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CARFAX

The postcolonial *flaneur* and other fellow-travellers: conceits for a narrative of redemption

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Perhaps the most signal component of Walter Benjamin's complex bequest to Western aesthetics is the revamped trope of the *flaneur:* a celebrated hangabout completely lost in a crowd while contemplating the wonders of the megalopolis.[1] Yet in his intense, self-absorbed absorption, the *flaneur* is unaware that there may be other *flaneurs* in the crowd who are equally taken in by the intoxicating wonders of the vast city.

To master his narrative, the *flaneur* must take into account the 'tales' of *fellow-flaneurs* and competitors, a conceptual and spatio-temporal impossibility which spells doom for all master-narratives and paradigmatic discourses. Walter Benjamin may have met a gruesome end while fleeing the onslaught of fascism in Europe, but by this intuitive insight into the futility of all foundational projects, he has exacted a supreme revenge on his totalitarian tormentors.[2]

After a period of relative influence and some measure of academic stardom, the doctrine of postcolonialism appears to have suffered serious ideological reverses. Question marks have been put after the validity of its intellectual claims. The viability of its politics has been subjected to pitiless scrutiny, and its major apostles have been derided as belonging to a rootless diasporic intelligentsia on sabbatical from the harsh political realities of the Third World. This reversal of fortunes is not in itself a unique development. It is perhaps anxiomatic of our troubled times that all ideological tendencies and movements prefixing themselves with 'post' often end up in the warehouse of unclaimed mail.

Postmarxism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, postfeminism and now postcolonialism have suffered largely the same fate, but with different inflections. In a sardonic commentary, Terry Eagleton has observed that 'the term "post", if it has any meaning at all, means business as usual, *only more so*'.[3] Thus, if their hubris is a function of the anxieties of the dominated, their naive triumphalism, their premature and even presumptuous celebration of ascendancy have laid them open to harsh, retributive justice. Like the mighty ocean that has merely receded, the parent ideology often returns with more devastating fury.

The aims of this article are threefold. First, it proposes to return a historical materiality to the categories of postcolonialism by grounding its crisis in concrete historical and material circumstances rather than mere recrim-

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inations. Second, it hopes to remap the boundaries of postcolonialism by re-examining the claims and efficacy of some of its principal concepts, particularly the concept of hybridity; the complex ideological manoeuvre surrounding the deployment of the term 'subaltern', and the disavowal of foundational categories such as race, class and nation. Finally, as a consequence of one and two above, the article attempts to strategically reposition postcolonialism as a radicalised doctrine within the struggle against the hegemonic ideology of our time: the phenomenon variously known as late capitalism, globalism and their 'end of history' mutations.[4] A neat and precise notion of the postcolonial thus enables us to appreciate why it is not yet the end of history or even the beginning of the end, but only the end of a particular beginning, that is the working out of a phase in the political evolution of mankind.

The advantage of such a historicised and materially grounded postcolonialism is that its unique strengths can then be incorporated into the strengths of its antagonistic fellow-travellers, such as neocolonialism, Fanonism, Third Worldism and neo-Africanism in a new narrative of redemption. Given the real threats to mankind as a result of urban misery, large-scale poverty even within the advanced societies of the world, the deepening marginalisation of the periphery and the real possibility of the extinction of the human species as a result of eco-disaster, the demands for such narratives, rather than being historically superannuated, have in fact become more pressing.

A word or two on methodological procedure. Unlike the famous *flaneur*, the article proceeds conscious of its limitations and the imbrications of its own narrative in the meta-narrative of the postcolonial condition. It can thus afford to meditate on its own meditations. First, by situating postcolonialism within its contemporaneous context and the occasional calumny of its critics, the article confronts it with its limitations. Second, by tracing the historical provenance of postcolonialism, the essay excavates its 'silences' and 'absences', particularly its projection of a specific colonial formation into global category. Finally, by focusing more on what is outside the literary text, the article avoids the empiricist fetishisation of the text which often bedevils the postcolonial theoretical project and shows the extent to which it is itself imprisoned in the discursive formation of a colonial–imperialist thought-process.[5]

Postcolonialism in context

Unlike all the other 'posts', with the possible exception of postmarxism, postcolonialism appears to be more of a victim of genetic privation than of intellectual or political infirmity. It is a concept in search of proper identification. Its celebrity is based on a universal assumption of its pedigree. As a result of this ambiguous paternity, it has been impossible for its various strands to get into a solid state, or for its diverse practitioners to coalesce around a central authority. Indeed, the charge that it has become 'a mere jargon', the reluctance of many scholars to accord it the status of an 'ism' reflect its lack of inner coherence or a stabilising set of ideas or fundamental ideal.[6]

The problem with postcolonialism, then, is that, lacking a clarity of objective(s), it tends to take all kinds of baggage on board; its categories becoming

elastic, its agenda open-ended. It then becomes a password for several mutually antagonistic phenomena, a riot of conflicting conceptual tendencies. The original exemplars cannot be saddled with the entire blame. Postcolonialism has operated at several levels at the same time. Some of these can be isolated. First, as a set of discursive tools for plotting the dynamics of the Third World after colonialism. Second, as a psychological delineation of the condition and status of colonial subjects after independence. Third, as a description of actually existing historical spaces, that is, the post-Independence nations of the Third World, particularly their state-formations.

There is a fourth, usually understated, level which deals with a global condition, namely the state of the colonising metropolis itself after the divestiture of its colonies. This fourth condition is extremely problematic in certain respects. How, for example, does postcolonialism respond to the continents of North and South America, where multiple and indeed mutually incompatible layers of colonies and colonisation have combined to shape the consciousness of individual nations? Or consider the case of a continent–country like Australia where the coloniser, colonised, postcolonial and indeed precolonial, as it has been rightly noted, all jostle within the same political and historical space.[7]

Within the ambit of contemporary geopolitics, the pride of place for this pre/post/ante/anticolonial cocktail must, however, go to Hong Kong, which recently regained freedom not as a new, independent nation, but as an integral part of another nation. In other words, the moment of decolonisation is swiftly followed by recolonisation (or reintegration). Economically, Hong Kong brings a First World economy, indeed a flagship of international capitalism, to a Chinese economy that is just emerging from the throes of rigid and centralised socialist planning. Culturally, a significant section of the Hong Kong populace is quite ambivalent about its lot, bringing as it does the norms and habits of liberal democracy to a political climate that is authoritarian and in a nominal sense still Marxist. In this case, the First World in the Third World collides with the ghost of the Second World.

Postcolonial theory operates within this complex intersection of postcolonialities, an endlessly criss-crossing pattern of overdetermined totalities. This excess of contents, of an overloaded signified in turn begets an excess of form, a flurry of signifiers, a stylistic exuberance which often informs the theoretical grandstanding of many of the practitioners. Hostile critics, invariably overlooking the historical materiality of this stylistic unease, have tended to dismiss postcolonial theorists for their 'mystification and obfuscations', their 'orgy of reflexifity' and their tendency to 'textual autarchy'.[8] Some have even gone as far as to suggest that postcolonial discourse is nothing but a new strategy for 'the marketing of a whole new generation of panels, articles, books and courses'.[9] But what has been lost in some of these recriminations is the profound historicity of the crisis of postcolonial discourse. It is crucial to return to this.

