian | Negro | Chino | 2/8 Negro, 6/8 Indian |
| Negro | Mulatto | Zambo | 5/8 Negro, 3/8 White |
| Mulatto | Negro | Zambo | 4/8 Negro, 4/8 White |
| Negro | Zambo | Zambo | 15/16 Negro, 1/16 White—Dark |
| Zambo | Negro | Zambo | 7/8 Negro, 1/8 White |
| Negro | Chino | Zambo-Chino | 15/16 Negro, 1/16 Indian |
| Chino | Negro | Zambo-Chino | 7/8 Negro, 1/8 Indian |
| Negro | Negro | Negro | |

Source: Reproduced from Pratt 1992: 152

that all classes and genders are treated as equal within them). From the sixteenth century on, we can trace the connections between the formation of the English nation (for example) and the articulation of the superiorities of the Anglo-Saxon race (see Loomba 2002). Scientific racism from the eighteenth century calcified the assumption that race is responsible for cultural formation and historical development. Nations are often regarded as the expression of biological and racial attributes. The yoking of race and nation was especially powerful in the writings of Gobineau and others who articulated fascist doctrines. While sometimes nations can be imagined as multi-racial, more often, as in the case of Australia, the very idea of nationhood was developed by excluding certain racial others, such as the Aboriginal peoples (Miles 1989: 89, 91).

As the connections between the outer manifestation of racial difference and the moral and social differences they were supposed to signify hardened over time, contradictions within racial ideologies also proliferated. The converted heathen and the educated native are images that cannot be reconciled to the idea of absolute difference. While at one level they represent colonial achievements, at another they stand for impurity and the possibility of mixing, or—to use a term that has become central to postcolonial theory—‘hybridity’. Indeed theories of race and racial classifications were often attempts to deal with the real or imagined ‘hybridisation’ that was a feature of colonial contact everywhere. A table from W. B. Stevenson’s *Narrative of Twenty Years’ Residence in South America* (1825) detailing ‘the mixture of the different castes, under their common or distinguishing names’ that is worth reproducing here (see Table 2.1).

Notice how the category ‘European’ in relation to other Europeans or Creoles becomes ‘white’ when put in relation to ‘Indian’ or ‘Negro’. The chart also suggests that paternity is genetically dominant (the child born to a white father and an Indian mother will be 6/8 white and ‘very fair’) as is the white race (the offspring of a white father and Negro mother is 7/8 white, but that of a Negro father and white mother is 4/8 white).

The need for detailed classification is testimony to the constant transgression of racial boundaries in colonial America. Such

transgressions did not diminish the effort to maintain the racial purity of whites. There is a wonderful anecdote about an American journalist's interview with Haiti's Papa Doc Duvalier which indicates the connections between theories of racial purity and social dominance. The journalist wanted to know what percentage of Haiti's population was white. Ninety-eight per cent, was the response. Struggling to make sense of this incredible piece of information, the American finally asked Duvalier: 'How do you define white?' Duvalier answered the question with a question: 'How do you define black in your country?' Receiving the explanation that in the United States anyone with black blood was considered black, Duvalier nodded and said, 'Well, that's the way we define white in my country' (Fields 1982: 146).

If miscegenation was a nightmare, colonial administrators nevertheless dreamt of racial mixings that would produce the ideal colonial subject. Here is what Sir Harry Johnson, the first commissioner of British Central Africa visualised in 1894:

On the whole, I think the admixture of yellow that the Negro requires should come from India, and that eastern Africa and British central Africa should become the America of the Hindu. The mixture of the two races would give the Indian the physical development which he lacks, and he in turn would transmit to his half-Negro offspring the industry, ambition, and aspiration towards civilized life which the Negro so markedly lacks.

(Quoted in Robinson 1983: 131)

Today, skin colour has become the privileged marker of races which are thought of as

either 'black' or 'white' but never 'big-eared' and 'small-eared'. The fact that only certain physical characteristics are signified to define 'races' in specific circumstances indicates that we are investigating not a given, natural division of the world's population, but the application of historically and culturally specific meanings to the totality of human physiological variation ... 'races' are socially imagined rather than biological realities.

(Miles, 1989: 71)

While colour is taken to be the prime signifier of racial identity, such identity is actually shaped by perceptions of religious, ethnic, linguistic, national, sexual and class differences. In order to signal the mutability and constructedness of race, many writers frame the word within quote marks and others substitute it with 'ethnicity'. But despite the fact that racial classification is a 'delusion' and a myth, we need to remember that it is all too real in its pernicious social effects.

In conclusion, let us return to the question of biology versus culture. Most histories of race insist that 'modern' racial categories are rooted in a discourse of 'biology'. But they often begin to adopt the very terms they wish to criticise—thus the centrality of cultural or religious categories to discourses of difference in the early modern period becomes evidence of a time 'before' the development of racism (proto-racism), and similarly modern Islamophobia or anti-Semitism indicate 'racism without race' or neo-racism. This posits 'culture' and 'nature' as binary opposites, instead of organically interconnected and historically changing concepts which have both *always* been central to the ideologies of human difference. As Sandra Harding argues, 'nature' is also a cultural category and cannot be conceptualised other than through the cultural assumptions of any given society (2006: 7–8, 73). Moreover, they are relational categories—one derives its meaning from our notion of the other. Early modern as well as modern histories remind us that a 'cultural' marker of difference is not necessarily more flexible or benign category. Thus, in early modern Spain or Nazi Germany, Jewish difference could not be erased simply because it was rooted in faith. As Albert Memmi puts it,

biology is a metaphor for the destiny imposed on the other. ... The lessons of history are clear. Racism does not limit itself to biology or economics or psychology or metaphysics; it attacks along many fronts and in many forms, deploying whatever is at hand, and even what is not, inventing when the need arises. To function, it needs a focal point, a central factor, but it doesn't care what that might be—the colour of one's skin, facial features, the form of the fingers, one's character, one's cultural tradition.

(Memmi 2000: 55, 78)

Racial, ethnic, tribal, and caste groupings are social constructions that have served to both oppress people and radicalise them. Colonial regimes manipulated as well as created such identities. In southern Africa, pre-colonial tribal groupings were transformed by white differentiation and the assignment of particular kinds of jobs to different groups of people. But Africans also participated in the process of tribal creation. In fact, the same tribalism also fed into the creation of anti-colonial movements (Ranger 1982). Similarly, the discourse of race has also been appropriated and inverted by anti-colonial and black resistance struggles, such as the Negritude or Black power movements. But equally, many resistance movements have had to struggle to *transform*, and not simply to invert, existing discourses about race. In his remarkable autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela describes how the hardest, most complex task for the African National Congress was to build solidarity across the racial and tribal divides that had been calcified and institutionalised by the apartheid state. The analysis of race and its place in colonial history must take cognisance of the reality of racial discriminations and oppressions, but also call attention to the constant manufacture of the philosophies of difference.

RACE, CLASS AND COLONIALISM

In Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*, the young orphan Jane is to be sent away from the house of her rich relatives who think of her as a badly behaved burden. Jane chooses to go to a boarding house rather than to her poorer relations because, she says, 'I was not heroic enough to purchase liberty at the price of caste' (1981: 19). Caste was a concept that became familiar in England from colonial experiences in India, where it marked a social, economic and religious hierarchy overlaid with connotations of purity and pollution, similar to 'casta' ideologies in Iberian colonies. For the young Jane, a movement down the class ladder is understood as a transgression of caste, a virtual crossing of racial divides. Robert Young points out that 'If, according to Marxism, race should be properly understood as class, it is clear that for the British upper classes class was increasingly thought of in terms of race'. He

cites the first version of D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as an instance: when Connie thinks of her lover Parkin at home in his shirt sleeves, eating bloaters for tea and saying 'thaeese' for 'these', she gives up the idea of moving in with him, for 'culturally he was another race' (Young 1995: 96). Precisely the opposite sort of movement is registered by Hanif Kureishi's film *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985) in which a white working-class lad in London suggests to his Pakistani employer that as a non-white person he should not evict his Caribbean tenant. The landlord replies: 'I am a professional businessman, not a professional Pakistani'. As an upwardly mobile immigrant, the landlord refuses to overlook the class distinctions that fracture racially oppressed communities as much as racially dominant ones. In this section we will examine the intersection of race and class in the colonial context.

There have been two broad tendencies in analyses of race and ethnicity: the first, which stems from Marxist analysis, regards social groupings, including racial ones, as largely determined and explained by economic structures and processes.¹ Colonialism was the means through which capitalism achieved its global expansion. Racism simply facilitated this process, and was the conduit through which the labour of colonised people was appropriated. The second approach, which has been called 'sociological', and derives partly from the work of Max Weber, argues that economic explanations are insufficient for understanding the racial features of colonised societies. While the first approach can be functionalist in its understanding of race, the second tends to underplay economic questions. While they cannot be separated into watertight compartments, on the whole the former approach privileges class, and the latter race in understanding colonial societies. The differences between them are not merely theoretical but have direct consequences for political struggles. If racial relations are largely the offshoot of economic structures, then clearly the effort should be to transform the latter; on the other hand, if this is not the case, racial oppression needs to be accorded a different political weightage and specificity.

A sophisticated dialogue between these two tendencies, exemplified by the work of sociologist John Rex, has helped develop a more dialectical approach to this question. Rex (1980) suggests

that, in South Africa, capitalism was installed through the enforced labour of the Bantu peoples. Thus race relations were crucial in making available a labour force. In *Capital*, Marx had suggested that capitalism depends upon 'the free labourer selling his labour power' to the owner of the means of production (1977: 170). But in South Africa, as in a variety of other colonial situations, the labour of colonised peoples was commissioned through a variety of coercive measures. It was not free labour at all. Rex quotes an East African settler to make his point: 'We have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs. ... Compulsory labour is the corollary of our occupation of the country' (1980: 129). 'Classical' Marxism attributes capitalism's efficiency to its having replaced slavery and crude forms of coercion with the 'free' labour market in which the force is exerted through economic pressure. But under colonialism, according to Rex, these other supposedly outdated features of control carry on, *not as remnants of the past but as integral features of the capitalist present*. Race and racism are the basis on which unfree labour is pressed into colonialist service.

Racist ideologies identified different sections of people as intrinsically or biologically suited for particular tasks. Aimé Césaire angrily quotes Ernst Renan on this point:

Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost no sense of honour; govern them with justice, levying from them, in return for the blessing of such a government, an ample allowance for the conquering race, and they will be satisfied; a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro; ... a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the ergastulum like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel. ... But the life at which our workers rebel would make a Chinese or a fellaah happy, as they are not military creatures in the least. *Let each one do what he is made for, and all will be well.*

(Césaire 1972: 16)

The ideology of racial superiority translated easily into class terms. The superiority of the white races, one colonist argued, clearly implied that 'the black men must forever remain cheap

labour and slaves'. Certain sections of people were thus racially identified as the natural working classes. The problem was now how to organise the social world according to this belief, or to force 'the population into its "natural" class position: in other words, reality had to be brought into line with that representation in order to ensure the material objective of production' (Miles 1989: 105).

Miles illustrates this process by examining how the racial ideologies with which British colonisers arrived in Kenya structured capitalist development there. First, Africans were dispossessed from the best lands and settled in adjacent reserves. This process was facilitated by the creation of African chiefs, contrary to the custom hitherto prevailing in most Kenyan communities. Land that was considered unused by Africans was appropriated after being defined as 'waste'. Local populations were often nomadic, so lands that lay unused at a particular time were potentially available for future use, but the new order curbed their movements and confined them to specific areas. After acquiring land, colonists needed to recruit labour. The different methods employed all required the intervention of the colonial state. The new 'chiefs' were commissioned to supply men to construct roads, railways and docks and act as porters, away from their place of residence. The fees paid were low, and refusal was treated with harsh punishment. The colonists also developed a 'squatter system' whereby African communities were encouraged to live on European lands in return for a certain quantum of labour power. Finally cash taxes were imposed, which Africans were forced to pay by selling their labour for a wage. 'Chiefs' were also used to 'persuade' Africans to enter the labour force, and these measures were defended on the grounds that they would eliminate 'idleness and vice' among the local population. Thus the imperial mission, based on a hierarchy of races, coincided perfectly with the economic needs of the colonists. In the process, as already noted, divisions between different African groups and tribes were also emphasised by creating particular sub-divisions and attributing particular kinds of skills and shortcomings to them. Thus the process of 'class formation was shaped by racialization' (Miles 1989: 111).

Capitalism therefore does not override and liquidate racial hierarchies but continues to depend upon, and intensify, them.

Ideologies of race and the social structures created by them facilitate capitalist production, so that, Rex argues, 'the South African labour system is the most efficient system for the capitalist exploitation of labour yet devised, resting as it does on the three institutions of the rural reserve, the mining compound and the controlled urban "location"' (1980: 129). While Rex's critics argued that even in 'classic' capitalism, labour is hardly 'free' in any real sense, his essential point is that in the colonial situation, capitalism works differently, and that this difference needs to be accounted for by thinking more concretely about race and ethnicity.

In colonial situations the state and its various institutions (such as educational establishments) are especially crucial in maintaining these racial and class distinctions and ideologies necessary for creating capitalism. We noted that the state made possible the acquisition of both land and labour in Kenya. Race relations are not determined by economic distinctions alone, rather economic disparities are maintained by ideologies of race. In the previous section we noted that racism helps to structure capitalist expansion. It is especially crucial in maintaining certain hierarchies when the state and legal systems can no longer be blatantly partisan:

when the social order could no longer be buttressed by legal sanctions it had to depend upon the inculcation in the minds of both exploiters and exploited of a belief in the superiority of the exploiters and the inferiority of the exploited. Thus it can be argued that the doctrine of equality of economic opportunity and that of racial superiority and inferiority are complements of one another. Racism serves to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

This is not of course to say that the use of force ceases with slave emancipation. In some countries like South Africa it is systematically mobilised on a political level to ensure continued white supremacy. But it is to say that when inequality, exploitation and oppression are challenged by economic liberalism, they have to be opposed by doctrines which explain the exceptions to the rule. While it is admitted that all men are equal, some men are deemed to be more equal than others.

(Rex 1980: 131)

That is why some critics have suggested that racial hierarchies are the 'magic formula' which allows capitalism to expand and find all the labour power it needs, and yet pay even lower wages, and allow even fewer freedoms than are given to the white working classes (Wallerstein 1988: 33). Racial difference, in such an analysis, is more than a by-product of class relations, although it is firmly connected to economic structures. Also important to Rex's analysis is the question of internalisation of racial ideologies, to which we will turn in the next section. Thus Rex's approach, says Stuart Hall, 'yields a "Marx plus Fanon" sort of argument' (Hall 1980: 315).

The precise intersection of racial ideologies with the process of class formation depended both upon the kinds of societies which colonial powers penetrated and the specific racial ideologies that emerged there. The race relations put into place during colonialism survive long after many of the economic structures underlying them have changed. The devaluation of African slaves still haunts their descendants, the inequities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once-colonised countries or communities, the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate, and contemporary global imbalances are built upon those inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past.

According to Stuart Hall, one of the most valuable aspects of emergent theories is to show more precisely how this anchoring works, and how it structures contemporary relations between the once-colonised countries and their erstwhile masters. The classical Marxist view that capitalism will eventually erase pre-capitalist economic systems does not seem to work either with regard to colonial societies or in the postcolonial world. In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels suggested that 'the bourgeoisie ... draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization, it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image' (Marx and Engels: 1976, Vol. 6: 488). All over the world capitalism replaces all previous social formations. Rex pointed out that the South African social system displayed no such inevitable tendencies. Within the colonies, pre-capitalist

economic forms of exploitation such as plantation slavery persisted, indeed flourished and expanded for a long time. In the postcolonial world also, capitalist economies coexist with, or are 'hampered' by pre-capitalist forms. Why do these social formations resist full-fledged capitalist development?

In an influential analysis, A. Gunder Frank (1969) argued that under the aegis of colonialism, capitalism *had* in fact penetrated everywhere. Latin America, he claimed, has been capitalist since the sixteenth century. According to this view, plantation slavery is nothing but one kind of capitalism, where the slave functions like capital, or like property. 'Underdevelopment' is the result of the manner in which countries around the globe were incorporated into the world system. Imperialism had divided the world into metropolises and satellites, and their relationship was marked by the unequal development of capitalism itself, and the dependency of the latter upon the former. Hence we live in a single world capitalist system that structures both the development of some countries and the underdevelopment, or dependency of others. Today's world is divided into 'advanced' capitalist countries and 'underdeveloped' ones because of the manner in which each of them became capitalist.

There are several problems with this thesis. Ernesto Laclau (1977) points out that it regards 'capitalism' as only a system of production for the market, without taking into account how it structures human relationships. That is why it cannot distinguish between West Indian plantations and English textile mills. Enormously varied exploitative practices are all understood within a single rubric, differentiated only by varying degrees of 'development'. Rex observes that Gunder Frank's thesis implies that the third world will have to continue to be exploited as capitalism advances, till it is overthrown by the working class in the advanced countries. Thus it locks advanced and underdeveloped countries into a relation of near-perpetual inequity.

Is there a less restrictive way of conceptualising the role of colonialism in the development of capitalism? Stuart Hall (1980) indicates an alternative perspective via current debates on plantation slavery. The slave, unlike the worker under capitalism, does not own his or her labour power. Thus she/he is not a worker in

the same way as the free wage labourer. The slave's relations with the master are markedly different than those between the worker and the capitalist. However, the slave (via the slave trade) as well as the fruits of the slave's labour enter and circulate within the global capitalist market. Mercantile capital funded the slave trade as well as the trade in plantation goods. Hence plantation slavery was made possible via colonial, agrarian, as well as capitalist, practices and relations. The non-capitalist practice of slavery coexists with, feeds into, and aids, the development of capitalism. Thus pre-capitalist modes do not simply give way to capitalist ones in any simple teleological sense, but persist precisely because they contribute to the growth of the latter. The relation between them is not simple coexistence but what Hall describes as 'an articulation between different modes of production, structured in some relation of dominance' (1980: 320). This analysis is extremely useful in understanding why capitalism does not simply erase pre-capitalist formations and relations. It is in the interest of capitalism that certain older social structures *not* be totally transformed, and certain older forms of exploitation based on racial and ethnic hierarchies continue to make available cheap labour. If plantation slavery once provided cheaper labour than would otherwise have been available, today the non-capitalist sector continues to play an analogous role. Capitalism coexists with, or is 'articulated' with, these other modes of production, but this coexistence is structured by the dominance of capitalism, which therefore benefits from it.

In this section, we have considered only the general framework within which class and race may be articulated together; the manner in which racial ideologies and images shaped class relations and perceptions varies in different periods. In early modern Europe, travelling salesmen (who were usually poor peddlers) were routinely perceived as foreign and black. Noah's curse upon the descendants of his son Ham was popularly used to explain the servitude of European peasants, much before it became a rationalisation of blackness. Racially marginalised peoples were also described in terms of servitude, as in the expression that a Jew is 'a slave to the world' (see Loomba 2002). In eighteenth-century Europe, Hayden White points out, the image of the noble savage fuelled bourgeois critiques of the nobility:

the concept of Noble Savage stands over against, and undercuts, the notion, not of the Wild Man, but rather of 'noble man'. ... The very notion of 'man' is comprehensible only as it stands in opposition to 'wild' and that term's various synonyms and cognates. There is no contradiction in 'wild savage' since these are in fact the same words. ... But given the theory of the classes prevailing at the time, Noble Savage is an anomaly, since the idea of nobility (or aristocracy) stands opposed to the presumed wildness and savagery of other social orders as 'civility' stands to 'barbarism'. As thus envisaged, the Noble Savage idea represents not so much an elevation of the idea of the native as a demotion of the idea of nobility.

(White 1987: 191)

And Peter Hulme suggests that the development of 'the discourse of the plantation, which recognized only two locations, inside and outside, white and black ... was itself to provide a central image for the class struggle of industrial Europe' (1981: 75).

In relation to the twentieth century, there has been considerable work around the dynamic intersection of race and class, especially in Britain. A pioneering study pointed out that the class relations within which black working-class people exist

function as *race relations*. The two are inseparable. Race is the modality in which class is lived. It is also the medium in which class relations are experienced. This ... has consequences for the *whole class*, whose relation to their conditions of existence is now systematically transformed by race.

(Hall *et al.* 1978: 394)

Many anti-colonial intellectuals had previously grappled with this connection between race and class, which is why even the Marxists among them found Negritude so compelling. They needed to foreground the question of race because, as Aimé Césaire put it, 'Marx is all right, but we need to complete Marx' (1972: 70). Césaire writes the colonial encounter as an equation: 'colonisation = "thingification"' (1972: 21). This 'thingification', or the reduction of the colonised person into an object was achieved not only by turning her/him into 'an instrument of production', but also, by

Western accounts (including some radical or socially progressive accounts) of subject-formation. If Marx needed to be 'completed', Freud and his legacy also needed to be re-written, for reasons that we will now examine.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND COLONIAL SUBJECTS

In *The Deceivers*, John Masters's 1952 novel set in the colonial India of 1825, William Savage, an East India Company official, finds himself impersonating Gopal, a local weaver who has disappeared and whose wife, thinking him dead, is about to immolate herself and become a sati. William soon discovers that Gopal is alive and part of a flourishing band of Thugs (Deceivers) or highway robbers who strangled their victims with scarves and supposedly owed allegiance to Kali, a Hindu goddess who carries connotations of female power, sexuality, and rebelliousness. William infiltrates the Thugs in order to understand their operations and to wipe them out. In the process, he discovers that *he* possesses their skills of strangulation as well as the ability to interpret certain omens, believed to be signs from Kali, which dictate Thuggee operations. Through the novel, William becomes increasingly alienated from his Western self, and finds himself intoxicated by the thrill of murder and the power of Kali. He participates in Thuggee rituals, including the eating of a certain consecrated sugar, 'the sweetness of Kali' which marks the allegiance of the bandit to the goddess and her protection in return: 'You are hers and she is yours' (Masters 1952: 179–80). Hussein, an ex-Thug turned informer for the British, had previously warned him that none who partake of the sacred sugar can escape Kali's seductive power. After William has eaten the sugar, Hussein laments:

you are a Deceiver, from this dawn on for ever. A strangler. ... It doesn't matter what a man *thinks* he is. When he eats consecrated sugar, on the blanket, in front of the pick-axe, he is a strangler, because Kali enters into him. ... Now you will never return to your office ... Kali wills it, so it is.

(Masters 1952: 185–86)

As a British official dedicated to the 'civilising mission' but wanting to respect Indians, Savage had started out with a 'battle within himself with regard to sati. Was sati a barbaric custom against women or a "beautiful" idea, besides being 'the people's custom and religion'? He

tried to understand, tried in the Western fashion to separate the good from the evil, to balance the beauty of sacrifice against the ugliness of waste. ... But to these Hindus there was no conflict between God, who is all-powerful, and Satan, who yet flouts and perverts His intentions. Here creation and destruction were the opposite faces of the same medal. ... He had to understand it if he could. Men and women who thought and acted in those beliefs were his charge. If he failed to understand, he could work only from a single, sweeping generalization: that Indians were fatalistic, brutal and loveless.

(Masters 1952: 25)

Now his empathy turns into potential deculturation—he is seduced by Kali into abandoning Western civilisation, and becoming a real Deceiver. At the Thugs' feast, he eats goat meat and drinks arrack and is maddened by his dual identities: 'He was William Savage, taking ritual part in a decorous, blood-bathed fantasy. He was Gopal the weaver, eating contentedly, with respect' (1952: 192). Then Kali possesses him, and 'blown by the fumes of the arrack' he becomes 'not a person but a place, cloudy with red blood and white rice'. In a charged sequence Masters describes his possession by Kali as a kind of madness, where his Christian self is torn asunder by a frenzied desire for Kali, who becomes identified both with a dancing girl present at the feast and with India herself:

Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called Thy son. He had eaten the sugar, Kali was Death. Kali was a woman. The zither urged him to spend desire. The girl's hands demanded him and crept over him. He put down the beaker, and touched her, and found her full, warm and waiting. ... He went to her and strove with her. Suddenly she looked at him, and her eyes sprang wide open, as wide as his.

The rumal (scarf) was in his hands, it circled her neck. The muscles were taut in his wrists. Death and love surged up together in him, ready to flood over together, and together engulf her.

(Masters 1952: 201–2)

William is possessed by Kali's 'infinite power', but Hussein pulls him away in the nick of time. Hussein's own salvation lies in the small wooden cross gifted him by William's wife Mary, and *his* desire is also to cross boundaries, and wear a 'red coat' as a loyal servant of the East India Company. At the end, Kali's 'blood-wet mouth and lascivious tongue' proves to be no match for a combination of Christ and 'Mary and the baby' which pulls William back to his reality. Thus the loyal native servant of the Empire guides William back to his true British colonial official identity away from the madness of native India.

Both in novels and in non-fictional narratives, the crossing of boundaries appears as a dangerous business, especially for those who are attracted to or sympathise with the alien space or people. 'Going native' is potentially unhinging. The colonised land seduces European men into madness. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is a well-known example of this pattern. There Africa is a primeval jungle and a source of power and wealth which fascinates and maddens the colonialist hero Kurtz. Marlow, the narrator of the story tells us that while Kurtz's 'intelligence was perfectly clear ... his soul was mad. Being alone in the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and by heavens! I tell you it had gone mad' (Conrad 1975: 95). Marlow journeys down the river Congo, into 'the heart of darkness,' in search of Kurtz, whose experiences are recreated as simultaneously a journey into childhood, madness and Africa. Although several critics regard Kurtz's dislocation as a product of colonialist greed, and the novel as a critique of imperialism, it can be seen to rehearse the primitivism of classical psychoanalysis. Chinua Achebe (1989) called it 'a story in which the very humanity of black people is called into question'. In this novel as in much colonialist fiction, Africa is a place where the European mind disintegrates and regresses into a primitive state. Africa, India, China and other alien lands induce madness, they *are* madness itself.

John Barrell opens his study of the imperial roots of Thomas De Quincey's neurotic visions with an extended quotation from De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*:

May 1818. The Malay has been a fearful enemy for months. Every night, through his means, I have been transported into Asiatic scenery. ... I have often thought that, if I were compelled to forgo England, and to live in China, among Chinese manners and modes of life and scenery, I should go mad. ... In China, over and above what it has in common with the rest of Southern Asia, I am terrified by the modes of life, by the manners, by the barrier of utter abhorrence placed between myself and *them*, by counter-sympathies deeper than I can analyse. I could sooner live with lunatics, with vermin, with crocodiles or snakes.

(Barrell 1991: xi)

Barrell discusses how these traumas are impelled by a fear of 'society in the mass', 'the monstrous aggregations of human beings' (1991: 6), both swarming Orientals and working-class hordes, and also shaped by sexual guilt. His book compellingly illustrates Roy Porter's suggestion that madness is not 'an individual atom' but is culturally shaped and determined (1987: 9).

The three fictional representations of maddening colonial encounter I have discussed are all very different from one another, but, in all of them, only the European subject is individuated. The 'mark of the plural', Albert Memmi tells us, is a 'sign of the colonised's depersonalization': 'The colonised is never characterised in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity ("They are this"; "They are all the same")' (1967: 88). The individual European faces the alien hordes, and, if he identifies too much with them, he transgresses the boundary between 'self' and 'other' and regresses into primitive behaviour, into madness. These associations between European male adulthood, civilisation and rationality on the one hand, and non-Europeans, children, primitivism and madness on the other are also present in Freudian and subsequent accounts of the human psyche. In Freud's writings, especially *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), historical and cultural development was

visualised as akin to individual, psychic and biological growth (see Seshadri-Crooks 1994). A child's growth towards adulthood and social progress from savagery towards monotheism and patriarchy (Freud's criteria for human civilisation) are mapped on to one another. 'Primitives' are thus akin to children, and to the civilised 'neurotic', having not achieved the psychological growth of the adult European. In the primitive mind, 'the deed ... is a substitute for thought', and pleasure is primary. Thought and reflection are not available to 'primitive men' (Freud 1950: 161). This division between instinctive and reflective human beings has informed the practice of ethnopsychology wherein cultural difference is pathologised and psychic growth understood in terms of cultural/racial difference.

But where does this leave the mad 'primitive'? Michel Foucault's influential work describes the creation of mental illness in European society as a process of 'othering', where the madman is confined and silenced in order to define the normative, rational self. But, as Megan Vaughan points out, in colonised societies, 'the need to objectify and distance the "other" in the form of the madman or the leper, was less urgent in a situation in which every colonial person was in some sense, already "Other"'. In Africa there was no 'great confinement' akin to what Foucault describes for nineteenth-century Europe. Instead, the concern was to describe and pathologise Africans in general in order to then define the European as inherently different from them. By and large, therefore, 'the literature on madness in colonial Africa was more concerned with a definition of "Africanness" than with a definition of madness' (Vaughan 1991: 10, 119).

