(v)

Collaboration, Independence, and Liberation

At a 1969–70 seminar on imperialism held at Oxford, Ronald Robinson's paper "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism" was among the most interesting contributions. Along with Thomas Hodgkin's "African and Third World Theories of Imperialism," Robinson's "suggestion" for theoretical and empirical study showed the influence of the many post-colonial developments I have been mentioning:

> Any new theory must recognize that imperialism was as much a function of its victims' collaboration or non-collaboration—of their indigenous politics, as it was of European expansion. . . . Nor [without the voluntary or enforced cooperation of their governing elites and] without indigenous collaboration, when the time came for it, could Europeans have conquered and ruled their non-European empires. From the outset that rule was continuously resisted; just as continuously native mediation was needed to avert resistance or hold it down.[159]

Robinson goes on to explore how in Egypt before 1882 the pashas and the Khedive collaborated in permitting European penetration, after which, with the dramatic overshadowing of that sector by the Orabi nationalist rebellion, the British occupied the country militarily. He might have added, although he does not, that many of the classes and individuals collaborating with imperialism began by trying to emulate modern European ways, to modernize according to what was perceived of as European advancement. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Muhammad Ali sent missions to Europe, three decades before Japanese missions came to the United States and Europe for the same purpose. Within the French colonial orbit, gifted students were brought to France to be educated until as late as the 1920s and 1930s, although some of them, like Senghor and Césaire and many Indochinese intellectuals, turned into vigorous opponents of empire.

The primary purpose of these early missions to the West was to learn the ways of the advanced white man, translate his works, pick up his habits. Recent studies of the subject by Masao Miyoshi *(As We Saw Them)* and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod *(The Arab Rediscovery of Europe)*[160] show how the impe-

rial hierarchy was imparted to eager students from the East along with information, useful texts, and profitable habits.[161]

Out of this particular dynamic of dependency came the first long reactive experience of nativist anti-imperialism, typified in the exchange published in 1883 between Afghani and Ernest Renan in the *Revue de deux mondes,* in which the native, using terms defined in advance by Renan, tries to "disprove" the European's racist and culturally arrogant assumptions about his inferiority. Whereas Renan speaks of Islam's status as lower than that of Judaism and Christianity, Afghani asserts that Islam is "better," and claims that the West improved itself by borrowing from the Muslims. Afghani also argues that Islamic development in science occurred earlier than its Western counterpart, and, if there was anything regressive about the religion, it came from something common to all religions, an irreconcilability with science.[162]

Afghani's tone is amiable, even though he clearly opposes Renan. In contrast to later resisters of imperialism—for whom liberation is the key theme—Afghani, like Indian lawyers in the 1880s, belongs to a stratum of people who while fighting for their communities try to find a place for themselves within the cultural framework they share with the West. They are the elites who in leading the various nationalist independence movements have authority handed on to them by the colonial power: thus Mountbatten to Nehru, or de Gaulle to the FLN. To this sort of antagonistic collaboration belong such different configurations of cultural dependency as Western advisers whose work helped native peoples or nations to "rise" (one aspect has been well chronicled in Jonathan Spence's book on Western advisers, *To Change China*), and those Western champions of the oppressed—Mrs. Jellyby is an early caricature, members of the Liverpool School a later example—who represented their own versions of the natives' interest. Another example is in the competition between T. E. Lawrence and Louis Massignon immediately after World War One, described with great subtlety in an essay by Albert Hourani.[163] Each man had a genuine empathy with the Arabs who fought against the Ottomans during the war (indeed, Massignon made empathy with Islam the very center of his theory of the monotheistic community, the Abrahamic succession), yet out of imperial conviction each acted his part in the partitioning of the Arab world between France and Britain: Lawrence served Britain, Massignon France, *for* the Arabs.

An entire massive chapter in cultural history across five continents grows out of this kind of collaboration between natives on the one hand and conventional as well as eccentric and contradictory representatives of imperialism on the other. In paying respect to it, acknowledging the shared and combined experiences that produced many of us, we must at the same time

note how at its center it nevertheless preserved the nineteenth-century imperial divide between native and Westerner. The many colonial schools in the Far East, India, the Arab world, East and West Africa, for example, taught generations of the native bourgeoisie important truths about history, science, culture. And out of that learning process millions grasped the fundamentals of modern life, yet remained subordinate dependents of a foreign imperial authority.

The culmination of this dynamic of dependence is the nationalism that finally produced independent states in the once colonial countries across the globe. Two political factors whose importance had already been registered in culture now marked off the end of the period of nationalist anti-imperialism and inaugurated the era of liberationist anti-imperialist resistance. One was a pronounced awareness of culture *as* imperialism, the reflexive moment of consciousness that enabled the newly independent citizen to assert the end of Europe's cultural claim to guide and/or instruct the non-European. The second was the dramatically prolonged Western imperial mission in various regions that I have already mentioned, principally Algeria, Vietnam, Palestine, Guinea, and Cuba. But liberation, as distinguished from nationalist independence, became the strong new theme, a theme already implicit in earlier works by people like Marcus Garvey, José Martí, and W.E.B. Du Bois, for instance, but now requiring the propulsive infusion of theory and sometimes armed, insurrectionary militancy.