In the beginning

Given the all-pervading, totalising nature of colonialism, the very concept of the postcolonial is an epistemological inevitability. In sharp contradistinction to all

the other ideologies and movements prefixing themselves with ‘posts’, the postcolonial bespeaks not just an ideological or intellectual rupture but a historical, political and economic rupture. Its crisis then, as it has been hinted, is radically genetic, conflating as it often does a concrete historical fact (the actual cessation of the colonial project in its capitalist incarnation) with its political and economic superannuation. This fundamental contradiction has always returned to haunt the postcolonial project.[10]

Before it assumed its contemporary status as a conceptual buzzword, postcolonialism was quietly making the round in several discourses about the modernist and postmodernist condition. Indeed, to articulate the postmodernist condition—the alienation and psychic unease of the modern soul and the global crisis of capitalism—is also to articulate the crisis of its most forlorn victim: the colonial subject. The aftermath of the two world wars merely accentuated this crisis rather than alleviating it. In a sense, then, postcolonialism is the dialectical mirror-image of postmodernism.

It is difficult to imagine the one without the other.[11]

As it is widely acknowledged, it is within the Subaltern Studies group, which focused on Indian history and historiography from the perspective of the colonised rather than the conventional Eurocentric perspective fronting as universal category, that postcolonialism found its voice. With revisionist gusto, the Subaltern group sought to disrupt, destabilise and finally undo the solidified categories of race, class and subject through which the colonial masters and their intellectual facilitators construct the identities of the colonised and hence perpetuate their hegemony.[12] This was intellectual revolt at its most empire-threatening, except that, at that point in time, the empire was in the process of physically winding up and transmuting itself into a far more insidiously colonising imperium.

Yet if the Subaltern Studies group was the first to articulate the concept of postcoloniality, its intellectual primogeniture has been rightly located in Edward Said’s pathbreaking work, *Orientalism*. Fusing the seminal insights of Foucault’s discursive analysis with the text-decoding tenacity of New Criticism in its post-structuralist reincarnation, Said examined how the ‘reinventions’ of the orient by orientalist scholars reinforce the assumptions of cultural and historical superiority by the West. It was a defining moment in anti-Western scholarship; and as Ahmad rightly notes, Said was the first Third World intellectual to provide a non-Marxist ‘critical apparatus for defining a postmodern kind of anticolonialism’.[13]

After Said’s seminal intervention, it was possible to talk about the analysis of colonial discourse in terms of its pre-*Orientalism* and post-*Orientalism* state. Yet as Said himself recently noted, orientalism is not an easy and straightforward tale, a situation which, according to him, is often seized upon by orientalist scholars to demonstrate that opponents of orientalism cannot tell a straightforward and easy tale.[14] The same fate, but with a different emphasis, appears to have overtaken postcolonial theory. By being everywhere and nowhere in actuality, by being everything and nothing in particular, postcolonialism has collected intimate enemies and hostile friends.

Such then is the immensity of the stakes involved that the postulations

of both Subaltern group and intellectual patriarch are ceaselessly trawled by partisans and opponents alike for intellectual controversy and academic disputations. Indeed, the hostility and unease generated in western academia by Said's pioneering work are often matched by the reservations and misgivings expressed by 'postcolonial' colleagues.[15] The turbulent trajectory of Edward Said's career as a theoretical innovator and exemplary public intellectual cannot be the focus of the present essay. Suffice it to note, however, that from a parallel set of premises, the Subaltern Studies group and the author of *Orientalism* arrived at roughly the same ideological and epistemological crisis.

As the dominated fraction of the dominant elite class in India, the Subaltern group sought to distance and distinguish itself from the nationalist mystifications of an equally remiss and oppressive indigenous political class, a class which can often be found in complicity with imperialism.[16] The Subaltern project, without meaning to reduce a vast and often contradictory corpus to a single strand, thus gives voice to the voiceless and visibility to the invisible. Indeed, its identification with the downtrodden and the disempowered can be glimpsed in the Gramscian echoes of the word 'subaltern'.

But given the location of its practitioners within the class spectrum, particularly in a rigidly differentiated indigenous system, and their subsequent insertion into the circuits of an international postcolonial intelligentsia, the championing of the dispossessed by the subaltern movement was bound to generate its own contradictions.

Ideologically alienated from the ruling class while being socially dislocated from the subaltern rabble, the intellectual finds himself a victim of double displacement.

It is within this historical and material context that Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's celebrated retort that the subaltern cannot speak must be situated.[17] Despite Spivak's occasionally belligerent posturing and the heated polemics this has spawned, despite her retractions and barely convincing reformulations, her position is informed by a complex intellectual manoeuvre involving the twin strategy of dispossession and repossession.[18] From the perspective of feminism and philosophical scepticism, Spivak joins battle with Freud's reactionary and patriarchal politics, as evident in the naming of the subject of hysteria, an act of spectacular psychological brutalisation. In Spivak's opinion, this recovery of subject, which could also be seen in the naming and branding of the victims of widow sacrifice in India, is a tactic which legitimates their suffering and confirms them as permanent victims.[19]

For such improper and pernicious naming, Spivak reinvents the word, 'catachresis'.[20] From the perspective of radical feminism and a subversive Indian nationalism, Spivak tries to prevent a certain brand of non-native feminist scholarship identifiable in colonial discourse from speaking for, or identifying with, the subaltern widow. Finally, in what is obviously an endorsement of what she has described as 'the circumscribed task of the female intellectual', and without being in the least fazed by the ironic contradictions, Spivak recovers the evacuated subject for herself as the archetypal postcolonial female intellectual.[21]

It is an extremely fraught and contentious manoeuvre, not least because the 'subaltern' that emerges from this intellectual alchemy is curiously decentred

and emptied of the authority of immense suffering and persecution associated with the original. For all the suggestive radicalism of her work, it can be legitimately inferred that in an attempt to create a theoretical turf of her own, Spivak might have exchanged the uncomfortable insights of conventional class and gender analysis for the non-threatening hell-raising of agnostic (and agonistic) disputation.

Nowhere is this contradiction more apparent than in the celebrated encounter between Spivak and members of the 'native' Indian intelligentsia. Spivak's gestures of intellectual solidarity and attempts to 'speak for' them were sternly rebuffed. In a bizarre turn of phrase which perhaps confirms the worst symptoms of textual solipsism, Spivak implores hardboiled former colleagues: 'We talk like Defoe's Friday, only much better'.[22] It is a moment that combines supreme irony with the textualisation of reality. Yet in the opinion of native Indian intellectuals, their work carried certain immediate and potentially dangerous implications which makes such gestures of solidarity from an emigrated intellectual gratuitously patronising or even downright dishonest.

In the event, the well-heeled, better spoken and cosmopolitan Man-Friday finds himself (or herself in this instance) an object of sullen suspicion among the indigenous coolies.

The emigrated scholar is thus comprehensively isolated: an alienated alien even within the intelligentsia of his native country. Whatever the strivings on behalf of the subaltern in Western academe, our postcolonial theorist was to discover that the westernised India intellectual borne homewards upon the 'wings of progress' has little or nothing in common with his or her deprived and immiserated colleagues who have been left behind to face the concrete horrors of the postcolonial state.[23]

Yet there is a profound irony to all this which goes to the heart of the postcolonial problematic. The internationalist, supranational nature of the postcolonial project, particularly its hegemonic faction, is an implicit admission of the failure of the postcolonial nation.[24] But while this is true in many respects, it is not the whole truth. Indeed, the insight exists in a state of paradoxical and antagonistic complicity with the category of global capitalism. The nation-state, which is the most visible product of colonial hegemony, is also, for now, the most potent and violent site for decolonising struggle. As a matter of fact, it was the confidence and hope in the new postcolonial nations which informed the Bandung conference of 1955. Whatever the subsequent failures of the postcolonial state, the postcolonial project derived a major boost from the confident optimism of that historic gathering.