How could African madness be slotted into this framework? Vaughan explains that the mad African was understood as one who is insufficiently 'other', as one who crosses cultural boundaries and becomes European. Madness, as in the case of the European who goes native, was regarded as a transgression of supposed group identities. The most widespread understanding was that 'deculturation' was the cause of rising insanity. The breakdown of traditional structures and the strains of 'modern' society had literally unhinged Africans who were unable to cope with change: an influential report on cases of insanity in Nyasaland suggested

that 'Native schizophrenics with their sexual disturbances and European type of delusions, and their fondness for offense against property, seem to manifest a more European attitude of mind than the members of other groups' (quoted by Vaughan 1991: 108). Extensive studies suggested that modernisation was eroding traditional social structures; the solution they suggested was indirect rule, whereby Africans would be controlled through their 'traditional' leaders and customary practices. Writings on African psychology and psychiatry served the need to define Africans as fundamentally different from Europeans. Therefore it is hardly surprising that within the frameworks of psychoanalytic discourse, anti-colonial resistance is coded as madness, dependency or infantile regression (see Cooppan 1996).

Frantz Fanon pointed out that resistance to colonial rule is routinely 'attributed to religious, magical, fanatical behavior' (1965: 41). Octavio Mannoni's *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonisation* employed these theories of the African mind to 'explain' the Malagasy revolt of 1947. Mannoni argued that particular ('backward') peoples are colonised because they suffer from an unresolved 'dependence complex', which leads them to revere their ancestors, and to transfer this reverence to their colonial masters. Thus colonisation is seen to be the result of psychic differences between those who show such dependency and some others, who become colonisers, who fear their own inferiority and seek out ways of proving themselves: 'To my mind there is no doubting that colonisation has always required the existence of the need for dependence. Not all peoples can be colonised: only those who experience this need' (Mannoni 1956: 85). Accordingly, Mannoni explained the revolt of 1947 as the result of concessions granted by the French which had left the islanders feeling abandoned by their colonial masters. Here it is not colonial repression but the lifting of adequate controls that triggers native rebellion. J. C. Carothers' studies of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya (in 1952–54) similarly pathologised resistance as an aspect of under-developed individualism. In Rudyard Kipling's novel *Kim*, the 'Mutiny' or Rebellion of 1857 sparked off by Hindu and Muslim soldiers of the Indian Army against the British is represented (by an Indian soldier loyal to the British) as a 'madness [that] ate into

all the Army'. In his discussion of the novel, Edward Said suggests that Kipling simply did not conceive of any conflict in India, which is why his hero Kim sees no contradiction between serving the Empire and remaining loyal to his Indian companions (1994: 146–47). But it is possible to read the conflation of madness and rebellion in the novel as Kipling's repressed awareness of the colonial conflict.

There were some who challenged such absolute notions of psychic difference between races. The South African psychoanalyst and doctor Wulf Sachs argued that there was no fundamental difference between his black and white patients. In *Black Hamlet: The Mind of an African Negro Revealed by Psychoanalysis* (first published in 1937), Sachs suggested that his patient, a black man called John Chavafambira, was suffering from 'Hamletism'. Sachs follows Freud in suggesting that Shakespeare's Hamlet is unable to act because of an unresolved Oedipus complex; 'Hamletism' is, accordingly, a 'universal phenomenon symbolizing indecision and hesitancy when action is required' (1947: 176). Given the context in which 'the African mind' was regarded as essentially different from the European, Sachs' suggestion that Chavafambira's mental processes are part of a universally applicable framework can be seen as a progressive move. Nevertheless, Sachs was not entirely free of the influence of the 'deculturation' school of thought—he too regarded Chavafambira's problems as a manifestation of his inability to cope with the demands of modern life. Sachs recognised that Chavafambira's life and his own work were structured by the political and economic realities of South Africa, where black Africans were constantly subject to political harassment and relentlessly pushed into urban proletarianisation. But he did not adequately confront the implications of his own work, and argued instead for a fundamental sameness between black and white psychic structures, thereby suggesting that Freudian categories such as the Oedipus complex are universally valid (see Dubow 1993).

The discourse of colonial psychology and psychiatry was 'unable to contain any notion of difference that was not directly tied to the question of inferiority and the necessity of subordination' (Vaughan 1991: 115). Sachs tried to counter this by erasing the notion of difference altogether. We have already considered how notions of

the 'universal' can also be deeply ethnocentric because they are formulated in the image of the dominant culture. A highly specific image of culture, or in this case, the psyche, is projected as globally applicable. Such a projection works to dehistoricise or depoliticise the notion of the psychic because, as happened in Sachs's case, it does not adequately confront the relation between social structures and the inner lives of human beings. Thus, both in the ways it has projected racial and cultural differences and in the ways it has erased them, psychoanalysis has served colonial interests in Africa and elsewhere (Gilman 1993).

Freud wrote: 'Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipal complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim to neurosis' (1953: 226, n.1). But to universalise the Oedipal drama is to suggest that it accounts definitively for the development of identities everywhere, as if there were no differences in the ways subjectivities are formed or sexual dramas played out around the world, or as if no other differences of class or culture shape their performance. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari condemn 'the analytic imperialism of the Oedipus complex' which inflates an unhistorical notion of the family as the site for human conflicts whereas in reality the family itself is not immune from political and historical reshaping. For Deleuze and Guattari, the idea of Oedipus is not only inadequate to the task of social analysis, it is itself 'colonialism pursued by other means' (1977: 170). Fredric Jameson argues for the need to 'radically historicize' psychoanalysis, to locate its account of Oedipal conflicts within a specific history of the family and to recognise that 'the structure of the psyche is historical, and has a history' (1981: 62).

Today, the critique of an 'African Oedipus' as nothing but a 'European Oedipal Phantasy' is not uncommon (Hitchcott 1993: 62). But given the history of the psychoanalytic institution, suggestions to this effect by the Martiniquan psychoanalyst Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* were explosive. Fanon's work directly intervened in the legacy of racist theories of biological and psychological development. It pushed to its logical conclusion the view that 'modernisation' led to native madness by suggesting that it was not modernisation as

such but *colonialism* that dislocated and distorted the psyche of the oppressed. The colonised could not 'cope' with what was happening because colonialism eroded his very being, his very subjectivity. Thus, Fanon announced at the beginning of *Black Skin, White Masks*: 'At the risk of arousing the resentment of my coloured brothers, I will say that the black man is not a man' (1967: 8). The colonial experience annihilates the colonised person's sense of self, 'seals' him into 'a crushing objecthood', which is why he is 'not a man'. Fanon does not entirely depart from the dominant paradigms about the black mind, but he extends them to the point where their political meaning is inverted. It is colonialism that is now seen as psychopathological, a disease that distorts human relations and renders everyone within it 'sick'. Conversely, traits that had been characterised within ethnopsychiatry as forms of native hysteria and evidence of atavistic brain structures are interpreted by Fanon as signs of resistance; laziness, for example, is 'the conscious sabotage of the colonial machine' on the part of the colonised: 'The Algerian's criminality, his impulsivity, and the violence of his murders are therefore not the consequences of the organization of his nervous system or of the characterial originality, but the direct product of the colonial situation' (1963: 239, 250). Whereas Mannoni had suggested that colonialism is the *result* of certain psychic differences between races (which lead some people to dependency or the need to be ruled) Fanon argued that in fact colonialism was the *cause* which engendered psychic difference along racial lines and annihilated the black subject into nothingness.

In recent years, Fanon has been treated (often to the exclusion of other important figures) as the most important anti-colonial writer-activist; he has become, in the words of his comrade and critic Albert Memmi, 'a prophet of the Third World, a romantic hero of decolonization' (1973: 39). Within postcolonial studies, his status as 'a global theorist' may derive from the fact that in Fanon's writings, as in recent critical work, subject formation converges with the colonial and postcolonial question (Gates 1991: 457–58). Let us briefly examine how this convergence works in Fanon's own writings.

Fanon reworks the Lacanian schema of the 'mirror stage', regarded as the crucial stage in the formation of the subject.

According to Lacan, when the infant first contemplates itself in a mirror, it sees a reflection smoother, more co-ordinated and stable than itself. The subject constructs itself in the imitation of as well as opposition to this image. Fanon writes:

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

(Fanon 1967: 161)

For the white man (and woman) the black man is marked by his colour and his supposedly limitless sexuality. 'Negrophobia' turns on the fear and desire of rampant black sexuality. For the white subject, the black other is everything that lies outside the self. For the black subject however, the white other serves to define everything that is desirable, everything that the self desires. This desire is embedded within a power structure, therefore 'the white man is not only the Other but also the master, real or imaginary' (1967: 138). Therefore, blackness confirms the white self, but whiteness empties the black subject. He cannot identify with that which is so persistently negated by the racist/colonialist structure. Hence Fanon's Antillean patients reported that in their delirium, they had 'no color'.

For the 'Negro', racial identity overrides every other aspect of existence. Fanon recalls that when a child on the streets of Paris pointed to him, calling out 'Look! A Negro', he felt 'responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors ... I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: "Sho' good eatin'" (1967: 112). The black person attempts to cope by adopting white masks that will somehow make the fact of his blackness vanish. This is a precarious process. Fanon records his shock at realising, at the screening of a film in France, that he was expected to identify with a 'negro' instead of, as he had always done, with Tarzan (1967: 152). Thus

black skin/white masks reflects the miserable schizophrenia of the colonised's identity.

Secondly, Fanon suggests that the Oedipal complex and the family structures within which it is housed are incapable of describing the psychic structures of the Antillean subject. Whereas for the European child the nation is an extension of the family, for the Antillean child the family is not reflected in the colonial nation. His/her father does not possess the power that a white father does because he is subject to colonial/white authority; hence the law of the father becomes the law of the white man. The colonial subject occupies the place of the transgressive child. This reinscription disrupts the universalism of psychoanalytic categories which Fanon says have always struck him as very far from 'the reality that the Negro presents' (1967: 151). Fanon does not entirely break away from the Oedipal framework, but rewrites it in racial terms. Instead of the Oedipal scenario where the male child desires its mother, the fantasy of possession of white women by black men is offered by him as the primal scene of colonialism: 'When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine'. Thus, colonialism is described as an Oedipal scene of forbidden desire.

But Fanon was not just a radical psychoanalyst—he was also an anticolonial activist. The Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks* seems more with the psychologies of the oppressed, while the Fanon of *The Wretched of the Earth* turns his attention to the revolt of the oppressed, espouses the cause of Algerian resistance and depicts a unified people who have overcome the debilitating effects of colonialism. While these twin concerns—the psychological ill-effects of colonialism and anti-colonial liberation—are inter-related throughout Fanon's work, critics tends to emphasise one or the other. Homi Bhabha appropriates Fanon as 'a premature post-structuralist' (Parry 1987: 31). Bhabha's Fanon indicates that colonial identities are always oscillating, never perfectly achieved. The divide between black skin and white mask is not, Bhabha explains, 'a neat division' but

a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once. ... It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the

disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes.

(1994: 117)

On the other hand, Benita Parry reads Fanon (and his fellow Martiniquan Aimé Césaire) as

authors of liberation theories ... [who] affirmed the intervention of an insurgent, unified black self, acknowledged the revolutionary energies released by valorising the cultures denigrated by colonialism and, rather than construing the colonialist relationship in terms of negotiations with the structures of imperialism, privileged coercion over hegemony to project it as a struggle between implacably opposed forces.

(1994a: 179)

Both these Fanons—the one who embodies post-structuralist angst, and the one who embodies revolutionary fervour—are hard to sustain in absolute terms. The post-structuralist Fanon is wrested by Bhabha against the obvious evidence of some of his own writing. On the other hand, Fanon the revolutionary remained 'a European interloper' in the causes he espoused, never learning the language or participating in the daily life of the people he championed. Albert Memmi (1973) astutely suggests that Fanon's revolutionary romanticism has much to do with his own rootlessness: because he was alienated from the French culture that he was brought up to revere, the Martiniquan culture that he was brought up to reject, and the Algerian culture he espoused but was never familiar with, Fanon adopted a universalist humanism, speaking for all colonised peoples and indeed all humanity in a Messianic tone.

There are other problems in trying to appropriate Fanon for our own ends today. Fanon's split subject cannot be read as the paradigmatic colonised subject: the psychic dislocations Fanon discusses are more likely to be felt by native elites or those colonised individuals who were educated within, and to some extent invited

to be mobile within, the colonial system than by those who existed on its margins. And in the next section, when we examine the place of gender in Fanon's schema, we will see how his subject is also resolutely male, and reinforces existing gender hierarchies even as it challenges racial ones. The fundamental question posed by these debates over Fanon's real legacy is: how do we interrelate the question of psychic oppression and trauma to the material, economic aspects of colonialism? Or, to use Memmi's terse formulation: 'Does psychoanalysis win out over Marxism? Does all depend on the individual or on society?' (1967: xiii; see also Gates 1991: 467).

In some ways this is not a helpful way of posing the question. There have been intense dialogues between Marxism and psychoanalysis both because of their differences and their shared terrain. Some of Marxism's fundamental concepts, such as those of alienation or ideology, have psychological as well as social dimensions. Gramsci's crucial contribution was to recognise the importance of subjectivity in the study of domination. On the other hand, psychoanalytic accounts of subject formation are also theories of socialisation, or of how an individual enters the world of sexuality, language and power. Psychoanalysis has also had much to say about groups of people and the relations between them. But in practice it *has* been notoriously difficult for contemporary cultural theorists to pay equally nuanced attention to both socio-political and psycho-sexual aspects of human existence. Feminism, for example, has most insistently and radically questioned as well as appropriated psychoanalysis both to question its constitution of female sexuality and to interrogate the very divisions between 'inside' and 'outside', personal and political, biology and culture, individual and society.² But Jacqueline Rose points out that feminism has been 'so successful ... in insisting on the political nature of the sexual and the psychic, that the sexual and psychic nature of the political in the other sense had become correspondingly neglected' (1993: 244).

How might what Rose calls the 'two-way process between the field of psychoanalysis and politics' (1993: 243) work in relation to colonial difference? Even feminist psychoanalysis has not yet cleared the ground for thinking about issues of race and ethnicity.

In fact, Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks accuses feminism of reproducing the existing problems of mainstream psychoanalytic discourse by 'not raising the question of racial difference with regard to irrational and mysterious "others" (Africans and Orientals) in theories of subject formation'. She rightly points out that when questions of cultural as opposed to sexual difference come up, 'we mark a moment of departure for postcolonials from the political and theoretical intentions of First World feminism' (1994: 175, 189).

Is it at all possible, then, to use psychoanalytic paradigms to think productively about colonial relations, or are they too bound up with colonialist ways of ordering culture and biology? Despite the problems outlined above, psychoanalytical theories of subject-formation have been widely deployed within postcolonial studies, even by those who otherwise strongly disagree with one another, such as Abdul JanMohamed who emphasises the 'Manichean' opposition between colonised and colonisers and Homi Bhabha who suggests the fuzziness and ambiguity of this divide. The work of Ashis Nandy on colonialism and its legacy in India, and of Gananath Obeyesekere on colonial encounters in the Pacific testify to the widespread use of psychoanalytic vocabularies in the work of scholars located outside the Western academy. Because, as Seshadri-Crooks puts it, psychoanalysis does provide 'our most elaborate language of subject-constitution', it remains a potentially useful tool for the analysis of colonial identities, the psychic effects of colonial rule, and the dynamics of resistance.

Perhaps the answer is 'to use psychoanalysis selectively and not as a fixed body of "truth"' (Rose 1993: 243). However some influential deployments of psychoanalytic concepts and vocabularies, as in the work of Homi Bhabha, may have made them even more difficult to interrelate with social critique. Fanon traced patterns through various individual neurosis in order to generalise about his colonised subject, 'the black man', 'the Negro'. But such a figure ought not to become a paradigm for the colonial condition, as it does for Bhabha (whose work we will consider in greater detail in the section on hybridity). Colonised subjects are, after all, simultaneously moulded by class and gender considerations. Also, the split between 'black skin' and 'white masks' is differentially experienced in various colonial and postcolonial societies. We

cannot forge a template of a split colonised subject and then apply it to *all* colonised subjects. Finally, the processes of individual subject-formation cannot endlessly be expanded to account for social collectivities. Even as we insist that madness needs to be understood in political terms, and political structures analysed in psychic terms, should we completely collapse the distinction between 'political repression and individual neurosis?' (Gates 1991: 467).

Fanon may not have satisfactorily resolved the tension between psychoanalysis and Marxism, but he remains a vital figure for us precisely because of his attempts to combine a socio-political critique and activism with an analysis of colonial and anti-colonial subjectivities. This duality is the most useful legacy of Fanon for postcolonial studies, reminding us of the need as well as the difficulties of using psychoanalytical concepts to talk about the political realities of colonial encounters.

GENDER, SEXUALITY AND COLONIAL DISCOURSE

In an earlier section, we discussed a famous sixteenth-century picture in which a naked America half rising from her hammock looks back at a clothed Vespucci who has awakened her: she has been literally 'dis-covered' (Hulme 1985: 17). A long pictorial tradition in which the four continents were represented as women now generated images of America or Africa that positioned these continents as available for plunder, possession, discovery and conquest. Conversely, native women and their bodies are described in terms of the promise and the fear of the colonial land, as in the much later description of 'a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman' whom the narrator in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* encounters on the shores of Congo River:

She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly, with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments. She carried her head high; her hair was done in the shape of a helmet; she had brass leggings to her knees, brass wire gauntlets to the elbow, a crimson spot on her tawny neck; bizarre things, charms, gifts of witch-men, that hung about her, glittered and trembled at every step. She must have had the value of several

elephant tusks upon her. She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her deliberate progress. And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul.

(Conrad 1975: 87)

Thus, from the beginning of the colonial period till its end (and beyond), female bodies symbolise the conquered land. This metaphoric use of the female body varies in accordance with the exigencies and histories of particular colonial situations. For example, in comparison with the nakedness of America or Africa in early modern iconographic representations, Asia is always sumptuously clothed, usually riding on a camel and carrying an incense burner. On her head she wears either a wreath of flowers and fruit (symbolising plenty) or a turban. These discursive divisions also spill over to depictions of ordinary women—in Cesare Vecellio's well-known sixteenth-century costume book (1598), for example, women from India, Turkey and Persia are heavily draped in comparison with their naked African or American sisters.

Such distinctions did not mean that Eastern women and lands were not represented as interchangeable terrain on which colonial power could be deployed. But during the Renaissance, Europeans were often supplicants in front of powerful rulers in Asia and could hardly encode themselves as the male deflowerers of a feminised land. Alternate discursive strategies thus came into play. The Oriental male was effeminised, portrayed as homosexual, or else depicted as a lusty villain from whom the virile but courteous European could rescue the native (or the European) woman. After the middle of the eighteenth century, Asia is often personified as a turbaned potentate. If America and Africa, then, are usually represented as savage women, images of 'the Orient' cluster around riches, splendour and plenty. As we might expect, women attached to the royalty—either queens or harem girls—become symbols of this world (see Kabbani 1986). The veiled Asian woman becomes a recurrent colonial fantasy, as does the recurrent figure of the

Eastern Queen, whose wealth testifies to the riches of 'the Orient' and whose gender renders those riches vulnerable to the European self. The Biblical story of Sheba arriving laden with gold at Solomon's court and willingly surrendering her enormous wealth in return for sexual gratification initiated a long tradition of stories in which the desire of the native woman for the European man coded for the submission of the colonised people. In early modern English literature, well before the English had established themselves as a colonial power, an 'Indian queen' who converts to Christianity and marries the coloniser became a recurrent figure. Of course the most famous instance of an 'Indian Queen' who abandons her own people for a white man came from other side of the world—the Pocahontas story was to receive recurrent re-inscription as a colonial fantasy, the latest being at the hands of Disney films.

Eastern royal or upper class/caste women being watched by, consorting with, and being saved by, European men are a feature of colonial narratives from the seventeenth century to the present. Another favourite figure in colonial inscriptions was that of the sati (or widow who immolates herself with her dead husband's body). Almost every European commentator of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stops to savour that picture of Oriental barbarity and female helplessness and devotion (Teltscher 1995). According to legend, Job Charnock, the 'founder' of Calcutta, rescued from the flames a young widow with whose beauty he was 'smitten'. In Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), Phileas Fogg also saves a beautiful young Parsi woman and then marries her (even though Parsis never practised widow immolation). In John Masters' *The Deceivers* (1952), William Savage sets out to rescue a beautiful young widow and is seduced, not by her but by the goddess Kali. And in M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* (1978, made into a popular television serial in the 1980s) the young hero starts by trying to save yet another young royal widow, and ends up marrying her half-sister! This pattern is not confined to literary texts. The barbarity of native men was offered as a major justification for imperial rule, and it shaped colonial policy. But the interference by white men into 'their' culture also catalysed the opposition of colonised men. Gayatri Spivak telescopes this dynamic into a pithy sentence: 'White men are saving brown women from brown men'. This, she

suggests, is for her as fundamental for an investigation of colonial dynamics as Freud's formulation 'a child is being beaten' was for his inquiry into sexuality (1988: 296).

Before we pursue this further, we should note that not all 'brown' or 'black' women are represented as victims, or as desirable or passive. The non-European woman also appears in an intractable version, as 'Amazonian' or deviant femininity. The Amazons are located by early colonial writings in virtually every part of the non-European world, and provide images of insatiable sexuality and brutality. Thus female volition, desire and agency are literally pushed to the margins of the civilised world. But not all margins are equally removed from the centre: skin colour and female behaviour come together in establishing a cultural hierarchy with white Europe at the apex and black Africa at the bottom. Thus, in seventeenth-century English drama, for example, sexual liaisons between aggressive black African women and white men never culminate in marriage and evoke horror whereas those between Christian men and the more 'subtle' and 'fair' women from the East are celebrated as romances.

Renaissance travel writings and plays repeatedly connect deviant sexuality with racial and cultural outsiders and faraway places, which, as Anne McClintock puts it, 'had become what can be called a porno-tropics for the European imagination—a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears'. Thus non-Europeans, especially women, are repeatedly constructed as libidinally excessive, and sexually uncontrolled. Francis Bacon imagined the spirit of fornication as a 'little foule, ugly Ethiopie' (McClintock 1995: 22). Non-European peoples were imagined as more easily given to same-sex relationships. Harem stories fanned fantasies of lesbianism. In his account of early seventeenth-century Turkey, for example, George Sandys contemplates what happens when women are cloistered with each other, engaged in long hours of massaging and pampering their bodies: 'Much unnaturall and filthie lust is said to be committed daily in the remote closets of these darksome [bathhouses]: yea, women with women; a thing incredible, if former times had not given thereunto both detection, and punishment' (1627: 69). Another traveller to Turkey claims that the men too

'are extremely inclined to all sorts of lascivious luxury; and generally addicted, besides all their sensual and incestuous lusts, to Sodomy, which they account as a dainty to digest all their other libidinous pleasures'. For this writer, Constantinople becomes 'A Painted Whore, the mask of deadly sin' (Lithgow 1928: 102, 85). Renaissance writings on Islam always emphasise that it encourages licentiousness because it promises 'marvelous beautiful women, with their Breastes wantonly swelling' as well as 'fair Boyes' in paradise (Warmistry 1658: 145).

Leo Africanus, a converted African Moor whose real name was Al Hassan Ibn Mohammed Al Wezaz Al Fazi (and on whom Shakespeare's *Othello* is sometimes supposed to be modelled), fuelled such imaginings in his *A Geographical History of Africa* (translated into English in 1600) which became the most influential early account of Africa. Africanus repeatedly attributes 'venerie', 'lecherie', homosexuality, drugs and cross-dressing to Africans. Thus, for example, the 'Inne-keepers of Fez ... goe apparalled like Women, and shave their Beards, and are so delighted to imitate women, that they will not only counterfeite their speech, but will sometimes also sit downe and spin'; in Tunis they 'have here a Compound, called Lhasis, whereof whosoever eateth but one Ounce, falleth a laughing, disporting, and dallying, as if he were halfe drunken, and is by the said confection marvellously provoked into lust', and in Fez there are witches who 'have a damnable custome to commit unlawful Venerie among themselves ... ', burning in lust for 'faire women', and in turn, arousing ordinary women to 'abominable vice' (1905: 413, 498, 435).

Such accounts also served to define deviant and normative behaviour in Europe. This very story of the witches of Fez is cited by the French surgeon Ambroise Paré first to 'verify' his descriptions of female parts that 'grow erect like the male rod' enabling the women to 'disport themselves ... with other women' and then to defend the excision of such parts (Parker 1994: 84). At the same time, stories about non-European lust or barbarism also circulate as fantasies that can work both to legitimate the *status quo* and to subvert it. In contemporary travel writings, for example, the Turkish patriarchy is censored for its barbaric attitudes to women, but at the same time it is admired and even offered as a model for

English life as in *The Travels of Foure Englishmen* (first published in 1608):

If their husbands have been abroad, at his entrance into the house, if any one of their women be sitting on a stool, she riseth up, and boweth herself to her husband, and kisseth his hand, and ... (standeth) so long as he is in presence. ... If the like order were in England, women would be more dutiful and faithful to their husbands than they are: and especially, if there were the like punishment for whores, there would be less whoredom: for there if a man have a hundred women, if any one of them prostitute herself to any man but her own husband, he hath authority to bind her, hands and feet, and cast her unto the river, with a stone about her neck, and drown her.

(Osborne 1745: 792)

Similarly, the figure of the sati is seen both as an example of Oriental barbarism and an awesome sign of wifely devotion, worthy of emulation by English women. In 1666, Richard Head wrote that he

could wish for the like custom (*sati*) enjoyn'd on all married English females (for the love I bear to my own Country) which I am confident would prevent the destruction of thousands of well-meaning Christians, which receive a full stop in the full career of their lives, either by corrupting their bodies by venomous medicaments administred by some pretended Doctors hand (it may be here Stallion) unto which he is easily perswaded, by the good opinion he hath of his wifes great care and affection for him: or else his body is poysoned by sucking or drawing contagious fumes which proceed from her contaminated body, occasion'd by using pluralities for her venereal satisfaction, and so dies of the new consumption.

(Head 1666: 92)

Colonialism entrenched the connections between foreign lands and deviant sexualities even deeper. Richard Burton, translator of the *Thousand and One Nights* claimed that there was a 'Sotadic Zone' in which sodomy was 'popular and endemic', and such a stereotype of 'Eastern perversity ... [is] firmly wedged in the

dominant Western imaginary' (Boone 1995: 115, 91). According to Ronald Hyam (1990), colonial frontiers offered Europeans the possibility of transgressing their rigid sexual mores. But while sexual relations in non-European cultures were often less repressive than in Christian Europe, for most European travellers and colonialists the promise of sexual pleasure rested on the assumption that the darker races or non-Europeans were immoral, promiscuous, and always desirous of white people. While cross-cultural sexual contact was certainly transgressive (and is celebrated as such in contemporary commentary on European sexual practices), we should not forget that colonial sexual encounters, both heterosexual and homosexual, often exploited inequities of class, age, gender, race and power. In colonial fictions and travelogues, however, they are often embedded within a myth of reciprocity. I have earlier referred to one early version of this myth—the dark queen who gives her body and her self to the white man. Other versions place the black woman as slave, nurtured and even liberated by the European male. Peter Hulme shows how such love plots articulate 'the ideal of cultural harmony through romance' (1986: 141). Colonial trade too is projected as a transaction desired by both parties, an enterprise mutually beneficial and entered into via the exercise of free will.

Not surprisingly, the romance is less sustainable in the case of white women who couple with black men. The fear is that such contact will 'people the isle with Calibans' (to use the words of Shakespeare's savage when he is charged with attempting to rape Prospero's daughter Miranda). The spectre of miscegenation most graphically brings together anxieties about female sexuality and racial purity, and, as colonial contacts widen and deepen, it increasingly haunts European and Euro-American culture. Here is the eighteenth-century historian Edward Long on the question of letting blacks into England:

The lower class of women in England are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention; they would connect themselves with horses and asses if the laws permitted them. By these ladies they generally have numerous brood. Thus, in the course of a few generations more, the English blood will become so contaminated

with this mixture ... as even to reach the middle, and then the higher orders of people.

(Quoted in Lawrence 1982: 57)

The fear of cultural and racial pollution prompts the most hysterical dogmas about racial difference and sexual behaviours because it suggests the instability of 'race' as a category. Sexuality is thus a means for the maintenance or erosion of racial difference. Women on both sides of the colonial divide demarcate both the innermost sanctums of race, culture and nation, as well as the porous frontiers through which these are penetrated. Their relationship to colonial discourses is mediated through this double positioning.

These various ways of positioning and erasing women in colonial writings indicate the intricate overlaps between colonial and sexual domination. According to Helen Carr,

in the language of colonialism, non-Europeans occupy the same symbolic space as women. Both are seen as part of nature, not culture, and with the same ambivalence: either they are ripe for government, passive, child-like, unsophisticated, needing leadership and guidance, described always in terms of lack—no initiative, no intellectual powers, no perseverance; or on the other hand, they are outside society, dangerous, treacherous, emotional, inconstant, wild, threatening, fickle, sexually aberrant, irrational, near animal, lascivious, disruptive, evil, unpredictable.