The national identity struggling to free itself from imperialist domination found itself lodged in, and apparently fulfilled by, the state. Armies, flags, legislatures, schemes of national education, and dominant (if not single) political parties resulted and usually in ways that gave the nationalist elites the places once occupied by the British or the French. Basil Davidson's important distinction between mass mobilization (the huge Indian crowds who demonstrated in the streets of Calcutta, for example) and mass *participation* highlights the distinction between the nationalist elite and the rural and urban masses who were briefly an organic part of the nationalist project. What Yeats does in Ireland is to help create a sense of restored community—an Ireland regaled by "a company that sang, to sweeten Ireland's wrong, Ballad and story, rann and song"[164]—but at its center stands a select group of men and women.

When the new national state gets established, argues Partha Chatterjee, it is ruled not by prophets and romantic rebels but, in India's case, by Nehru, "a state-builder, pragmatic and self-conscious."[165] To him the peasants and the urban poor are ruled by passions, not reason; they can be mobilized by poets like Tagore and charismatic presences like Gandhi, but after independence this large number of people ought to be absorbed into the state, to be

made functional in its development. Yet Chatterjee makes the interesting point that by transforming nationalism into a new regional or state ideology, post-colonial countries subjected themselves to a global process of rationalization based on external norms, a process governed in the post-war years of modernization and development by the logic of a world system whose type is global capitalism, commanded at the top by the handful of leading industrial countries.

Chatterjee is correct to say that "no matter how skillfully employed, modern statecraft and the application of modern technology cannot effectively suppress the very real tensions which remain unresolved."[166] The new pathology of power, in Eqbal Ahmad's phrase, gives rise to national security states, to dictatorships, oligarchies, one-party systems. In V. S. Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River* (1979) an unnamed African country is ruled by a Big Man, neither named nor present, who manipulates European consultants, Indian and Muslim minorities, and his own tribespeople in and out of rigid nativist doctrine (this is like the cult of Qaddafi's Green Book or Mobutu's invented tribal traditions); by the end of the book many of his subjects have been mercilessly killed; the one or two who survive the onslaught and realize what is happening—like Salim, the protagonist—decide that the situation is hopeless and yet another emigration is required. (From an East African Muslim Indian family, Salim drifts into the interior ruled by the Big Man, then leaves the place forlorn and completely dejected.) Naipaul's ideological point is that the triumph of nationalism in the Third World not only "suppresses the very real tensions . . . unresolved" in the post-colonial state, but also eliminates the last hope of resistance against it, as well as the last civilizing traces of Western influence.

Naipaul, a remarkably gifted travel writer and novelist, successfully dramatizes an ideological position in the West from which it is possible to indict the post-colonial states for having succeeded unconditionally in gaining independence. His attack on the post-colonial world for its religious fanaticism (in *Among the Believers*), degenerate politics (in *Guerrillas*), and fundamental inferiority (in his first two books on India)[167] is a part of a disenchantment with the Third World that overtook many people during the 1970s and 1980s, among them several prominent Western proponents of Third World nationalism, like Conor Cruise O'Brien, Pascal Bruckner *(The Tears of the White Man),* and Gérard Chaliand. In an interesting semi-documentary history of the earlier French support for Third World resistance, *Aux Origines des tiers-mondismes: Colonisés et anti-colonialistes en France (1919–1939),* Claude Liauzu ventures the thesis that by 1975 an anti-imperialist block no longer existed as it had earlier.[168] The disappearance of a domestic opposition to imperialism is a plausible argument about mainstream France

and perhaps also the Atlantic West generally, but it is not helpful about persisting sites of contention, whether in the new states or in less prominent sectors of metropolitan culture. Questions of power and authority once directed at the classical empires of Britain and France are now thrown at despotic successor regimes, and against the idea that African or Asian countries should remain in thrall and dependency.

The evidence for this is dramatic. The struggle in behalf of human and democratic rights continues in, to name only a few places, Kenya, Haiti, Nigeria, Morocco, Pakistan, Egypt, Burma, Tunisia, and El Salvador. Also, the increasing significance of the women's movement has put more pressures on oligarchical statism and military (or one-party) rule. In addition the oppositional culture still maintains links between the Western and the non-European world: one first sees evidence of the connection in, for instance, Césaire's affiliations with Marxism and surrealism, and later in the connection between *Subaltern Studies* and Gramsci and Barthes. Many intellectuals in the formerly colonized world have refused to settle for the unhappy fate of Naipaul's Indar, once a promising young provincial who is sought out by foundations in the United States, but now a discarded and hopeless person with no place to go.

> From time to time that is all he knows, that it is time for him to go home. There is some dream village in his head. In between he does the lowest kind of job. He knows he is equipped for better things, but he doesn't want to do them. I believe he enjoys being told he can do better. We've given up now. He doesn't want to risk anything again.[169]

Indar is one of the "new men," a Third World intellectual who springs to undeserved prominence when fickle enthusiasts in the First World are in the mood to support insurgent nationalist movements, but loses out when they become less enthusiastic.

Is that an accurate representation of what resistance politics and culture were all about? Was the radical energy that propelled Algerians and Indians into mass insurrection finally contained and extinguished by independence? No, because nationalism was only one of the aspects of resistance, and not the most interesting or enduring one.