Yet what is also undeniable is the fact that, for the postcolonial intellectual subject, the failure of the postcolonial state, its inability to meet the yearnings and expectations of the populace has led to an early exodus. But there is a political price to pay for this departure. Robbed of the anticolonial energies released by the bitter struggle at the level of the nation-state, the cosmopolitan intellectual runs the risk of utter depoliticisation or political neutering. The evacuation from the nation-state may bring heightened awareness and hone intellectual tools, but it also invariably leads to an anaesthetisation of the will. In the absence of critical linkages with the radicalised intellectual factions of

other Third World countries, without a Pan-national consciousness or an international postcolonial consciousness, the exiled intellectual finds himself conducting an autotelic dialogue of elegant futility. In the particular case of the subaltern intellectual, exile appears to have compounded rootlessness and the crisis of identity rather than alleviating it.

It is within this volcanic crucible of postmodernist alienation, of existential longing and not belonging, that the concept of hybridity makes supreme political and ideological sense. Bhabha shares the philosophical scepticism of Spivak as well as her radical agnosticism. Hybridity represents the ultimate denial of origin, subject, race, class and indeed nation. Bhabha's intellectual strategy is similar to but far more sweeping and fundamentalist than Spivak's and, taken together, they represent a critique and refinement of the parameters of the Subaltern group.

Bhabha's theory exists in a gesture of postmodernist transcendence and sublation of the ultramodernist categories of colonisation and foundational discourses. Yet it is also ultimately hoisted with its own epistemological petard.

The concept of hybridity seeks to problematise and decompose the solidified categories by which racial, class and primordial identities are constructed. By insisting on the hybrid nature of the constituting self and constructing race, Bhabha has sought to decentre their totality and to get rid of it their baneful essence. This is no doubt a profoundly destabilising and decolonising manouevre. But it is not an earth-shattering discovery. Racial constructs have been a site of agonistic encounters.

The turbulent history of the twentieth century is marked by a struggle for the construction and deconstruction of racial identity. From the stout efforts of WEB Du Bois and his arch intellectual antagonist, Booker Washington, through Hitler's neo-Aryan racism, to the doctrine of negritude, Fanon's problematisation of this and Sartre's celebrated dismissal of same as an 'antiracist racism', our epoch has become a great battlefield of contending notions of race.[25]

It is not a wanton war. In their construction and articulation of the myth of racial purity and superiority, racist ideologies and ideologues have always urged the same project on the other, asking it to 'rediscover' itself, to 'go native'. As we have seen in the case of negritude, by falling into such traps, intellectuals of the 'other' usually end up reinventing and revalidating the categories of racial superiority. By insisting that solidified categories of self and race can be further decomposed, indeed by hybridising its product, Bhabha has therefore denied racist construct its breeding and breathing space.

But for some who have been involved in this project, particularly Fanon and Du Bois, the decomposition of the categories of race and the subject is only part of a complex process of reconstruction and recomposition of a universal subject who, irrespective of race and origin, can speak to universal injustice and global inequities. Having lost sight of, or having disavowed this fundamental political imperative, Bhabha inflates the psychological unease to a cosmic condition, a global category. And this is the location of hybridity's political, ideological and epistemological crisis. Since nothing is whole, since everything—and everybody—is a mongrel miscegenation, un-wholesomeness becomes a world-historic virtue.[26] Master narratives, foundational discourses and the paradigm patriarchs

are all given short shrift: 'America leads to Africa; the nations of Europe and Asia meet in Australia; the margins of the nation displace the centre; the people of the periphery return to rewrite the history and fiction of the metropolis'.[27]

It is a deracialised, denationalised, classless world and in the ahistorical and anti-material cauldron all distinctions are abolished, all class differences and differentiations are summarily liquidated and all heterogeneities are forcibly homogenised. Fanon's seminal insights into the hybrid condition of the assimilated are selectively deployed and this selective enlistment of authority is in turn justified in the name of hybridity. It is a curious, caricatural Fanon that emerges from this heady brew but certainly not the militant crusader against the iniquities of colonisation. In a remarkable feat of intellectual aplomb, Bhabha actually deploys Fanon against himself: 'The place of the Other must not be imagined as Fanon sometimes suggests as a fixed phenomenological point, opposed to the self, that represents a culturally alien consciousness. The other must be seen as the necessary negation of a primordial identity'.[28]

Bhabha's controversial deployment of Fanon has been subjected to stiff interrogations by Gates, Lazarus and Robinson among many others.[29] These interrogations take place within different ideological perspectives, different and often mutually contradictory political motivations and are themselves marked by a degree of internal stress and hostile inter-textual tiffs, as witnessed by Robinson's severe dismissal of Gates' clever adjudications. But what emerges from these insightful critiques is the extremely nuanced nature of Fanonist philosophy and the often contradictory impulses that powered it. Suffice it to note, however, that rather than seeing himself as 'a fixed phenomenological point', or constructing 'a primordial identity' for himself, what Fanon has done is to reconstruct himself as a universal subject who is able to address problems of racial injustice and global inequities. It is this remarkable transformation that made it possible for a Martinique-born psychiatrist to identify with the cause of Algerians whose race, language and culture are 'alien' to him.

Fanon, who grew up thinking that he was a white Martinican, first sought to denationalise himself only to renationalise as an Algerian in his closing years. It was obvious that, for this most cosmopolitan of intellectuals, the terrain of the nation-state remained the most fulfilling arena for anticolonial struggle. Memmi, the Tunisian novelist and philosopher, has some telling comments to make on Fanon's attempts to disown his origins, and the insurmountable difficulties.[30] But it is interesting that, years after his death, the Algerian authorities, in the process of constructing a new national identity, would see it fit, in the words of a perceptive observer, 'to deFanonise Algeria and to deAlgerianise Fanon'.[31] Thus by depoliticising Fanon, our postcolonial theorist runs the risk of complicity with his posthumous tormentors.

Bhabha's indebtedness to Lacan's assault on the unified self as a psychoanalytic object, his concept of the imaginary and Derrida's frenzied polemics against the stable, coherent text and the logocentric tyranny of Western tradition is obvious. There are also strong hints of Nietszchean irrationalism in his disavowal of agency, particularly the famous contention of the German philosopher that the deed is everything and the doer is a piece of fiction attached to the deed, as well as of the structuralist/poststructuralist celebration of the demise of the

author. The great meltdown of reality, the medium is the message antics, also suggest a combination of McLuhan with the postmodernist hallucinations of Baudrillard.

But as every student of epistemology is aware, such eclectic borrowings always come with an overdraft penalty.

Lacanian psychoanalysis is a revisionist assault on the Freudian concept of a coherent subject. The concept of hybridity is a rethreading of a revisionism. Its crisis is thus underwritten by the conceptual impasse of Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean philosophy. Underlying the whole amalgam is the old empiricist problematic with its fragmented and fragmenting technique, its preference for scattered and isolated facts which spare the mind uncomfortable political conclusions. Hence the new critical preference of hybridity for the reading of isolated texts rather than the totality of literary production. There can be little doubt as to why this methodological monadism, this preference for mini-narratives as opposed to grand narratives and synthesis should find an ideal breeding ground in an academe still in thrall to new criticism and its benign mutations. Postcolonialism, as it is marked by the concept of hybridity, is a symptom pretending to be a diagnosis.