(Carr 1985: 50)

These connections exist both as part of the 'common sense' about race and gender, and, in a more codified form, within scientific discourse. Sander Gilman (1985a; 1985b) shows how nineteenth-century medical and popular discourses progressively intensified the linkages between 'blackness', sexuality and femininity by using one to describe the other. The sexuality of black men and especially that of black women 'becomes an icon for deviant sexuality in general'. Thus black women are constructed in terms of animals, lesbians and prostitutes; conversely the deviant sexuality of white women is compared with blackness: 'The primitive is

black, and the qualities of blackness, or at least of the black female, are those of the prostitute' (1985a: 248).

The equivalencies suggested between women, blacks, the lower classes, animals, madness and homosexuality were further entrenched in scientific discourse. In an extremely thought-provoking essay, Nancy Leys Stepan argues that 'So fundamental was the analogy between race and gender (in scientific writings) that the major modes of explanation of racial traits were used to explain sexual traits'. In the nineteenth century, she writes,

it was claimed that women's low brain weights and deficient brain structures were analogous to those of the lower races, and their inferior intellectualities explained on this basis. Women, it was observed, shared with Negroes a narrow, childlike, and delicate skull, so different from the more robust and rounded heads characteristic of males of 'superior' races.

In short, lower races represented the 'female' type of the human species, and females the 'lower race' of gender.

(Stepan 1990: 40)

Science did not proceed through empirical observation 'but by and through a metaphorical system that structured the experience and understanding of difference and that in essence created the objects of difference'. Science elaborated familiar analogies, which could then be extended in new ways. Thus the jaws of Irish people were described by one scientist to have become 'more like the negro' after the potato famine. Initially, women were described in terms taken from racial discourse, and then gender differences were used in turn to explain racial difference (Stepan 1990: 41–43).

It is no accident, then, that in a famous formulation, Freud expresses his incomprehension of the sexual life of women by calling it a 'dark continent':

We know less of the sexual life of little girls than of little boys; the sexual life of grown-up women, too, is still a 'dark continent' for psychology. But we have learnt that the small girl feels sensitive over the lack of a sexual organ equal to the boy's and holds herself to be

inferior on that account; and that this 'penis-envy' gives rise to a whole series of characteristic feminine reactions.

(Freud: 1947: 34–35)

Both femininity and Africa, the analogy suggests, defy rational understanding and signify a lack. Do patriarchal relations provide a model for colonial domination? Since the terms used by psychoanalysis are sexual, psychoanalytically inflected accounts of the construction of race (even by those who seek to dismantle existing hierarchies) rest on the question of sexual difference. Thus, Gilman's account of the production of stereotypes explains that racial as well as sexual 'others' derive from 'the same deep structure' (1985b: 25). Fanon's schema also indicates some congruence in the position of women and colonised subjects. In patriarchal society, women are split subjects who watch themselves being watched by men. They turn themselves into objects because femininity itself is defined by being gazed upon by men (Berger 1972: 47). Fanon describes the objectification of blacks and their internalisation of this process in the same way: 'I cannot go to a film without seeing myself. ... The people in the theater are watching me, waiting for me'. As one critic has noted, 'racial and gender privilege are so intertwined that Fanon evokes castration to describe racial disempowerment: "What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood?"' (Bergner 1995: 79; Fanon 1967: 112).

But while Fanon's use of the schema of sexual difference to understand the production of racial difference challenges the colour-blindness of psychoanalytic categories, it only confirms, and indeed depends upon, their gender asymmetry. While the black man's desire for white women is contextualised and historicised by Fanon, the white woman's fantasy of being raped by a black man is understood by him as 'in some way the fulfilment of a private dream, of an inner wish'. His colonised subject is exclusively male and he abruptly dismisses the psychosexuality of the 'woman of colour': 'I know nothing about her' (1967: 180). Whereas Fanon's male colonial subject moves from disempowerment and objectification to revolt, both black and white women remain, in his account, the terrain on which men move and enact their

battles with each other. In other words, women remain as much of a 'dark continent' for Fanon as they were for Freud. Fanon's work thus illustrates both the utility and the limits of a theory of Western sexuality to account for the production of racial difference. Above all, it reminds us how 'race' and 'colonial difference' are both produced and split by gender differences. Many of those who invoke and use Fanon to discuss colonial identities simply extend his gender blindness. As several critics point out, Homi Bhabha, for example, does not address questions of gender; his discussions of colonial subjectivity 'invoke the structures of desire without addressing the structures of sexuality' (Young 1990: 119). Fanon's appropriation of psychoanalysis to account for the production of racial difference needs to be brought together with feminist critiques of the subject before it can serve as a useful paradigm for colonial identity.

The analogy between the subordination of women and colonial subjects, sometimes promoted by women and non-Europeans themselves, runs the risk of erasing the specificity of colonialist and patriarchal ideologies, besides tending to homogenise both 'women' and 'non-Europeans'. Sandra Harding observes that 'What they call the African view is suspiciously similar to what in feminist literature is identified as a distinctively feminine world view. What they label European and Eurocentric shares significant similarity with what feminists label masculine or androcentric' (1986: 165). Thus, both Africans and women are commonly regarded as more community-minded in their outlook than Europeans or men. As Harding points out, women of colour 'totally disappear from both analyses, conceptualized out of existence because African men and white women are taken as the paradigms of the two groups' (1986: 178). Similarly, the 'colonial subject' tends to be conceptualised as male and the 'female subject' as 'white'. When parallels are drawn between them, the colonised woman's situation is glossed over. Historically, analogies between the oppression of white women and black men often 'pitted white women against Black men in a competition for privileges that erased Black women altogether' (Hurtado 1989: 840). Moreover, such comparisons erase the fact that black and colonised women suffer from both racial and gendered forms of oppression simultaneously.

In order to draw attention to their own complex positioning, black and postcolonial feminists and women's activists have had to challenge both the colour prejudices within white feminism and the gender-blindness of anti-racist or anti-colonial movements. Colonising as well as anti-colonial men, while being otherwise opposed, have often shared certain attitudes to women. In colonialist as well as nationalist writings, racial and sexual violence are yoked together by images of rape, which becomes an abiding and recurrent metaphor for colonial relations. If colonial power is repeatedly expressed as a white man's possession of black women and men, colonial fears centre around the rape of white women by black men. Certain anti-colonial or anti-racist activists have also problematically appropriated such a possession as an act of insurgency. Machismo has been manifest in many nationalist movements, as we will discuss in greater detail later.

Women of colour and third world women have also had to challenge the colour-blindness of Euro-American feminist theory and movements. Gayatri Spivak (1985a) alleged that feminist criticism 'reproduces the axioms of imperialism' in valorising the emergence of the articulate Western female subject and her entry into individualism without marking how such a process is inflected, indeed made possible, by the expansion of imperialism. We earlier discussed how this works in a novel such as *Jane Eyre*. Aphra Behn's novella *Oroonoko* (first published in 1688) provides an even earlier instance of how a consolidation of Western female selfhood is predicated upon the 'othering' of black woman. Oroonoko is a royal slave, much like Othello, and his wife Imoinda, a 'beautiful black Venus' (1986: 34). They are taken from their native Coramantein and brought to Surinam, and the story turns on their romance, their troubles as slaves, and their suicide pact which is designed to save their honour and that of their unborn child. While Behn's tale critiques existing patriarchal as well as colonial relations, it also places the white female narrator, Imoinda and Oroonoko in a strangely triangulated relationship. The author is enamoured of both Oroonoko's beauty and Imoinda's. At the same time, there is a competitive relation between the narrator and Imoinda. While one woman will tell Oroonoko's story, the other carries his child. Imoinda's pregnancy is thus set against

Behn's construction of her own self as a woman writer. Even though Behn is in sympathy with Imoinda's plight, the differentiation between the narrator and Imoinda is essential to the construction of a white female authority. Thus, as Ferguson (1991) argues, the critic must constantly 'juggle the categories of race and gender'.

Many scholars and activists have critiqued the Western feminist project for its neglect of racial and colonialist politics. To take just a few examples: Hazel Carby (1982) suggested that the 'boundaries of sisterhood' were indicated by differential understanding of the role played by race in defining women's experience and as an analytical category in feminist thought. Ann Jones (1981) observed that notions of female identity and pleasure in French feminist theory are deeply ethnocentric. Pratibha Parmar and Valerie Amos (1984) have described Euro-American feminism's drive to establish itself as the only legitimate feminism as 'imperial' because it erases the experience of non-white and third world women. Chandra Mohanty (1988) has accused Western feminist scholarship of constructing a monolithic 'third world' woman as an object of knowledge. Non-white feminists have written alternative histories of women's oppression, and also offered alternative blueprints for action. Angela Davis (1982) pointed out that although black as well as white women are oppressed within the family, the family as an institution carries different meanings for them—American blacks, and other immigrants of colour, have historically been denied the privilege of forming family units and the family for them has been forged in the crucible of racial oppression. Ideologies of black female sexuality thus do not arise primarily from the family, as Carby also argues. Hortense Spillers (1987) drew out the implications of this difference for ideologies of the family and sexuality. Within once colonised countries, where women's activism has been proliferating in this century, some activists have rejected the term 'feminist' as too tainted by its white antecedents.

But although these critiques of white feminism and patriarchal anti-colonialisms together cleared the conceptual space for more sophisticated understandings of how racist and sexist discourses are related, they often did not go beyond asserting that black and/or colonised women were doubly oppressed. In this view of a 'double colonisation', race and gender categories are not analogous but

they remain mutually intensifying: Gwen Bergner concludes her critique of Fanon by suggesting that 'the most important effect of conjoining postcolonial and feminist psychoanalysis may well be to clear a space for black women as subjects in both discourses' (1995: 85). Combining postcolonial and feminist perspectives can perhaps achieve more than that. For one, it would alert us to the ways in which the category 'black woman' itself does not take into account the enormous range of cultural, racial or locational differences internal to it, all of which would complicate the relationship between black women and colonial or racist ideologies. This is not to suggest that we endlessly bifurcate our categories of analysis to the point where no grouping makes any sense. But are 'black' and 'postcolonial' women identical? The social or the sexual identities of African-American women have at least as much in common with white American women as they do with women in Morocco or Pakistan. The veil, segregation, or the institution of the extended family, structure sexuality and gender relations in highly specific ways, and they also shaped the impact of colonial rule upon existing gender relations. Finally, class is extremely important in analysing how race and gender have historically shaped one another: colonial practices were nothing if not conscious of indigenous class, gender, caste or regional hierarchies, which they manipulated, altered or entrenched.

Colonialism eroded many matrilineal or woman-friendly cultures and practices, or intensified women's subordination in colonised lands. In rural Africa, the control of women over farming and the crops they produced declined with the advent of the slave trade. As village agriculture declined, and male labour migrated to urban centres, women became increasingly dependent economically upon men's incomes. Christianity profoundly altered family structures and sexual patterns. Colonial law restructured customs by taking the texts and practices of the elites as the basis on which changes should be made. For example, Lata Mani shows that in India, the colonial administration consulted only pundits (Hindu priests) resident at the courts in order to decide the status of widow immolation. The pundits were asked 'whether sati was enjoined by the scriptural texts. The pundit responded that the texts did not enjoin but merely permitted sati in certain instances'. In spite

of this the British authorities concluded that the practice was 'recognized and *encouraged* by the doctrines of the Hindoo religion' and that the colonial government should 'allow the practice in those cases in which it is countenanced by their religion; and to prevent it in others in which it is by the same authority prohibited' (Mani 1989: 99)

In this way, a scriptural sanction and a religion tradition were constructed for a diverse, variable and uneven practice. Pundits became the spokesmen for a vast and heterogeneous Hindu population, and the existing hierarchies of Hindu society were calcified in new and dangerous ways. Similarly, the colonial state recast matrilineal, extended Nair households in Kerala, which had allowed women some sexual and economic freedoms, into a Western patriarchal family mould. Their norm of *sambandhan* relationships which women could enter at will was legislated as illegal and the monogamous, co-residential unit recognised as the only permissible form of marriage (Mies 1980: 84–90; Arunima 1996). In both these cases, the authority of the upper castes (which in India usually corresponded to the upper classes) was legitimised by colonial intervention.

Colonialism intensified patriarchal oppression, often because native men, increasingly disenfranchised and excluded from the public sphere, became more tyrannical at home. They seized upon the home and the woman as emblems of their culture and nationality. The outside world could be Westernised but all was not lost if the domestic space retained its cultural purity. The example of widow immolation will again serve to illustrate this process. Following the 1813 legislation banning of widow immolation, there was a sharp increase in the number of sati. Ashis Nandy interprets this as a form of anti-colonial disobedience: 'the rite', he suggests, 'became popular in groups made psychologically marginal by their exposure to Western impact ... the opposition to sati constituted ... a threat to them. In their desperate defence of the rite they were also trying to defend their traditional self-esteem' (1980: 7). If defence of sati is a form of 'native resistance', we must recognise that the natives in question are men, and that the form of this 'resistance' deeply oppressive of women. Of course, the process whereby women became the metaphor for indigenous

culture was reinforced by colonial law, which sought to mould the public sphere according to European ideals but emphasised religion and custom as the basis for personal law in colonised countries.

Although men on both sides of the colonial divide engaged in bitter strife, they also often collaborated when it came to the domination of women. In 1910, for example, a distinguished Indian courtesan and woman of letters called Bangalore Nagaratnamma reprinted an epic poem *Radhika Santwanam*, which had been written in the late eighteenth century by another courtesan Muddupalani. There was a furore—Indian men of letters protested against the publication, saying that the poem was too sexual in tone and the British courts upheld this objection (despite protests to the contrary) by banning the poem. Although the ban was lifted after Independence in 1947, it continued to be ‘decreed out of existence ideologically’ (Tharu and Lalita 1991: 6). Such collaboration across the colonial divide spans individual cases as well as aspects of law and tradition. In 1887, Rakhamabai, an educated daughter of a Bombay doctor refused to cohabit with the much older man to whom she had been married as a child. Her husband sued her on the grounds that she was his rightful property, but lost the case under civil law. However, the Chief Justice bowed to the conservative demand that she be tried under Hindu law, and finally Rakhamabai was ordered to go and live with her husband. In a book called *The High Caste-Hindu Woman* (1888), Pandita Ramabai, scholar, educationist and reformer, charged that the case revealed an alliance between the colonial government and Indian men in questions involving women. Often *new* forms of patriarchal domination were introduced in colonised lands. In Peru, Spanish rule constricted women’s participation in public life:

As opposed to long-standing Andean traditions, Spanish law presumed women were innately unsuited to public offices. Coming from the climate of European witch hunts, Spanish theology targeted native women as the most likely consorts of God’s enemies—Peru’s devil/huacas. ... The gendered institutions of Spanish colonialism systematically eroded the life possibilities of most Andean women.

(Silverblatt 1995: 288–89)

Recent scholarship has explored European women's contradictory relation to colonial discourses—they participated in the imperial mission, but were also tangential to or at odds with it. The English 'memsahib' is routinely portrayed in fiction, as well as historical criticism, as more racist and parochial than the British administrator himself, the main obstacle to his developing a working comradeship with the natives. Feminist criticism has emphasised the patriarchal structures within which the memsahib was trapped at home and abroad, and has highlighted the differences between female and male fictions, travelogues and memoirs in various parts of the colonial world. Of course, not all imperial women were alike: at the one end of the spectrum, we have the outpourings of a Katherine Mayo, whose book *Mother India* (1927) was a virulent attack on Indian culture, and, at the other, there were women like Annie Besant who were a part of the Indian nationalist struggle. More difficult to assess is someone like the Irishwoman Margaret Noble, who became a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, adopted the name Sister Nivedita and defended Indian culture by romanticising some of its most patriarchal practices.

European colonialism often justified its 'civilizing mission' by claiming that it was rescuing native women from oppressive patriarchal domination. Mayo's *Mother India* had blamed all of India's ills on the Indian male's 'manner of getting into the world and his sex-life thenceforth'. London's *New Statesman and Nation* said that the book demonstrated 'the filthy personal habits of even the most highly educated classes in India—which, like the denigration of Hindu women, are unequalled even among the most primitive African or Australian savages' (Joshi and Liddle 1986: 31). In an editorial published in *The Storm-bell* of June 1898, Josephine Butler commented that Indian women were

helpless, voiceless, hopeless. Their helplessness appeals to the heart, in somewhat the same way in which the helplessness and suffering of a dumb animal does, under the knife of a vivisector. Somewhere, halfway between the Martyr Saints and the tortured 'friend of man', the noble dog, stand, it seems to me, these pitiful Indian women,

girls, children, as many of them are. They have not even the small power of resistance which the western woman may have.

(Burton 1992: 144)

Butler and other Englishwomen could thus claim the necessity of representing their mute sisters, and hence legitimise themselves as 'the imperial authorities on "Indian womanhood"'. While white women played important roles in the abolition of slavery and in initiating colonial reform, even these progressive roles were often premised on the idea of a racial hierarchy. Within colonial spaces, white women participated with varying degrees of alienation and enthusiasm in imperial projects; as teachers, missionaries, nurses, and the help-mates of colonial men, their roles varied both structurally and ideologically. According to Kumari Jayawardena, the response of South Asian men was to divide foreign women into 'female devils' and 'white goddesses': the former were those who, like Mayo, critiqued South Asian societies; the latter were those who, like Sister Nivedita, participated in the national liberation struggle (1995: 2). As we might expect, colonised women also occupied contradictory positions vis-à-vis both indigenous and colonial social structures. It is important to note, though, that they were hardly as silent and suffering as colonial discourses claimed—women activists in India seized upon Katherine Mayo's text to demand their rights both from the colonial administration and from Indian men (Sinha 2000).

My analysis has suggested that race, gender and sexuality do not just provide metaphors and images for each other, but develop together in the colonial arena. Colonised women were not simply objectified in colonial discourses—their labour (sexual as well as economic) fed the colonial machine. If female slaves were the backbone of plantation economies, today third world women and women of colour provide the cheapest labour for sweatshops, the sex-trade, large multinationals as well as smaller industries, and have been the guinea pigs for exploitative and dangerous experiments in health and fertility. They remain the poorest of the poor in the 'post'-colonial world. Scholars such as Swasti Mitter have shown how colour and sex are 'the main principles behind the most recent international division of labour' (1986: 6). Such

exploitation is both a colonial legacy and the outcome of specific 'postcolonial' developments.

HYBRIDITY

Postcolonial studies have been preoccupied with issues of hybridity, creolisation, and *mestizaje*—with the in-betweenness, diasporas, mobility and cross-overs of ideas and identities generated by colonialism. However, as some recent debates will serve to illustrate, there are widely divergent ways of thinking about these issues. Robert Young reminds us that a hybrid is technically a cross between two different species and that therefore the term 'hybridisation' evokes both the botanical notion of inter-species grafting and the 'vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right' which regarded different races as different species (1995: 10). However, in post-colonial theory, hybridity is meant to evoke all those ways in which this vocabulary was challenged and undermined. Even as imperial and racist ideologies insist on racial difference, they catalyse cross-overs, partly because not all that takes place in the 'contact zones' can be monitored and controlled, but sometimes also as a result of deliberate colonial policy. One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it both needs to 'civilise' its 'others', and to fix them into perpetual 'otherness'. We have already discussed how colonial empires both fear and engender biological as well as intellectual intermingling. An early nineteenth-century Colombian, Pedro Fermín de Vargas, actually advocated a policy of interbreeding between whites and Indians in order to 'hispanicise' and finally 'extinguish' Indians. Benedict Anderson, who cites this example, rightly characterises as 'mental miscegenation' those colonial educational policies which aimed to create Europeanised natives, or to use Macaulay's famous words, 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect' (1991: 13, 91). The underlying premise was, of course, that Indians can mimic but never exactly reproduce English values, and that their recognition of the perpetual gap between themselves and the 'real thing' will ensure their subjection.

Colonial 'hybridity' in this particular sense, is a strategy premised on cultural purity, and aimed at stabilising the *status quo*.

In practice, it did not necessarily work in that way: anticolonial movements and individuals often drew upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge colonial rule and hybridised what they borrowed by juxtaposing it with indigenous ideas, reading it through their own interpretative lens, and even using it to assert cultural alterity or insist on an unbridgeable difference between coloniser and colonised. Thus Gandhi's notion of non-violence was forged by his reading of Emerson, Thoreau and Tolstoy, even though his vision of an ideal society evoked a specifically Hindu vision of 'Ram Rajya' or the legendary reign of Lord Rama. Thus, too, the theory of Negritude was articulated in a very French idiom, and drew upon French intellectual traditions.

Hybridity or *mestizaje* is more self-consciously invoked as an anti-colonial strategy by some Caribbean and Latin American activists, most notably the Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar. In a landmark 1971 essay, Retamar writes that 'our *mestizo* America' is unique in the colonial world because the majority of its population is racially mixed, it continues to use 'the languages of our colonisers', and 'so many of their conceptual tools ... are also now *our* conceptual tools' (1974: 9–11). Retamar suggests that Caliban is the most appropriate symbol for this hybridity, although:

I am aware that it is not entirely ours, that it is also an alien elaboration, although in our case based on our concrete realities. But how can this alien quality be entirely avoided? The most venerated word in Cuba—*mambí*—was disparagingly imposed on us by our enemies at the time of the war for independence, and we still have not totally deciphered its meaning. It seems to have an African root, and in the mouth of the Spanish colonists implied the idea that all *independentistas* were so many black slaves—emancipated by the very war for independence—who of course constituted the bulk of the liberation army. The *independentistas*, white and black, adopted with honor something that colonialism meant as an insult. This is the dialectic of Caliban.

(Retamar 1974: 27)

Although Retamar's vision of a radical hybridity sweeps under the carpet both gender difference and African culture in his

region, it distinguishes between the hybridity of the 'creole exploiting classes' and the *mestizo* culture created by the oppressed classes, peasants and workers. Retamar connects the history of colonialism and revolutions in Latin America to the United States' attempt to stifle the Cuban revolution at the time he was writing the essay. He explicitly urges the connection between colonised peoples and those fighting against capitalist domination. Although Retamar's invocation of 'a planetary vanguard' of 'socialist countries emerging on every continent' may feel out of date in today's world, his resolute connection between the colonial past and the neo-colonial present is salutary in the context of current discussions of postcoloniality.

In contrast to Retamar, gender and sexuality are central to the experience of hybridity as it is articulated in Gloria Anzaldúa's celebrated 1987 work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Anzaldúa draws upon her experience as a Chicana and lesbian activist to highlight the ways in which several different types of hybridities mark the experience of people of the American South who have become migrants in their own land. Calling herself a 'chicana dyke-feminist, tejana patlache, poet, writer, and cultural theorist', she uses both English and several kinds of Spanish to fuse crossings between territories, gender identities, sexual orientations and languages, and to embrace such crossings as a political creed:

My spirituality I call spiritual mestizaje, so I think my philosophy is like philosophical mestizaje where I take from all different cultures—for instance, from the cultures of Latin America, the people of color and also the Europeans.

(Anzaldúa 1987: 238)

Like many other Chicana activists and intellectuals, Anzaldúa invokes the figure of Malintzin or La Malinche, the Nahuatl woman who was the interpreter and lover of the Spanish Conquistador Hernan Cortez, and whose son Martin is supposedly one of the earliest *mestizos*.

Paul Gilroy's important book *The Black Atlantic* discusses another related but distinct dimension of colonial hybridities, i.e. the intellectual and political cross-fertilisations that resulted from

the black diasporas or 'the movements of black people [from Africa to Europe and the Americas] not only as commodities but engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy and citizenship'. These movements created what Gilroy calls 'a black Atlantic', which he defines as an 'intercultural and transnational formation' which 'provides a means to re-examine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory' (1993: ix, 16). Gilroy shows the extent to which African-American, British and Caribbean diasporic cultures mould each other *as well as the metropolitan cultures with which they interacted*. Such diasporas have generated new and complex identities whose analysis demands new conceptual tools. If, on the one hand, there is no such thing as an uncontaminated white or European culture, then, on the other, as Stuart Hall points out, 'the black subject and black experience are ... [also] constructed historically, culturally, politically'. The term 'ethnicity' has dominantly been used to indicate biologically and culturally stable identities, but Hall asks us to decouple it from its imperial, racist or nationalist deployment and to appropriate it to designate identity as a constructed process rather than a given essence. For Hall, the new black ethnicities visible in contemporary Britain are results of the 'cut-and mix' processes of 'cultural *diaspora-ization*' (1996c: 446–47).

It is Homi Bhabha's usage of the concept of hybridity that has been both the most influential and the most controversial in postcolonial studies. Bhabha goes back to Fanon to suggest that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of 'the' colonial condition. For Fanon, psychic trauma results when the colonised subject realises that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, or shed the blackness he has learnt to devalue. Fanon's image of black skin/white masks is not, Bhabha explains, 'a neat division' but

a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once which makes it impossible for the devalued, insatiable *evolué* (an abandonment neurotic, Fanon claims) to accept the colonizer's invitation to identity: 'You're a doctor, a writer, a student, you're *different*, you're one of *us*'. It is precisely in that ambivalent use of 'different'—to be different from those that are different makes you the same—that

the Unconscious speaks of the form of Otherness, the tethered shadow of deferral and displacement. It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body. It is in relation to this impossible object that emerges the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes.

(Bhabha 1994: 117)

Terry Collits points out that Fanon reminds us that 'Skin is not just assumed like a mask: it is god-given even if its meanings are social, discursive. What skin and masks have in common is that they mark the interface between the self and the world: they are the border' (1994: 65–66). Thus the image of 'black skin/white masks' suggests not a hybridity but 'a violated authenticity'. For Bhabha, however, this image evokes an ambivalence that indicates not just the trauma of the colonial subject but also the workings of colonial authority as well as the dynamics of resistance. Colonial authority, he suggests, undermines itself by not being able to replicate its own self perfectly. In one of his best-known essays, 'Signs Taken for Wonders', he discusses the transmission of the Bible in colonial India, and the way in which the Book was hybridised in the process of being communicated to the natives. He concludes that 'the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference' (1985: 150). For Bhabha, this gap marks a failure of colonial discourse and is a site for resistance:

resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or the exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as difference once perceived ... [but] the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses as they articulate the signs of cultural difference.

(Bhabha 1985: 153)

If in Fanon's writings colonial authority works by inviting black subjects to mimic white culture, in Bhabha's work such an invitation itself undercuts colonial hegemony. Whereas Fanon's

black mimics are dislocated subjects, here, as also in a wide range of writings on postcolonialism, mimicry has the effect of undermining authority.

In Bhabha's work, radical mimicry is not, as it is with Retamar, a weapon in the hands of a self-conscious Caliban. Rather it is an *effect* of the cracks within colonial discourse (with discourse being understood in entirely linguistic terms). Resistance is a condition produced by the dominant discourse itself. Bhabha's writings are indeed useful in insisting that neither coloniser nor colonised is independent of the other. However, Bhabha generalises and universalises the colonial encounter. Thus, ironically, the split, ambivalent, hybrid colonial subject projected in his work is in fact curiously universal and homogeneous—that is to say he could exist anywhere in the colonial world. Hybridity seems to be a characteristic of his inner life (and I use the male pronoun purposely) but not of his positioning. He is internally split and agonistic, but undifferentiated by gender, class or location. As Ella Shohat suggests, we need to 'discriminate between the diverse modalities of hybridity, for example forced assimilation, internalized self-rejection, political co-optation, social conformism, cultural mimicry, and creative transcendence' (1993: 110).

The colonialist presence was felt differently by various subjects of the Empire—some never even saw Europeans in all their lives, and for them authority still wore a native face. For others, the foreign presence was daily visible but space was still divided into 'their' sphere and 'ours'. For others still, colonialism had penetrated still deeper into their everyday existence. Thus the resonances of both 'hybridity' and mimicry are enormously variable. As Rob Nixon writes in the context of the complex interchanges between South African and African-American cultures,

the insights of the by now considerable literature around the issues of masking and mimicry ought always ... to be measured against conditions that are unavoidably local and immensely variable in the possibilities they allow. Otherwise the risk arises of sentimentalizing masquerade by abstracting it into a unitary phenomenon that is inherently, if ambiguously empowering.

(Nixon 1994: 24–25)

The universalising tendency in Bhabha's work (and other writings inspired by it) derives partly from the fact that it theorises colonial identities and colonial power relations in entirely semiotic or psychoanalytic terms, which have given us sophisticated vocabularies of subjectivity, but are not always sensitive to the ways in which subjectivities are contextually shaped. In making the point that 'there is no knowledge—political or otherwise—outside representation' Bhabha reduces colonial dynamics to a linguistic interchange. Or, as Benita Parry puts it in a detailed critique of Bhabha's work, 'what he offers us is *The World according to The Word*' (1994b: 9). And this 'Word' seems to lie largely with the coloniser: in Bhabha's writings, it seems as if the 'hybridity' of both coloniser and colonised can be understood only by tracing the vicissitudes of the colonists' discourse. Unlike Anzaldúa's work, there seems to be no need to attend to the details of the local cultures that were colonised.

