FRANTZ FANON

CONFLICTS & FEMINISMS

T. DENEAN SHARPLEY-WHITING

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For Fanon

For feminism

[We] must guard against the danger of perpetuating the feudal tradition which holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine. Women will have exactly the same place as men, not in the clauses of the constitution but in the life of every day: in the factory, at the school, and in the parliament.

Frantz Fanon

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Foreword

It is a current truism that a strange marriage (in fact, one in which battery is not an unknown feature) exists between feminism and black liberation politics, especially male revolutionary politics. Fortunately, much spoken and written work has addressed the sexism and misogyny of black or "Third World" male radicals. Unfortunately, the critiques are occasionally Pavlovian in their dismissals of male revolutionaries, fighting racism and imperialism, as uniformly counterfeminist. These Pavlovian leaps, like binary polarities, mask the complexities of liberation struggles against the oppressed status of colonized peoples. Say "black revolutionary" and the reflex response "patriarchal male" manifests as the negative image. But its appearance displaces the subtle analyses of gray areas and the fine lines differentiating anti-imperialists whose revolutionary praxis (despite their sexual politics) contributed to women's liberation from those revolutionaries who expressed little interest in women's rights. The shapes of profeminist male revolutionaries can only materialize in painstaking examinations of gender politics in antiracist, decolonization theory.

Resisting simplistic constructions, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* discusses the Martinican theorist and his relevance to feminisms in their plurality. Sharpley-Whiting elevates the level of feminist debate within both antiracist and feminist discourse, offering new understandings of gender politics in Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, and *A Dying Colonialism*. *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* initiates and sustains sophisticated analyses about the convergence between and theoretical ruptures within "Third World" freedom movements and women's liberation. It

provides an important service to progressive social and political theory; regarding this twentieth-century revolutionary and feminist theory, the book skillfully "debunk[s] the binary erected by some feminists between Fanon's philosophy of revolution and women's liberation."

Sharpley-Whiting's study encompasses Fan-on's revolutionary writings and his European/American and Arab/Algerian feminist critics, as well as his legacy found in the works of radical black feminist theorists such as bell hooks and Gloria Joseph. In fact, Sharpley-Whiting joins the ranks of African American women who acknowledge the limitations of Fanon's thought yet maintain a link between his revolutionary ideology, his love for freedom and people, and their own feminist commitments. Such women have used Fanon to evaluate the limitations of feminism. For instance, through her reading of Fanon's "Pitfalls of National Consciousness," Sharpley-Whiting issues a challenge to academic feminists "to renew their commitment to feminism's activist and socially transformative origins." She also parlays Fanon's discussion of "colonial feminism" among French women during France's occupation of Algeria into a critique of postmodern feminist writers who first dismiss Fanon without engaging the revolutionary content of his praxis and who caricature Fanon's observations about women and gender.

Not inclined toward romantic revivals, Sharpley-Whiting reminds us that "Fanon never pronounced himself as a feminist." She refuses to reconstruct him as such even while she demystifies his postmodern reconstruction as a counterfeminist. In her work, Sharpley-Whiting makes provocative and thoughtful arguments, observing that while Fanon's "heterosexism and latent homophobia are incompatible with progressive feminisms," there is no convincing argument that this "translates into misogyny." Describing Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* as a "clinical study and an experimental narrative," she contends that its honesty about white women's interracial sexual phobias may be considered "brutal" but "not brutalizing." Fanon identifies how both black male and female bodies are hypersexualized, associated with sexual license and violence, in the "white imaginary." In Sharpley-Whiting's argument, black female victimization by (white and) black males thus becomes the identifying marker among some feminist writings that overlook the nuances found in revolutionary thought.

Sharpley-Whiting's wry and astute discussion of Mayotte Capecia reveals how Fanon's female Martinican contemporary was complicit in French sexual-racial objectification of France's colonial "subjects." Feminists' negative and (as Sharpley-Whiting points out) in some cases hyperbolic responses to Fanon's criticisms of Capecia's "negrophobia" have resulted in her reconstruction as "the lamb at Fanon's sacrificial altar." The debate surrounding Fanon's response to Capecia presents implications that extend beyond this one revolutionary intellectual; it raises the question of how to read a black male revolutionary's caustic critique of a woman of African (and European) descent who is championed by white literary elites precisely because of her denigration of black life and culture as "savage." How do we understand the valorization of Capecia as a "native" writer half a century ago, during a time of disintegrating colonial empires, by a male French literary elite—in relationship to her being championed, by postmodern feminists who do not fully confront her antiblack sentiments, as a woman "vilified" by an anticolonialist?