The intellectual charms of contingency and the renunciation of agency have not stopped the agents of history. Hybridity did not stop three wars between India and Pakistan, despite the fact that the latter was hacked out of the former on the eve of independence. Indeed, neither has hybridity prevented the homogenous clans of Somalia from permanently waging war among themselves nor did it prevent the grotesque barbarity visited upon US soldiers in that unhappy land. Hybridity or even assimilation did not confuse a superpower like France as to the real object and objective of its forty three documented interventions in 'postcolonial' Africa, and neither did it dissuade the Nigerian military authorities from executing Kenule Saro-Wiwa, who was making legitimate demands for his distinct nationality within the realities of a multinational Nigeria. Thus it is that an initial beneficial insight into the schizophrenic nature of the self, the overdetermined instability of race, class, nationalities and their textualisations is turned into a premature arrival at the place of the golden truth.

It will, however, be unfair and inaccurate to charge Bhabha with all the sins of postcolonialism. Bhabha has enunciated an intriguing but inevitably flawed theoretical ethos. That this is often appropriated by commentators as a manifesto for postcolonialism can hardly be blamed on him. Part of the problem lies with the fact that, unlike a fundamental credo, the doctrine of postcolonialism developed dynamically often in confrontation with shifting reality and political uncertainties. With the possible exception of Bhabha, Prakash and Spivak, there is a startling lack of a declaration of intent, of a stable worldview and coherent theology. Ahmad, who is often lumped together with the group, is more of a friendly enemy, with his devastating critiques and memorable put-down of individual members.[32]

For postcolonialism, then, it is a long and tortuous pilgrimage from Said's *Orientalism* through the Indian subcontinent to metropolitan America via British cultural studies. In such a perilous odyssey, any baggage can become a treasured lifeline. To sustain the turbulent dynamics and maintain the momentum, ac-

counts have to be settled with hostile exigencies. To distinguish itself from orthodox class analysis, the original identification with the subaltern had to be jettisoned and the subaltern subject had to be decentred and stripped of 'primordial identity'. From the fact that the subaltern cannot speak, it is a short step to the position that the subaltern must not be spoken for. As a result of this complex negotiation, the single issue which gave postcolonialism much of its radical impetus, its threatening postmarxian vigour, is exchanged for a higher political correctness leaving nothing but aimless linguistic virtuosity in its wake.

As is always the case, the weary traveller has suffered accommodation. In an influential survey of postcolonialism, Dirlik has turned painful reality into an equally painful joke by locating the precise point of capitulation in the moment the postcolonial critic arrives in the USA.[33] The writer from the periphery has arrived to fictionalise the miseries of colonial brutalities and won laurels from the centre but only after submitting himself to the grim mechanics of multinational publishing. The postcolonial theorist has acquired stardom in Western academe but only after rewriting and revising his script and draining it of its poisonous effluents. The leash is not as long as it seems. In gloating over his theoretical prowess, in celebrating his new found cultural power, the postcolonial theorist may be celebrating a far more insidious form of disempowerment.

The severity of some of the objections to postcolonialism, particularly from critics of Third World origin, attests to a certain dismay about its miscognition of its true status.

According to Dirlik, postcolonialism 'divorces itself from the material conditions of life, in this case global capitalism as the foundational principle of contemporary society globally'.[34] Kuan-Hsing Chen is even less sympathetic: 'Beyond the therapeutic function so that previous colonizers feel better, postcolonial discourse in effect obscures the faces of a neo-colonial structure in the process of reconstructing global capitalism, and potentially becomes the leading theory of the global hegemonic re-ordering'.[35]

These are not unjust strictures, but they tend to overlook the immense historical, material and epistemological difficulties faced by postcolonial discourse and its practitioners which have been enumerated above. It is obvious that, in view of the stakes, the task of rescuing postcolonial discourse from its crisis cannot be left to the pioneers. The most promising statement in this regard is Gyan Prakash's definition of postcoloniality as representing 'a new beginning, one in which certain old modes of domination may persist and acquire new forms of sustainance but one that marks the end of an era'.[36]

It is in this respect that postcolonialism must be confronted with its most startling 'silence' to date, which is the absence of any meaningful dialogue or conceptual linkages between its concerns and those of other Third World sectors, particularly the continent of Africa. Assuming that its conceptual basis were to be unimpeachable, then hybridity must not work only between the centre and the margins, between the coloniser and the colonised but also within margins, among the colonised. Otherwise it only privileges colonisation with the determinate agency it had tried to deny it, and further demonstrates the fact that the hybrid is not so much a hybrid as a species of a specific colonial consciousness.

Postcolonialism or neocolonialism?

Beyond the occasional glancing references and the deployment of intellectual authority, the absence of an authentic and well sustained African input into the paradigm of contemporary postcolonialism is one of the most intriguing intellectual developments of our time.[37] While this cannot be entirely blamed on non-African exegetes of the postcolonial doctrine, it nevertheless bespeaks a profound historical amnesia which immediately puts a question mark on the claims of postcolonialism to represent the global condition of the colonial subject after the cessation of empire and the departure of the former colonial masters. The sparse reflections on the postcolonial project emanating from intellectuals of African origins, when they are not studiedly dismissive of its 'prematurely "postmodern" senescence' or downright contemptuous of it as the musings of a 'comprador intelligentsia', normally assume its paradigm to be given.[38]

Three reasons for this come readily to mind, and it may be necessary to explore even their vulgar dimensions in order to put the matter to rest. First, it may be that African scholars are not intellectually equipped for the mindbending conceptual acrobatics that have come to be associated with postcolonial discourse. This is not as petulant as it seems, given the self-exultations of certain postcolonial critics about the power and potency of their theoretical constructs, and the furtive insinuations in racist discourses about the fundamental incapacity of the African for abstraction and conceptual thinking. Second, it can be objectively argued that the crisis of tertiary education on the African continent and the ravages of an anti-intellectual ruling class have rendered intellectuals of African origin technically disempowered and hence intellectually disadvantaged. Third, it is probably the case that the specific colonial experience of Africa fostered a different intellectual and political consciousness which has pushed it along a parallel but not necessarily antithetical trajectory.

The first two can be quickly disposed of, as they appear to be intertwined. While African intellectuals appear, in the main, to be temperamentally cool towards grand theorising and its formalist chicanery, this cannot be ascribed to a poor capacity for abstraction. The ravages of institutionalised corruption and mismanagement may have led to the virtual collapse of tertiary education on the continent, but it has also created a diasporic intelligentsia which has held its own in all the major institutions of learning in the Western world.

The third reason appears to throw up interesting and intriguing points of convergence and departure between the colonial history and experience of the Indian subcontinent and the African continent. In both continent and subcontinent, the final struggle for independence was taken over from the native nobility by intellectual figures. But in India while these ascendant intellectual figures were, in the main, also scions of the feudal aristocracy, in Africa they were, with one or two exceptions, members of an emergent elite class with no blood ties to the tribal chieftains. In India the Subaltern Studies group emerged from this crucible after some complex intellectual negotiations with a nativised Marxism—a well entrenched colonial discourse and the complicated side-effects of

Marx's own devastating critiques of oriental despotism and the 'idiocies' of rural life in India—and Ghandi's romance with Ruskin's philosophy.[39]

On the Indian side of the colonial divide were reform-minded members of the feudal nobility such as Ghandi and Nehru. On the African side were radical members of a new elite class who were often in contention with both the ancient nobility and the new colonial masters. The advent of a settler-class colonialism in Africa also raised the stakes for the colonialists and increased the pressures on its intellectuals to come up with endless 'reinventions' and *raisons d'etre* for the colonising mission.[40] These contrasting locations in the class spectrum and colonial disposition were to profoundly affect the tempo and colouration of the final struggle against colonisation in both India and several African countries.