One reason for this asymmetry may be that the experience of migration or exile has become, in the Western academy, emblematic of the fissured identities and hybridities generated by colonial dislocations. Indeed, the critical fascination with Fanon may, in part, derive from the way in which his own complicated life (as a French educated Martiniquan who became an Algerian nationalist) mirrors themes of alienation, national longing and transnationalism that mark the experience of diaspora. It is true that the migration of peoples is perhaps the definitive characteristic of the twentieth century. And because in some senses the 'exile is a universal figure', as George Lamming put it (1960: 12) it is always tempting to present this experience in universalised terms. But there are important differences between various diasporic experiences and exiles. For example, the experiences and traumas generated by the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan—the single largest population shift in history—are quite different from immigration from India or Pakistan to Britain. The experience of diaspora is also deeply shaped by class, location and education—so the working class Indians who migrated to Britain to work in low paying jobs are a different group—in terms of their politics, their connections to other migrants, their relationship to the home country—from the Indian professionals who migrated to the United States. Finally, it

is important to recall that large numbers of people in the third world move not to 'the West' but to other places in the Global South, or even from village to city, or to neighbouring countries. These different kinds of dislocations cannot result in identically split subjectivities.

Critics such as Benita Parry (1994a) also suggest that current theories of 'hybridity' work to misrepresent and downplay the importance of anti-colonial struggles. Nationalist struggles as well as pan-nationalist movements such as Negritude were fuelled by the alienation and the anger of the colonised, and cannot be understood, according to this view, within the parameters of current theories of hybridity. As mentioned earlier, many nationalists and anti-colonialists passionately, and often poetically, appropriated the notion of a binary opposition between Europe and its others. Liberation, for them, hinged upon the discovery or rehabilitation of their cultural identity which European colonialism had disparaged and wrecked. Stuart Hall identifies this as a search for 'a sort of collective "one true self" ... which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common', or in Fanon's words, a search for 'some very beautiful splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves, and in regard to others'. Such a search has been essential for anti-colonial struggles and postcolonial identities as well. But, as Hall goes on to suggest, it is possible to think about cultural identity in a related but different way, one which recognises that identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. Thus, colonised peoples cannot simply turn back to the idea of a collective pre-colonial culture, and a past 'which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity' (1994: 394). Hall is careful not to dismiss such a turning back as a romantic nativism, as some other postcolonial critics are apt to do. Although there are no pure and fixed origins to which cultures and peoples can return,

it is no mere phantasm either. It is something—not a mere trick of the imagination. It has its histories—and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us as a simple, factual 'past', since our

relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is always-already 'after the break'.

(Hall 1994: 395)

This break is effected by colonial histories of domination. Colonialist categories of knowledge 'had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as "Other" ... this kind of knowledge is internal, not external' and it is crucial to the process of colonial subject formation. It therefore cannot simply be erased or shrugged off as a kind of false consciousness. *That*, Hall reminds us, is the burden of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Hall thus refuses to choose between 'difference' and 'hybridity' and tries to keep alive a 'sense of difference which is not pure "otherness"'. As we sift through the often confusing positions on the subject, it will be useful to recall Neil ten Kortenaar's sensible reminder that 'neither authenticity nor creolization has ontological validity, but both are valid as metaphors that permit collective self-fashioning'. Neither, he insists, is an inherently progressive or regressive position. Authenticity can be an enabling metaphor, as in the case of Ngugi, or be 'mere obfuscation in the service of tyranny' as in the case of Mobutu in Zaïre:

One may not be able to return to the world of one's ancestors, but one can claim to be doing so, with political effect. ... Like authenticity, hybridization is a metaphor that does not define a particular political program. Hybridization is most often invoked by advocates of pluralism and tolerance, but it can also underwrite imperialism (as in the case of French nationalist Jules Michelet). ... Authenticity and creolization are best regarded as valuable rhetorical tools that can be made to serve liberation. It may also be liberating to remember that these constructions are effectively rhetorical.

(Kortenaar 1995: 40–41)

Instead of pitting migrancy, exile and hybridity against rootedness, nationalism and authenticity, it is more useful to trace how each set of terms is evoked, by whom, and to what end. What do such evocations make visible? What do they occlude? Only then

can we uncover the ideological, political and emotional work done by each of them within colonial and postcolonial histories.

NOTES

- 1 In this section, I am indebted to Stuart Hall (1980), John Rex (1980) and Robert Miles (1989).
- 2 Melanie Klein and Karen Horney initiated the debate on Freud's phallocentrism. The feminist debate on psychoanalysis is extensive. Useful starting points are Mitchell (1974), Feldstein and Roof (1989) and Rose (1986).

3

CHALLENGING COLONIALISM

NATIONALISMS AND PAN-NATIONALISMS

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization.

A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization.

A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization. ...

Europe is indefensible.

Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* opens with this poetic and passionate indictment of European colonialism, and with an announcement that its days are numbered:

The colonialists may kill in Indochina, torture in Madagascar, imprison in Black Africa, crack down in the West Indies. Henceforth the colonized know that they have an advantage over them. They know that their temporary 'masters' are lying. And therefore that their masters are weak.

(Césaire 1972: 9–10)

However, rebellion does not simply follow upon this knowledge of colonial duplicity. Caliban curses Prospero, and yet cannot revolt outright. He tells himself that 'he must obey' because Prospero's 'art is of such power' that it would control his mother's god Setebos. Prospero's continuing power lies not in his ability to fool Caliban or Ariel, but in the threat of violence:

If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
Thou hast howled away twelve winters.

(*The Tempest*, I, ii, 294–96)

What does it take for colonial subjects to move from alienation to revolution, from recognition of injustice to resistance? What are the dynamics of anti-colonial consciousness and revolt? Since no pre-colonial cultures, processes of colonisation or colonised subjects are identical, can we even begin to speak about resistance in general or global terms? Historically speaking, anti-colonial resistance has taken many forms, and they have drawn upon a wide variety of resources. They have inspired one another, but also quarrelled with each other about the nature of colonial authority and how best it should be challenged. There have also been sharp differences between the different sections of any colonised population; even where they managed to come together under the sweep of a particular movement, they clashed both before and after colonial rule was formally dismantled. Some of those debates are rehearsed in contemporary writings on the colonial encounter and postcolonial societies.

Colonialism, we have seen, reshapes, often violently, physical territories and social terrains as well as human identities. As the Caribbean novelist George Lamming put it, 'the colonial experience is a *live* experience in the *consciousness* of these people. ... The experience is a continuing *psychic* experience that has to be dealt with and will have to be dealt with long after the actual colonial situation formally "ends"' (cited in Hulme 1993: 120). Anti-colonial struggles therefore had to create new and powerful identities for colonised peoples and to challenge colonialism not only at a political or intellectual level, but also on an

emotional plane. In widely divergent contexts, the idea of the nation was a powerful vehicle for harnessing anti-colonial energies at all these levels.

Although nationalism has been so crucial an aspect of modern history, and in some disciplines its study has been 'a minor industry', until recently it remained a curiously *undertheorised* phenomenon, especially in relation to non-European societies.¹ It is difficult to generalise about nationalism because none of the factors we might think of as responsible for forging national consciousness—language, territory, a shared past, religion, race, customs—are applicable in every instance. However, even as we know that each case of nationalism is unique, we do need to make linkages between different histories of the nation, and look for general patterns, if any. What, after all, makes a nation different from other sorts of communities? What is special about nations forged by struggles against colonialism?

One of the most influential recent studies of nationalism is Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991). Anderson, as the title makes clear, defines the nation as an 'imagined community', born with the demise of feudalism and the rise of capitalism. Feudal hierarchies, he suggests, allowed bonds to exist across national or linguistic boundaries (thus, in the sixteenth century, Catholics from different European lands, felt more kinship with each other than with non-Catholics in their own countries; the same horizontal fellowship was true of European nobility of different lands). The bourgeoisie, however, attempted to create a different sense of community, which cut across class lines and religious or other divides within a more bounded geography. Newspapers, novels and other new forms of communication were the channels for creating such a shared culture, interests and vocabularies within the nation. Such forms of communication were themselves made possible by 'print-capitalism' (or trade in books and printed materials) which had created certain 'mechanically reproduced print languages' by pruning out some vernaculars and modifying others, thereby creating certain standardised languages that could be used to reach diverse groups of people. Thus, 'the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language

created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation' (1991: 46).

However, Anderson tells us, in practice language was not an issue in the formation of those states which were the first to define themselves as nations, i.e. 'the new American states of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'. Spanish-speaking creole communities in South and Central America developed the notion of 'nation-ness' well before most of Europe did, and they co-opted the indigenous non-Spanish speaking peoples into this idea of an 'imagined community' with them. Why did this happen, and why were otherwise comfortable landowning families so willing to risk ruin for this idea of the nation? The creoles, Anderson points out, were marginalised in the imperial administration and sought advancement that the existing system denied them. While the indigenous peoples were 'conquerable by arms and disease, and controllable by the mysteries of Christianity and a completely alien culture', the creoles 'had virtually the same relationship to arms, disease, Christianity and European culture as the metropolitans'. Thus they were privileged in all ways except in their independence from the colonial power: they were 'simultaneously a colonial community and an upper class' (Anderson 1991: 58). Their nationalism was born out of *both dispossession and privilege*: a dichotomy which also informs various anti-colonial nationalisms at a later time in history.

Anderson then traces the forms that nationalism took in Europe, where language was much more fundamental to developing national consciousness. Here, because of the pivotal role played by the literate middle classes and the intelligentsia, nationalism first appeared as all-inclusive, popular and based on language identifications. Such nationalism employed a more egalitarian rhetoric, speaking out against serfdom or legal slavery. But subsequently it was appropriated by the ruling European dynasties and aristocrats, who, in response to popular national movements and tendencies, appeared 'in national drag'; that is, they tried to forge new identifications with the people they ruled: 'Romanovs discovered they were Great Russians, Hanoverians that they were English' and so on. While these new identifications were often

tenuous, they were the means of 'stretching the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire' (1991: 86–87). Anderson reminds us that such 'official nationalism' (i.e. the nationalism forged by rulers) was 'an anticipatory strategy' adopted by dominant groups who felt they might be excluded from newer communities struggling to be born (1991: 101). Anderson contends that such a reactionary conservative nationalism was not confined to Europe, but extended to the colonies in Asia or Africa. There was a 'world-wide contradiction' whereby the ruled and the colonised were invited to become one of the rulers:

Slovaks were to be Magyarized, Indians Anglicized, and Koreans Japanified, but they would not be permitted to join pilgrimages which would allow them to administer Magyars, Englishmen or Japanese. The banquet to which they were invited always turned out to be a Barmecide feast.

(Anderson 1991: 110)

The final form of the nation that Anderson considers is that of the 'nation-state' which was ushered in after the First World War and cemented after the Second World War. Anderson argues that the nation-state everywhere was conceptualised along the lines of the earlier models discussed by him, including nations born of anti-imperialist struggles. He explains the dependency of anti-colonial nationalism on the European models by the fact that the American and European experiences 'were now everywhere modularly imagined' partly because the 'European languages-of-state they employed were the legacy of imperialist official nationalism' (1991: 113). In the colonies, the native intelligentsia played such a crucial role in forging nationalist consciousness because they were bilingual and had access 'to modern Western culture in the broadest sense, and in particular, to the models of nationalism, nation-ness, and nation-state produced elsewhere in the course of the nineteenth century' (1991: 116). In other words, anti-colonial nationalism is itself made possible and shaped by European political and intellectual history.

Anderson's argument here converges with the standard colonial understanding of nationalism in the colonised world. For example,

English historians had often suggested that Indians learnt their ideas of freedom and self-determination from English books, including the plays of Shakespeare! Nationalism in the colony was understood as a 'derivative discourse', a Calibanistic model of revolt, dependent on the coloniser's gift of language/ideas. The phrase 'derivative discourse' is the subtitle of Partha Chatterjee's book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (1986) which challenges Anderson's model, suggesting that the relationship between anti-colonial and metropolitan nationalisms is structured by an intricate relationship of *both* borrowing and difference. In a later book, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, Chatterjee sums up his 'central objection' to Anderson's argument thus:

If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized.

(Chatterjee 1993: 5)

Chatterjee attempts to break away from such a debilitating paradigm by locating the processes of ideological and political exchange in the creation of Indian nationalism—of identifying what he calls 'the ideological sieve' through which nationalists filtered European ideas. He does this by drawing a distinction between nationalism as a political movement, which is derivative, and nationalism as a cultural construct, which draws its energies from indigenous sources.

Chatterjee points out that the official (postcolonial) histories of Indian nationalism in fact correspond to Anderson's thesis. They tell us that 'nationalism proper' began in 1885 with the formation of the Indian National Congress after a period of 'social reforms' when 'colonial enlightenment was beginning to "modernize" the customs and institutions of a traditional society'. But such

histories mistakenly believe that nationalism is only a political movement. Instead, Chatterjee argues, well before anti-colonial nationalism launches itself against the colonial state, it attempts to create 'its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society'. It does so by dividing the world into a material, outside sphere constituted of the economy, statecraft, science and technology, and a spiritual, inner domain of culture (which includes religion, customs and the family). The supremacy of the West may be conceded in the material world, whereas the spirit-cultural domain is claimed as a space in which the coloniser is already in command; this space is also the essence of national culture. The more colonised peoples imitate the coloniser in the former sphere, the greater the need to protect the latter. Chatterjee clarifies that this cultural world is not unchanged during the fight against colonialism:

In fact, here nationalism launches its most powerful, creative, and historically significant project: to fashion a 'modern' national culture that is nevertheless not Western. If the nation is an imagined community, then this is where it is brought into being. In this, its true and essential domain, the nation is already sovereign, even when the state is in the hands of the colonial power. The dynamics of this historical project is completely missed in conventional histories in which the story of nationalism begins with the contest for political power.

(1993: 6–7)

Thus, anti-colonial nationalism was not modelled upon simple imitation but also by defining its difference from Western notions of liberty, freedom and human dignity.

In the colonial situation, 'print capitalism' and national languages also developed differently. In India, Chatterjee argues, colonised intellectuals may have been schooled in the coloniser's language but they simultaneously asserted their claim over their mother tongues, and began to disseminate and modernise them. Thus

the bilingual intelligentsia came to think of its own language as belonging to that inner domain of cultural identity, from which the colonial intruder had to be kept out; language therefore became a zone over which the nation first had to declare its sovereignty

and then had to transform in order to make it adequate for the modern world.

(Chatterjee 1993: 7)

Despite their Western schooling and Anglicisation, Bengali intellectuals fervently tried to create, through theatre, novels and art, an aesthetic sphere that would be distinctively Indian. And they took the lead in setting up educational institutions that would be distinct from those run by the missionaries and the colonial state. It was to such schools that women were sent, because the family and women were firmly placed within the inner domain that was to remain outside the control of colonial authority.

Chatterjee's thesis is based on the study of Bengal, but he suggests its wider applicability, and indeed it has been widely used to illuminate the centrality of 'culture', and of gender, to nationalist discourses everywhere in the colonised world. In South Africa, the family was central to the making of Afrikaner nationalism (Hofmeyr 1987). Here too 'white men were seen to embody the political and economic agency of the *volk*, while women were the (unpaid) keepers of tradition and the *volk's* moral and spiritual mission' (McClintock 1995: 277). All over Asia and Africa, the colonisers regarded women's position within the family and within religious practices as indicative of degenerate native cultures. 'Reform' of women's position thus became central to colonial rule. Nationalists regarded this as colonialist intrusion, and responded by initiating reforms of their own, claiming that only they had the right to intervene in these matters. Such tactics resulted in partial reform, intricately connecting feminism and nationalism in the third world, as Kumari Jayawardena (1986) and others have argued, but also strengthening indigenous patriarchal practices (T. Sarkar 2001). In India, a 'new woman' and a new family structure, different from the traditional and the Western versions, were projected as nationalist ideals, a pattern that is also visible in other colonial situations.

Frantz Fanon's 'Algeria Unveiled' shows how nationalist discourses moulded and remoulded women. French colonialists had identified Algerian women and family relations as the crucial site for their onslaught against native culture:

If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight. It is the situation of woman that was accordingly taken as the theme of action. The dominant administration solemnly undertook to defend this woman, pictured as humiliated, sequestered, cloistered ... transformed by the Algerian man into an inert, demonetized, indeed dehumanized object. ... After it had been posited that the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society, all efforts were made to obtain control over her.

(Fanon 1965: 37–38)

Because it lets the woman gaze upon the world while shielding her from prying eyes, the veil became a symbol of all that was frustrating about the colonial situation for the colonisers; thus unveiling the Arab woman became an obsession: ‘the rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of the European is always preceded by a rending of the veil’. The colonial struggle becomes a sort of war of the veils because ‘to the colonialist offensive against the veil, the colonised opposes the cult of the veil’. The colonialist identification of woman with Algeria thus ‘had the effect of strengthening the traditional patterns of behavior’ (1965: 45, 47, 49).

Fanon goes on to describe how the resistance movement used this ‘war of the veils’. At first, since the colonial regime assumed that Westernised women could not be part of the resistance, Algerian women who were part of the resistance were asked to Europeanise themselves in order to penetrate the European quarters of the city. The Algerian woman who was used to being veiled now had to fashion her body to being ‘naked’ and scrutinised, she had to move ‘like a fish in the Western waters’ while ‘carrying revolvers, grenades, hundreds of false identity cards or bombs’, a process that is graphically depicted in Gillo Pontecorvo’s stunning 1965 film, *The Battle of Algiers*. But because such a woman did not unveil at Europe’s bidding, she did not signify the loss of cultural identity but the forging of a new nationalist self. Fanon describes how a relative and friend might spot this woman and reports would reach her father: ‘Zohra or Fatima unveiled, walking like a ... My Lord, protect us!’ But his protests would melt in the face

of the young woman's 'firmness' and 'commitment' and soon 'the whole family—even the Algerian father, the authority for all things, the founder of every value—following in her footsteps, becomes committed to the new Algeria' (1965: 60). But as the colonial state understood this strategy, the Algerian woman was ordered to veil herself again:

The Algerian woman's body, which in an initial phase was pared down, now swelled. Whereas in the previous period the body had to be made slim and disciplined to make it attractive and seductive, it now had to be squashed, made shapeless and even ridiculous. This ... is the phase during which she undertook to carry bombs, grenades, machine-gun clips. ... Spontaneously and without being told, the Algerian women who had long since dropped the veil once again donned the *haïk*, thus affirming that it was not true that woman liberated herself at the invitation of France and of General de Gaulle.

(Fanon 1965: 62)

The relationship of women to national culture can obscure other vital aspects of their social existence. Thus, as Vilashini Cooppan points out, Fanon is interested in Algerian and other women of colour only to the extent that they are useful for discussing the nation:

Gender and nation do more than intersect in Fanon's analysis: nation subsumes gender. Within Fanon's scheme, gender seems to represent a particularity that should be translated, with all possible speed, into the universality and strategic unity of revolutionary culture and the new nation.

(Cooppan 1996: 193–94)

Similarly, the demands of the nation dictated when and how male Indian nationalists either took up or discarded the woman question.

The gendered spiritual or inner core central to the construction of national identities is shaped by the idea of a shared national past or a cultural essence, which in turn becomes synonymous with a religious or racial identity. When Gandhi declared not just the British but all of modern industrial society to be the enemy,

he was drawing upon the Romantic critique of industrialism; at the same time, his critique rested upon and strengthened the idea of a Hindu anti-materialism, spiritualism and asceticism. Jawaharlal Nehru, so different from Gandhi in his Anglicisation, his belief in socialism, modernity and Western science, was just as passionately eloquent about the 'Idea of India' which had been shaped at the dawn of civilisation and had survived for thousands of years. We can find similar resurrections of the past in many African, Arab, and other nationalisms. Such a going back is actually quite modern in itself—it is a product of a *present* need, which reshapes, rather than simply invokes the past.

A national 'memory' is also the subject of Ernest Renan's 1882 essay 'What is a Nation?', which remains a foundational text on the subject. 'A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle', Renan says, and of all its cults 'that of the ancestors is the most legitimate, for the ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory ... this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea' (1990: 19). Renan is emphatic, too, that '*forgetting* ... is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation' (1990: 11; emphasis added). Thus, forging a collective identity involves careful *selection* from past histories. Although Renan is resolutely Euro-centric in his focus, his perception that where 'national memories are concerned, griefs are of more value than triumphs, for they impose duties and require a common effort' resonates in the colonial situation where nationalists repeatedly invoke the idea of glorious pre-colonial traditions (symbolised by 'culture', language, religion, the family and women) which have been trampled upon by the colonial invader.

Nationalism also engages in a complex process of contesting as well as appropriating colonialist versions of the past. Anthony Appiah has accused nationalists in Africa of making 'real the imaginary identities to which Europe has subjected us' (1991: 150). Nativists, he says, are of the West's party without knowing it, and in fact 'few things ... are less native than nativism in its current forms' (1991: 145–46). Earlier, Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's well-known book, *The Invention of Tradition*, had documented how many so-called traditions are not traditional at all, but are continually re-invented by colonialists as well as

nationalists who constantly engage with one another's creations in order to reinforce or challenge authority. Indeed, in many parts of the colonised world, not just traditions, but nations themselves were invented by colonialists. These newly created nations drastically altered previous conceptions of the community, or of the past. For example, in Rwanda, at the onset of colonial rule,

only in the central core of the Rwandan kingdom had 'Tutsi' and 'Hutu' acquired comprehensive social meaning as labels associated with dominance and subordination, respectively. In the outer perimeter of this expanding state, where looser tributary relations applied, the evidence of oral tradition shows that 'Tutsihood' and 'Hutuhood' were much more diffuse concepts. The colonial state absorbed the ideology of domination of the central Rwandan state, codified and rationalized it, and extended it throughout the domain. The consequences of this are illustrated in the intriguing difference today between 'kiga' in southwest Uganda and those labelled 'Hutu' across the border in Rwanda; a century ago there was no meaningful linguistic, cultural, or identity difference.

(Young 1994: 227–28)

These new identities were often appropriated for anti-colonial purposes: thus Arab nationalisms in the Middle East and North Africa invested colonially created territorial units with their own meaning of community or nation by drawing upon myths of Arab origin or the Islamic golden age of the Caliphates, even though some early Arab nationalists were Christian. As Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it, European imperialism and third world nationalisms have *together* achieved the 'universalization of the nation-state as the most desirable form of political community' (1992: 19).

Benita Parry and Neil Lazarus, among other postcolonial critics, have insisted that it is important to acknowledge the enormous power and appeal of anti-colonial nationalism. They accuse post-colonial studies of undermining histories and theories of 'resistance' or 'liberation' (Parry 2002; Lazarus 2011). But 'resistance' and 'liberation' took many forms and offered various competing visions of the nation. In each country, the nationalism that triumphed and established the postcolonial state did so by silencing other

liberation movements and ideas, and by claiming that it included 'all' the people and spoke for the 'entire' imagined community. Benedict Anderson argues that 'Regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (1991: 6–7). As several critics have suggested, *Imagined Communities* pays so much attention to those who are included in the nation that it fails to consider those who are excluded, marginalised or co-opted, such as women, lower classes and castes, as well as marginalised races. The 'fraternity' of the nation claims to represent them even as it does not include them as equals. For example, creole nationalism, which Anderson regards as foundational, incorporated and extended existing hierarchies of gender, race and class (Skurski 1994). The forms of marginalisation may vary: women were openly excluded from citizenship in Napoleonic France, and the lower-castes in India were invited to participate in terms that underlined their subordination. At the same time, the power of nationalism, its continuing appeal, lies precisely in its ability to (at least for some time) successfully speak on behalf of all the people. In this context, it is significant that many nationalist leaders offer their own life stories as emblematic of their nation's birth: Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography*, Kwame Nkrumah's *Autobiography*, Kenneth Kaunda's *Zambia Shall be Free* (see Boehmer 1995: 192).

Even before independence was achieved, many anti-colonial intellectuals expressed unease at the very idea of nationalism. Rabindranath Tagore (who was no radical) felt that nationalism was a Western idea, and could only be used for a very mechanical purpose, while later Fanon (who *was* radical) pointed out that it usually consolidated the power of the postcolonial bourgeoisie. In recent years, the effort to uncover the histories and standpoints of people excluded by nationalist projects has multiplied across the disciplines. 'Histories from below' have attempted to tell other stories of rebellion and struggle, and to interrelate them to the narratives of nationalism and decolonisation. A key document was Ranajit Guha's 'On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,' which announced the revisionist agenda of the Subaltern Studies volumes on Indian history. Guha accused the

dominant historiography of Indian nationalism of excluding 'the subaltern classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in town and country—that is, the people'. Guha's essay inaugurated the widespread use of the term 'subaltern' in postcolonial studies, which he defined as 'the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those we have defined as elite'. The elite was composed of 'dominant groups, foreign as well as indigenous'—the foreign including British officials of the colonial state and foreign industrialists, merchants, financiers, planters, landlords and missionaries, and the indigenous divided into those who operated at the 'all-India level', i.e. 'the biggest feudal magnates, the most important representatives of the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie and the native recruits to the uppermost levels of the bureaucracy' and those who operated at 'the regional and local levels', either as 'members of the dominant all-India groups', or 'if socially inferior', those who 'still acted in the interests of the latter and not in conformity to interests corresponding truly to their own being' (1982: 8). Such a definition asks us to re-view colonial dichotomies; it shifts the central division from that between colonial and anticolonial to that between 'elite' and 'subaltern'.

The wretched of the earth have rarely been *represented* by the nation. But nationalism, Ranajit Guha contends, simply cannot be understood without locating how subaltern groups *contributed* to it, not at the behest of nationalist leaders but '*on their own*, that is, *independently of the elite*'. The difference between subaltern and elite politics can be grasped by what Guha calls 'the failure of the Indian bourgeoisie to speak for the nation. There were vast areas in the life and consciousness of the people which were never integrated into their hegemony' (1982: 5–6). Thus the millions who contributed to the nationalist project were also both excluded by and resistant to it. What, then were their agendas, their struggles, and their relationship to colonialism and postcolonial societies? How can we recover them? We will return to these questions in the section on subaltern speech; here we should note that recovering the viewpoint of 'the people' does not necessarily indicate a historian's radical sympathies. Belinda Bozzoli and Peter Delius trace pioneering oral history work in South Africa to liberal

historians W. M. MacMillan and C. W. de Kiewiet, who, during the 1920s and 1930s argued that history should speak of the everyday lives of ordinary folk only in order to argue that 'contemporary forms of racism were rooted in a preindustrial world and imperialism was a benign force'. Today, histories 'from below' are committed not simply to unravelling colonialism but to tracing 'how colonized peoples have been drawn into capitalist society and have resisted their incorporation, leaving their mark on the form taken by the "big" categories of class, race and state' (Bozzoli and Delius 1990: 34).

In such relational histories, nationalism emerges as a wider and yet more limited force than in its own narration. Wider because, as it turns out in Shahid Amin's gripping account of a pivotal event in the Indian struggle for independence, nationalism is also created by people, narratives and perspectives beyond its own imaginings, and more limited because, when placed within this larger context, its scope, ambitions and reach are revealed as severely constricted. Amin's book *Event, Metaphor, Memory* re-tells the story of Chauri Chaura, the place where twenty-three policemen were burnt to death by an angry 'mob' in February 1922, leading Mahatma Gandhi to suspend the struggle against the British, and the event itself to become the great unremembered episode of modern Indian history read only as 'a figure of speech, a trope for all manner of untrammelled peasant violence, specifically in opposition to disciplined non-violent mass satyagrahas.' (Amin 1995: 3). Perceived as criminals by both nationalists and imperialists, the rioting peasants have been entirely obscured by subsequent histories as crucial actors both in this local drama and in the larger nationalist struggle. By re-reading the archives, and reconstructing local memories of the event as well as local cultural history Amin tries to interconnect 'peasant nationalism' to the Gandhian movement. Although it has the structure of an exciting 'whodunnit', the book in fact leads one away from the judicial/nationalist perspectives of the 'crime', and asks us to re-examine the ideologies and cultures of the peasants who made Gandhi into a Mahatma and yet were far from being represented by him.

Gandhi's creed of 'non-violence' also silenced Dalit (the out-castes) and lower-caste activism. B. R. Ambedkar, Gandhi's most

radical interlocutor, pointed out that Gandhi's caste-work was directed at ensuring the continuance of the system as a whole. Just as Gandhi argued that for a moral awakening on the part of the rich, who, he said, should regard their property as held in trust for the poor, he insisted that caste-reform would stem from upper-caste Hindu self-awareness. On neither front was a radical restructuring needed. Gandhi insisted that Dalits, or that section of the population that was understood to be entirely outside the four main castes, were actually a part of Hindu society. This putatively moral stance derived from Gandhi's canny understanding of politics and demography. Without the inclusion of Dalits, Hindus would not have had a clear majority in the country. When Dalits, led by Ambedkar, asked for a separate electorate, Gandhi went on a fast unto death until Ambedkar withdrew the agitation; later, Ambedkar wrote that 'there was nothing noble in the fast. It was a foul and filthy act. ... the worst form of coercion against a helpless people' (1946: 270). Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were anti-colonial, and both were nationalists, yet their understanding of the nation was very different. Ambedkar articulated his differences from Gandhi in terms that came close to a Marxist critique of class society, writing that

Under Gandhism the common man must keep on toiling ceaselessly for a pittance and remain a brute. In short, Gandhism with its calls of back to nature, means back to nakedness, back to squalor, back to poverty and back to ignorance for the vast majority of the people ... class structure in Gandhism is not a mere accident. It is its official doctrine.