In her argument that Fanon expressed a commitment to women's liberation, a commitment largely ignored or misconstrued by too many readers and writers, Sharpley-Whiting suggests ways in which we might talk about resistance to racism without masculinist or patriarchal occlusion and how simultaneously we might speak about phallocentric bias and sexism in male antiracist, anticolonial discourse without obscuring antiracist theory and practice. Sharpley-Whiting tackles the limitations and inconsistencies of feminist scholarship concerning Fanon's writings on women without repudiating feminism or valorizing the male revolutionary. Her discussions of feminisms draw the connections between contemporary black women theorists and activists and the resources and radicalizing inspiration they drew from Fanon's uncompromising political life and writings—even while finding it necessary to rework his words for a more liberatory sexual politics. As it explores the conflicts surrounding varied feminisms and Fanon's commitments to revolutionary struggle, this book makes a vital contribution to liberation theory for both women and oppressed peoples.

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Introduction

At the Second Annual Black Harvest Film Festival sponsored by the Art Institute of Chicago on July 20, 1996, I expressed these thoughts in response to a question regarding the legacy of Frantz Fanon and Isaac Julien's film, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask*: "The testament to Fanon's impact on our lives is that we are here today discussing Fanon, and that there's a film on Fanon, and that there are so many people doing different things with Fanon, and so many readings with Fanon." Screened on Fanon's birthday before a racially and politically diverse audience, the film was debated by a panel of Fanonian scholars who facilitated a discussion of Julien's rendition of the revolutionary's life.

My response elaborated upon Fanon's commitment to women's liberation, his relevancy to post-movement feminist liberation theory and praxis, and more important, his "antifeminist" tendencies implied by the cultural studies feminist critic in the film.

The auditorium was filled to capacity, with people spilling out into the aisles, eager to see the film and learn about, rediscover, and discuss Frantz Fanon. As many of the audience members were not wholly familiar with the intricacies of Fanon's works or his life, I will not assume that the readers of these pages, while curious about Fanon, know precisely who he was, what he stood for, and what his legacy is.

Frantz Fanon was born July 20, 1925, on the island of Martinique, a former French colony in the Caribbean. At the age of eighteen, he joined the French army in its fight against Nazi Germany and was honored with the Croix de Guerre in 1945. Subjected to French metropolitan racism during his military service and in the aftermath of the war, Fanon began to question

his identity as "French." After the war, he studied psychiatry in Lyon. In November 1953, he was appointed as the *Chef de Service* at Blida–Joinville, the largest psychiatric hospital in French colonial Algeria. France's policy of colonization in Algeria, beginning in 1830 and ending with the final conquest of the territory in 1871, had longed provoked rumblings by discontented Algerian Muslims wanting to enjoy the fruits of "French" Algerian citzenship. While the *colons*, or the European minority who resided in Algeria, equally referred to as *pied-noirs*, lived comfortably, the Muslim majority suffered in extreme poverty. The most violent French repression of pre-Revolutionary Muslim Algerian agitation occurred May 8, 1945, at Sétif, a small market town known for its radical nationalist history.[1] The Franco-Algerian war would officially begin a year after Fanon's arrival on November 1, 1954. In 1956, he resigned from his psychiatric post and joined the secular faction of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) in its fight against France for independence. He became one of the revolutionary forces' most articulate ideologues, writing for *El Moudjahid* (The Fighter), the FLN's organ for dissemination of political propaganda, and speaking at conferences and summits on the Algerian situation. In 1960, he was selected to represent the Gouvernement Provisoire Algérien in Ghana.

Fanon extended his clear-sighted apprehension of the Algerian colonial situation to include all colonized peoples. While *Black Skin, White Masks* (*Peau noire, masques blancs*), his clinical study of the conflicted psychic condition of the colonized, used Martinique as its point of departure, the theories espoused in the work would find global applicability. Indeed, the ease with which his revolutionary manifestos, *A Dying Colonialism* (*L'An cinq de la révolution*), *Towards the African Revolution* (*Pour la révolution africaine*), and *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnés de la terre*), lent themselves to other Third World and U.S. crises would eventually situate him as a global theorist of oppression in many progressive circles. *The Wretched of the Earth* would easily become one of the most cited handbooks for revolution by U.S. black radicals in the tumultuous '60s and '70s.[2]

Fanon died from complications related to leukemia in 1961 at the age of thirty-six. In commemoration of the radical psychiatrist and revolutionary, a boulevard and university were given his name in the independent Algeria, and a literary prize, *Prix Frantz Fanon*, was established in his homeland of Martinique in 1987 as well as the Bibliothèque Frantz Fanon and a boulevard.