For the emergent African political elite, an even more radicalising factor was the phenomenon of slavery and the slave-trade which is not to be confused with indentured migrant labour. By the middle of the 19th century, the entire coast of West Africa was teeming with colonies and settlements dominated by freed slaves and their offspring who were to inject a heady dose of anti-imperialist doctrine into the struggle against colonialism. To be sure, this 'recaptive' class had its blacklegs, its dandified and disorientated aesthetes who preferred to be known as 'negrosaxons' and whose inanities were later to elicit some withering comments from Blyden.[41]

But for its radicalised intellectual faction, their militant even if occasionally confused black nationalism was influenced by the stirring of an anti-colonial literature of freed slaves now domiciled in the metropolis. This nascent literature was exemplified in the works of Equaino, Cuguano and Sancho—former slaves who were lionised and feted by London's literary society in the 18th century. Their influence can be glimpsed in works such as *Ethiopia Unbound* and *The Blinkards* by the Gold Coast nationalists, Casely-Hayford and Sekyi Kobina; and the radical, militantly anticolonial press pioneered in what was to become modern Nigeria by the descendants of freed slaves.[42] By the turn of the twentieth century, this militant tradition was to receive an even more radical fertilisation from the work and personal influence of African-Americans such as Du Bois and Blyden.

Given such antecedents, it was not surprising that the political and intellectual vanguard of this tradition did not equate the occasion of political independence as synonymous with the superannuation of colonial domination. A new term—neocolonialism—was adopted which describes the grim coupling of political independence with continuing economic and cultural subjugation.[43] Thus, while postcolonialism bespeaks a confident if incautious triumphalism at the cessation of colonialism, neocolonialism betokens a nervous insecurity, a hard-headed refusal to believe that the sinister ghost of colonial exploitation has been exorcised once and for all. The emergent African political elites were also greatly helped in their struggle against colonialism by the fact that, unlike the entrenched conservative discourse of orientalism, the most influential faction of pioneering Africanist scholars was impelled towards a radical evaluation of colonialism and its baleful legacy.[44]

This dialectic was also at work in the hegemonic literary tradition of post-independence Africa and the period immediately preceding it. African

writers, in the main, saw it as an obsessional duty to settle accounts with colonialism, to confront its reinvention of African culture and tradition, and to clear the historic cobwebs of an unflattering legacy. The strategy of confrontation may vary from writer to writer, but, irrespective of temperament and ideological inclination, the end result was very much the same. Thus, against the grand narrative of colonialism, a Chinua Achebe, first in the history-making *Things Fall Apart* and later in the even more subtly devastating *Arrow of God*, would pose a 'native' narrative which demonstrates that Africa did not first hear of culture with white colonisation.[45]

For a Camara Laye, the strategy ranged from a romanticisation of an idyllic African community in *The African Child*, to a stern attempt to compel Western civilisation and its exemplars to have respect for non-Western and even anti-Western notions in *The Radiance of The King*. Both Ngugi and Armah, from different ideological perspectives, arrived at an even more militant disavowal of colonialism and its postcolonial ramifications. Armah's *Why Are We So Blest?* is a ferocious anti-Western and anti-capitalist piece of fictionalised polemic, while his *Two Thousand Seasons* is a militant manifesto for an urgent return to primeval African roots. Despite his orthodox Marxism, there are echoes of this fierce Africanism in Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* and his radical renunciation of the English language as a creative tool. Even a normally conservative writer like the Nigerian poet JP Clark penned a diatribe against American—and by extension Western—culture: *America, Their America*.

This attempt to repossess an African space forcibly evacuated by colonialism can be seen in negritude poetry, despite its internal contradictions, and in the writings and poetry of Augustino Neto and Amilcar Cabral. Despite the fact that his early theoretical interventions constituted an almost violent assault on this literature of nostalgia and repositioning which he dismissed as 'neo-tarzanist' and 'totemist–narcissistic', Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian Nobel laureate, would later come to a substantial renegotiation with its socio-cultural categories.[46] Indeed, from a different angle, Soyinka's attempt to evolve an authentic African dramaturgy, in contradistinction to the universalising and imperialising motifs and motives of Aristotelian theatre, represents a crucial phase of this project of recovery. Underwriting all these ventures is an implicit belief that colonialism is not yet done with the continent of Africa, even while many of the writers were also acutely aware of the depredations of Africa's postcolonial ruling class.[47]

This turbulent political, philosophical and literary heritage and its complex intercalation with neocolonialism weigh heavily on the contemporary African intellectual both consciously and unconsciously and whether at home or in the diaspora. It accounts for a certain reluctance to abandon the struggle at the level of the nation-state even within the paradoxical context of exile and its internationalist milieu. It may also account for what appears to be the abiding preference of its most influential faction, irrespective of ideological hue, for foundational discourses or an oppositional validation of these, be it in political science, sociology, philosophy, literary theory and History.[48]

Thus while the doctrine of postcolonialism is informed by a bouyant optimism that colonialism has, in the main, been supplanted, the credo of neocolonialism is suffused with the profound pessimism that colonialism has merely been

transformed into a new and potentially far more devastating form of colonisation. Postcolonialism is marked by a virtual decoupling of the original postcolonial critic from the parent nation-state, whereas the neocolonial African theorist is almost fanatically coupled to the parent nation-state. The irony does not end here. While the postcolonial state in the Indian subcontinent—at least in India—has created something new, a uniquely Indian political culture despite its foibles, the postcolonial state in Africa, has, by and large, suffered serious reverses, often leading to the phenomenon of failed states.[49]

The nation of India in this respect represents an ironic tribute to both colonisation and the resilience of the local populace. Something radically different, a far from perfect but workable blending, has been created from the violent encounter of two empires. It is in this sense that we can speak of a truly postcolonial development. But by the same token, even the postcolonial chaos of sub-Saharan Africa bespeaks a novel political development, a monstrous misarticulation of the colonial and the precolonial. Yet as the contrast glaringly demonstrates, the major ideological drawback of neocolonialism may well be the obvious attempt to hide the failures of Africa's postcolonial elite under the sins of colonialism.

What the foregoing analysis establishes is the non-existence of a homogeneous postcolonial culture and the impossibility of a unified postcolonial subject either in the diaspora or in the 'home' nations. The postcolonial subject is a varied and variegated entity, in short a decentred psychic totality marked by differing colonial experience and a differentiated postcolonial trajectory. So is the postcolonial nation-state and indeed the postcolonial notion of class. This, however, as we have seen is not the same thing as a hybrid pot-pourri but distinct identities consolidated *in difference*. Bearing this crucial point in mind, the strengths of the different postcolonial subjects and their different colonial traditions can then be harmonised in a new project of collective redemption. The power and potency of the concept of hybridity and the postcolonial critique of foundational discourses lie in the fact that they prevent and problematise such premature harmonisation and totalisation. This has engendered a paradigmatic slide which renders vulnerable the old-fashioned analysis of class, race and nationality. The great irony is that, in doing so, postcolonialism is in working collaboration and complicity with the most comprehensive mode of harmonisation and totalisation known to human history. This is the phenomenon of globalisation.