(Ambedkar 1946: 295)

Though Ambedkar here calls attention to the class-divides structuring society, there remained a large gap between him and Indian Marxists, as the latter believed that class subsumed caste, and that any movement to address class discrimination would also erode caste hierarchies. Caste was, as Ambedkar put it, 'the domination of one class by another on a hereditary basis which means a perpetual domination of one class by another' (301).

More recently, Kancha Ilaiah, in a passionate volume entitled *Why I am not a Hindu* (a book that has been compared to

Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*) reminds us that the castes excluded as 'backward' or 'untouchable' by Hinduism are alienated not merely from the colonial or neo-colonial Western culture, but also from the dominant postcolonial 'Indian' one:

What difference did it make to us whether we had an English textbook that talked about Milton's *Paradise Lost* or *Paradise Regained*, or Shakespeare's *Othello* or *Macbeth* or Wordsworth's poetry about nature in England, or a Telegu textbook which talked about Kalidasa's *Meghasandesham*, Bommera Potanna's *Bhagvatam*, or Nannaya and Tikkana's *Mahabharatham* except the fact that one textbook is written with 26 letters and the other in 56 letters? We do not share the contents of either, we do not find our lives reflected in their narratives. We cannot locate our family settings in them. In none of these books do we find words that are familiar to us. Without the help of a dictionary neither makes any sense to us. How does it make any difference to us whether it is Greek and Latin that are written in Roman letters or Sanskrit that is written in Telegu?

(Ilaiah 1996: 15)

In a situation where the Hindu right has begun to aggressively define what is Indian (and it does so by invoking both the West and Islam as foreign elements that threaten to pollute the nation), Ilaiah challenges its right to represent or speak for the 'dalitbahujans' whom he defines as 'people and castes who form the exploited and suppressed majority' in India (1996: ix). Now, there is an obvious nativism at work in the book: Ilaiah defends Dalit cultures as intrinsically more creative, democratic and humanitarian (and even feminist) than Hindu society, just as Césaire had argued that all non-Western societies were superior to European ones. For Ilaiah however the line between oppressor and oppressed is drawn by caste and not by colonial oppression. Even more polemical (and far more problematic) is the argument of another Dalit writer, Chandra Bhan Prasad, that for the lower castes in India, British colonialism represented a progressive force because it challenged some of the orthodoxies of the upper castes; most specifically, it challenged the Brahmin stranglehold over education and created some space for the

education of Dalits. Thus, the British Empire played a 'liberating role' in India (Prasad 2004: 130). While this argument ignores the way in which colonialism strengthened the existing divisions of caste, and it also leads Prasad to embrace the new world order, the point is that if we are to give 'two cheers for nativism' or nationalism and celebrate 'reverse-discourse', as Benita Parry suggests we should, it should be with the knowledge of their exclusions.

When nationalist thought becomes enshrined as the official dogma of the postcolonial state, its exclusions are enacted through the legal, educational, bureaucratic and military systems, and often they duplicate the exclusions and the coercive methods of colonial rule (see Kaul 2011). Women's movements, peasant struggles or caste- and class-based dissent, both during and after colonial rule, allow us to explore the distance between the rhetoric and the reality of State nationalism. Partly because some key writings on these issues (such as the *Subaltern Studies* volumes) have dealt with India, this section has favoured materials from that part of the world: however, similar patterns of recall and repression are at the heart of nearly every national 'community'. As we ponder the distance between the nation and the people, as well as the enormous force of nationalism, Amílcar Cabral's writings take on an especial validity. Cabral, who was Secretary-General of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and the Cape-Verde Islands (PAIGC), was committed to the idea of forging a national culture, and yet committed also to the idea that 'the movement must be able to preserve the positive cultural values of every well-defined social group, of every category, and to achieve the confluence of these values in the service of the struggle, giving it a new dimension—the *national dimension*' (1994: 59). In 'metropolitan' nations as well as 'third world' ones, the difficulty of creating national cultures that might preserve, indeed nourish internal differences has emerged as a major issue in our time. Cabral's insistence that 'no culture is a perfect, finished whole. Culture, like history, is an expanding and developing phenomenon' (1994: 61) reminds us that nations, like other communities, are not transhistorical in their contours or appeal, but are continually re-imagined.

LITERATURE AND THE NATION

European nationalism was discredited over the course of the twentieth century by its association with colonialism and fascism. At the same time, its third world variant was legitimised through its connection with anti-colonialism. In contemporary mainstream European or American discourse, nationalism is usually regarded as an exclusively 'Third World problem' (and for that reason almost always implies atavistic religious fundamentalism and bigotry). Even in the writings of radical Western academics, there is often a reductive equation of nationalism with the third world. Thus Aijaz Ahmad criticises Fredric Jameson's well-known essay 'Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital' for suggesting that 'a certain nationalism is fundamental in the third world' where 'the telling of the individual story, the individual experience cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the experience of the collectivity itself' (Jameson 1986: 85–86). How can widely divergent cultures, histories and narratives be squeezed into a single formal pattern? Ahmad points out that such a generalisation relies on the Three Worlds Theory according to which the 'First' and 'Second Worlds' are defined in terms of their systems of production (i.e. capitalism and socialism) and the 'Third World' is defined in terms of its experience of an 'externally inserted phenomenon' (colonialism):

If this Third World' is *constituted* by the singular 'experience of colonialism and imperialism', and if the only possible response is a nationalist one, what else is there that is more urgent to narrate than this 'experience'? ... For if societies here are defined not by relations of production but by relations of international domination; if they are forever suspended outside the sphere of conflict between capitalism (First World) and socialism (Second World); if the motivating force for history here is neither class formation and class struggle nor the multiplicities of intersecting conflicts based upon class, gender, nation, race, region, and so on, but the unitary 'experience' of national oppression ... then what else *can* one narrate but that national oppression? Politically we are Calibans all.

(Ahmad 1987: 20)

Ahmad's questioning of the theoretical and political underpinnings of the term 'Third World' and his plea against the homogenisation of the literatures of vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America are compelling. But whereas he implies that to speak of the 'national oppression' is necessarily to highlight the colonial experience at the expense of issues such as 'class formation' or 'the multiplicities of intersecting conflicts', in fact these are not issues that need to be counter-posed to one another. We have seen how the nation emerged as a site where these conflicts—of class, gender, caste, region and language—were played out. As Ranajit Guha's statement on the Subaltern Studies project (cited above) notes, the *failure* of the postcolonial nation-state can only be understood by looking at class, region, gender and other social formations and tensions in once colonised countries. Thus, to pose the question as a choice between an account of colonial domination and nation-formation on the one hand, and an analysis of modes of production or internal dynamics on the other hand, is itself reductive.

Finally, despite the flaws in his conceptualisation, is Jameson entirely wrong in suggesting that 'a certain nationalism' is crucial to understanding postcolonial societies? Timothy Brennan suggests that the burden of one strain of writing from the so-called third world has been to critique 'the all-inclusive gestures of the nation-state and to expose the excesses which the *a priori* state, chasing a national identity after the fact, has created at home' (1990: 58, 56). Such writing, Brennan argues, appropriates and inverts the form of the European novel; writers like Salman Rushdie and Mario Vargas Llosa are 'well poised to thematize the centrality of nation-forming while at the same time demythifying it from a European perch'; moreover, such challenges are 'easier to embrace in our metropolitan circles than the explicit challenges of, say, the Salvadoran protest-author Manlio Argueta, or the sparse and caustic satires of the Nigerian author, Obi Egbuna'. In this view, the novel in once-colonised countries is 'the form through which a thin, foreign-educated stratum (however sensitive or committed to domestic political interests) has communicated to metropolitan reading publics, often in translation' (1990: 56). Such a definition, of course, leaves out the enormous production of literature within once-colonised countries which is written by those who were not

‘foreign-educated’, or not even educated within the colonial educational apparatus. Their writing, often literature which is not translated or circulated abroad, thus cannot be understood as featuring ‘Third World thematics as seen through the elaborate fictional architecture of European high art’ (Brennan’s suggestive phrase for the novels he discusses). It is a matter of some alarm that not just in Western academic circles but also beyond, writing in non-European languages is excluded or marginalised—a prominent instance being Salman Rushdie’s wild assertion in the pages of the *New Yorker* that in India, writing in English is ‘a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the eighteen “recognized” languages’ of the country (1997: 50; see also Lazarus 2011: 21–88).

Neil Lazarus validates Jameson’s connection between the nation and ‘third world’ societies on the grounds that:

it is only on the terrain of the nation that an articulation between cosmopolitan intellectualism and popular consciousness can be forged; and *this* is important, in turn, because in the era of multinational capitalism it is only on the basis of such a universalistic articulation—that imperialism can be destabilised.

(Lazarus 1994: 216)

In his view, the ‘specific role’ of postcolonial intellectuals is ‘to construct a standpoint—nationalitarian, liberationist, internationalist—from which it is possible to assume the burden of speaking for all humanity’ (1994: 220). But given the history of exclusions that have accompanied the constructions of an all-inclusive nation, many postcolonial intellectuals and activists are in fact rightly sceptical about such a prescription. Postcolonial women’s struggles, for example, are less concerned with speaking on behalf of all the people than claiming their own place within the national polity. It is even more doubtful whether the construction of a national identity can be adequate grounds for forging an anti-imperialist struggle. The postcolonial state often uses an anti-imperialist rhetoric of nationalism to consolidate its own power while making enormous concessions to multinational interests. And then, it is not merely the state but other social and political configurations

that lay claim to the rhetoric of 'the nation'. Hindu fundamentalists in India, or Muslim fundamentalists in Iran, have most aggressively tried to reconstruct a national identity along exclusionary religious lines, and this has always included a diatribe, not only against other religions and communities, but also against the West, and often against 'imperialism'. Finally, racist organisations also lay claim to nationalism; as Etienne Balibar reminds us: 'the discourses of race and nation are never very far apart' (1991b: 37).

Perhaps the connection between postcolonial writing and the nation can be better comprehended by understanding that the 'nation' itself is a ground of dispute and debate, a site for the competing imaginings of different ideological and political interests. If so many so-called 'third world' writings return to this site, it is not at the expense of, but as an expression of, 'other' concerns—those of gender, ethnicity, race, religion, caste, language, tribe, class, region, imperialism and so on. While it is patently excessive to claim that 'all third world texts' are allegories of nationalism, we can certainly see why the construction of, and contestation of, 'the nation' becomes such a charged issue for so many writers of the Global South.

Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, written in the aftermath of the communal riots that tore Bombay apart in January 1993 following the destruction of the Babri Mosque by Hindu fundamentalists, movingly evokes the Nehruvian vision of a free, hybrid India, a nation that hoped to be

above religion because secular, above class because socialist, above caste because enlightened, above hatred because loving, above vengeance because forgiving, above tribe because unifying, above language because many-tongued, above colour because multi-coloured, above poverty because victorious over it, above ignorance because literate, above stupidity because brilliant.

(Rushdie 1995: 51)

However critical we may be of the reality of India, this vision is deeply compelling and moving. The lineage of Rushdie's Moor invokes the intricate histories of such a hybridity. His mother Aurora is from the Catholic da Gama family of Cochin, pepper traders by

profession. His father is Abraham Zogoiby, whose ancestry invokes the intermingling histories of Moors and Jews, both of whom had arrived on the Kerala coast in the wake of their expulsion from Spain. Aurora and Abraham's fourth child unites their double Moorishness.

At the end of the novel, this hybrid figure moves back to Spain, driven by the increasingly anti-Muslim atmosphere of contemporary Bombay. He dies looking at the site which had once been the emblem of Moorish grandeur, but also from where they had been expelled, the magnificent 'Allahambra, Europe's red fort, sister to Delhi's and Agra's' and hoping to awake in better times (1995: 433). Rushdie thus juxtaposes the recent escalation of anti-Muslim fundamentalism in India, the drive towards ethnic cleansing and purity alongside its layered and multicultural and international histories. Arrivals from the outside mirror expulsions from the inside:

Christians, Portuguese and Jews; Chinese tiles promoting godless views; pushy ladies, skirts not saris, Spanish shenanigans, Moorish crowns ... can this really be India? *Bharat-mata, Hindustan-hamara*, is this the place? War has just been declared. Nehru and the All-India Congress are demanding that the British must accept their demand for independence as a precondition for Indian support in the war effort; Jinnah and the Muslim League are refusing to support that demand; Mr. Jinnah is busily articulating the history-changing notion that there are two nations in the sub-continent, one Hindu, the other Mussulman.

(Rushdie 1995: 87)

Shakespeare's Othello, who haunts Rushdie's novel, had died testifying to an impossible split between his black, Moorish self and his Christianised, Europeanised 'mask'. He had described his suicide as the killing of a 'malignant and turban'd Turk' who acts against the Venetian State; thus, in his own words, Othello is *both* the defender of the state *and* the rebel, the insider and the outsider. Rushdie's Moor invokes a different sort of hybridity—a long history of mingling among people of different faiths and races that is now being erased in the name of national

purity. Rushdie's novel thus both retains the vision of an all-inclusive nation, *and* charts its historic degeneration into communal hatred and violence. Contrary to Brennan's argument, Rushdie's vision is not just tailored for Western consumption—when this novel was threatened with a ban from the Indian government, intellectuals and artists performed public readings from the book in protest.

Is the partisan degeneration Rushdie portrays a necessary outcome of the nationalistic vision, or its travesty? Can the belief in a plural all-encompassing nation be used to resist narrow, faith-based visions of the community, or is it time to discard the former altogether? Answers to such questions will vary contextually: in the building of a 'new South Africa', the language of the 'rainbow nation', an all-inclusive community, still carried a radical charge, but in Kashmir, the local people see only hypocrisy in the Indian state's profession of a constitutional secularism that forcibly incorporates them. Finally, the meaning of nationalism today is necessarily refracted through the processes of globalization and the new world order. Thus, according to Anthony Giddens, we live in a world where rapid 'globalization' has been accompanied by a proliferation of 'local' nationalisms, which have reshaped the contours of the modern globe: 'In circumstances of accelerating globalization, the nation-state has become "too small for the big problems of life and too big for the small problems of life"' (1994: 182).² Here, the assumption is that nationalism now represents the local rather than the global, but a world hegemon like the United States is arguably more, not less nationalistic than many less powerful polities. The difference is that the United States projects its own nationalism (and that of its allies such as Israel) as being inclusive, multi-racial, and democratic, and the nationalism of others opposed to it (from Russia, China, Afghanistan or Palestine) as sectarian or bigoted. Thus US national culture is understood to embody the spirit of globalization, whereas other national cultures are archaic, medieval, sectarian, or sectional. In the conclusion I shall return to the question of contemporary globalization, suggesting that it is not as antithetical to the nation state as is often supposed.

PAN-NATIONALISMS

Anti-colonial thought has not always equated the notion of a 'shared' racial/cultural memory or experience with the nation understood as a distinct geographical or political entity. In the writings of the Negritude movement, or of Pan-Africanism, 'nation' itself takes on another meaning, a sense of shared culture and subjectivity and spiritual essence that stretches across the divisions of nations as political entities. Negritude (the word itself was coined by Aimé Césaire) refers to the writings of French-speaking black intellectuals, such as Léopold Sédar Senghor (who became the President of independent Senegal), the Martiniquan poet Aimé Césaire, or Bernard Binlin Dadié from the Ivory Coast. Pan-Africanism generally refers to a similar movement in the English-speaking world, by and large the work of black people living in Britain. Both these movements articulated pan-national racial solidarity, demanded an end to white supremacy and imperialist domination and positively celebrated blackness, and especially African blackness, as a distinct racial-cultural way of being.

It was Jean-Paul Sartre who, in his collection of black poetry, *Black Orpheus* (1963), first identified the shared sentiment of a collective black consciousness in the poetry of several black writers whom he was introducing. For Sartre, Negritude was a particular historical phase of black consciousness, 'a weak stage of a dialectical progression' which will be transcended in 'the realization of the human society without racism'. However, for Léopold Senghor, considered by many to be the most important philosopher of Negritude, racial difference and consciousness were part of human reality, moulded historically, and yet reflecting an inner state that is not just a passing phase of history. For Senghor, the experience of colonialism, for black people, is a racial experience, and it creates what Abiola Irele describes as a 'community of blood', and what Senghor calls a 'collective personality of the black people'. Thus Negritude does not contest the colonial assertion that race signifies both outer and inner traits, or the connections between race and culture: it is, in fact, 'a sum of the cultural value of the black world' (Senghor 1994: 28). However, it does challenge the meaning and values attached to these associations.

In Senghor's work, the black race is associated exclusively with Africa. Africa provides a common cultural root for black peoples all over the world, and a common African culture is seen to survive in black subcultures everywhere, notably in the Americas: 'What strikes me about the Negroes in America is the permanence not of the physical but of the psychic characteristics of the Negro-African, despite race-mixing, despite the new environment' (cited in Irele 1971: 167). African civilisation is described in terms of precisely those supposed markers of African life that had been for so long reviled in colonialist thought—sensuality, rhythm, earthiness and a primeval past. For Senghor, Africans 'belong to the mystical civilizations of the senses', and for Aimé Césaire, these civilisations are communal and non-individualistic in nature. But sensuality and community are separated from the negative implications of barbarism attached to them within colonialist thought. Césaire thus claims that these communal societies were fundamentally democratic, anti-capitalist, 'courteous' and therefore civilised (1972: 23). It is Europe which is barbaric. Negritude is thus a reactive position, and yet it tries to create a black identity free of colonialism's taint. Like Césaire, Senghor charts a dichotomy between Africa and Europe in terms that celebrate the former: whereas the 'traditional philosophy of Europe ... is essentially static, objective, dichotomic' and 'founded on separation and opposition: on analysis and conflict', '[t]he African, on the other hand, conceives the world, beyond the diversity of its forms, as a fundamentally mobile, yet unique, reality that seeks synthesis' (1994: 30). Césaire pointed out that they adopted the word 'nègre' as a term of defiance, out of 'a violent affirmation' (1972: 74). Fanon also understood the relationship between Negritude and colonial categories: 'It is the white man who creates the Negro. But it is the Negro who creates Negritude' (1965: 47). Except that for the Negritude writers, the Negro is not created only by Europe, but also by a shared precolonial past, which produces, in Césaire's words, a 'sort of black civilization spread throughout the world' (1972: 77). Of course, as Ran Greenstein points out:

... it is highly doubtful that indigenous conceptualizations of Africa as a whole (as opposed to specific groups and regions within it) ever

existed. Pan-Africanism, Negritude and Black Consciousness have all emerged in the aftermath of the colonial encounter, and not just in their written forms, although they have drawn on and sought to mobilize pre-colonial discourses.

(Greenstein 1995: 227)

Fanon was highly critical of the Negritude movement, and he described its literature as 'a violent, resounding, florid writing which on the whole serves to reassure the occupying power', written as it is from within the terms, in the language of, and for the benefit of that power by an assimilated, albeit protesting, native intelligentsia (1963: 192). Against such writing Fanon proposes a 'national literature', a 'literature of combat' directed towards the people, engaged in the formation of 'national consciousness' and committed to the struggle for national liberation. For Fanon, native intellectuals who take to 'the unconditional affirmation of African culture' are mistaken since such a category simply inverts colonial stereotyping. For Césaire, on the other hand, it is the nation that is 'a bourgeois phenomenon' (1972: 57), and true radicalism demands forging solidarities across its boundaries.

Thus, both 'the nation' and a pan-national racial essence are contentious conceptions which have nevertheless helped mobilise anti-colonial consciousness. Both nationalism and pan-nationalisms create communities which then have to be endowed with a historical, racial and cultural unity which in practice both simplifies complex cultural formations and performs its own exclusions. However, there may be an alternative way of thinking about transnational solidarities and connections. Paul Gilroy's book *The Black Atlantic* charts a pan-national black culture along very different lines. Gilroy is critical both of 'ethnic absolutism' and 'cultural nationalism'. He points out that the nation is too often considered, even by radical analysts, as the privileged site of material production, political domination and rebellion. It is rarely acknowledged how syncretic the nation itself is. Gilroy traces a shared culture of blackness—a 'transcultural, international formation I call the black Atlantic'—which is rooted not in any racial essence but in the shared historical experiences and geographic

movements of black peoples through the colonial period. He suggests that Western nations are themselves deeply permeated and shaped by this African diaspora, whose historical experiences form the basis of a shared black culture which can thus never be thought of in racially essentialist terms, or by simply referring back to pre-colonial African roots. Thus his idea of 'the black Atlantic' shows us the inadequacy of both 'nation' or 'race' as privileged markers of cultural identity.

Peter Fryer's *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* traces the history of Asian, Caribbean and African descent within Britain. The histories charted by Gilroy's and Fryer's books and the issues they highlight are important for contemporary attempts to negotiate the legacies of colonialism and deal with the challenges and problems thrown up by both a global resurgence of nationalisms and the 'globalization' of different nations. They remind us that there were important political and intellectual exchanges between different anti-colonial movements and individuals and that even the most rooted and traditional of these was shaped by a syncretic history so that, despite the rhetoric used by many of the participants, 'nationalism' is not the simple opposite of 'pan-nationalism' or 'hybridity' the neat inverse of 'authenticity'. Finally, we need also to recall Frederick Cooper's caution that, 'Politics in a colony should not be reduced to anticolonial politics or to nationalism: the "imagined communities" Africans saw were both smaller and larger than the nation, sometimes in creative tension with each other, sometimes in repressive antagonism' (1994: 1519).

ANTICOLONIALISM AND WOMEN

If the nation is an imagined community, that imagining is profoundly gendered. We have already discussed how gender and sexuality are central to the conceptualisation, expression and enactment of colonial relations. Nationalist fantasies, be they colonial, anti-colonial or postcolonial, also play upon the connections between women, land or nations. To begin with, across the colonial spectrum, the nation-state or its guiding principles are often personified as a woman. The figures of Britannia and

Mother India, for example, have continually circulated as symbols of the national temper.³ Such symbols can also be shaped from imaginary figures (Britomart in Spenser's *Fairy Queen*), goddesses (Kali), or real-life women (Queen Elizabeth or the Rani of Jhansi). Resistance itself is imagined as a woman—Delacroix commemorated the spirit of the French Revolution as the bare breasted Liberty (who was later transformed into Marianne, the figure symbolising the French Republic and represented by the Statue of Liberty in New York). Sometimes the nation-state is represented as a woman as in the former Stalingrad where stands a colossal statue of the Motherland. Sometimes the spirit or dilemma of an entire culture is expressed through a female figure; Malintzin (or La Malinche) occupies such a place in Chicano culture.

As national emblems, women are usually cast as mothers or wives, and are called upon to literally and figuratively reproduce the nation. As Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias point out, feminist literature on reproduction considers the biological and economic aspects of the term but 'has generally failed to consider the reproduction of national, ethical and racial categories' (1989: 7). Anti-colonial or nationalist movements have used the image of the Nation-as-Mother to create their own lineage, and also to limit and control the activity of women within the imagined community. They have also literally exhorted women to produce sons who may live and die for the nation. Hamas or the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement makes this point rather blatantly: 'In the resistance, the role of the Muslim woman is equal to the man's. She is a factory to produce men, and she has a great role in raising and educating the generations' (Jad 1995: 241).

The identification of women as national mothers stems from a wider association of nation with the family. The nation is cast as a home, its leaders and icons assume parental roles (Mahatma Gandhi is the 'Father of the Nation', and until recently, Winnie Mandela was 'Mother of the Nation') and fellow-citizens are brothers and sisters. This association is not just metaphoric, nor is it new. Under feudalism, the King was a Father to his people, and patriarchy provided the vocabulary for explaining political hierarchies too. Thus King James I proclaimed that 'by the Law of Nature the King becomes a naturall Father to all his Lieges at his

Coronation'. The family and the State shaped each other's development. A seventeenth-century French ordinance recognised that 'Marriages are the seminaries of States'. Quoting this, Natalie Zemon Davis observes that 'Kings and political theorists saw the increasing legal subjection of wives to their husbands (and of children to their parents) as a guarantee of the obedience of both men and women to the slowly centralizing state' (1965: 128).

This vocabulary translated easily to the colonial situation. The colonial state cast itself as a *parens patriae* (parent of the nation), controlling but also supposedly providing for its children. In the colonial situation, the familial vocabulary was not limited to the relations between state and subject but became the means of expressing racial or cultural relations as well. The white man's burden was constructed as a parental one: that of 'looking after' those who were civilisationally underdeveloped (and hence figured as children), and of disciplining them into obedience. In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela describes how the South African prison system enforced racial discrimination by not allowing African prisoners to wear long trousers in prison. Unlike their white or coloured counterparts, they had to wear shorts 'for only African men are deemed "boys" by the authorities' (1994: 396). We have already discussed how this homology between the child and the non-European was advanced by psychiatric ethnography. Isabel Hofmeyr (1987) shows how the ideology of the family played a crucial role in consolidating the Afrikaner nationalist ideology as well as its racism in early twentieth-century South Africa. The image of the *volksmoeder* (mother of the nation) was central to such consolidation. Afrikaner women were denied any agency outside of the family, but the authority and power of motherhood was marshalled in the service of white racism.

The family can be both used as metaphor for the nation and cast as the antithesis of the nation or a 'private' realm, as opposed to the public space of the nation. In the colonial situation this division breaks down as the family becomes both the domain and the symbol of anti-colonial activity precisely because it signals an inner sphere. In many situations, especially that of slavery, colonialism violently intruded upon, broke up and appropriated families of colonised subjects. In such cases and where intrusions were only

imagined or feared, the family became a symbol of resistance. Anti-colonial nationalism is a struggle to represent, create or recover a culture and a selfhood that has been systematically repressed and eroded during colonial rule. As already discussed, for both colonisers and the colonised, women, gender relations as well as patterns of sexuality come to symbolise both such a cultural *essence* and cultural *differences*. Veiling, clitoral excision, polygamy, and widow immolation (to take just a few examples) are interpreted as symptoms of the untranslatable cultural essence of particular cultures. Maintaining or undermining these practices or the social relations they signify thus becomes central to anticolonial struggles, often tinting them with an extremely patriarchal hue.

Under colonial rule, the image of nation or culture as a mother worked to evoke both female power and female helplessness. The nation as mother protected her son from colonial ravages, but was also herself ravaged by colonialism and in need of her son's protection. 'I know', writes the Indian nationalist Sri Aurobindo, 'my country as Mother. I offer her my devotions, my worship. If a monster sits upon her breast and prepares to suck her blood, what does her child do? Does he quietly sit down to his meal ... or rush to her rescue?' (quoted in Nandy 1983: 92). Thus the image of nation as mother both marshals and undercuts female power.

As mothers to the nation, real women are granted limited agency. Arguments for women's education in metropolitan as well as colonial contexts rely on the logic that educated women will make better wives and mothers. At the same time, educated women have to be taught not to overstep their bounds and usurp authority from men. Thus, for example, in Renaissance Europe, humanist arguments in favour of women's education were careful to distinguish between a learned woman and a virago who might usurp male authority. Humanist writings visualised women as companions and help-mates to their men, and yet as completely subservient to the male head of the household. Sir Thomas More, for example, championed the cause of female education, and yet proscribed the role of leaders or teachers for educated women. In the colonial context, the debates on women's education echoed these earlier histories but were further complicated by racial and colonial hierarchies. The question of female education itself

became a colonial battlefield. If colonialists claimed to reform women's status by offering them education, nationalists countered by charting a parallel process of education and reform, one which would simultaneously improve the women's lot and protect them from becoming deculturated. In nineteenth-century Bengali discourses, for instance, the over-educated woman is represented as becoming a *memsahib* or Englishwoman who neglects her home and husband. Too much education, like too little, results in bad domestic practices:

If you have acquired real knowledge, then give no place in your heart to *memsahib* like behaviour. That is not becoming in a Bengali housewife. See how an educated woman can do housework thoughtfully and systematically in a way unknown to an ignorant, uneducated woman. And see if God had not appointed us to this place in the home, how unhappy a place this world would be.

(quoted in Chatterjee 1989: 247)

This appeal, incidentally, was issued by a woman.