Indeed, that we can see and judge nationalist history so severely is a testament to the radically new perspective offered on the entire experience of historical imperialism by a deeper opposition; it comes positively from the decentering doctrines of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, and negatively from the insufficiencies of nationalist ideology. It infuses Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, in which the ideologies of colonial dependency and Black

racial inferiority are shown to have been incorporated surreptitiously into the modern jargon of psychiatry, which in turn permits Césaire to use *its* underlying deconstructive theoretical force to undermine its own imperial authority. Nationalist culture has been sometimes dramatically outpaced by a fertile culture of resistance whose core is energetic insurgency, a "technique of trouble," directed against the authority and the discourse of imperialism.

Yet this does not happen all or even most of the time, alas. All nationalist cultures depend heavily on the concept of national identity, and nationalist politics is a politics of identity: Egypt for the Egyptians, Africa for the Africans, India for the Indians, and so on. What Basil Davidson calls nationalism's "ambiguous fertility"[170] creates not only the assertion of a once incomplete and suppressed but finally restored identity through national systems of education, but also the inculcation of new authority. This is equally true in the United States, where the tonic force of African-American, women's and minority expression has here and there been turned into doctrine, as if the wish to criticize the myth of white America also meant the need to supplant that myth with dogmatic new ones.

In Algeria, for example, the French forbade Arabic as a formal language of instruction or administration; after 1962 the FLN made it understandably the only such language, and set in place a new system of Arab-Islamic education. The FLN then proceeded politically to absorb the whole of Algerian civil society: within three decades this alignment of state and party authority with a restored identity caused not only the monopolization of most political practices by one party and the almost complete erosion of democratic life, but, on the right wing, the challenging appearance of an Islamic opposition, favoring a militantly Muslim Algerian identity based on Koranic *(shari'ah)* principles. By the 1990s the country was in a state of crisis, whose result has been a deeply impoverishing face-off between government, which abrogated the results of the election as well as most free political activity, and the Islamic movement, which appeals to the past and orthodoxy for its authority. Both sides claim the right to rule Algeria.

In his chapter on "the pitfalls of nationalist consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth,* Fanon foresaw this turn of events. His notion was that unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into a social consciousness, the future would hold not liberation but an extension of imperialism. His theory of violence is not meant to answer the appeals of a native chafing under the paternalistic surveillance of a European policeman and, in a sense, preferring the services of a native officer in his place. On the contrary, it first represents colonialism as a totalizing system nourished in the same way—Fanon's implicit analogy is devastating—that

human behavior is informed by unconscious desires. In a second, quasi-Hegelian move, a Manichean opposite appears, the insurrectionary native, tired of the logic that reduces him, the geography that segregates him, the ontology that dehumanizes him, the epistemology that strips him down to an unregenerate essence. "The violence of the colonial regime and counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity."[171] The struggle must be lifted to a new level of contest, a synthesis represented by a war of liberation, for which an entirely new post-nationalist theoretical culture is required.

If I have so often cited Fanon, it is because more dramatically and decisively than anyone, I believe, he expresses the immense cultural shift from the terrain of nationalist independence to the theoretical domain of liberation. This shift takes place mainly where imperialism lingers on in Africa after most other colonial states have gained independence, e.g., Algeria and Guinea-Bissau. In any case Fanon is unintelligible without grasping that his work is a response to theoretical elaborations produced by the culture of late Western capitalism, received by the Third World native intellectual as a culture of oppression and colonial enslavement. The whole of Fanon's *oeuvre* is his attempt to overcome the obduracy of those very same theoretical elaborations by an act of political will, to turn them back against their authors so as to be able, in the phrase he borrows from Césaire, to invent new souls.

Fanon penetratingly links the settler's conquest of history with imperialism's regime of truth, over which the great myths of Western culture preside:

> The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning. "This land was created by us"; he is the unceasing cause: "If we leave all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages." Over against him torpid creatures, wasted by fevers, obsessed by ancestral customs, form an almost inorganic background for the innovating dynamism of colonial mercantilism.[172]

As Freud excavated the subterranean foundations of the edifice of Western reason, as Marx and Nietzsche interpreted the reified data of bourgeois society by translating them back into primitive but productive impulses toward dominance and accumulation, so Fanon reads Western humanism by transporting the large hectoring bolus of "the Greco-Latin pedestal" bodily to the colonial wasteland, where "this artificial sentinel is turned into dust."[173] It cannot survive juxtaposition with its quotidian debasement by European settlers. In the subversive gestures of Fanon's writing is a highly

conscious man deliberately as well as ironically repeating the tactics of the culture he believes has oppressed him. The difference between Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche on the one hand and Fanon's "native intellectual" on the other is that the belated colonial thinker fixes his predecessors geographically—they are *of* the West—the better to liberate their energies from the oppressing cultural matrix that produced them. By seeing them antithetically as intrinsic to the colonial system and at the same time potentially at war with it, Fanon performs an act of closure on the empire and announces a new era. National consciousness, he says, "must now be enriched and deepened by a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other words, into [real] humanism."[174]

How odd the word "humanism" sounds in this context, where it is free from the narcissistic individualism, divisiveness, and colonialist egoism of the imperialism that justified the white man's rule. Like Césaire's in his *Retour,* Fanon's reconceived imperialism is in its positive dimension a collective act reanimating and redirecting an inert mass of silent natives into a new inclusive conception of history.