Globalism and Postcolonialism

Globalism has become perhaps the most important philosophical postulation of our time. It is not hard to see why. For radical theorists, the phenomenon of globalisation represents an intensification of the unequal exchange between the centre and the margin, the deepening of the crisis of dependency, the canonisation of poverty and immiseration, the frantic flight of all modes of capital, natural, cultural, intellectual from the periphery to the old metropoles and the attempted co-option of all human societies into the capitalist logic of development.[50]

Yet there are also advocates and champions of globalisation who insist that it represents the resumption of the interrupted march of capitalism towards global prosperity and the emancipation of mankind from misery and the isolation that breeds economic tyranny. As proof they point to the new found power and prosperity of nations hitherto at the periphery, to the globalisation of communication, via satellite and the internet, which has made life difficult for surviving autocracies, and to the unipolarity of political values.[51]

What is certain, however, is that, unlike the situation obtained in the first part of the 20th century when capitalism was just the dominant mode articulated to other modes of production, global capitalism is the unchallenged ideology of our era and neocapitalist relations of production and distribution the supreme engine powering the world economic order. This triumphant resurgence of capitalism with its social Darwinism and political philosophy of liberal democracy has been celebrated as 'the end of history'.[52] Its main features are the validation of transnational class interests and alliances, the regrouping of the core-nations of the North in a godfatherism of international capital, the ascendancy of multinational corporations as the ultimate economic superpowers, and the emergence of the Bretton Woods institutions as the *de facto* law-givers and government of the less developed world.

These epochal developments, which have given rise to notions of a 'borderless' world and the decline of the nation-state, have without any doubt profoundly altered the geopolitical equations of the entire globe.[53] Yet this is not the entire story. For while the nation-state has declined in certain respects as a result of globalisation, the contradictions of globalisation have also engendered fierce territorial resistance and a revalidation of the sanctity of the national border both within the centre and the periphery.[54] In that respect, since the nation-state is itself a by-product of capitalist mode of production, its death may well be exaggerated.

Be that as it may, the most remarkable casualty of these developments is the centralised, socialist economy and by extension the socialist world. With the collapse of actually existing socialists states, the notion of a Second World has been rendered effectively defunct. If there is no Second World, the very idea of a Third World is rendered ambiguous and technically null and void.[55] It must be restated that before it became a marker of underdevelopment, the notion of the Third World which emerged from the historic Bandung conference of 1955 was of newly independent, non-aligned postcolonial democracies distinct and distinguishable from two existing worlds, ie the advanced capitalist nation-states of the West and the socialist states. Despite what they call their preference for a mixed economy, it was obvious that the signatories to the Bandung communiqué had a fundamental bias towards socialist planning.[56]

It is crystal clear, however, that the collapse of the Second World and the capitulation of virtually all the emergent postcolonial nations to structural adjustment programmes and the dictates of the Bretton Woods institutions have made their platform untenable. Yet, whatever the nature of IMF- and World Bank-inflicted reforms, these nations are as far away from the First World as ever. Indeed, from all the available indices of wealth, health care, infant mortality, education, income and the 'feel-good factor', global inequality is

greater now than at any other period in modern history.[57] It does seem as if a far more insidious and potentially more devastating form of colonisation has been unleashed on the world. What then is there for the postcolonial doctrine to elaborate?

There is a sense in which it can be argued that globalisation is the *unstructured* response of capitalism to the combined threat represented by the loss of empire with its huge market and vast raw material and the militarist threat incarnated by a commandist mode of production ominously demonstrated in the Second World war when Soviet production of munitions often outstripped that of the First World.[58] Since a physical recolonisation is a historic impossibility, better an economic reoccupation which is even more lethal. The implosion of the Soviet state was facilitated by the lure of consumer capitalism, superior techonologised propaganda and the globalisation of modes of mass-communication which beamed a paradisiacal state of existence in the Western world to a hapless soviet citizenry and its stricken leadership. While it will be historically presumptuous and analytically naive to ascribe a determinate agency to this development, it is certainly not unfortuitous that the turn of the 1980s witnessed the ascendancy in the most important capitalist capitals of ultra-rightist fractions that were united by an economic neoliberalism and a shrill demonisation of the old Soviet empire.

In this sense, globalisation can be seen as a peculiarly postcolonial, end of empire response by the colonising metropole and its allies, a *logical* transformation of the dynamics of capitalism *after the epoch of colonisation*. And this is precisely what places a refocused postcolonial discourse, as the most historically privileged intellectual response to this development, in the best position to serve as its ideological nemesis. But for now postcolonialism appears more like a casualty than a nemesis. Indeed, with the concept of hybridity aping and unconsciously validating the capitalist homogenisation of global economic structure, with its abolition of the primordial self subconsciously underwriting the loss of selfhood under global capitalism, with its hybridisation of racial identity secretly valorising the nation-less and borderless triumphalism of transnational capital, and with the downsizing of the subaltern echoing the forcible abolition of the old underclass categories in the process of globalisation, postcolonialism appears like a strong ally of global capitalism rather than its profound foe. What began as a radically anti-colonial project has transformed into an intellectual facilitator of a new mode of colonisation.

Yet, with or without postcolonialism, global capitalism has not had it all its own way. Indeed, the very moment of globalisation and consolidation of capital also generated its own contradictions, new instabilities and unanticipated vistas of resistance. This can be seen in the proliferation of urban ghettoes in the great cities of the West, the rise in homelessness and begging, the phenomenon of Green movements and single-issue parties, primordialist groupings and associations, in short a whole range of oppositional alliances. In its dying moments, the Third World has resurrected in the First World. But in deference to the logic of globalisation, all these oppositional energies and antagonistic tendencies remain localised and critically isolated.

As a corollary, however, it can also be argued that globalisation has not

succeeded in homogenising even the capitalist mode of production. There remain pockets of local resistance, and in one or two instances a form of successful domestication. The infusion of certain oriental concepts and institutions such as *Pancasila*, *Chaebol*, the *Samurai* code of conduct and *Confucian* ethics into capitalist relations of production and distribution has thrown up intriguing mutants which combine Western-style affluence with the traditional values of the orient. While international capital may continue to dominate global relations, these new capitalised societies are bound to produce interesting mutations which will in turn problematise the categories of global capitalism.

In most African countries, particularly the predominant black nations south of the Sahara, the huge loans of the IMF and the World Bank have not led to showcases of capitalism, or liberal democracy for that matter. They have often produced startling economic monstrosities. In the particular case of the old Zaire of deposed Mobutu, they led to a modern kleptocracy; and in the case of Nigeria they have produced what has been diagnosed as a new variant of prebendalism.[59] These are indeed forms of negative resistance to globalisation, and they reflect what Bayart has described as the 'profound historicity' of both the precolonial formations of Africa and its postcolonial succession.[60] The so called rogue states, the pariah nations and outlaw potentates are nothing but historic refractories of this complex interaction of social, economic and political forces.

The ravages of global capitalism, its grim inequities, the dislocations attendant upon its forcible occupation of pre-capitalist and non-capitalist economic spaces have led to a new subject–object dialectic. Were it to be the case that this new dialectic can no longer be posed in terms of the old Marxian framework, then its major conceits, particularly the vision of redeemed humanity, can still be critically enlisted. It is the theoretical terms of this that remain to be worked out.