Although the ideal woman here is constructed in opposition to the spectre of the *memsahib*, the image fuses together older Brahminical notions of female self-sacrifice and devotion with the Victorian ideal of the enlightened mother, devoted exclusively to the domestic sphere. Women may have become the grounds for colonial battle, but according to Rosalind O'Hanlon, colonial history also reveals a reverse pattern whereby colonial officials and native men 'came to share very similar language and pre-conceptions about the significance of women and their proper sphere and duties' (1994: 51). The construction of an ideal *bhadramahila* (or gentlewoman), educated yet ladylike, also entailed the isolation of upper- and middle-class women from their lower-class sisters, who were not only servants but also repositories of folk or popular music and tales, dramas and wit. As a result, many 'indigenous forms of women's popular culture were suppressed' and marginalised. These forms often voiced the plight of women in a male-dominated society or expressed sexual desire using robust humour, sharp wit and frankness which was deemed vulgar or too explicit for a gentlewoman's ears (Banerjee 1989).

Thus iconic motherhood or wifehood is also constructed by purging the ghosts of racial or class 'others' and in the effort to harness women to the nation, certain traditions are repressed and others invented anew.

If the strengthening of patriarchy within the family became one way for colonised men to assert their otherwise eroded power, women's writings often testify to the confusion and pain that accompanied these enormous changes. From the autobiography of Ramabai Ranade, married at the age of eleven to the well-known scholar and jurist Mahadev Govind Ranade, we can glimpse what a tortuous process it was to be fashioned from a traditional child bride into the nationalist ideal of the wife as help-mate and companion. Ramabai describes how she was torn between her husband's desire that she be literate and schooled, and the taunts of her mother-in-law and other women in the family who disapproved. One day, she was faced with the choice of sitting with either orthodox or reformist women at the temple, and thought herself very clever for refusing to choose by pretending to be ill and going home. Her husband punished her by refusing to discuss the issue or even to speak to her. The ultimate rejection came when

I started rubbing his feet with the ghee myself. I wanted him at least to say, 'Now that's enough!' But no, he went off to sleep as soon as I started rubbing his feet. *Usually, after an hour's massage, he would extend his other foot and ask us to start working on that.* But today, I don't know how, he did not forget his resolve of silence even in his sleep. He didn't speak a single word. And turning on the other side, he pretended to be fast asleep.

(Ranade 1991: 288; emphasis added)

While she does not even know the nature of her fault, the situation is only resolved when she goes up and apologises to her husband. His response is to scold her:

Who would like it if his own one didn't behave according to his will? Once you know the direction of my thoughts, you should always try to follow the same path so that neither of us suffers. Don't ever do such things again.

(Ranade 1991: 289)

The self-fashioning of the nationalist male thus required his fashioning of his wife into a fresh subservience, even though this new role included her education and freedom from some older orthodoxies.

Critics have pointed out that even though the reform of women's position seems to be a major concern within nationalist (and colonialist) discourses, and even though female power, energy and sexuality haunt these discourses, women themselves, in any real sense, 'disappear' from these discussions about them. From colonial as well as nationalist records, we learn little about how they felt or responded, and, until recently, there was little attempt to locate them as subjects within the colonial struggle. For example, Lata Mani suggests that the entire colonial debate on sati was concerned with re-defining tradition and modernity, that 'what was at stake was not women but tradition' (1989: 118) and that women 'become sites on which various versions of scripture/tradition/law are elaborated and contested' (1989: 118, 115). Hence, she argues, nowhere is the sati herself a subject of the debate, and nowhere is her subjectivity represented. Thus, we learn little or nothing about the widows themselves, or their interiority, or even of the fact of their pain. The debates around widow immolation have come to occupy a prominent place within postcolonial theory, and especially within debates on the agency of the colonised. This is in part due to Gayatri Spivak's oft-cited essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in which the complete absence of women's voices in the immolation debates is read as a particularly apt emblem of the overlapping violence of colonialism and of patriarchy.

Let us pursue the formulation that women are the 'site' rather than the subjects of certain historical debates, an idea which is often to be found in postcolonial studies. While it captures the fact that gender functions as a currency in all political exchanges, and that women are marginalised by discourses 'about' them, such a formulation also implies that gender politics is only a metaphor for the articulation of other issues. This somewhat confuses women's relationship to any social structure. Women are not just a symbolic space but real *targets* of colonialist and nationalist discourses. Their subjection and the appropriation of their labour is crucial to the workings of the colony or the nation. Thus,

despite their other differences, and despite their contests over native women, colonial and indigenous patriarchies often collaborated to keep women 'in their place'. The spectre of their real independence haunted both colonialists and their opponents. Such collaborations do not indicate that gender ideologies are more fundamental than those of class or race, but they do remind us that women are not just a vocabulary in which colonial and colonised men work out their relations with each other but at least half the population of any nation, whose subordination is crucial to both colonial and nationalist patriarchs. This is not to pit 'symbolic' and 'real' women against each other, but to remember that symbolism shapes the real-life roles women are called upon to play.

But if women are and have always been at stake, an ethical and feminist criticism must search for them—both within discourses which seek to erase their self-representation and elsewhere. The writings of women who worked alongside, within or in opposition to the nationalist and anti-colonial movements are increasingly becoming available for feminist scholars. These writings help us understand that the debate over tradition and modernity specifically targeted those who challenged or critiqued the patriarchal underpinnings of nationalist discourses. In 1883, for example, Pandita Ramabai's attack against the domestic roles enshrined by both orthodox and nationalist Hindus led her to convert to Christianity. Her 'betrayal' aroused widespread anger precisely because it contested the nationalist attempt to identify the Hindu home as the domain of Indian culture. Thus while women and gender are seen as emblematic of culture and nation, they also signify breaks or fault lines within these categories. Women who broke the codes of silence and subservience became the objects of extreme hostility, which, in some cases, succeeded in silencing outspoken women (O'Hanlon 1994). The more feminist research recovers and re-interprets the lives of women under colonial rule, the clearer it becomes that women, as individuals and as a potential collectivity, constituted a threat and were thus the target of earlier patriarchal re-writings of 'tradition'. Male nationalists had not 'resolved the women's question' as Partha Chatterjee suggests, so much as used 'the glorified femininity of women' as 'the ground on which to render their political demands illegitimate' (Nair 2008).

That is why many feminists have questioned Partha Chatterjee's account of the nationalist division between the home and the world. Priyamvada Gopal writes that Chatterjee's formulation is not an analysis of 'the Woman Question' so much as 'an account, principally, of male nationalist anxieties around cultural identity and colonial subjection' (Gopal 2005: 61–62). In reality, women's campaigns challenged the division of home and world by exposing the reluctance of both the imperial state and male nationalists to 'reform' women's positions (Sinha 2000). Women not only engaged in public debate and discussion and action, but they 'showed no hesitation in inviting the state into the realm of the family' (Nair 2008: 61). However, as Nair also notes,

despite these serious challenges to Chatterjee's formulation, ... it has achieved the emblematic status of speaking for the Indian nation, and serving as a useful shorthand for a wide range of scholars who wish to signal their engagement with 'the women's question' in ways that do not demand knowledge of or engagement with rich veins of feminist historiography.

Despite the productive intersection of feminist and postcolonial studies, Nair's observation remains true of much postcolonial scholarship, including the influential Subaltern Studies series (see Kamala Viswesaran 1996), as well as scholars who wish to assert the centrality of Marxism and nationalism within the field (an example is Bartolovich and Lazarus's 2002 volume on the subject, which has a single essay on gender).

Anti-colonial struggles varied greatly in their attitudes to female agency and women's rights. Throughout Latin America, *machismo* has posed a real problem for women in political struggle (Fisher 1993). The Black Consciousness movement was also often aggressively macho. Others, such as Gandhi's non-co-operation movement have been called proto-feminist, not only because they mobilised enormous numbers of women, but also because they adopted attributes (such as passivity) and activities (such as spinning) that are traditionally considered female. But one may question whether such attributes are really 'female', and recall that Gandhi's movement censored women's militancy, and

adhered to entirely patriarchal conceptions of the family and society. In a variety of places, including India, women's increasing militancy met with an intense backlash. Even where women were called upon to be militant, as in Algeria, it was resolutely on behalf of the emergent nation. In some contexts the exclusion and inclusion are intimately connected. To continue with the example of colonial India, the ideal of the *bhadramahila* shaped the terms on which they were allowed to participate in the nationalist mainstream movement (O'Hanlon 1994: 61). They were recruited in enormous numbers, but their roles were seen as extensions of their domestic selves—caring, subservient, non-militant.

Women themselves responded in a variety of ways to these attempts to harness and limit their agency. Often they appropriated the iconography of motherhood. Millions of women actively fought in anti-colonial struggles as followers, but also as leaders in their own right. Most of them were not feminist, nor did they necessarily perceive a tension between their own struggles and those of their community at large. Often they themselves subscribed to the nationalist logic that the colonial masters must first be gotten rid of before other inequities could be addressed. Nevertheless, because these women were politically active, worked and lived outside of purely domestic spaces, sometimes in positions of leadership, they opened up new possibilities of thought and action for other women. Even when they moved into public spaces in the name of motherhood and family, they challenged certain notions of motherhood and of femininity, as continues to be the case in the postcolonial period—two examples are the Madres of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and anti-war movements in Sri Lanka (see de Alwis, 2012). Sometimes, nationalist movements themselves accommodated or demanded women's militancy. In some rare cases, as in contemporary South Africa, women's voices and increasing grass-roots activism altered the shape and ideology of nationalism itself.

How can we make sense of these different patterns? They seem to suggest that women and gender can function as 'sites' and agents of colonial collaboration as well of colonial difference. They suggest also that anti-colonial movements have a complex, ambiguous and shifting relationship with the question of women's

rights (see Jayawardena 1986). They have to work through a basic contradiction: on the one hand, the principle of universal equality from which they are launched demands certain concessions to women's rights. This explains why many newly liberated nations conceded certain rights to women (such as the right to vote) well before their European counterparts. On the other hand, as we earlier discussed, national culture is built upon a series of exclusions. Thus, even in the case of the relatively progressive African National Congress,

While the language of the ANC was the *inclusive* language of national unity, the Congress was in fact *exclusive* and hierarchical, ranked by an upper house of chiefs (which protected traditional patriarchal authority through descent and filiation), a lower house of elected representatives (all male) and an executive (always male). Indians and so-called coloureds were excluded from full membership.

(McClintock 1995: 380)

For this reason, women's struggles for equality continue after formal independence and define the nature of postcoloniality. On the whole, however, anti-colonial nationalisms did open up avenues of change for women, largely by legitimising their public activity. Women's participation in politics is often more easily accepted in postcolonial countries than in 'metropolitan' ones precisely because of this nationalist legacy.

But we must guard against a simple celebration of female militancy or political participation, because the key question is for what purpose it is used. Not only does women's active participation in politics not necessarily indicate a feminist consciousness or agenda but in recent years there has been an effort to harness women's political activity and even militancy to right-wing movements and especially to religious fundamentalism. In various parts of the world, women have been active campaigners for the Hindu, Islamic or Christian right-wing movements. The question of religion is an especially tricky one for postcolonial feminists, as it has surfaced as a major factor in women's relationship to 'the nation' and to postcolonial politics. Many postcolonial regimes have been repressive of women's rights, using religion as the basis

on which to enforce their subordination. National identity in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia (and several other places) has been moulded by the Islamicisation of civil society, an alliance between fundamentalism and the State, and severe curtailment of freedoms for women.

Over the last decades, a strand of feminist scholarship has suggested that even though women may themselves participate in the process of national or communal violence, they themselves in a sense 'have no country' because for them 'belonging' is always

and uniquely—linked to sexuality, honor, chastity; family, community and country must agree on both their acceptability and legitimacy, and their membership within the fold. ... 'citizen' and 'state subject' are gendered categories [and] men and women are treated unequally by most states—but especially postcolonial states—despite constitutional guarantees of equality.

(Menon 2002: 57)

Menon and other feminist scholars illustrate this imbalance by documenting the place of women in the Partition of British India in 1947. Because women were symbolic of national and community honour, the creation of Pakistan was marked by mass scale rape and abduction of women by Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Often women were compelled or voluntarily chose to die rather than be taken by force, and such acts have been enshrined as heroic sacrifices in community memory. After Partition, the newly independent Indian and newly formed Pakistani states launched into the task of rescuing abducted women, without caring to ask whether the women wanted to be rescued at all. Women who had been abducted were often disowned by their families, and now had to suffer displacement twice and leave behind newly formed families and children. Feminist scholars have probed the meaning of women's agency as well as their silence, voluntary and enforced; in such situations Urvashi Butalia shows that often women themselves were key in circulating the very ideas (of female chastity, honour and the necessity of securing these, even through violence) that ensured their victimization (Butalia 2000). Such work is important in questioning the widespread assumption that women are necessarily

more peace-loving or more alienated from the dominant discourses of sexual honour or communal identity, even as it highlights how they are the ones whose bodies and identities are most manipulated in the service of such discourses.

Women may defend practices such as clitoral excision, veiling, women's exclusion from public life, or even their submission to men, because they think that such practices are central to the identity of their community, especially when such a community is under threat from a Eurocentric discourse of women's liberation *or* when it wants to establish its power and domination over others. While I cannot explore the complex relationship between women and religious identity in detail here, I want to emphasise how important this relationship is in the mutations of postcolonial identities and gender roles.⁴ It is a measure of the persistence of Orientalist discourses that Islam is commonly understood as more prone to fundamentalist appropriation (and to misogyny) than any other religion. However, other religious groupings (such as the Hindu right in India, Christian fundamentalists in the United States or Jewish extremists in Israel) are equally culpable on both counts. The crucial point here is that often women themselves are key players in the fundamentalist game: in India, for example, women have stridently mobilised for Hindu nationalism by invoking fears of Muslim violence. In other words, women are objects as well as subjects of fundamentalist discourses, targets as well as speakers of its most virulent rhetoric. For postcolonial, third world and anti-racist feminists, the task is to walk the tight rope between the sectarian demands of religious, national or race-identity, and majoritarian discourses of female emancipation or liberation.

FEMINISM AND GLOBALIZATION

As the previous section showed, the relationship between women, nation and community is highly variable, both in the colonial period and afterwards. If, on the one hand, questions of women's rights and autonomy make difficult any simple celebration of anti-colonialism and nationalism, then, on the other, colonial and anticolonial histories also complicate contemporary feminism. In 1984, Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood is Global* claimed

that women seem, cross-culturally, to be deeply opposed to nationalism. This once-influential view stands challenged by the nature of women's movements which, as I have already discussed, developed in the crucible of nationalism in large parts of the once-colonised world. Women had to overcome male opposition to their equal participation in the struggles for self-determination, democracy and anti-imperialism, but these movements also re-shaped women's understanding of themselves, as in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank, Namibia or South Africa. Amrita Basu points out that female participation in nationalist struggles has benefited women more in the contemporary period than it did in the earlier anti-colonial period. Thus in Namibia (which gained independence in 1990), the constitution forbids sex discrimination, and authorises affirmative action for women, whereas in India (which became free in 1947) the constitution explicitly excludes women as a group from affirmative action programmes and upholds customary law in relation to the family. In the United States, it should be remembered, the Equal Rights Amendment has yet to be ratified (Basu 1995: 14).

Women's movements have often been closely aligned with working-class struggles, as in Mexico, Chile and Peru. In Brazil, feminism was transformed and expanded by working-class women. At a national feminist conference in 1987, for example, 79 per cent of the participants were also active in black, labour, working-class, church and other political movements, and feminists from autonomous groups were dubbed 'fossils' (Soares *et al.* 1995: 309). It is easy to understand why women in several colonial or neo-colonial situations would identify more readily with anti-imperialist or working-class struggles than with the dominant images or concerns of white first world feminism. As a South African feminist puts it:

burning one's bra to declare one's liberation as a woman did not connect psychically as did the act of a Buddhist monk who made a human pyre of himself to protest the American occupation of Vietnam. And perhaps that was the point—we were a people under siege. As women we identified with this—the national liberation struggle was our struggle.

(Kemp *et al.* 1995: 138)

Of course, in the process of drawing these distinctions between women's movements, we should be careful not to homogenise either 'first world' or 'third world' women. In each case, considerations of class, colour, religion, location, sexuality and politics have divided the women's movements and their dominant concerns. If black and third world women within the United States have questioned the politics of white feminism in that country, then independent feminists in India have made valuable contributions in raising issues of sexuality and violence that were downplayed by nationalist and left-wing women's groups. If, on the one hand, middle-class white women's movements have not sufficiently addressed questions of class and race, then, on the other, nationalist or class-based struggles have historically subordinated questions of women's autonomy or sexuality to supposedly 'larger' concerns. So it has not been easy for postcolonial women to raise questions of sexuality and sexual orientation. In several countries, including Bangladesh, China, Eastern Europe, Kenya and Nigeria, lesbianism has been rendered invisible (Basu 1995: 13). In others, such as the Philippines, it has become a major issue. In still other countries, such as India, there has been an attempt by a wide spectrum of women's organisations to articulate questions of sexual and domestic violence alongside those of secularism, or of equal pay for equal work. On the whole, the experience of postcolonial women's movements has underlined that the fight against state repression, sexual violence, racism, for better working conditions and freedom of sexual orientation cannot be pitted against each other, but need to be simultaneously addressed.

Postcolonial women's movements of different hues have tried to make visible their indigenous roots and thus challenge the assumption that women's activism in the postcolonial world is only inspired by its Western counterparts. This has involved re-writing indigenous histories, appropriating pre-colonial symbols and mythologies, and amplifying, where possible, the voices of women in the past. Since colonialism often eroded certain women-centric traditions, images and institutions, it is important to recover woman-friendly aspects of the pre-colonial past. But it is important that revivals of pre-colonial and indigenous heritages not gloss over their patriarchal aspects, especially given that these

are constantly being amplified and strengthened, in some cases by postcolonial nation-states and in others by fundamentalist groups.

Today, postcolonial women's movements have to negotiate the dynamics of globalization on the one hand, and of the post-colonial nation-state on the other. Globalization often reproduces the general effects of colonialism. Women's labour was universally expropriated, either directly or indirectly, to feed the colonial machine, and this legacy dovetails with patterns of globalization to ensure that third world women and women of colour remain the most exploited of the world's workers today, whether that be as agricultural workers, or as workers in the garment industry. The economist Guy Standing termed this 'the feminization of labor' (quoted in Moghadam 2005: 7). Many of the forms of exploitation are new—as these women (along with minority women in the West) are also the guinea-pigs for fertility and other medical experiments, and the recipients of drugs and contraceptives. For example, the pill was first tested in Puerto Rico, while Brazil, Bangladesh and India were the testing sites for Norplant, a synthetic hormone that inhibits ovulation and is injected into women's bodies. In many of these trials, none of the protocols for informed consent that are mandated in the elite parts of the first world were followed. There is also a booming trade in what is called reproductive tourism or reproductive outsourcing whereby women in countries like India rent their wombs as surrogate mothers (Raymond 1995). As with the sale of body parts, the debates around these issues include the argument that these are matters of choice, and that women are willing to rent out their wombs, just as in China, India, Brazil and elsewhere there is no shortage of volunteers for medical experiments. But feminist groups have pointed out that in conditions of abject poverty, such a choice can hardly be seen as 'free'. For the same reason, thousands of women from Sri Lanka, the Philippines and the Caribbean work as nannies, maids and sex workers in the United States and Europe, wrenching themselves from their families in order to ensure that their mistresses can work as well as maintain their familial structures. As Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild put it:

The lifestyles of the First World are made possible by a global transfer of the services associated with a wife's traditional role—child care, homemaking, and sex—from poor countries to rich ones. To generalize and perhaps oversimplify: [I]n an earlier phase of imperialism, northern countries extracted natural resources and agricultural products—rubber, metals, and sugar, for example—from lands they conquered and colonized. Today, while still relying on Third World countries for agricultural and industrial labor, the wealthy countries also seek to extract something harder to measure and quantify, something that can look very much like love.

(Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002: 4)

Thus, if there is a 'Sisyphus stratum' consisting of people 'endlessly toiling at the bottom of the socio-economic stratification', then women from once-colonised countries or communities form a major part of that stratum (Joseph 1995: 147). But as we can see from the example above, the place of women and gender relations in today's world cannot be understood by mechanically separating the Global North from the Global South. As Maria Mies points out, women's oppression today must be placed in the context of a global division of labour under the dictates of capital accumulation (Mies 1986). In addition to explaining how the sexual division of labour complicates any economic structure, Mies shows why women are both mobilised and then pushed back after struggles for national liberation are over, why they continued to be at the receiving end of patriarchal attitudes and structures in socialist countries, and how real social change can only take place if it involves both overdeveloped and underdeveloped parts of the world simultaneously. Just as Marx argued that socialist revolutions cannot be fully realised if confined to particular countries, Mies argues that women's oppression can only be eliminated if understood as a global issue.

The image of the Sisyphus stratum should not lead us to suppose an eternal victim-status for those at the bottom. Women have increasingly participated in the full range of postcolonial politics, ranging from the more established forms of political action to the new social movements (such as those for the preservation of the environment). Postcolonial women's movements have increasingly

begun to articulate both the specificity of their concerns and their connections with other struggles around them globally. As they battle religious and market fundamentalisms, as well as mounting sectarian, national and international violence, they have had to develop new analytical tools as well as organisational skills. It is impossible to summarise the wide range of issues that confront women in the postcolonial world (especially if we also include women of colour and immigrants in the global North). Therefore I shall only raise some key issues that will allow us to reflect upon the complicated relationship between the local and global, and upon the very term 'postcolonial feminism'.

Whereas during the 1960s and 1970s there were enormous differences between North-South or first world-third world feminist movements, with the former largely emphasising legal equality, sexual freedom and reproductive rights and the latter the problems of underdevelopment and sustenance, after the 1970s a greater dialogue has taken place between them. The global restructuring of national economies (a decline in public welfare, an erosion of the public sector economy, the debunking of centralised planning after the fall of the Soviet Union, the structural adjustment programmes that enforced neoliberal capitalism upon most poor countries) resulted in what we have already seen—the feminisation of global poverty. At the same time, independent feminist movements have sprung up all over the third world, and women of colour have raised important critiques of middle-class white feminisms. As a result, in many international women's forums and meetings (including the United Nations World Conferences on Women in several venues) there has been an increasing dialogue between women from different parts of the world, and an emerging consensus that issues of development cannot be divorced from those of personal, sexual and legal freedoms. The result has been the mushrooming of trans-national feminist networks (TFOs) that fight for gender and economic justice. As Valentine Moghadam puts it:

In our globalizing world, we have not yet seen the formation of a transnational working class or transnational workers organizations. But we do see a global social movement of women and ... [a] transnational feminist movement that feeds into the larger global justice

movement and offers concrete proposals for an alternative to capitalist globalization that is grounded in human rights.

(2005: 19)

Indeed, globalization *has* spawned an international ‘women’s development’ network, linked to non-governmental organisations, international aid-giving bodies and development agencies which tour the world with programmes for women’s ‘empowerment’. While some of them have worked alongside local governmental or feminist organisations to better women’s health or working conditions, others have worked very much within the colonialist legacy of carrying enlightenment from the West to the rest of the world. Moreover, feminists in postcolonial countries have expressed their concern about ‘the appropriation of feminist vocabularies and agendas by local and national governments, NGOs and international funding organizations, which readily speak of women’s “empowerment” and participation, but in ways that blunt the edge of feminist critiques, offering patronage instead of a fundamental redistribution of resources, or envisaging individual advancement while disabling collective opposition’ (Loomba and Lukose 2012: 2). This has prompted many feminists to rethink their own agendas and methods. Has such co-optation meant that feminists now only work within a liberal-colonial framework of rights and equality? Have they given up on their revolutionary agenda to transform society by working within the existing structures of law and governance? Has the optimism that legal reform would bring about real change faded as violence against women continues in spite of changes in the law?

Arguing that this is indeed the case in South Asia, feminist legal theorist Ratna Kapur argues that feminism

needs to incorporate the insights of postcolonial theory, from which it has hitherto remained distant, not only because such a theory can better capture law’s complex and contradictory role in struggles to improve women’s social, economic, political, and cultural position, but also because ... [this theory challenges] the basic assumptions on which the liberal project is based.

(2012: 346)

Kapur's argument is that women's movements have operated with a conservative understanding of 'gender' which can be and is being used 'to resuscitate authentic versions of culture, entrench the public/private divide, and justify protectionist measures' (347). Postcolonial feminism, she says, can change the grounds of the debate by exploring alternative ways of conceptualising gender itself within 'non-liberal' histories and philosophic traditions, some of which are made available by a study of non-Western histories: 'The idea of a non-liberal position being necessarily narrow-minded and illiberal is itself framed within a binary according to which Western liberalism is the norm and illiberalism its opposite. But the world is not constituted within this binary' (348). She then explores how Indian materialist thought offers ways of conceptualising gender and the human subject that pose a challenge to Hindu fundamentalism and nativism on the one hand as well as Western liberalism on the other.

Ratna Kapur's understanding of postcolonial theory and postcolonial feminism differs dramatically from that of Marxist-feminists such as Moghadam and Mies. Moghadam argues that in the 'postmodern or postcolonialist feminist approach' (note how the two are the same for her),

there is a tendency to play down or reject the importance of the state, the global economy and global feminism in favour of theorizing that emphasizes agency, identities, differences, hierarchies based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation etc., and multiple forms and sites of power.

(2005: 27)

Mies also suggests that the deconstruction of sex and gender systems, and the critique of "essentialism" meant the end of a materialist and historical approach to reality. Its main target was of course Marxism' (Mies 1986: xvi). These differences resonate with the debates about the politics of postmodernism that we discussed in the opening chapter of this book, but are not identical with them. For Ratna Kapur and others argue that feminists must theorise gender difference not just to complicate identity categories in the abstract but precisely in order to avoid the

impasse and difficulties that feminist activists are facing on the ground, in their political struggles, including those directed against the state.

At the same time, Kapur's plea for retheorising gender dovetails with the work of several other scholars who argue that the concept has been reshaped profoundly through a Eurocentric and colonialist history, and as such is inadequate to understanding the lives of many women and gender relations around the world. Afsaneh Najmabadi offers the history of nineteenth-century Iran to show that 'the production of gender itself as a binary, man/woman' was 'an effect of a paradigmatic shift ... from a view in which all gender categories were defined in relation to adult manhood to a view in which woman and man became opposite and complementary, to the exclusion of other categories that would not fit'. Najmabadi observes that while 'our contemporary binary of gender translates any fractures of masculinity into effeminization', in nineteenth-century Iran there were 'other ways of naming a young adolescent male and an adult man desiring to be objects of desire for adult men that were not equated with effeminacy' (2006: 14). Ifi Amadiume (1987), argues that the category 'woman' in European society had no precise counterpart among the Yoruba in western Nigeria whereas seniority structured many of the hierarchies that were erroneously attributed by Western scholars to gender divisions. (A novel like Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* allows us to glimpse an analogous situation in colonial Rhodesia where older gender and familial dynamics are drastically reshaped through colonial rule and Western education.) Molara Ogundipe-Leslie contends that African women's relationships with men are peripheral to their self-perceptions, and that 'African women continue to be looked at and looked for in their coital and conjugal sites which seem to be a preoccupation of many Western analysts and feminists' (1994: 251; see also Oyewumi 1997). Some of this work can idealise pre-colonial African women's lives and the evidence presented is not always equal to the theoretical claims made. Nevertheless, it resonates with recent reconsiderations of the very meaning of categories of gender and sexuality in other locations such as India and China (see Sinha 2012; Young 1989). Postcolonial feminist scholars and

activists are thus urging a radical retheorisation based on their own diverse histories, even as they confront the homogenising challenges posed by a rampant and often brutal globalization.

SUBALTERN AGENCY

To what extent did colonial power succeed in silencing the colonised? When we emphasise the destructive power of colonialism, do we necessarily position colonised people as victims, incapable of answering back? On the other hand, if we suggest that the colonial subjects can 'speak' and question colonial authority, are we romanticising such resistant subjects and underplaying the effects of colonial violence? In what voices do the colonised speak—their own, or in accents borrowed from their masters? Can subalterns be represented by intellectuals? Such questions are not unique to the study of colonialism but are especially critical for scholarship concerned with recovering the histories and perspectives of marginalised people—be they women, non-whites, non-Europeans, the lower classes or oppressed castes—and for any consideration of how ideologies work and are transformed. To what extent are we the products of dominant ideologies, and to what extent can we act against them? From where does rebellion arise?

In her influential essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985b), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak suggests that it is impossible to recover the voice of the 'subaltern' or oppressed colonial subject.⁵ Even a radical critic like Foucault, she says, who so thoroughly decentres the human subject, is prone to believing that oppressed subjects can speak for themselves, because he has no conception of the extent of the colonial repression, and especially of the way in which it historically intersected with patriarchy. In a previous essay, Spivak had focused on the figure of an Indian queen to argue that the colonial archive systematically erases or mutilates the presence of the subaltern, making such recovery even more difficult (1987). In 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' the Indian widow burnt on her husband's pyre becomes emblematic of the subaltern subject silenced by the combined workings of colonialism and patriarchy. As I have discussed earlier, Lata Mani's influential work shows that in the discourse on sati (i.e. the lengthy debates that followed the British

government's legislations against the practice) we hear the opinions of colonial legislators as well as different groups of Indian men, but not the voices of the women who were burnt. Spivak reads this absence as emblematic of the difficulty of recovering the oppressed subject and proof that 'there is no space from where the subaltern [sexed] subject can speak' (Spivak 1988: 307). She challenges a simple division between colonisers and colonised by inserting the 'brown woman' as a category oppressed by both; thus she extends Mani's suggestion that women were simply the grounds on which Indian and British men battled the meaning of both tradition and modernity.