Frantz Fanon's writings have also made their mark on academic disciplines, from political science to contemporary cultural studies to women's studies. Indeed, his writings appear timeless and transcend rigid academic boundaries.

I first heard his name in conversations between my uncle, George Webb, a Marxist humanist who organized workers in North Philadelphia and established a cooperative, and his comrades. "Who is Fanon?" I asked. He gave me *The Wretched of the Earth*. That was a hot and muggy summer in 1982. It was not until the summer of 1992 in Avignon, France, that I fully grasped the nature of many feminist contestations with Fanon. In a class on Francophone literature, the professor admonished Fanon for his "*injuste*" reading of Mayotte Capécia. While Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (*Return to My Native Land*) and *Discours sur le colonialisme* (*Discourse on Colonialism*) and Memmi's *Portrait du colonisé précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (*The Colonized and the Colonizer*) were required readings, providing a context for the exploration of the Francophone colonial world, that admonishment was the only mention of Frantz Fanon's writings. It was then that I decided to reread Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and find the writings of Mademoiselle Capécia.

In the spring of 1995, I again returned to the writings of Frantz Fanon. At a conference sponsored by Purdue University's African-American Studies Research Center in honor of Fanon's seventieth birthday, I delivered a paper on Fanon, Capécia, and feminism. From this conference emerged an anthology, *Fanon: A Critical Reader*.[3] My essay, "AntiBlack Femininity–Mixed Race Identity: Engaging Fanon to Reread Capécia," and the symposium provided the framework for the present study.

As a more developed study of issues raised in that essay, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* aims to redress feminist misreadings of Fanon as "misogynist," "antifeminist," and "anti-women's liberation." This book will present instead an alternative feminist reading of Fanon's writings as not only advocating gender equity and liberation, but representative of a *pro*feminist-consciousness.[4] Simply put, Fanon's works speak often of a "New Humanism" profoundly grounded in the belief in "[a] social democracy in which man and woman have an equal right to culture, to material well-being, and to dignity" (*Toward the African Revolution*, p. 102). More than an attempt to "rescue Fanon from the critics," an endeavor undertaken in 1970,[5] *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* intends to debunk the binary erected by some feminists between Fanon's philosophy of revolution and

women's liberation. In chipping away at this binarism, the book proceeds with rereadings of and engagements with Fanon by feminist literary and activist critics and then shifts to a chronicling of his influence on women's liberationists in their feminist theorizing and practice. This study is not only an engagement with Frantz Fanon and his feminist critics, but it is equally inspired by the discussions of women of color, oppression, the epidermalization of inferiority, and resistance throughout the Fanonian corpus.

Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms consists of an introduction, four chapters, and an epilogue, "Pitfalls, Postmodern Academic Feminist Consciousness, and U.S. Social Crises," which engages with Fanon's "Pitfalls of National Consciousness" and progressive feminists in articulating the "misadventures" of postmodern academic feminism. The epilogue interrogates essentially why we, as academic feminists, haven't moved from indispensable feminist theorizing to liberatory action in the midst of such social crises; it also challenges women academics who recognize themselves as feminist intellectuals to renew their commitment to feminism's activist and socially transformative origins from within and without the academy.

The study moves from U.S. feminisms in political culture and the academy to feminism in the Third World context of Algeria and the Arab world and then back again to the United States. In effect, it begins with a presentation of the conflicts and moves toward reconciliation.

Chapter 1, "Fanon, Conflicts, Feminisms," outlines the conflicts among Fanon, feminists, and various feminisms. The chapter introduces and defines the feminisms and their conflicts and engagements along political and/or ideological fault lines, notably liberal, radical, and nationalist.

Chapter 2, "Fanon and Capécia," engages Fanonian and essentially academic feminist literary theorists (whom I refer to as liberal Euro-American lit-crit feminists) in a rereading of Mayotte Capécia's *Je suis martiniquaise* and *La négresse blanche*. My rereading reveals that these autobiographical/autofictional works are not only hindered by what Fanon accurately pointed to as an Adlerian exaltation premised upon white male love, lactification, and antiblack racism, but also by antifeminism and antiblack femaleness. The chapter concludes by way of bell hooks's feminist challenge in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*: "Must We Call Every Woman Sister?"