Towards a narrative of redemption

The postcolonial subject, being a historic product of globalisation, is also a globalised phenomenon. Yet there can be no denying that its most concentrated abodes are the corners of the world which have suffered the most from the devastating impact of global capitalism. These are the traditional hells on earth, the nations of the South, particularly sub-Saharan African, which have witnessed startling regressions into prehistory. But just as the globalisation of capital has rendered national borders and the nation-state quite vulnerable, the postcolonial response to the historic pressure has also produced worldwide movements, epic migrations of biblical proportions without any respect for international boundaries, and the phenomenon of an uncaptured migrant intelligentsia exercising the exit option. It is in this regard that the postcolonial is truly post-colony.

In this borderless, porous world, unpoliced because it is virtually unpoliceable, Africa leads to the USA and Asia leads to Europe and vice versa. This world-historic problematisation of global space is often celebrated in some versions of postcolonial theory but for the wrong reasons. There is an enormous and intriguing differentiation. For the postcolonial intelligentsia of Third World origin, the traffic is one way: towards the USA and Europe. But for many

postcolonial theorists of First World origin, the intellectual traffic, in a gesture of affirmation and solidarity with the oppressed, is towards Africa, Asia and nations of the South. This profound identification, as demonstrated in the works of the surviving clan of writers, cultural theorists, historians and philosophers of humanist persuasion, offers great resources for a narrative of redemption and hence cannot be dismissed on the altar of sectarian intolerance or some unadulterated Third World solidarity. Indeed, as Dirlik has noted, the power and prestige often enjoyed in First World academes by Third World intellectuals often make their native colleagues appear victims of racist oppression.[61]

The separation of victim from victimiser in the era of global capitalism must proceed within this minutely discriminated and overdetermined context. The First World boasts of postcolonial victims, just as Africa and the Third World boast of economic and cultural agents of globalisation. While this subject–object dialectic frees globalisation from the burden of racial malevolence and the unworthy imputations of premeditated genocide, it also clears the space for an analysis of the new classes, new historic blocs and new cultural modes created by its global economic imperialism. If globalisation represents the interrupted march of capitalism, then the interrupted narrative of its acute disorder and discontents must be also resumed. This is not so much an agonistic luxury but a historic necessity. For it is by such narratives of an imagined better world, such tales that broach the possibilities of human emancipation, such utopian dreams of the realm of absolute freedom that nudge mankind towards a higher *telos*.

It is in this respect that the poststructuralist deconstructions, the caustic demystifications of solidified global categories of race, class and religion of a Salman Rushdie, the benign but radically destabilising mythopoesis of a Gabriel Marquez, the cultural nationalism of an Achebe and even the nationalist conservatism of a Vargas Llosa, must all be seen as part of a provisional clearing of ground.

It is historically imperative for a refashioned postcolonial doctrine to be a vital part of this global project against emergent forms of domination. It can only do this by globalising its own perspective, by directing attention to the paradoxically and painfully narrow base of global capitalism and hence its limitations as an instrument of human emancipation. Postcolonial doctrine must do this conscious of its status as victim in a new dialectic of subjugation. But, while it must borrow tropes from the great narratives of emancipation of the past and their impassioned narrators, it must also learn, from Walter Benjamin's cautionary tale of the *flaneur*, about the pitfalls of master-narratives and their totalitarian pretensions.

Notes

1 For an absorbing meditation on Walter Benjamin and the trope of the *flaneur*, see T Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, London: Verso, 1981. See also Susan Sontag, 'Under the sign of Saturn' in Sontag, *Under the Sign of Saturn and Other Essays*, New York: Doubleday, 1980.

2 Walter Benjamin reportedly committed suicide when he was refused entry to a neutral country while fleeing fascism during the second world war. For a recent essay that chronicles his intellectual ordeals and triumphs,

see OK Werckmeister, 'Walter Benjamin's angel of history, or the transfiguration of the revolutionary into the historian', *Critical Inquiry*, 22(2), 1996, pp 239–267.

[3] T Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p 381.

[4] For a recent critical discourse on the 'end of history' ideology see J Derrida, 'Spectres of Marx', *New Left Review*, 205, 1994. For a critical endorsement of this see A Ahmad, 'Reconciling Derrida: "Spectres of Marx" and deconstructive politics', *New Left Review*, 208, 1994, pp 88–119.

[5] For a critique of the tendency of postcolonial theory towards textual autarchy, see B Parry, 'Signs of our times', *Social Text*, 28/29 1994, p 19. For a recent discourse on the Foucauldian notion of discursive formation, particularly from the perspective of interculturalism, see Biodun Jeyifo, 'The reinvention of theatrical tradition: critical discourses on interculturalism in the African theatre' in Erica Fischer-Lichte *et al* (eds), *The Dramatic Touch of Difference*, Tubingen: GNV, 1990, p 249.

[6] See A Ahmad, 'The politics of literary postcoloniality', *Race and Class*, 36(3), 1995, p 7; and J Goss, 'Postcolonialism: subverting whose Empire?', *Third World Quarterly* 17(3), 1996, p 244.

[7] A Ahmad, 'The Politics of literary postcoloniality', p 9.

[8] A Dirlik, 'The postcolonial aura: Third World criticism in the age of global capitalism', *Critical Inquiry*, 20(2), 1994, p 333; and G Eley, quoted in N B Dirks, 'Introduction' in Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p 13.

[9] A McClintock, 'The angel of progress: pitfalls of the term post-colonialism', *Social Text*, 31/32, 1992, p 93.

[10] In an insightful critique of McClinton's sweeping notion of colonisation, Ahmad delimits colonisation to its capitalist phase. See 'The politics of literary postcoloniality'. However, Ahmad's orthodox Marxian perspective and overly rigid delimitation lead him to overlook, even within the terms of his own conceptual formulation, the phenomena of Roman and Turkish colonisation. For a useful treatise on the linkages between nascent capitalism and the emergence of the modern nation-state, see S Amin, *Class and Nation*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980.

[11] See D Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990; and C Wise '(Post)modernity/(post)coloniality', *Arena*, 5, 1995, pp 40–42.

[12] For a sample of early postcolonial discourse see Ranajit Guha & G. Spivak (eds), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

[13] A Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures.* London: Verso, 1992, p 222. The reference for Said's work is E Said, *Orientalism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

[14] 'The lion of Judea', *Guardian* 20 May 1997.

[15] For the most devastating appraisal of Said's work to date see Ahmad, *In Theory*. For a stout defence of Said's position and as a consequence a withering dismissal of Ahmad, see Benita Parry's review of *In Theory*, in *History Workshop Journal*, 36, Autumn, 1993 pp 232–241.

[16] For the concept of the dominated status of intellectuals within a dominant elite, see P Bourdieu, 'The intellectual field: a world apart' in Boudieu, *In Other Words*, Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990.

[17] G Spivak 'Can the subaltern speak?, in C Nelson & L Grossberg (eds) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Urbana, IL, 1988.

[18] For examples of Spivak's retractions and reformulations, see J Stephens 'Cultural dominance at its most benevolent: an interview with Spivak', *Arena*, 6, 1996, pp 35–52.

[19] For a penetrating elucidation of the phenomenon of widow sacrifice in India and a benign critique of Spivak see A Loomba, 'Dead women tell no tale', *History Workshop Journal*, 36, 1993, pp 209–227.

[20] For a recent discussion of the notion of catachresis, see A Kumar, 'Catachresis is her middle name: the cautionary claims of Gayatri C Spivak', *Cultural Studies*, 11(1), 1997, pp 176–179.