Spivak's point is to insist that the postcolonial historian can recover the standpoint of the subaltern. Therefore she takes seriously the desire, on the part of postcolonial intellectuals, to highlight oppression and to try and represent the position of oppressed people. She therefore suggests that such intellectuals adapt Gramsci's maxim—'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'—by combining a philosophical scepticism about recovering subaltern agency with a political commitment to making visible the position of the marginalised. Thus it is the intellectual who must 'represent' the subaltern:

The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish.

(Spivak 1988: 308)

Spivak effectively warns the postcolonial critic against romanticising and homogenising the subaltern subject. However, her insistence on subaltern 'silence' is problematic if adopted as the definitive statement about colonial history. Benita Parry finds that Spivak's reading of Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, for example, does not pick up on traces of female agency within that text and in Caribbean cultures generally, and is insensitive to the ways in which 'women inscribed themselves as healers, ascetics, singers of sacred songs, artisans and artists' in colonised societies. Therefore, she accuses Spivak of 'deliberate deafness to the native

voice where it *can* be heard' (1987: 39; emphasis added). Parry suggests that such deafness arises out of Spivak's attributing 'an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse'. Spivak responds by renewing her earlier warning against what she calls 'a nostalgia for lost origins', or the assumption that native cultures were left intact through colonial rule, and are now easily recoverable: 'the techniques of knowledge and the strategies of power ... have a history rather longer and broader than our individual benevolence and avowals' (1996: 204).

Spivak's choice of the immolated widow as emblematic of the 'subaltern' is significant since a sati is a category that comes into being only when the subject dies. The to-be-sati is merely a widow, the sati is by definition a silenced subject. So Spivak offers a somewhat circular argument—a subaltern can only be defined by virtue of her complete erasure, therefore the subaltern cannot speak. Even if offered in a cautionary spirit, such logic can be detrimental to research on colonial cultures by closing off options even before they have been explored. The silencing of the sati certainly points to the oppression of all women in colonial India, but at the same time not all women in colonial India can be collapsed into such a figure. Elsewhere I have suggested that we need to reposition the sati by concentrating not just on the particular widow who died but also on other women with whom such a figure intersects, including the widows who survived to tell the tale and women who attested to the misery of the lives of Indian widows (Loomba 1993). For example, in an article called 'The Plight of Hindu Widows as Described by a Widow Herself', written in 1889, the writer describes the misery of a wife following the death of her husband:

None of her relatives will touch her to take her ornaments off her body. That task is assigned to three women from the barber caste ... those female fiends literally jump all over her and violently tear all the ornaments from her nose, ears etc. In that rush, the delicate bones of the nose and ear are sometimes broken. Sometimes ... tufts of hair are also plucked off. ... At such times grief crashes down on the poor woman from all sides ... there is nothing in our fate but suffering from birth to death. When our husbands are alive, we are their slaves;

when they die, our fate is even worse. ... Thousands of widows die after a husband's death. But far more have to suffer worse fates throughout their lives if they stay alive. Once, a widow who was a relative of mine died in front of me. She had fallen ill before her husband died. When he died, she was so weak that she could not even be dragged to her husband's cremation. She had a burning fever. Then her mother-in-law dragged her down from the cot onto the ground and ordered the servant to pour bucketfuls of cold water over her. After some eight hours, she died. But nobody came to see how she was when she was dying of the cold. After she died, however, they started praising her, saying she had died for the love of her husband. ... If all [such] tales are put together they would make a large book. The British government put a ban on the custom of sati, but as a result of that several women who could have died a cruel but quick death when their husbands died now have to face an agonizingly slow death.

(Tharu and Lalita 1991: 359–63)

The speaker herself does not offer a critique of the practice of sati, but rather the grim reality which explains why many widows want to die. And yet, she herself did *not* die. While her voice is no straightforward testimony to rebellion, it also militates against too absolute a theory of subaltern silence. Many upper-caste women, from whose ranks a majority of satis were drawn, learnt to write and expressed themselves, participated in anti-colonial activities, and spoke out against British and indigenous patriarchal oppression. While some of them offered elaborate justifications for restrictions on female education and freedom, others adopted Christianity as a platform from which to attack Hindu patriarchy. Their writings, like the fragment quoted above, will only underline the fact that subaltern agency, either at the individual level or at the collective, cannot be idealised as pure opposition to the order it opposes; it works both within that order and displays its own contradictions.

Spivak ends her essay by considering a very different kind of Indian woman as another example of the silenced subaltern:

A young woman of sixteen or seventeen, Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri, hanged herself in her father's modest apartment in north Calcutta in

1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhuvaneswari was menstruating at the time, it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly a decade later, it was discovered that she was a member of one of the many groups involved in armed struggle. She had finally been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself.

(Spivak 1996: 307)

Spivak speculates that Bhuvaneswari 'had known that her death would be diagnosed as the outcome of illegitimate passion. She had therefore waited for the onset of her menstruation. While waiting ... [she] was no doubt looking forward to good wifhood.' But unlike the sati whose death was supposed to uphold the cause of such wifhood, Bhuvaneswari's death is motivated by politics, or rather the failure of political action. Her suicide therefore rewrites the act of sati-suicide 'in an interventionist way'. But years later, the members of her family still insist on erasing Bhuvaneswari's politics and reading her suicide as a case of 'illicit love'. So, the young woman's radical voice is once again stifled. Once again, the subaltern cannot speak, either as an individual or as part of a collectivity; indeed Spivak insists that 'the possibility of collectivity itself is persistently foreclosed through the manipulation of female agency' (1996: 283). Although Spivak spends a lot of time discussing the discourse of sati, she is silent about the discourse of anti-colonial nationalism, and the kind of anticolonial revolutionary group Bhuvaneswari was involved in. Barbara Harlow rightly points out that Spivak's account is uninterested in 'what may have impeded Bahduri in her mission; her own "weakness", material circumstances, a breakdown in the organization's political coordination? ... [Why] must Bhaduri, in her particular function as a female member of the resistance, be obliged to prove herself and maintain the confidence of her male comrades[?]' (1992: 34).

In fact, we know a lot about the issues Harlow raises, and some of it from the writings and testimonies of young revolutionary women like Bhuvaneswari. We know that, fired with anticolonial nationalism, they persisted in their efforts to join underground revolutionary groups, overcoming the reluctance of male comrades to admit them. We know that sometimes they even decided

to act on their own, either spontaneously or with considerable planning. Revolutionary women worked not just as helpers, and couriers, but spent days and nights in underground hideouts with men, they learnt to shoot and used guns, made and hurled bombs, disguised themselves as men, resisted torture, spent long periods in prison, committed suicide in order to evade arrest, recruited and trained other young women, financed the movement, and brought out journals. Each of these activities involved proving themselves to their male comrades. There was indeed fear that they would not be able to resist the inhuman torture that was inflicted on such activists. The legendary Surya Sen asked the girls in his anti-colonial group to increase their tolerance for physical pain by making a slight cut in the middle of their chest to shed one or two drops of blood every day. They also had to show that they could inflict pain on others. Suniti Chowdhury, and Shanti Ghosh, who assassinated C. G. B. Stevens, the District Magistrate of Comilla in 1929, had been told that young girls could not possibly shoot a tall European, and that their failure would reflect badly on the organisation. The girls countered by asking whether their male counterparts had always been successful: 'Is there no one who has failed? Then if we fail why will it be scandalous?' (Mandal 1991: 78). Spivak's speculation that Bhuvaneswari dreamt of being a good wife goes against the evidence of revolutionary women writings, which testify to dreams of valour and action, not marriage. Of course, the organisations they joined were patriarchal in the extreme, and the girls were subordinated within organisations that worked like demanding families, disallowing sexual intimacy among members or private lives. Most of them remained unmarried during their days in the underground. Geraldine Forbes trenchantly concludes that: 'No one, including the revolutionary women themselves, considered revolutionaries representative of Indian womanhood' (1996: 155).

Nevertheless, Spivak's observation that Bhuvaneswari rewrote the text of sati-suicide is canny, but for reasons other than those she gives. Several young revolutionary women evoked martyrdom and even immolation in their public statements. Bina Das, who shot Stanley Jackson, claimed that 'my object was to die, and to die nobly fighting against this despotic system of governance ...'. She

writes that her own 'immolation' and that of a 'son of England' would possibly 'awaken' India and England; her 'pain was unbearable and I felt I would go mad if I could not find relief in death' (Das 2010: 22). Pritilata Waddedar did commit suicide by swallowing cyanide after she led a band of men on an attack against the European Club, and left behind a statement in which she stated her hopes that her Indian sisters will 'no longer nurse the view that they are weak' and stated her belief that 'armed women of India will demolish a thousand hurdles, disregard a thousand dangers' as they join the rebellion (Waddedar 1993: 265–67). These women thus embrace martyrdom not as good wives to particular men but as daughters to the nation. Indeed where Gandhian nationalism demanded that women work for the nation *and* for their families, revolutionary groups demanded that women break with their families if necessary.

Neither colonial and nationalist archives nor public memory has erased the political nature of these women's lives; indeed post-colonial memorialization of them has thoroughly assimilated them to mainstream nationalism. Today, they are celebrated as national martyrs, and the differences between them and Gandhian nationalism are erased. So is the psychic and material price that they paid. Pritilata was anguished as she planned her suicide; she could not erase her memory of comrades who had died while she watched. She asked her leader for cyanide because, as she put it, 'they beckon me to come to them.' Poems written by such women testify to their deep pain at having to turn their backs on their families; there are other accounts that tell us of lost loves and political doubts. Many were abandoned by their families. But others continued to work in politics; the most famous being Kalpana Dutt who, like several of her comrades, joined the Communist Party of India and married its general secretary. As Priyamvada Gopal argues, radical women help us understand that anticolonial movements threw up many competing ideas of the nation; while all these movements might have been organised hierarchically, they were not all identically 'elite'. The story of Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri leads us to the putative silence of the subaltern only if, as Purnima Bose notes, we deliberately turn away from the histories that are available, or dismiss their recovery, as 'being a form of

information retrieval and of reinstating an overly romanticized understanding of subaltern consciousness and agency' (2003: 22).

Ultimately, as Lata Mani reminds us, 'one's conclusions about subaltern agency necessarily are constrained by the nature of one's sources.' Sometimes it is hard to find evidence of subaltern subjectivity within the colonial archive, but we cannot generalise from that that the archive necessarily and always erased all traces of her agency and will. She rightly suggests that

The question 'Can the subaltern speak?' ... is perhaps better posed as a series of questions: Which group constitute the subalterns in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in any given set of materials? With what effects? Rephrasing the questions in this way enables us to retain Spivak's insight regarding the positioning of women in colonial discourse without conceding to colonial discourse what it, in fact did not achieve—the erasure of women.

(Mani 1992: 403)

MARXISM AND POST-STRUCTURALISM IN POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

There is a long-standing debate concerning the issue of whether Marxism and post-structuralism are philosophically or politically compatible; the debate becomes especially sharp when it comes to the study of colonialism. Said's *Orientalism* was critiqued for trying to combine Gramscian dedication to social change with Foucaultian and Derridean methods. Throughout this book, we have considered some of these debates; here I want to suggest how two key issues structure a great many of them. One of them is the question of the subjectivity of the oppressed, already discussed in the previous section. The other concerns the nature of social structures and historical change. In this last section, I will here examine some important ways in which these questions are deeply interconnected.

Whereas Foucault-inspired critique argues that subjectivity is an effect of the discourses of power, Marxist critics, in their

search for historical agents, claim that such a theorisation makes it hard to conceptualise opposition. That is why, for many scholars, Foucault-inspired 'colonial discourse theory' has become synonymous with an over-emphasis on colonial power; they even suggest that older historical methodologies were more helpful in uncovering subaltern agency. For example, Megan Vaughan argues that oral histories of Africa document how Africans participated in the creation of 'custom' and 'tradition' in colonial Africa, and how colonial discourses and practices 'were created out of the face-to-face encounters of colonizer and colonized' (Vaughan 1994: 13) whereas colonial discourse theory emphasises only colonial power and hegemony. Oral histories have indeed been an especially important method of assessing Africans' participation in the formation of both oppressive and oppositional discourses, and of filling the gaps in written documents and archives. But oral histories cannot be understood as transparently reflecting the point of view of 'the people'; they too are mediated by the scholar, the historian or the critic (Bunn 1994: 31). Joan Scott offers an analogous caution about the category of 'experience':

experience works as a foundation providing both a starting point and a conclusive kind of explanation, beyond which few questions need to or can be asked. And yet it is precisely the questions precluded—questions about discourse, difference and subjectivity, as well as about what counts as experience and who gets to make that determination—that would enable us to historicize experience, to reflect critically on the history we write about it, rather than to premise our history upon it.

(Scott 1992: 33)

If we are not to take either identity or experience for granted, she writes, we should look at how they are 'ascribed, resisted or embraced'. Thus, 'experience' and 'constructedness' need not be thought of as polar opposites.

This work cautions us against assuming that there is a stable relationship between our critical method and our success in locating subaltern agency. Nor does the critic's radicalism depend only on her finding agency or resistance on the part of those she studies. That assumption has sometimes led to a reductive

understanding of 'resistance', evidence of which seems to mushroom too easily everywhere. It is for this reason that Frederick Cooper suggests that sometimes the concept of resistance is vaguely and endlessly expanded until, as he puts it, 'it denies any other kind of life to the people doing the resisting. Significant as resistance might be, Resistance is a concept that may narrow our understanding of African history rather than expand it' (Cooper 1994: 1532). Judith Walkowitz has offered a related word of caution against feminist scholarship that idealises resistance:

Foucault's insight that no one is outside of power has important implications for expressions from the margins. Just because women are excluded from centres of cultural production, they are not left free to invent their texts, as some feminist critics have suggested. ... They draw on the cultural resources available to them—they make some amendments, they refocus or rewrite them in a different direction—yet they are basically bounded by certain cultural parameters. ... That individuals do not fully author their texts does not falsify Marx's insight that men (and in parenthesis women) make their own history, albeit under circumstances that they do not fully control or produce. *They are makers as well as users of culture, subjected to the same social and ideological constraints, yet forcefully resisting those same constraints.*

(Walkowitz 1989: 30; emphasis added)

In practice, it has not been easy for critics to maintain a balance between 'positioning' the subject and amplifying her/his voice. Indeed several attempts to write 'histories from below' have come close to essentialising or romanticising the figure or the community of the resistant subaltern. In trying to show how peasant struggles in India were distinct from the elite anti-colonial movements, the Marxist historian Rosalind O'Hanlon suggests that the subaltern historians repeatedly construct an 'essential' peasant identity in India, one that is not fractured by differences of gender, class or location. As a corrective, she cites the work of Fanon, Said and Bhabha on how colonial identities are *constructed* rather than given (1988: 204–5). But at the same time, she and David Washbrook are also deeply sceptical about

adopting in full measure post-structuralist or postmodern views about the constructedness of identity:

Some conception of experience and agency are absolutely required by the dispossessed's call for a politics of contest, for it is not clear how a dispersed effect of power relations can at the same time be an agent whose experience and reflection form the basis of a striving for change. To argue that we need these categories in some form does not at all imply a return to undifferentiated and static conceptions of nineteenth-century liberal humanism. Our present challenge lies precisely in understanding how the underclasses we wish to study are at once constructed in conflictual ways as subjects yet also find the means through struggle to realize themselves in coherent and subjectively centred ways as agents.

(O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992: 153; emphasis added)

This view—that to regard human beings as fragmented discursive constructs is incompatible with understanding them as experiencing agents—is widespread within critics of postmodernism. Thus, when Baudrillard speaks of the masses as an implosive force that 'can no longer be spoken for, articulated and represented' (1983: 22), Stuart Hall is justified in reading this statement as exemplifying the pessimistic politics of postmodernism. Stuart Hall himself offers another way of interpreting the supposed passivity of the subaltern:

in spite of the fact that the popular masses have never been able to become in any complete sense the subject-authors of the cultural practices in the twentieth century, their continuing presence, as a kind of passive historical-cultural force, has constantly interrupted, limited and disrupted everything else.

(1996d: 140)

How we view acting subjects depends upon how we view social structures as a whole. Gyan Prakash's essay 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography' (1990) suggested that histories of marginalised, subaltern subjects can only be written by moving away from a 'post-foundational perspective', i.e. by moving away from the

‘grand narratives’ which occluded such subjects and their stories. Foucault suggested that all subjects are positioned simultaneously within several different and overlapping structures of power. This implies that any instance of agency, or act of rebellion, can be assessed from divergent perspectives. For example, Frederick Cooper asks us to consider whether African working-class actions in French and British Africa are to be thought of as an instance of African militancy, or as an example of the universal struggle of the working class, or of the successful co-optation of Africans into Western practices? But he reminds us that while ‘all three readings have some truth, ... the important point is their dynamic relationship’ (1994: 1536). Labour movements were in creative tension with anti-colonial struggles, as were rural and peasant movements with urban and more Westernised forms of rebellion. This is an important point. Situating the subaltern within a multiplicity of hierarchies is not enough: we must also think about the crucial relations *between* these hierarchies, between different forces and discourses. Marxist scholars insist that because many postmodern thinkers do not consider this interrelation, their work does not help us in the task of recovering the subaltern subject in colonial history: ‘Derridean and post-modern perspectives’ display a ‘depthlessness’ and make it impossible for us to understand how societies function (O’Hanlon and Washbrook, 1992: 148–53).

The most powerful ‘grand narrative’ has been that of Marxism, and Marxists insist that ‘the critique of colonialism, and of the social order that has followed formal decolonization, is inextricable from the critique of capitalism’ (Bartolovich 2002: 6). This is the debate that has dogged postcolonial studies from its very beginning in the Western academy. Critics, from both within and outside, have argued that the field has been unequal to the task of understanding any larger connection because it arose in, and was shaped by, a particular historical moment—that of the rise of post-structuralism, postmodernism and deconstruction (all are often used synonymously by many critics) in the Western academy. In an oft-cited essay, Kwame Anthony Appiah pronounced that:

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: a relatively small, Western-style, Western

trained group of writers and thinkers, who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa.

(Appiah 1996: 62–63)

Appiah makes his point by contrasting such Westernised intellectuals with others who live in Africa: whereas the former are always at the risk of becoming ‘otherness machines, with the manufacture of alterity as our principal role’, in Africa itself ‘there are those who will not see themselves as other’. Whereas ‘postcoloniality’ as it pertains to these ‘Western-style’ intellectuals ‘has become ... a condition of pessimism,’ in Africa,

[d]espite the overwhelming reality of economic decline; despite unimaginable poverty; despite wars, malnutrition, disease, and political instability ... popular literatures, oral narrative and poetry, dance, drama, music and visual art all thrive. The contemporary cultural production of many African societies, and the many traditions whose evidences so vigorously remain, is an antidote to the dark vision of the postcolonial novelist.

(Appiah 1996: 69)

Certainly, art and culture may ‘thrive’ amidst poverty and disease, but does such art and culture necessarily share a common, optimistic ‘vision’? Even though they may not agree with this easy generalisation about indigenous cultural production, several recent critiques of postcolonial studies reiterate the crux of Appiah’s argument about ‘postcoloniality’. Arif Dirlik calls ‘postcolonialism’ a ‘child of postmodernism’ which is born not out of new perspectives on history and culture but because of ‘the increased visibility of academic intellectuals of Third World origin as pacesetters in cultural criticism’ (1994: 330). He too argues for the ‘First world origins (and situation)’ of the term postcoloniality. Aijaz Ahmad also attributes a postmodern outlook and sensibility to what he calls ‘literary postcoloniality’ situated in the Western academy.

Of the various critics who have written in this vein, Dirlik formulates the case against 'postcolonialism' most vehemently: he argues that David Harvey and Fredric Jameson established an interrelation of postmodernism and late capitalism that can now be extended to postcolonialism. If postmodernism is, in Jameson's words, the 'cultural logic' of late capitalism, then postcolonialism is also complicit with the latter. In this view, both postmodernists and postcolonialists celebrate and mystify the workings of global capitalism. Even the 'language of postcolonialism ... is the language of First World post-structuralism'. Therefore, postcolonialism, which appears to critique the universalist pretensions of Western knowledge systems, and 'starts off with a repudiation of the universalistic pretensions of Marxist language ends up not with its dispersal into local vernaculars but with a return to another First World language with universalist epistemological pretensions' (1994: 342). So Dirlik modifies Appiah's critique to suggest that 'Postcoloniality is the condition of the intelligentsia of global capitalism' (1994: 356).

This is a scathing indictment indeed, and at many points it touches several earlier critiques of post-structuralism and post-modernism as Euro-centric philosophies, articulated by intellectuals within as well as outside the Western academy. Nearly 30 years ago, for example, Nancy Hartsock pointed out that post-structuralist theories of split and agonistic subjectivity came into vogue just at the moment when marginalised subjects were finding a more powerful collective voice (1987: 160). Is the notion of the decentred subject the latest strategy of Western colonialism? As Denis Epko puts it:

nothing stops the African from viewing the celebrated postmodern condition ... as nothing but the hypocritical self-flattering cry of overfed and spoilt children of hypercapitalism. So what has hungry Africa got to do with the post-material disgust ... of the bored and the overfed?
(Epko 1995: 122)

But does hungry Africa or naked India need to resurrect older ideas of the unified humanist subject, or go back to older accounts of human history that did not take gender or race seriously?

Dirlik argues that postcolonial studies has not seriously considered the way in which our world is necessarily shaped by the operations of capitalism—both the way in which capitalism globalizes, drawing various local cultures and economies into its vortex, and how it weakens older boundaries and decentres production and consumption

While capital in its motions continues to structure the world, refusing it foundational status renders impossible the cognitive mapping that must be the point of departure for any practice of resistance.

(Dirlik 1994: 356)

Whether this neglect is due to the disciplinary training and affiliations of postcolonial critics or their political/philosophical orientation, there is no doubt that neither local nor global cultures, neither nation nor hybridity can be thought about seriously without considering how they are shaped by economic systems. However, it is more debatable whether such neglect makes postcolonial critics agents of global capital! Unfortunately some of the debates reproduce reductive versions of both Marxism and post-structuralism, and, as such, retard the possibility of a more nuanced dialogue.

The South Asian Subaltern Studies project, according to Gyan Prakash, represented one such attempt, deriving 'its force as postcolonial criticism from a catachrestic combination of Marxism, post-structuralism, Gramsci and Foucault, the modern West and India, archival research and textual criticism' (1994: 1490). Prakash implies that when the subaltern historians combine these different perspectives, they also transform each of them. But O'Hanlon and Washbrook (1992) liken trying to combine Marxist and post-structuralist insights to trying to ride two horses at the same time. Writing on Latin American Subaltern Studies, Florencia Mallon asserts the value of negotiating the 'fertile tensions' between different theoretical approaches and the necessity of postcolonial critics and historians becoming 'stunt riders' (Mallon 1994: 1515). While within literary and cultural studies, we often see a too-easy pluralism—where all theories, regardless of their incompatibility, are regarded as equally available for the critic—Mallon's term,

‘fertile tensions’ acknowledges the *difficulty* of putting ideas from different philosophic, political and methodological traditions in conversation.

Over the last two decades, many scholars have suggested that such ‘stunt riding’ has proved impossible. The South Asian Subaltern Studies became progressively hostile to Marxism instead of revising it, according to its critics, because the collective adopted ‘linguistic’, ‘Saidian’ and post-structuralist frameworks, and therefore privileged cultural and religious identity, and East-West differences over all other aspects of colonial India (S. Sarkar 1997). One such critique has received a lot of recent attention—sociologist Vivek Chibber’s *Postcolonial Theory and the Spectre of Capital* (2013) which also blames the collective for turning ‘away from its roots in cultural Marxism and toward the greener pastures of post-structuralist irrationalism’ (283). Chibber argues that in suggesting the socio-economic fabric of India reveals the limits of the reach of European capitalist modernity, the Subaltern historians have not understood that capitalism *itself* produces what appear to be different kinds of modernities across the world. What the Subaltern School identifies as a stubborn resistance to capitalism in India is actually itself an effect of the functioning of capital. Moreover, in locating Indian difference from the West in irrationalism and religion, the Subaltern historians rehearse Orientalist paradigms; having bought into a post-structuralist valorising of all difference, they can only explore the particular rather than also understanding how it is connected to the universal (i.e. capitalism which has spread all over the world).

Chibber’s understanding of the global work of capitalism is not new. Some years earlier, Manu Goswami had also argued that anticolonial intellectuals and movements desired, and also claimed they already possessed, an autonomous space ‘untouched by the perceived abstract logic of capitalism and exempt from the geographies of domination that constituted colonial worlds’ (2004: 278). This earlier history ‘resonates with ... recent claims of an alternative modernity and radical singularity’; but in a sense this is itself made possible by the ‘internal differentiation and fragmentation’ of capitalist modernity, a modernity which projects the ‘mirage’ of universality, of ‘empty homogenous time’

and an ‘abstract homogeneous space’ (279). Goswami is attentive to the production of racial difference in the colonies, but Chibber does not discuss race as an issue that interrupted earlier Marxist discussions of global capitalism. (Nor, ironically, do the Subalternists; ‘cultural difference’ is not identical with ‘race’, or for that matter with caste and they often equate the ideologies and practices of upper-caste Hinduism with an autonomous Indian space resistant to capitalist modernity). Cedric Robinson’s 1983 book *Black Marxism, the Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, to consider yet another example of such important earlier work, had argued that conventional Marxism could not grasp the racial character of capitalism, either within Europe or outside it. Racial differentiation, it showed, began within Europe, and predated its encounter with Africa, which then reshaped and deepened it; capitalism also built upon feudal discrimination rather than replacing it. For Marx, the colonial system was a “‘strange God” who perched himself side by side with the old divinities of Europe on the altar, and one fine day threw them all overboard with a shove and a kick’ (Marx 1977: 229–30). But in fact this did not happen: religious and racial prejudice deepened. Robinson wrote that the tendency of capitalism was ‘not to homogenize but to differentiate—to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into “racial ones”’ (1983: 23). Thus, Robinson argues, the working class within Europe was always racialised, and the relationship between European and non-European capital was asymmetrical. Such concerns were central to many non-European Marxists, whose work has been central to postcolonial theory. But as Chris Taylor points out, Chibber defines postcolonial theory in such a way that Marxism is *necessarily* located outside it—this can only happen by ignoring the large body of ‘Marxist thinkers whose work was foundational for, or retroactively incorporated into, the postcolonial canon: George Padmore, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Kwame Nkrumah, Amílcar Cabral, Walter Rodney ... ’ (Taylor 2013). Chibber ultimately resurrects a rigid and unimaginative Marxism, turning his back on those issues that he accuses postcolonial theory of exaggerating. As a result, he too cannot satisfactorily address the question of the uneven development of global capital, which he

says the Subaltern School analyses erroneously; as we have already discussed in Chapter 1, this is a subject that needs a theory of race as well as one of class, of global difference as well as the spread of capital, of culture as well as economics.

These debates remind us what is at stake in searching for an expanded Marxist vocabulary, or retaining a supple analysis of culture, gender, race and language while rethinking class and economic structures. Can we abandon the grand narratives that once dominated the writing of history without also abandoning all analysis of the *relationships* between different forces in society? To insert gender into our understanding of history, for example, is to move away from class as a 'grand narrative', according to which historical development is shaped primarily by class struggle. But the point of 'adding' gender to class is to show how neither one can be fully understood without the other. If we really believe that human subjects are constituted by several different discourses, then we are obliged to consider such intersections. Thus in order to listen for subaltern voices we need to uncover the different histories that were previously obscured by grand narratives, but we still need to think about whether and how these different histories are woven together. The narratives of women, colonised peoples and non-Europeans *revise* our understanding of colonialism, capitalism and modernity: these global narratives do not disappear but can now be read differently. We need to move away from global narratives not because they necessarily *always* swallow up complexity, but because historically they have neglected key areas of social conflict, and once we have focused on these submerged stories and perspectives, the entire structure appears transformed.