> This huge task, which consists of re-introducing mankind into the world, the whole of mankind, will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realize that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our common masters where colonial questions are concerned. To achieve this, the European peoples must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid faun of the Sleeping Beauty.[175]

How this can be enacted takes us from the apparent exhortations and prescriptions to the extraordinarily interesting structure and method of *The Wretched of the Earth.* Fanon's achievement in this his last work (published in 1961, a few months after his death) is first to represent colonialism and nationalism in their Manichean contest, then to enact the birth of an independence movement, finally to transfigure that movement into what is in effect a trans-personal and trans-national force. The visionary and innovative quality of Fanon's final work derives from the remarkable subtlety with which he forcibly *deforms* imperialist culture and its nationalist antagonist in the process of looking beyond both toward liberation. Like Césaire before him, Fanon impugns imperialism for what it has created by acts of powerful rhetorical and structured summary. These make clear imperialism's long cultural history, and—more tellingly—allow Fanon to formulate new strategies and goals for liberation.

The Wretched of the Earth is a hybrid work—part essay, part imaginative

story, part philosophical analysis, part psychological case history, part nationalist allegory, part visionary transcendence of history. It begins with a territorial sketch of the colonial space, separated into the clean, well-lighted European city and the dark, fetid, ill-lit casbah. From this Manichean and physically grounded stalemate Fanon's entire work follows, set in motion, so to speak, by the native's violence, a force intended to bridge the gap between white and non-white. For Fanon violence, as I said earlier, is the synthesis that overcomes the reification of white man as subject, Black man as object. My conjecture is that while he was writing the work Fanon read Lukacs's *History and Class Consciousness,* which had just appeared in Paris in French translation in 1960. Lukacs shows that the effects of capitalism are fragmentation and reification: in such a dispensation, every human being becomes an object, or commodity, the product of human work is alienated from its maker, the image of whole or of community disappears entirely. Most important to the insurgent and heretical Marxism put forward by Lukacs (shortly after publication in 1923 the book was removed from circulation by Lukacs himself) was the separation of subjective consciousness from the world of objects. This, he says, could be overcome by an act of mental will, by which one lonely mind could join another by imagining the common bond between them, breaking the enforced rigidity that kept human beings as slaves to tyrannical outside forces. Hence reconciliation and synthesis between subject and object.

Fanon's violence, by which the native overcomes the division between whites and natives, corresponds very closely to Lukacs's thesis about overcoming fragmentation by an act of will; Lukacs calls this "no single, unrepeatable tearing of the veil that masks the process but the unbroken alternation of ossification, contradiction and movement."[176] Thus the subject-object reification in its prison-like immobility is destroyed. Fanon adopts much of this extremely audacious thesis, which is oppositional even within oppositional Marxism, in passages like the following, where the settler's consciousness functions like that of a capitalist, turning human workers into inhuman and non-conscious objects:

> The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skins off, all that she violates and starves.
>
> The immobility [later he speaks of *apartheid* as one of the forms of "division into compartments": "The native," he adds, "is being hemmed

> in. . . . The first thing which a native learns is to stay in his place"][177] to which the native is condemned can only be called in question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonization—the history of pillage—and to bring into existence the history of the nation—the history of decolonization.[178]

In Fanon's world change can come about only when the native, like Lukacs's alienated worker, decides that colonization must end—in other words, there must be an epistemological revolution. Only then can there be movement. At this point enters violence, "a cleansing force," which pits colonizer against colonized directly:

> The violence of the colonial regime and the counter-violence of the native balance each other and respond to each other in an extraordinary reciprocal homogeneity. . . . The settler's work is to make even dreams of liberty impossible for the native. The native's work is to imagine all possible methods for destroying the settler. On the logical plane, the Manicheanism of the settler produces a Manicheanism of the natives, to the theory of the "absolute evil of the native" the theory of the "absolute evil of the settler" replies.[179]

Here Fanon is not only reshaping colonial experience in terms suggested by Lukacs, but also characterizing the emergent cultural and political antagonist to imperialism. His imagery for this emergence is biological:

> The appearance of the settler has meant in the terms of syncretism the death of the aboriginal society, cultural lethargy, and the petrification of individuals. For the native, life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler. . . . But it so happens that for the colonized people this violence, because it constitutes their only work, invests their character with positive and creative qualities. The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence.[180]

Certainly Fanon depends here on the earlier language of French colonialism, in which publicists like Jules Harmand and Leroy-Beaulieu used the biological imagery of birth, parturition, and genealogy to describe the parental relationship of France to its colonial children. Fanon reverses things, using that language for the birth of a new nation, and the language of death for the colonial settler-state. Even this antagonism, however, does not cover

all the differences that spring up once revolt begins and "life [appears to be] an unending contest."[181] There are the major divisions between legal and illegal nationalism, between the politics of nationalist reform and simple decolonization on the one hand, and the illicit politics of liberation on the other.

These divisions are just as important as the one between colonized and colonizer (whose motif is taken up, altogether more simply, by Albert Memmi.)[182] Indeed the true prophetic genius of *The Wretched of the Earth* is located precisely here: Fanon senses the divide between the nationalist bourgeoisie in Algeria and the FLN's liberationist tendencies, and he also establishes conflicting narrative and historical patterns. Once the insurrection gets under way, the nationalist elites try to establish parity with France: demands for human rights, self-rule, labor unions, and so on. And since French imperialism called itself "assimilationist," the official nationalist parties are trapped into becoming co-opted agents of the ruling authorities. (Such, for example, was the sad fate of Farhat Abbas, who as he gained in official French approval lost any hope of winning mass support.) Thus official bourgeois nationalists simply drop into the narrative pattern of the Europeans, hoping to become mimic men, in Naipaul's phrase, mere native correspondences of their imperial masters.