"Colonialism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Liberating Algeria," chapter 3, examines debates on the veil, the repressive uses of nationalism and fundamentalism during the Algerian revolution and in the postcolony, and criticisms of Fanon's writing on the revolution and women by Algerian feminist Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas. Finally, the chapter analyzes Fanon's writings on the Algerian woman and her involvement with the Algerian struggle for independence in *A Dying Colonialism*. "There is a continuity between the woman and the revolutionary," Fanon writes; she is "the lighthouse, the barometer" of the struggle who carried out revolutionary activity with "exemplary constancy, self-mastery, and success. The Algerian woman [a]s a nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter, she bears witness to the depth and the density of the struggle" (*A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 50, 66). Indeed, according to Fanon, the Algerian woman's participation in the liberation struggle challenged the patriarchal structure of Algerian society and altered the Algerian woman's conception of herself and her right to total freedom.[6]

Chapter 3 also discusses Fanon's insightful critique of the complexities and hypocrisy of the supposedly feminist solidarity espoused by Western women, a concept that I will call here *colonial feminism*, predicated upon the continuation of colonization and the myth of *Algérie française*.

"Affinities: U.S. Radical Black Feminism and Fanon," chapter 4, follows up with a deliberation of black feminism in the United States and the use of Fanon's theories of oppression/liberation in various stages of feminist politics of resistance. In the main and as one move toward reconciliation, this chapter examines the relationship between Fanon's philosophy of revolution and New Humanism and radical black feminists' philosophies of socioeconomic and political change. The writings of Linda Jo La Rue, Frances Beale, and bell hooks, in particular, are explored.

Why these black feminists? The choices are at once random and not so random. These feminists have clearly extrapolated dimensions of Fanon's thought into their political and scholarly narratives. From this perspective, it was especially easy to assimilate them in this discussion. But there have been other radical feminists' writings—like Kathleen Cleaver's remarks in "The *Black Scholar* Interviews Kathleen Cleaver"; Barbara Smith's statements on black feminism and black liberation; Assata Shakur's autobiography, *Assata*; Angela Davis's essay, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves"; Elaine

Brown's *A Taste of Power*; and Toni Cade Bambara's "On the Issue of Roles"—whose theorizing and practice are akin to Fanon's. Yet, in ironic contradistinction to analyses of Fanon's antifeminist proclivities, both La Rue and Beale position Fanon's writings as a *critique* of black male chauvinism in the Black Power, civil rights, and cultural nationalist movements and of sexism, in general.

hooks is especially important to this project as she represents a compelling voice on the contemporary academic and cultural studies feminist scene, a scene in which the most virulent criticisms of Fanon as misogynist have arisen. While both Beale and La Rue's eras were marked by the radical movements of the '60s and '70s, hooks's works span the '80s and '90s. Uncontestably feminist and progressive, hooks provides a radical contemporary bridge to feminist resistance politics in our post-Civil Rights era. Through her integration of Fanon's thoughts into her resistance politics and her refusal to accept the binary between progressive male intellectual thinking and women's liberation theories, hooks represents implicitly a powerful commentary on the narrowness and lack of antiracist and anticapitalist agendas of some Euro-American lit-crit and cultural studies feminists.

It must be stated at the outset that Fanon never pronounced himself a feminist. Given that his heterosexism and latent homophobia are incompatible with progressive feminisms, seeking to portray him as such is pointless. Rather this study endeavors to present Fanon's commitment to women's liberation as a radical humanist, as well as his usefulness to antiracist feminist liberation theory and practice. From this point of departure, *Frantz Fanon: Conflicts and Feminisms* embarks upon a necessarily novel and polemical path in light of Fanon's conflicts with feminists: by revisiting several feminist theorists and an antifeminist, antiblack author, it moves toward a transformational feminism, committed to and engaged in resisting alienation and oppressive practices embedded in racism, sexism, and capitalism.

NOTES

1. For more on Sétif, see Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace* (New York: Viking, 1977).

2. Unless otherwise stated, references to Fanon's work throughout this book are to the following editions: *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967); *Towards the African Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967); *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963); *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970).

3. Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renée T. White, eds., *Fanon: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

4. I borrow the term "profeminist" from Joy James's *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

5. Tony Martin, "Rescuing Fanon from the Critics," *African Studies Review* 13 (December 1970).

6. There are, of course, even Western feminists who contest Fanon's assessment of the transformation of Algerian society with respect to the feminine collective. See Barbara Burris's essay "Fourth World Manifesto" in *Radical Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973). While I do not address Burris's observations in the body of chapter 3, a summation of her criticisms is presented in note 1 of that chapter.

Chapter One

Fanon, Conflicts, Feminisms

Black Skin, White Masks, Frantz Fanon's controversial and widely read work, has been frequently debated by contemporary U.S. literary and cultural studies academics. In the book, the Martinican psychiatrist, revolutionary, and critical race theorist issued a most brutal, yet compelling, critique of writer Mayotte Capécia. As one feminist critic observes: "Typically, contemporary readers dismiss Fanon's condemnation as so obviously sexist that it does not merit analysis."[1] The feminist critic's ensuing analysis nonetheless reveals itself as importantly typical even in its implicit claim to atypicality, for she does in fact tackle Fanon's condemnation but merely to reinscribe his sexism.

Yet a thorough reading of Fanon's writings on women, liberation, and resistance in *A Dying Colonialism, Towards the African Revolution, The Wretched of the Earth*, and *Black Skin, White Masks* provides an important frame of reference for a liberatory feminist theory and praxis for women existing under various guises of colonial and neocolonial oppression and sexist domination within their own countries and communities.

PRELUDE TO THE FEMINISTS' CONFLICTS

Racial self-hatred and racism are endemic to the colonial enterprise. And revealing the mundane features of such tendencies through the phenomenological study of racism and colonialism was Frantz Fanon's calling—to a fault, in the view of his critics. Language was the primary instrument through which Fanon observed racism and alienation. The words of patients, the words

of novelists, the words of children, women, and men, and the unwritten but spoken Antillean rules that governed the most intimate of social relations were the prisms that enabled Fanon to shed light on racist cultures and the colonized psyche.

In his use of language to articulate racialized/sexualized psychical dramas, Fanon's own words have come under scrutiny—turning upon him and leading his work into conflicts with Euro-American feminist theorists and cultural critics.

With a significant degree of validity, gay and lesbian cultural theorists such as Diana Fuss and Kobena Mercer have found homophobia and heterosexism in Fanon's body of ideas.[2] Fanon's consistent situating of relationships within a heterosexual framework, coupled with a rather contentious homophobic statement—"I have never been able without revulsion, to hear a man say to another man: 'He is so sensual!'" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 201)—as well as a footnote on page 180 of that same book about his knowledge, or lack thereof, of homosexuality in Martinique, would certainly compel one to reassess the progressiveness of Fanon's gender politics and his relevance for feminists today. But I am not convinced that Fanon's latent homophobia translates into misogyny. Nor am I convinced sufficiently that these shortcomings undermine the contributions his theories on sexuality and subjectivity could make to a "queer revolutionary theory."[3]

The primary evidence cited as representative of Fanon's "misogyny" is all contained within his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks*. First is his use of the masculine as normative—*il, lui, le noir,*[4] *l'homme*—coupled with rigid constructions of gender and sexuality, resulting in the erasure of (black) feminine subjectivities. Second is his "grossly reductive" discussion of (white) women, psychosexuality, and sexual violence, thus relegating (white) women to the realm of the neurotic and characterizing their sexuality as essentially masochistic.[5] Third and most damning is his brutal reproof of Mayotte Capécia, which is reflective of patriarchal inclinations, a desire to police black women's bodies, and petty sexual jealousy.

Masculine referents, characteristic of intellectual writings of Fanon's era, indeed appear in *Black Skin, White Masks* and the majority of the Fanonian corpus. Silence on issues of sexual difference and/or use of masculinist language as a signifier of the neutrality (sexual indifference) in social theory sends up a red flag for many feminists, as it represents a clandestine means of

repression and oppression; it is to some extent no different from blatant biases/pro-male slants found in a great deal of other theoretical discourses.[6] As Naomi Schor writes, "What is to say that this discourse of sexual indifference . . . is not the last or (less triumphantly) the latest ruse of phallocentrism?"[7] It must be conceded, however, that *Black Skin, White Masks* is at once a clinical study and an experiential narrative.