[21] For Spivak's existential self-projections, see GC Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed S Harasym, New York: Routledge, 1990; and *Outside in The Teaching Machine*, New York: Routledge, 1993. See also *In Other Worlds, Essays in Cultural Politics*, New York: Menthuen, 1981.

[22] See Maria Koundoura, 'Naming Gayatri Spivak', *Stanford Humanities Review*, Spring 1989, pp 91–92.

[23] G C Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic*, pp 67–68. Ahmad is particularly contemptuous of this category of postcolonial intellectual. See Benita Parry's intervention in her review of Ahmad's book. See also Dipesh Chakrabarty's review of *In Theory* in *Cultural Studies* II(1), 1997. According to Chakrabarty in obvious reference to Ahmad: 'It takes a very modern, very affluent, very uprooted kind of intellectual to debunk both the idea of progress and the sense of a "long past", not to speak of modernity itself', (p 147).

[24] Apart from Bhabha's obvious anti-national narration, Spivak, for example, also sees herself as thinking 'more of the state than the nation'. See 'Cultural Dominance', p 47.

[25] For a most recent survey of this battlefield, particularly as it concerns the Black intelligentsia, see R Posnock, 'How it feels to be a problem: Du Bois, Fanon, and the "impossible life" of the black intellectual', *Critical Inquiry*, 23(2), 1997.

[26] For a recent discussion which makes a shrewd distinction between Said's and Bhabha's notions of hybridity, see 'Not a postmodern nomad: Les Terry's conversation with Stuart Hall', *Arena*, 5, 1995, pp 59-68.

[27] H K Bhabha 'Introduction: narrating the nation', in Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, London: Routledge, 1990, p 6.
[28] H K Bhabha 'Foreword: remembering Fanon', in F Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, 1991 p x.
[29] H L Gates, 'Critical Fanonism', *Critical Inquiry*, 17(3), 1991; N Lazarus 'Disavowing decolonisation: Fanon, nationalism, and the problematic of representation in current theories of colonial discourse', *Research in African Literatures*, 1993, 24(4), pp 69–98; and C Robinson 'The appropriation of Frantz Fanon', *Race and Class*, 34, 1993, pp 79–92.
[30] Albert Memmi, 'The impossible life of Frantz Fanon', *Massachusetts Review*, 14, 1973, pp 9–39.
[31] I L Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study*, New York: 1973, p 244.
[32] Dirlik in 'The postcolonial aura' clearly separates Ahmad from the postcolonial group, a separation for which Ahmad in turn expresses profound gratitude. See 'The politics of literary postcoloniality'. But for a clear if severe disinheritance of Ahmad see Chakrabarty's review of *In Theory*, in *Cultural Studies*.
[33] Shosat asks: 'When does the postcolonial begin?'. To which Dirlik facetiously but quite penetratingly replies: 'When the postcolonial critic arrives in America'. See 'The postcolonial aura', pp 328–329.
[34] A Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*, Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1992, p 99.
[35] K-H Chen. 'Not yet the postcolonial era: the (super) nation-state and transnationalism of cultural studies, *Cultural Studies*, 10(1), 1996, p 43.
[36] G Prakash 'Introduction', in Prakash (ed), *After Colonialism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p 5.
[37] See for example the collection entitled *After Europe: Critical Theory and Post-Colonial Writing* (S Slemon & H Tiffin, eds), Sidney: Dangaroo, 1989.
[38] For example number one, see B Jeyifo, 'Oguntoyinbo: modernity and the 'rediscovery' phase of postcolonial literature', *Comparative and General Literature*, 43, 1995, p 99. For two, see A K Appiah 'Is the post- in postmodernism the post- in postcolonial?', *Critical Inquiry*, Winter, 1991, p 348.
[39] For a penetrating account of this intellectual drama in India, see P Brantlinger, 'A postindustrial prelude to postcolonialism: John Ruskin, William Morris and Ghandism', *Critical Inquiry*, 22(3), 1996, pp 466–485.
[40] The classic critique of this tradition remains, E Hobsbawn & T Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
[41] Blyden dismissed them as 'apes and parasites'. As quoted in L Spitzer, *The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism, 1870–1945*, Madison, WI: Wiser, 1974, p 113.
[42] For a useful review of this tradition, see O Dare, '126 years of patchy service', in Dele Giwa (ed), *Nigeria: Twenty-five Years On*, Lagos: Academy Press, 1985.
[43] See K Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, New York, 1965.
[44] For an exploration of this issue, see S Howe, 'The interpreter: Basil Davidson as public intellectual', *Race and Class*, 36(2), 1994, pp 19–44.
[45] For an insightful analysis of this phase of cultural recovery, particularly in the hegemonic postcolonial African fiction, see B Jeyifo, 'Determinations of remembering: postcolonial fictional genealogies of colonialism in Africa', *Stanford Literature Review*, 10(1–2), 1993, pp 99–116.
[46] See B Jeyifo, 'Oguntoyinbo, modernity and the "rediscovery" phase', and 'Wole Soyinka and the tropes of disalienation', in Jeyifo (ed) *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*, New York: Pantheon, 1993.
[47] For an exploration of this contradiction see my 'Literature in the time of tyranny: African writers and the crisis of governance', *Third World Quarterly*, 17(2) 1996.
[48] For samples, see the works of various African scholars such as the late Claude Ake, VY Mudimbe, Hountondji Echeruo, Irele, Okpewho, Jeyifo, Mazrui, Amin, Ajayi, Ekeh, etc.
[49] For a recent discussion of this phenomenon, see my 'Closed states and open borders: interrogating the fictions of postcolonial nationhood in Africa', in *Black Renaissance*, 3, 1997.
[50] See W I Robinson, 'Globalisation: nine theses on our epoch', *Race and Class*, 38(2), 1996, pp 13–33.
[51] J Sachs, 'The limits of convergence', *The Economist* 14–20 June, 1997, pp 21–24.
[52] The Classic text remains F Fukuyama's triumphalist celebration, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London: Penguin, 1992.
[53] See M Miyoshi, 'A borderless world? From colonialism to transnationalism and the decline of the nation-state', *Critical Inquiry*, Summer 1992.
[54] The recent electoral triumph of the left in France, the phenomenon of 'euroscepticism' in British politics and the remarkable rupture in the Conservative Party that this has engendered, the fierce resistance to transnational regrouping even in the periphery are all instances of the contradictory pull of globalisation towards and away from the nation-state.
[55] See MT Berger, "The end of the 'Third World?' ", *Third World Quarterly*, 15(2), 1994, pp 257–275.
[56] See J H Mittleman, 'The globalisation challenge: surviving at the margins', *Third World Quarterly*, 15(3), 1994, pp 427–441.
[57] A Sen, *Inequality Re-Examined*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

[58] There are two major historical approaches that seek to explain the phenomenon of globalisation. The first is the instrumentalist—Weberian approach which sees globalisation as a contingent, multi-centred process which is a response to a deeper but open rationality within the world-system. The second is historical–materialist in inspiration and sees globalisation as the structured but multivalent response of capitalism to a changing world which it transforms while being also simultaneously transformed by the consequences. For a brilliant condensation of the arguments, see P Wilkin, 'New myths for the South: globalisation and the conflict between private power and freedom', *Third World Quarterly*, 17(2), 1996, pp 227–238.

[59] R Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[60] JF Bayart, *The State in Africa: the Politics of the Belly*, Harlow: Longman, 1993.

[61] A Dirlik, 'The postcolonial aura', p 350.

Religion State & Society

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