Fanon's brilliant analysis of the liberationist tendency opens Chapter 2, "Spontaneity: Its Strength and Weakness," the basis of which is a time lag and rhythm difference *(décalage)* "between the leaders of a nationalist party and the mass of the people."[183] As the nationalists copy their methods from Western political parties, all sorts of tensions develop within the nationalist camp—between country and city, between leader and rank-and-file, between bourgeoisie and peasants, between feudal and political leaders—all of them exploited by the imperialists. The core problem is that, although official nationalists want to break colonialism, "another quite different will [becomes apparent]: that of coming to a friendly agreement with it."[184] Thereafter an illegal group asks questions about this policy, and it is quickly isolated, often imprisoned.

> So we can observe the process whereby the rupture runs between the illegal and legal tendencies within the party . . . and an underground party, an offshoot of the legal party, will be the result.[185]

Fanon's method for showing the effect of this underground party is to dramatize its existence as a counter-narrative, an underground narrative, set in motion by fugitives, outcasts, hounded intellectuals who flee to the

countryside and in their work and organization clarify and also undermine the weaknesses of the official narrative of nationalism. Far from leading

> the colonized people to supreme sovereignty at one fell swoop, that certainty which you had that all portions of the nation would be carried along with you at the same speed and led onward by the same light, that strength which gave you hope: all now are seen in the light of experience to be symptoms of a very great weakness.[186]

Precisely that power to convey "the light of experience" is located in the illegal tendency animating the liberationist party. This party shows to all that racialism and revenge "cannot sustain a war of liberation"; hence the native makes "the discovery" that in "breaking down colonial oppression he is automatically building up yet another system of exploitation," this time giving it "a black face or an Arab one," so long as the mimic men lead.

"History teaches clearly," remarks Fanon at this point, "that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism."[187] In the image of the "lines of nationalism," Fanon understands that conventional narrative is, as we noted in Conrad's work, central to imperialism's appropriative and dominative attributes. Narrative itself is the representation of power, and its teleology is associated with the global role of the West. Fanon was the first major theorist of anti-imperialism to realize that orthodox nationalism followed along the same track hewn out by imperialism, which while it appeared to be conceding authority to the nationalist bourgeoisie was really extending its hegemony. To tell a simple national story therefore is to repeat, extend, and also to engender new forms of imperialism. Left to itself, nationalism after independence will "crumble into regionalisms inside the hollow shell of nationalism itself."[188] The old conflicts between regions are now repeated, privileges are monopolized by one people over another, and the hierarchies and divisions constituted by imperialism are reinstated, only now they are presided over by Algerians, Senegalese, Indians, and so forth.

Unless, Fanon says a little later, "a rapid step . . . [is] taken from national consciousness to political and social consciousness."[189] He means first of all that needs based on identitarian (i.e., nationalist) consciousness must be overridden. New and general collectivities—African, Arab, Islamic—should have precedence over particularist ones, thus setting up lateral, non-narrative connections among people whom imperialism separated into autonomous tribes, narratives, cultures. Second—here Fanon follows some of Lukacs's ideas—the center (capital city, official culture, appointed leader)

must be deconsecrated and demystified. A new system of mobile relationships must replace the hierarchies inherited from imperialism. In passages of an incandescent power, Fanon resorts to poetry and drama, to René Char and Keita Fodeba. Liberation is consciousness of self, "not the closing of a door to communication"[190] but a never-ending process of "discovery and encouragement" leading to true national self-liberation and to universalism.

One has the impression in reading the final pages of *The Wretched of the Earth* that having committed himself to combat both imperialism and orthodox nationalism by a counter-narrative of great deconstructive power, Fanon could not make the complexity and anti-identitarian force of that counter-narrative explicit. But in the obscurity and difficulty of Fanon's prose, there are enough poetic and visionary suggestions to make the case for liberation as a *process* and not as a goal contained automatically by the newly independent nations. Throughout *The Wretched of the Earth* (written in French), Fanon wants somehow to bind the European as well as the native together in a new non-adversarial community of awareness and anti-imperialism.

In Fanon's imprecations against and solicitations of European attention, we find much the same cultural energy that we see in the fiction of Ngugi, Achebe, and Salih. Its messages are we must strive to liberate all mankind from imperialism; we must all write our histories and cultures rescriptively in a new way; we share the same history, even though for some of us that history has enslaved. This, in short, is writing from the colonies coterminous with the real potential of post-colonial liberation. Algeria was liberated, as were Kenya and the Sudan. The important connections with the former imperial powers remain, as does a newly clarified sense of what can and cannot be relied on or salvaged from that former relationship. Once again it is culture and cultural effort that presage the course of things to come—well in advance of the cultural politics of the post-colonial period dominated by the United States, the surviving superpower.