One of these major revisions is with regard to the rise of capitalism itself. Stuart Hall writes that 'the "postcolonial" marks a critical interruption into that whole grand historiographical narrative [of the transition from feudalism to capitalism]' which had neglected the 'global dimension' of this transition, and turned it into 'a story which could essentially be told from within its European parameters' (Hall 1996a: 250). In Chapter 1, I discussed this point, and how economic historians of Asia, as well as scholars of pre-modern Europe have suggested that the story of the birth of capitalism is far more complicated than that offered

by Marxist scholars, who have taken for granted the world domination of Europe from the sixteenth century on. We have also considered how Marxist accounts of colonialism and racism had little vocabulary for culture, literature and ideologies. Stuart Hall also pleads for more discrimination between different kinds of postmodern critics: some of them *'may'* believe that the global has fragmented into the local but most of the serious ones argue that what is happening is a mutual reorganization of the local and the global, a very different proposition' (1996a: 257). In other words, we need to distinguish between thinkers who adopt postmodernism as a philosophical creed, and others who signal the need for new critical and analytical tools to understand the contemporary world. Thus minority intellectuals and feminists have felt affinities with post-structuralism, but have also been sceptical about its claims; feminists have suggested that they pioneered alternative ways of thinking about history, language and subjectivity which were subsequently made fashionable in a different way by academic post-structuralism (Newton 1989). Indeed I want to point out that considerations of gender are either entirely left out or minimised in the battles between postmodernism, postcolonialism and Marxism, or between postcolonial intellectuals inside and outside the Western academy. For feminists especially, the sweeping divide between 'third world Marxism' and 'first world' postmodernism, as suggested by writers like Ahmad, is extremely problematic. Feminist politics in the third world ranges across a large spectrum, but it has always had to negotiate a complex relationship with Marxist struggles at home, as well as with women's movements and writing in the West. Their affinities and disagreements cannot be addressed by continuing to divide Marxism from post-structuralism, and culture from economics.

Throughout this book I have tried to show how anti-colonial movements and intellectual traditions have both borrowed from and critiqued Marxism as well as other philosophical and political traditions. These debates remind us that the search for new analytical procedures is precisely political, and that theoretical debates often develop alongside political movements, both informing and learning from them, and that theoretical debates need to develop alongside political movements, and vice-versa.

The Latin American Subaltern Studies Group was more conscious of this overlap than its Indian counterpart; its founding statement recognised that 'Clearly, it is a question not only of new ways of *looking* at the subaltern, new and more powerful forms of information retrieval, but also of building new relations between ourselves and those human contemporaries whom we posit as subjects of study' (1993: 121). The African-American critic Cornel West once noted that even Frederic Jameson's Marxist critique of post-structuralism

is too far removed from the heat of political battles, too little reflective on and about the prevailing political strife ... the present fragmentation of the North American Left, the marginalization of progressive micropolitical formations, and the rampant mystification of North American life and culture impose severe constraints upon Jameson's textual practice; nonetheless, more substantive reflections on 'practical' political strategies seem appropriate. My plea here is not anti-intellectual or anti-theoretical but rather a call for more sophisticated theory aware of and rooted in the present historical and political con-juncture in American capitalist civilization.

(West 1982–83: 196)

Remember that Ratna Kapur calls for a greater dialogue between theorisation of politics and political practice from the opposite direction, suggesting that, in order to be politically effective, the Indian women's movement must complicate its understanding of women, gender and sexuality by engaging with postcolonial feminist theory. For Kapur, understanding that 'woman' is not a homogeneous category will help rather than retard the fight against the neoliberal state.

While some critical polemics often redraw the battle-lines between activism and theory, Marxism and postcolonial studies, and map them onto questions of global location in a reductive way, this book has tried to show how and why we need to engage with the substantive questions at stake in these debates. To this end, I have tried to show that both within and beyond what is usually understood as 'postcolonial studies', there is work that ranges across disciplines and locations, and that challenges us to

think about the histories, legacies and contemporary manifestations of colonialism and racism. For this we often have to go beyond the Western academy, and often beyond the academy itself, reclaiming both philosophical and activist traditions as our own. In the concluding chapter, I turn to new horizons and challenges for the field, posed both by new scholarship and new political developments.

NOTES

- 1 The phrase is Timothy Brennan's (1990: 47). Hutchinson and Smith (1994), and Bhabha (1990) are useful collections of current writings on the nation.
- 2 Giddens is quoting Daniel Bell, 'The World and the United States in 2013', *Daedalus*, 116: 3 (1987) 14.
- 3 Warner (1987) discusses the iconography of the female form, although she never ventures outside Europe in her study.
- 4 See Leila Ahmed (1992); Mernissi (1987); el Saadawi (1986); Azar Tabari and Nahid Yahgeneh (1983).
- 5 There are several versions of this essay: Spivak (1988) and (1985a). See also Spivak (1987) for further discussion of colonial archives and the recovery of the colonial subject.

CONCLUSION

THE FUTURE OF POSTCOLONIAL STUDIES

Ever since the second edition of this book came out a decade ago, some of the best known practitioners of postcolonial studies, like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, claim they ‘no longer have a post-colonial perspective. I think postcolonial is the day before yesterday’ (Spivak 2013: 2). For some postcolonialists, both within and outside literary studies, such rethinking has been prompted by their engagement with new challenges, such as those posed by environmental studies. Thus, Dipesh Chakrabarty finds that all his ‘readings in theories of globalization, Marxist analysis of capital, subaltern studies, and postcolonial criticism over the last twenty-five years’ have not prepared him for the task of analyzing the ‘planetary crisis of climate change’ (2009: 199). In this conclusion, I want to briefly reflect on some of these challenges and what they might mean for a postcolonial critique.

Let me start with ecology, which is not a new concern for many intellectuals and activists concerned with the contemporary legacies of colonialism. For decades now, the environmental activist Vandana Shiva has exposed the connection between colonialism and the

destruction of environmental diversity. She argues that the growth of capitalism, and now of trans-national corporations, exacerbated the dynamic begun under colonialism which has destroyed sustainable local cultures; these cultures were also more women-friendly, partly because women's work was so crucially tied to producing food and fodder. Other feminist environmentalists are more sceptical of such an assessment of pre-colonial cultures, which, they point out, were also stratified and patriarchal; however, they agree that questions of ecology and human culture are intricately linked. Especially in the so-called third world, they state, one cannot talk about saving the environment while ignoring the needs of human lives and communities (Shiva 1988; Agarwal 1999).

Precisely such a disconnect, Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martínez-Alier (1997) point out, is evident in American environmentalism and its obsession with the wilderness. Rob Nixon further notes that this wilderness obsession is celebrated in American literature as well as in natural history, where 'There is a durable tradition ... of erasing the history of colonized peoples through the myth of the empty lands. ... a prodigious amount of American environmental writing and criticism makes expansive gestures while remaining amnesiac towards non-American geographies that vanish over the intellectual skyline' (Nixon 2005: 236). Nixon suggests such 'spatial amnesia' is one reason why 'postcolonial criticism' has been suspicious of earth-first 'green-criticism' and therefore has not engaged with questions relating to the environment. Such engagement is particularly necessary given the battles all over the third world between environmental activists (such as Ogoni writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria) and big multi-national companies, which, acting in concert with the nation-state, despoil land and destroy communities. Of course, there is no shortage of writing on this question for postcolonial studies as a field to include within its canon (such as the many writings of Saro-Wiwa himself). As I have argued throughout this book, we should work towards such inclusions, so that the scope of postcolonial studies is enlarged beyond the scholarship produced in the Anglo-American academy.

If the US obsession with a 'wilderness tradition' results in a 'spatial amnesia' about non-American geographies, the tradition

itself is premised on a deliberate erasure of the genocidal history of settler colonialism vis-à-vis Native American peoples. Post-colonial criticism has not engaged sufficiently either with this history or its legacies. Jodi A. Byrd and Michael Rothberg suggest that this is the result of 'indigenous people's sense of living under ongoing colonial projects—and not just colonial legacies—and from postcolonial studies' over-reliance on models of colonialism in South Asia and Africa that do not necessarily speak to the settler colonies of the Americas, Australia and New Zealand' (2011: 2). The problem, however, is not just one of reliance on different models of colonialism; Vilashini Cooppan points out that from its inception

[there is] a prevailing version of postcolonial studies in the United States that so embraces its aura of 'new work' and its dual allegiances to high theory and a rather reified, distanced, and monolithic 'Third World literature' that it largely estranges itself from the individual and collective histories of several important allied traditions such as American studies, Native-American studies, African-American studies, Asian-American studies, Latino studies, and Gay and Lesbian studies. (Cooppan 1999: 7)

Despite the fact that there are pressing political overlaps between disenfranchised peoples and groups across the world (some of which I shall turn to shortly), there are also important differentials between them: Native Americans or African-Americans, however disenfranchised, are citizens of the most powerful nation-state in the world; on the other hand, at least within the United States, many immigrants from the third world are either from relatively well-off sections of society, or even when not, have participated in what Toni Morrison has called a 'most enduring and efficient rite of passage into American culture: negative appraisals of the native-born black population' (Morrison: 1993, 57), an ugly process that makes solidarities as difficult as they are necessary.

Of course, questions of 'indigeneity' and 'ongoing colonial projects' are not limited to the particular settler colonial societies mentioned by Byrd and Rothberg. They are germane to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and the displacement and

marginalization of Arabs in the region. The parallel between them was evoked by Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, and has been thoughtfully explored by many activists and intellectuals, but the issue remains highly contentious (see Darwish n.d.; Baroud 2003; Warrior 2014). Finally, the displacement of indigenous communities and the theft of their land are also defining features of many spaces that have been privileged in postcolonial studies, such as South Asia and Africa, as is evident from environmental struggles there. Ken Saro Wiwa led MOSOP, or the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People, an indigenous group in southeast Nigeria, whose oil-rich homelands were targeted for drilling by multinationals, leading to their large-scale displacement and to wide-scale environmental destruction. Shell Oil finally admitted that it had collaborated with the Nigerian military dictatorship in the execution of Saro Wiwa in 1995. In India, the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA; Save the Narmada River Movement) led widespread protests against a project, funded by multinational as well as indigenous capital, to build scores of large dams across central India. The protests highlighted not just the ecological damage but the displacement of thousands of tribal peoples all across the Narmada valley. Finally, it was the Indian Supreme Court which ruled that construction of the dams should continue. Chittaroopa Palit, one of the leaders of the NBA, says that she and her comrades ‘learnt a lot about the structures and processes of globalization through these struggles’. Especially valuable was the lesson that

though international political factors, such as the character of the governments involved, the existence of able support groups in the North that play an important part, they cannot supplant the role of a mass movement struggling on the ground. Soon after the SPD government in Berlin refused a guarantee to Siemens, the German multinational, for building the dam in Maheshwar, it agreed to underwrite the company's involvement in the Tehri dam in the Himalayas and the catastrophic Three Gorges Dam in China—both just as destructive as the Narmada project; but in neither instance were there strong mass struggles on the ground.

(Palit 2003: 91)

Palit discusses the ways in which the NBA developed new forms of resistance by drawing on the rich experience of the local people and their knowledge of the land. But its self-conception and practices were also shaped by the methods of the Gandhian anti-colonial struggle, and gathered enormous support from women's groups, trade unions and left parties in the country, as well as connected with other people's movements internationally.

In sharp contrast is the resistance to the plunder of the forests in Central India by iron and bauxite mining companies. The movement here is led by Maoist guerrillas who have taken control of large swathes of territory and are being hunted by the police and the army. Writer Arundhati Roy reminds us that tribal people in Central India have a history of resistance that predates Mao by centuries:

the Ho, the Oraon, the Kols, the Santhals, the Mundas and the Gonds have all rebelled several times, against the British, against zamindars and moneylenders. The rebellions were cruelly crushed, many thousands killed, but the people were never conquered. Even after Independence, tribal people were at the heart of the first uprising that could be described as Maoist, in Naxalbari village in West Bengal (where the word Naxalite—now used interchangeably with 'Maoist'—originates).

(Roy 2010: n. p.)

Roy writes that the constitution of free India 'ratified colonial policy and made the State custodian of tribal homelands. Overnight, it turned the entire tribal population into squatters on their own land. It denied them their traditional rights to forest produce, it criminalised a whole way of life' (2010: n. p.) Roy and many others have documented how the Indian State is acting in the interests of large iron and steel or bauxite and aluminium producing conglomerates, which are simultaneously national and global.

I have been suggesting that questions of indigeneity and the environment—two issues that were neglected by institutionalised postcolonial studies—highlight the fact that internal colonialism is a feature of the formally decolonised world as well as of

formerly settler colonial societies. These two issues also alert us to the overlaps between colonialisms of yore and the workings of global capital today, a subject that I have touched upon in the Introduction to this volume. Over the last decades it has become clearer than ever that global and local capital, acting through the nation-state in most cases, is encroaching ever more deeply into areas of the world still available as natural and human resources. The forced and continual encroachment of 'the commons', a phrase that refers to traditions of shared land and resources that can be found all over the world, is still ongoing. Indeed, focusing on these four issues—the environment, indigeneity, colonial legacies and global capital—can help us understand that global capitalism today has both retained and refined the dynamics of plunder and colonialism that marked its inception.

The enclosure of the commons was, Karl Marx explained, crucial to the birth of capitalism. He described the process in England: beginning at the end of the fifteenth century, the forcible usurpation of communal property occurred first 'by means of individual acts of violence' and later through the Parliamentary Acts for Enclosures of the Commons (this is not unlike the US takeover of Native American or Mexican territories, or the process Arundhati Roy describes in the case of the Indian constitutional takeover of tribal lands). Along with slavery and colonialism, the takeover of the commons and the conversion of various forms of collective property rights into private property involved dispossessing large sections of the population, both in the colonising and colonised countries, so that wealth would be accumulated by a few. It also turned those dispossessed people into landless labourers and forced them into a cash economy; their work (as well as, in the case of slaves, their bodies) was thus 'commodified'. Marx described this process of dispossession and proletarianisation as 'primitive accumulation', remarking that the concept was as central to political economy as original sin was to theology.

But the term 'primitive accumulation' is somewhat misleading in so far as it suggests that the process was at work only at an early stage of capitalism. In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Rosa Luxemburg suggested the need to revise Marx; she argued that Marx visualised capitalism as a closed system, sufficient in itself.

Instead, she argued that for capitalism to thrive it constantly needs new markets for its goods, which cannot be consumed entirely within the system. Thus it always needs to ‘trade’ with non-capitalist social formations by whatever means necessary:

Its predominant methods are colonial policy, an international loan system, a policy of spheres of interest—and war. Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process.

(1951: 452)

It also needs to encroach on spaces, workers, and goods (or ‘productive forces’) that lie outside its purview:

Capital, impelled to appropriate productive forces for purposes of exploitation, ransacks the whole world, it procures its means of production from all corners of the earth, seizing them, if necessary by force, from all levels of civilization and all forms of society.

(358)

Capitalism’s central dynamic, the constant search for markets, resources and labour, thus involves the ongoing need to draw in whatever still remains open of the non-capitalist environment.

(446)

Luxemburg’s ideas remain important today for two reasons. Firstly, she alerts us to the deep historical connections between trade and colonialism (Amitav Ghosh’s recent book, *The River of Smoke* offers a deeply compelling fictional account of this process by looking at the opium trade and wars in China). Secondly, she reminds us that accumulation is a constant process rather than a past event; even if there are no spaces neatly outside capitalism, there are differentially ‘developed’ areas, and areas where there may be remnants of the commons, still open for enclosure. ‘Globalization’, as I have argued earlier, is a spectacular display of the energy of capital as it moves across the world in search of new markets and new raw materials, goods and labour;

while there is certainly a redefinition of older colonial and neo-colonial boundaries through this process, the newer divisions build on former patterns of dispossession. Because it is an ongoing process, David Harvey suggests that we redefine 'primitive accumulation' as 'accumulation by dispossession' (2005: 144). Harvey points out that

All the features of primitive accumulation that Marx mentions have remained powerfully present with capitalism's historical geography until now. Displacement of peasant populations and the formation of a landless proletariat has accelerated in countries such as Mexico and India in the last three decades, many formerly common property resources, such as water, have been privatised (often at World Bank insistence) ... alternative (indigenous and even, in the case of the United States, petty commodity) forms of production and consumption have been suppressed. Nationalised industries have been privatised. Family farming has been taken over by agribusiness. And slavery has not disappeared (particularly in the sex trade).

(Harvey 2005: 145–46)

At the same time, accumulation has been 'fine-tuned' through the processes of financialisation, involving 'stock promotions, ponzi schemes, structured asset destruction through inflation, asset-stripping through mergers and acquisition', and its 'cutting edge' is 'the speculative raiding carried out by hedge funds and other major institutions of finance capital' (147). But new mechanisms for dispossession have also been developed: for instance, the international bodies that enforce intellectual property rights, patents, but also new technologies of bio-piracy that target, repurpose and patent the knowledge and resources of vulnerable, poor or indigenous peoples. Water, land and air or 'the environmental commons' are now battlegrounds in many areas of the world; and we have already seen a severe erosion of welfare rights in those places where they were won through hard struggle in the previous century. Swapna Bannerjee-Guha argues that accumulation by dispossession is at the very heart of neoliberal development, concluding that it involves not just dispossession from land but 'losing rights over nature, livelihood practices, related knowledge,

even culture—all that capital needs to appropriate for its expansion and increasing profit’ (2013: 172).

Such dispossession is widespread in Asia, Africa and Latin America, but it is also evident in Europe and North America. In the latter, the exclusions enacted by settler colonialism continue, and for this reason settler colonialism has also been recently theorised as a process rather than an event. Indeed it is the logic of settler colonialism that has led scholars of indigenous peoples, such as Glen Coulthard, to engage with Marxist theory and understand accumulation as ‘an ongoing practice of dispossession that never ceases to structure capitalist and colonial social relations in the present’. However, given the situation of indigenous peoples today, Coulthard recommends ‘shift[ing] our analysis from primitive accumulation’s primary emphasis on the capital-relation to the colonial-relation’ (cited in Brown 2014: 5). Coulthard recognises the suppleness of novel forms of colonial control; via Fanon, he argues that the legal recognition of indigenous people by the colonial-capitalist state only dismantles their resistance, producing indigenous ‘subjects of empire’ who continue to be subject *to* its exclusionary processes (2007: 437–60). For Brown, the central question is whether the overlap between settler-colonialism and primitive accumulation indicates ‘a unique set of processes that we might call settler accumulation? In other words, does a distinct form of accumulation emerge from the dialectic between primitive accumulation and settler colonialism, which cannot be reduced to either of its constitutive elements?’ (2014: 1).

Older histories of race, empire and dispossession are re-inscribed in the pattern of dispossession within the heart of the new empire. Examining subprime and debt crisis in the United States, Paula Chakravartty and Denise Ferreira da Silva trace the racialised logic of dispossession that is evident in the United States. Asking who is the most vulnerable to dispossession, they note that

the question [is one] that Harvey does not even consider, one that he also seems to see as already asked and answered by the subprime mortgages themselves and their securitization, which is: what is it about blackness and Latinidad that turns one’s house (roof, protection, and aspiration) and shelter into a death trap? ... How could anyone

expect to profit from unpayable loans without debtors who were already marked by their racial/cultural difference ensuring that at least some among them would not be able to pay? This is precisely what makes 'high-risk' securities profitable.

(Chakravartty and da Silva 2012: 367)

Chakravartty and da Silva suggest that black and Latino bodies are high risk subjects both because of their poverty and because 'these "new territories" of consumption and investment have been mapped onto previous racial and colonial (imperial) discourses and practices'. That is, they continue not to be understood as fully fledged citizens of the capitalist empire, capable of rational economic exchange (368). Chakravartty and da Silva invite us to see the subprime crisis in the United States as an event that should be analysed 'through a dual lens of race and empire' (363–64). They also see it as 'a "relative" of crises that transformed the political economic horizons of Africa, Asia, and Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s', and of the destructive forms of privatised microfinance and loans to the poorest of third world women. Ananya Roy has shown how such loans are a crucial part of the 'remaking of markets in the age of millennial development', generating what she calls 'poverty capital' (2010: 216). Roy shows how microfinance works in the same way as subprime lending does; both are 'simultaneously instruments of financial inclusion and instances of exploitative, even, predatory lending' (218; Chakravartty and da Silva 2012: 364).

Influential new work on debt and capitalism, notably David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* and Thomas Picketty's *Capital*, has suggested that inequality is endemic to capitalism, being both its precondition and its result. The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protests in 2012 demonstrated a public consciousness of some of these issues in the US. Protestors highlighted the recent bailouts of failing banks and badly managed corporations, contrasting them to governmental and corporate indifference to those who had been dispossessed of their jobs, housing and pensions. Going further than that, many connected this pattern to the steady privatisation of public resources: one protest sign that I photographed in the heart of downtown Philadelphia proclaimed

the need for ‘Commons not Capitalism’ (see also Byrne 2012). The arrests of OWS protestors underlined a further tightening of the noose, so to speak, as they were forcibly shifted from public squares, town halls, and even streets. This is, of course, a process of surveillance and eviction that minority communities have been long used to, especially African-American men whose public presence is constantly policed even as unconscionable numbers of them are incarcerated or newly segregated after incarceration; Michelle Alexander in a powerful book called *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2012) argues that this process rehearses and extends earlier lines of racial segregation. But the OWS movement was itself, arguably, insufficiently engaged with questions of racial discrimination: as Rinku Sen (2011: n. p.) argued

We need to interrogate not just the symptoms of inequality—the disproportionate loss of jobs, housing, healthcare and more—but, more fundamentally, the systems of inequality, considering how and why corporations create and exploit hierarchies of race, gender and national status to enrich themselves and consolidate their power.

The work that I have been referring to here reminds us that analyses such as those of Graeber and Picketty need to incorporate discussions of race and the legacies of colonialism, since they are crucial to understanding the inequalities that capitalism builds on and perpetuates. It also underlines the need to understand the connections between inequality in the Global North and the Global South.

Recently, connections across differentiated regions and peoples of the world have been advanced from a very different perspective, one that invokes the shared plight of humanity in the face of galloping environmental catastrophe. In an essay I referred to earlier, Dipesh Chakrabarty writes that whereas historians had previously assumed that the environment changed so slowly as to be a negligible factor in human history, we have now reached ‘a tipping point’ where it is clear that human beings have become ‘geological agents’ in a much more drastic and immediately palpable way. They are now ‘the main determinant of the environment of the

planet', ushering in 'a new geological age' that can be called the Anthropocene (2009: 208–9). Chakrabarty concedes that

Climate change, refracted through global capital, will no doubt accentuate the logic of inequality that runs through the rule of capital; some people will no doubt gain temporarily at the expense of others. But the whole crisis cannot be reduced to a story of capitalism. Unlike in the crises of capitalism, there are no lifeboats here for the rich and the privileged (witness the drought in Australia or recent fires in the wealthy neighborhoods of California).

(Chakrabarty 2009: 221)

Chakrabarty insists that we will have to abandon our previous conceptions of human freedom that entailed thinking about 'the injustice, oppression, inequality, or even uniformity foisted on them by other humans or human-made systems' because 'these critiques do not give us an adequate hold on human history once we accept that the crisis of climate change is here with us and may exist as part of this planet for much longer than capitalism or long after capitalism has undergone many more historic mutations' (208). Whereas Chakrabarty's earlier work had suggested that the writing of non-Eurocentric history was impossible given the colonialist conceptions that exerted a stranglehold over the disciplines, now the category of history itself is thrown into crisis by this planetary disaster which requires us to grasp time on a different—even non-human—scale altogether.

In a response, Ian Baucom observes that a 'new universalism: the universalism of species thinking' is being proposed here (2012: 9). To be sure, such a universalism is not identical with that advanced in the heyday of European colonialism, but it comes dangerously close to resurrecting a nature/culture divide by insisting that all human difference becomes diminished by the reality of our species-existence. No interventions are possible in the face of 'Nature, red in tooth and claw' to recall the words of Tennyson's majestic poem 'In Memoriam', a poem that also grappled with the enormity of Darwin's revelations about the survival and death of biological species, and their implications for humanity. Baucom rightly suggests that concern with our planetary condition 'must be less

distanced, less empyrean and less stratospheric; ... [H]aving caught that catastrophic glimpse from above' we need not ask 'postcolonial studies to abandon recorded history' but to engage with key moments that help us understand 'this unfolding of catastrophes' (2012: 11–12). For this, Baucom proposes that we return to

the history of the commonwealth ... to that sixteenth and seventeenth century moment in which the political was separated out from the natural and set in conceptual opposition to it. And we need to do so not only in order to discover in this moment the deep origins of the Anthropocene, but as importantly, to find in our habits of critique, in our interpretative strategies, the ability to imagine a counter concept of the commons and of the commonwealth through which we might be able to find a way out of the anthropogenetic catastrophe gathering around us.

(Baucom 2012: 18)

This was precisely the historical moment when European colonial and soon-to-be-colonial nations established what the conservative thinker German Carl Schmitt described as the first *nomos* or order of the earth, a colonial order which divided Europe and non-Europe, but also, Land and Sea. These European nations came to an agreement—the *jus publicum Europaeum*—which drew 'amity lines' across two types of

'open' spaces in which the activity of European nations proceeded unrestrained: first, an immeasurable space of free land—the New World, America, the land of freedom i.e., land free for appropriation by Europeans—where the 'old' law was not in force; and second, the free sea—the newly discovered oceans conceived by the French, Dutch and English to be a realm of freedom.

(Schmitt 2003: 94)

Although Schmitt cannot name it as such, he is really describing the way in which the global dynamic of primitive accumulation was inscribed within European law. Note that this dynamic was premised upon a colonial *division* of the elements, of land and

sea, which was nevertheless couched in the language of the openness and freedom of these elements. Note also how 'nature' is used to justify political or cultural actions, which occurs when the two are understood as conceptually distinct realms. This is exactly what happens in ideologies of race and gender, where 'nature' is invoked to justify cultural distinctions (see Stolcke 1993 for an excellent discussion of this issue).

This moment, when European colonialism began to entrench itself, has been crucial to many disciplines such as international law, world systems theory and economic theory, but their accounts pay limited attention to questions of culture and ideology, which postcolonial critique has foregrounded as central to the analysis of both capitalism and colonialism. As Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman note, 'no other critical practice has foregrounded the links between cultural forms and geopolitics to the degree that postcolonial studies has over the past four decades' (2001: 606). But postcolonial studies must engage more deeply in historical work in order to amplify these connections between culture and geopolitics; moreover, a narrow presentism obscures our view of the world we live in and postcolonial studies needs to understand pre-colonial histories precisely in order to approach the present with even greater sophistication. Some of this vital dialogue is in place, initiated by premodern scholars who have been using the insights of postcolonial theory to rethink pre-colonial and early colonial forms of contact and conflict, and who have in turn urged postcolonial critics to re-evaluate their own methods and assumptions in the light of these longer histories. I have discussed one fruitful example of this dialogue in Chapter 2 of this book—the way in which analysis of ideologies of difference in the medieval and early modern worlds can help us to think about neo-racism today and thus help us theorise race more rigorously. Literary scholarship focused on earlier periods has been especially useful in attending to hitherto neglected aspects of pre-colonial, colonial and racial histories that are crucial to understanding the later dynamics of both domination and rebellion, as well as uncovering new connections across geographical areas (see, for example, Heng 2003; Holsinger 2002, Lampert-Weisseg 2010; Kaul 2009; Cohen, 2013). Most importantly, such work takes

culture seriously, and shows why it is essential for a materialist understanding of the past.

'Extending the time-frame of our self-understanding' as Baucom puts it, should lead, not to despair, which he detects in Chakrabarty's analysis, but to a deeper commitment to 'enhancing conditions under which not just human life, but life itself can continue through the deep future of the planet' (2012: 18). This is precisely the agenda of some of the social movements I have mentioned earlier, which are part of what Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martínez-Alier have called an 'environmentalism of the poor' (1997). Such an environmentalism refers both to the small ecological footprint of many poorer communities in the global South, and also to the struggles they have waged seeking to protect both biodiversity and their livelihoods. Along with many other mobilisations, these movements (which are widely divergent philosophically and differently innovative in their political practices) challenge and expand the agendas and scope of postcolonial studies.

In this conclusion, I have offered an inevitably partial examination of such challenges, indicating some new directions postcolonial studies has either taken, or must take. I have highlighted four areas: the environment; the history and present of indigenous peoples and societies; premodern histories and cultures; and the ongoing colonisation of territories, labour and peoples by global capitalism. All of these demand fresh thinking about colonial history, the shape of freedom, racial hierarchies, gender dynamics, and community. I have suggested that such thinking is taking place, in the academy and beyond. Many commentators have suggested that postcolonial studies should not be thought of as a discrete field so much as an approach that has been honed by work on colonial dynamics and legacies in several disciplines; nevertheless, it is also a formation within the academy, shaped largely within English departments. Throughout this book I have examined postcolonial studies in both these senses, and indicated points of intersection and tension between them. I have also indicated how some of the fundamental insights of postcolonial studies were developed outside the academy, within anti-colonial and other movements. Despite the bitter and often valid critiques of literary postcolonial studies as not materialist enough, as too

reliant on post-structuralism, as not political enough, this institutional formation did help in expanding the concerns and vision of a Eurocentric literary academy, and in many senses straining the bounds of the discipline from where it had sprung. The best work within it showed why cultural analysis is essential to understanding colonialism and its aftermath today.

I have also discussed some recent scholarship and political movements that show why that the colonial past and the globalized present are deeply interconnected. Whether or not we see World Literature or Globalization Studies as having superseded Postcolonial Studies, all of them will have to engage with these connections if they are to be more than academic trends. Postcolonial critique, however we interpret the term, can be meaningful only in conversation with scholarship and activism across the globe that strives to achieve a truly postcolonial world.

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