Since much of the literature of resistance was written in the thick of battle, there is an understandable tendency to concentrate on its combative, often strident assertiveness. Or to see in it a blueprint for the horrors of the Pol Pot regime. On the one hand, a recent spate of articles on Fanon has looked at him strictly as a preacher calling the oppressed to violence, and violence only. Little is said about French colonial violence; according to the strident polemics of Sidney Hook, Fanon is nothing more than an irrational, finally stupid enemy of "the West." On the other hand, it is hard to miss in Amílcar Cabral's remarkable speeches and tracts the extraordinary intensity of the man's mobilizing force, his animosity and violence, the way *ressentiment* and hate keep turning up—all the more evident against the particularly ugly

backdrop of Portuguese colonialism. Yet one would seriously misread such texts as "The Weapons of Theory" or "National Liberation and Culture" if one missed Cabral's enabling utopianism and theoretical generosity, just as it is a misreading of Fanon not to see in him something considerably beyond a celebration of violent conflict. For both Cabral and Fanon, the emphasis on "armed struggle" is at most tactical. For Cabral the liberation gained by violence, organization, and militancy is required because imperialism has sequestered the non-European away from experiences that have been permitted only to the white man. But, says Cabral, "the time is past when, in an attempt to perpetuate the domination of peoples, culture was regarded as an attribute of privileged peoples or nations and when, out of ignorance or bad faith, culture was confused with technical skill, if not with the colour of one's skin or the shape of one's eyes."[191] To end those barriers is to admit the non-European to the whole range of human experience; at least all humankind can have a destiny and, more important, a history.

Certainly, as I said earlier, cultural resistance to imperialism has often taken the form of what we can call nativism used as a private refuge. One finds this not only in Jabarti, but in the great early hero of Algerian resistance, the Emir Abdel Kader, a nineteenth-century warrior who, while fighting the French armies of occupation, also cultivated a cloistral spiritual apprenticeship to the thirteenth-century Sufi master Ibn Arabi.[192] To fight against the distortions inflicted on your identity in this way is to return to a pre-imperial period to locate a "pure" native culture. This is quite a different thing from revisionist interpretations, such as those of Guha or Chomsky, whose purpose is to demystify the interests at work in establishment scholars who specialize in "backward" cultures, and to appreciate the complexity of the interpretative process. In a way, the nativist argues that one can get past all interpretation to the pure phenomenon, a literal fact beseeching assent and confirmation, rather than debate and investigation. Something of this passionate intensity is found in blanket condemnations of "the West" such as Jalal Ali Ahmad's *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West* (1961–62)[193] or in Wole Soyinka implying the existence of a pure native African (as in his unfortunate attack on Islam and the Arabs as defacing the African experience);[194] one can see that intensity put more interestingly and productively to use in Anwar Abdel-Malek's proposal about "civilizational projects" and the theory of endogamous cultures.[195]

I am not particularly interested in spending much time discussing the altogether obvious unhappy cultural consequences of nationalism in Iraq, Uganda, Zaire, Libya, the Philippines, Iran, and throughout Latin America. Nationalism's disabling capacities have been lingered over and caricatured quite long enough by a large army of commentators, expert and amateur

alike, for whom the non-Western world after the whites left it seems to have become little more than a nasty mix of tribal chieftains, despotic barbarians, and mindless fundamentalists. A more interesting commentary on the nativist tendency—and the rather naive foundationalist ideology that makes it possible—is provided in such accounts of creole or *mestizo* culture as in Rodó's *Ariel* and by those Latin American fabulists whose texts demonstrate the manifest *impurity,* the fascinating mixture of real and surreal in all experience. As one reads "magic realists" like Carpentier, who first describes it, Borges, García Márquez, and Fuentes, one vividly apprehends the dense interwoven strands of a history that mocks linear narrative, easily recuperated "essences," and the dogmatic mimesis of "pure" representation.

At its best, the culture of opposition and resistance suggests a theoretical alternative and a practical method for reconceiving human experience in non-imperialist terms. I say the tentative "suggests" rather than the more confident "provides" for reasons that will, I hope, become evident.

Let me quickly recapitulate the main points of my argument first. The ideological and cultural war against imperialism occurs in the form of resistance in the colonies, and later, as resistance spills over into Europe and the United States, in the form of opposition or dissent in the metropolis. The first phase of this dynamic produces nationalist independence movements, the second, later, and more acute phase produces liberation struggles. The basic premise of this analysis is that although the imperial divide in fact separates metropolis from peripheries, and although each cultural discourse unfolds according to different agendas, rhetorics, and images, they are in fact connected, if not always in perfect correspondence. The Raj required Babus, just as later the Nehrus and the Gandhis took over the India set up by the British. The connection is made on the cultural level since, I have been saying, like all cultural practices the imperialist experience is an intertwined and overlapping one. Not only did the colonizers emulate as well as compete with one another, but so also did the colonized, who often went from the same general type of "primary resistance" to similar nationalist parties seeking sovereignty and independence.

But is that all imperialism and its enemies have brought forward, a ceaseless round of impositions and counter-impositions, or is a new horizon opened up?

There can be little doubt that were they alive today Fanon and Cabral, for example, would be hugely disappointed at the results of their efforts. I make that speculation considering their work as a theory not just of resistance and decolonization, but of liberation. In all sorts of ways, the somewhat inchoate historical forces, confusing antitheses, unsynchronized events that their work tried to articulate were not fully controlled or rendered by it.

Fanon turned out to be right about the rapacity and divisiveness of national bourgeoisies, but he did not and could not furnish an institutional, or even theoretical, antidote for its ravages.

But it is not as state builders or, as the awful expression has it, founding fathers that the greatest resistance writers like Fanon and Cabral should be read and interpreted. Although the struggle for national liberation is continuous with national independence, it is not—and in my opinion never was—culturally continuous with it. To read Fanon and Cabral, or C.L.R. James and George Lamming, or Basil Davidson and Thomas Hodgkin merely as so many John the Baptists of any number of ruling parties or foreign-office experts is a travesty. Something else was going on, and it sharply disrupts, then abruptly veers away from the unity forged between imperialism and culture. Why is this difficult to perceive?

For one, the theory and theoretical structures suggested by writers on liberation are rarely given the commanding authority—I mean the phrase quite literally—or blithe universalism of their contemporary, mostly Western counterparts. There are many reasons for this, not the least being the one I mentioned in my previous chapter, that very much like the narrative devices in *Heart of Darkness*, many cultural theories pretending to universalism assume and incorporate the inequality of races, the subordination of inferior cultures, the acquiescence of those who, in Marx's words, cannot represent themselves and therefore must be represented by others. "Hence," says the Moroccan scholar Abdullah Laroui, "the Third World intelligentsia's condemnations of cultural imperialism. Sometimes people are puzzled by the ill-treatment meted out to the old liberal paternalism, to Marx's Europocentrism, and to structuralist anti-racism (Levi-Strauss). This is because they are unwilling to see how these can form part of the same hegemonic system."[196] Or, as Chinua Achebe puts it, when remarking that Western critics often fault African writing for lacking "universality":

> Does it ever occur to these universalists to try out their game of changing names of characters and places in an American novel, say, a Philip Roth or an Updike, and slotting in African names just to see how it works? But of course it would not occur to them to doubt the universality of their own literature. In the nature of things the work of a Western writer is automatically informed by universality. It is only others who must strain to achieve it. So-and-so's work is universal: he has truly arrived! As though universality were some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe or America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home.[197]

As an instructive reminder of this unfortunate state of affairs, consider the roughly contemporary work of Michel Foucault and Frantz Fanon, both of whom stress the unavoidable problematic of immobilization and confinement at the center of the Western system of knowledge and discipline. Fanon's work programmatically seeks to treat colonial and metropolitan societies together, as discrepant but related entities, while Foucault's work moves further and further away from serious consideration of social wholes, focussing instead upon the individual as dissolved in an ineluctably advancing "microphysics of power"[198] that it is hopeless to resist. Fanon represents the interests of a double constituency, native and Western, moving from confinement to liberation; ignoring the imperial context of his own theories, Foucault seems actually to represent an irresistible colonizing movement that paradoxically fortifies the prestige of both the lonely individual scholar and the system that contains him. Both Fanon and Foucault have Hegel, Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, Canguihelm, and Sartre in their heritage, yet only Fanon presses that formidable arsenal into anti-authoritarian service. Foucault, perhaps because of his disenchantment with both the insurrections of the 1960s and the Iranian Revolution, swerves away from politics entirely.[199]

Much of Western Marxism, in its aesthetic and cultural departments, is similarly blinded to the matter of imperialism. Frankfurt School critical theory, despite its seminal insights into the relationships between domination, modern society, and the opportunities for redemption through art as critique, is stunningly silent on racist theory, anti-imperialist resistance, and oppositional practice in the empire. And lest that silence be interpreted as an oversight, we have today's leading Frankfurt theorist, Jürgen Habermas, explaining in an interview (originally published in *The New Left Review*) that the silence is deliberate abstention: no, he says, we have nothing to say to "anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles in the Third World," even if, he adds, "I am aware of the fact that this is a eurocentrically limited view."[200] All the major French theoreticians except Deleuze, Todorov, and Derrida have been similarly unheeding, which has not prevented their ateliers from churning out theories of Marxism, language, psychoanalysis, and history with an implied applicability to the whole world. Much the same thing can be said of most Anglo-Saxon cultural theory, with the important exception of feminism, and a small handful of work by young critics influenced by Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall.

So if European theory and Western Marxism as cultural co-efficients of liberation haven't in the main proved themselves to be reliable allies in the resistance to imperialism—on the contrary, one may suspect that they are part of the same invidious "universalism" that connected culture with imperialism for centuries—how has the liberationist anti-imperialism tried to

break this shackling unity? First, by a new integrative or contrapuntal orientation in history that sees Western and non-Western experiences as belonging together because they are connected by imperialism. Second, by an imaginative, even utopian vision which reconceives emancipatory (as opposed to confining) theory and performance. Third, by an investment neither in new authorities, doctrines, and encoded orthodoxies, nor in established institutions and causes, but in a particular sort of nomadic, migratory, and anti-narrative energy.

Let me illustrate my points by looking at a wonderful passage in C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*. Twenty-odd years after his book appeared in 1938, James appended a further chapter, "From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro." Although James is a highly original figure, as I said, it takes nothing away from his contribution to associate his work with that of various metropolitan historians and journalists—Basil Davidson, Thomas Hodgkin, Malcolm Caldwell among others in Britain, Maxime Rodinson, Jacques Chesnaux, Charles-Robert Argeron among others in France—who labored at the intersection of imperialism with culture, and who went the range from journalism to fiction to scholarship. That is, there was a conscious attempt not only to write history saturated in, taking maximum account of, the struggle between imperial Europe and the peripheries, but to write it in terms both of subject matter and of treatment or method, from the standpoint of and as part of the struggle against imperial domination. For all of them, the history of the Third World had to overcome the assumptions, attitudes, and values implicit in colonial narratives. If this meant, as it usually did, adopting a partisan position of advocacy, then so be it; it was impossible to write of liberation and nationalism, however allusively, without also declaring oneself for or against them. They were correct, I believe, in presuming that in so globalizing a world-view as that of imperialism, there could be no neutrality: one either was on the side of empire or against it, and, since they themselves had lived the empire (as native or as white), there was no getting away from it.

James's *Black Jacobins* treats the Santo Domingo slave uprising as a process unfolding within the same history as that of the French Revolution, and Napoleon and Toussaint are the two great figures who dominate those turbulent years. Events in France and in Haiti crisscross and refer to one another like voices in a fugue. James's narrative is broken up as a history dispersed in geography, in archival sources, in emphases both Black and French. Moreover James writes of Toussaint as someone who takes up the struggle for human freedom—a struggle also going on in the metropolis to which culturally he owes his language and many of his moral allegiances—with a determination rare among subordinates, rarer still among slaves. He

appropriates the principles of the Revolution not as a Black man but as a human, and he does so with a dense historical awareness of how in finding the language of Diderot, Rousseau, and Robespierre one follows predecessors creatively, using the same words, employing inflections that transformed rhetoric into actuality.

Toussaint's life ended terribly, as a prisoner of Napoleon, confined in France. Yet the subject of James's book properly speaking is not contained in Toussaint's biography any more than the history of the French Revolution would be adequately represented if the Haitian insurgency were left out. The process continues into the present—hence James's 1962 appendix, "from Toussaint to Castro"—and the predicament remains. How can a non- or post-imperial history be written that is not naively utopian or hopelessly pessimistic, given the continuing embroiled actuality of domination in the Third World? This is a methodological and meta-historical aporia, and James's swift resolution of it is brilliantly imaginative.

In digressing briefly to reinterpret Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal,* James discovers the poet's movement through the deprivations of West Indian life, through "the blue steel rigidities" and "vainglorious conquests" of "the white world," to the West Indies again, where in wishing to be free from the hate he once felt toward his oppressors, the poet declares his commitment "to be the cultivator of this unique race." In other words, Césaire finds that the continuation of imperialism means that there is some need to think of "man" (the exclusively masculine emphasis is quite striking) as something more than "a parasite in the world." "To keep in step with the world" is not the only obligation:

> *but the work of man is only just beginning*
> *and it remains to man to conquer all*
> *the violence entrenched in the recesses of his passion.*
>
> *And no race possesses the monopoly of beauty,*
> *of intelligence, of force, and there*
> *is a place for all at the rendezvous*
> *of victory.*[201] *(James's translation)*

This, says James, is the very center of Césaire's poem, precisely as Césaire discovers that the defensive assertion of one's identity, *négritude,* is not enough. *Négritude* is just one contribution to "the rendezvous of victory." "The vision of the poet," James adds, "is not economics or politics, it is poetic, *sui generis,* true unto itself and needing no other truth. But it would

be the most vulgar racism not to see here a poetic incarnation of Marx's famous sentence, 'The real history of humanity will begin.' "[202]

At this moment James accomplishes another contrapuntal, non-narrative turn. Instead of following Césaire back to West Indian or Third World history, instead of showing his immediate poetic, ideological, or political antecedents, James sets him next to his great Anglo-Saxon contemporary T. S. Eliot, whose conclusion is "Incarnation":

> *Here the impossible union*
> *Of spheres of existence is actual,*
> *Here the past and the future*
> *Are conquered, and reconciled,*
> *Where action were otherwise movement*
> *Of that which is only moved*
> *And has in it no source of movement.*[203]

By moving so unexpectedly from Césaire to Eliot's "Dry Salvages," verses by a poet who, one might think, belongs to a totally different sphere, James rides the poetic force of Césaire's "truth unto itself" as a vehicle for crossing over from the provincialism of one strand of history into an apprehension of other histories, all of them animated by and actualized in an "impossible union." This is a literal instance of Marx's stipulated beginning of human history, and it gives to his prose the dimension of a social community as actual as the history of a people, as general as the vision of the poet.

Neither an abstract, packaged theory, nor a disheartening collection of narratable facts, this moment in James's book embodies (and does not merely represent or deliver) the energies of anti-imperialist liberation. I doubt that anyone can take from it some repeatable doctrine, reusable theory, or memorable story, much less the bureaucracy of a future state. One might perhaps say that it is the history and politics of imperialism, of slavery, conquest, and domination freed by poetry, for a vision bearing on, if not delivering, true liberation. Insofar as it can be approximated in other beginnings then, like *The Black Jacobins*, it is a part of what in human history can move us from the history of domination toward the actuality of liberation. This movement resists the already charted and controlled narrative lanes and skirts the systems of theory, doctrine, and orthodoxy. But, as James's whole work attests, it does not abandon the social principles of community, critical vigilance, and theoretical orientation. And in contemporary Europe and the United States, such a movement, with its audacity and generosity of spirit, is particularly needed, as we advance into the twenty-first century.