Fanon is nonetheless neither silent on the question of gender, which exists as part of feminists' conflicts, nor sexually indifferent. I would argue that his use of masculinist paradigms of oppression and alienation in *Black Skin, White Masks* (or elsewhere) does not importantly posit male superiority. Masculinism is categorically different from antifeminism and misogyny. As Joy James writes in *Transcending the Talented Tenth*, because

> masculinism does not explicitly advocate male superiority or rigid gender social roles, it is not identical to patriarchal ideology. Masculinism can share patriarchy's presupposition of the male as normative without its antimfemale politics and rhetoric. Men who support feminist politics, as profeminists, may advocate the equality or even occasionally for the superiority of women. . . . However, even without the patriarchal intent some works may replicate conventional gender roles.[8]

In Fanon's more political manifestos, the "revolutionary" is never envisioned as wholly masculine, nor is the "neurotic blackphobe" conceived as importantly feminine in his clinical treatise. Fanon spreads his critical assessment of blackphobia rather evenly among male and female colonized subjects. The colonized woman of color seeks humanity, value, through white male love. The colonized man of color caresses "white breasts" with the belief that he is grasping "white civilization and dignity" and making them his own (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 63).

The chapter "The Negro and Language" again uses the masculine referent. However, a discussion of language, oppression, and sexual difference—that is, a feminist hermeneutics of the colonized woman of color's psychoexistential complexes when confronted with the phenomenon of the colonizer's language—equally reveals the epidermalization of inferiority. As the man of color wants to *devenir français*, the inferiorized woman of color desires to *devenir française*.[9] One need only examine "the myth of the r-eating Martinican" in Mayotte Capécia's *La négresse*

blanche to understand that with every correct idiomatic expression, phonetic articulation, melodic tonality, and deliberated roll of an "r," a rupture occurs: the heroine's phenotype undergoes a definitive, absolute mutation (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 19). Fanon continues:

> Every colonized people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation. . . . The colonized is elevated above his[her] jungle status in proportion to his[her] adoption of the mother's country's cultural standards. [She]He becomes whiter as [she]he renounces his[her] jungle. (p. 18)

Hence, the exclusion of subjectivities extends to the masculine *and* the feminine. Such exclusions must be nevertheless contextualized.

Black Skin, White Masks is a treatise on the psychopathology of alienated (duped) men and women of color and of "the no less alienated (duped and duping) whites" (p. 29). Keenly aware of class differences and the economic dis-ease of the colonized, Fanon opts to limit his analysis to the epidermalization/internalization of inferiority. Defining clearly the context of his study and of those studied, Fanon seems to have anticipated objections regarding exclusion, representation, and identification:

> Many Negroes will not find themselves in what follows. This is equally true of whites. But the fact that I feel a foreigner in the worlds of the schizophrenic or sexual cripple in no way diminishes their reality. The attitudes that I propose to describe are real. I have encountered them innumerable times. (p. 12)

Black Skin, White Masks is ostensibly drawn from his experiences, his observations. And because of the specificity of this study, of his encounters, he forgoes a blanket assessment of black and white behaviors. *Black Skin, White Masks*, in essence, critiques stereotypification; it does not reinscribe it. The radical psychiatrist continues,

> To these objections I reply that the subject of our study is the dupes and those who dupe them, the alienated, and that if there are whites who behave naturally when they meet Negroes, they certainly do not fall within the scope of our examination. . . . Which means simply that, side by side with normal people who behave naturally in accordance with a human psychology, there are others who behave pathologically in accordance with an inhuman psychology. And it happens that the existence of men of this sort has determined a certain number of realities. (pp. 31–32)

Racists, sexists, capitalists, homophobes undeniably dictate a number of realities in our social world—in the interpersonal as well as public policy realms—so much so that their practices are obfuscated by their normalization, their institutionalization. But there are again, for Fanon, blacks and whites, men and women, who resist these processes of duping.

Our discussion of the Fanonian context leads us into the thorny terrain of what are for feminists Fanon's most contentious pronouncements: on white women, sexual violence, and negrophobia.

White women who believe that they are in danger of being raped by black men as a result of the very presence and proximity of black men are, for Fanon, neurotic. By way of Hesnard,[10] Fanon notes that phobia is a neurosis characterized by the anxious fear of an object or by extension a situation in which contact alone can evoke anxiety, as contact serves schematically as initiating sexual activity (pp. 154–56). This fear of rape when the possibility or the desire to rape on the part of the black male is nonexistent signals repressed desire.

While the black body serves as a cultural marker of illicit sex and violence in blackphobic cultures, it would appear that Fanon's translation of the fear of rape to the desire for sex is quite a stretch. But we are here speaking of white women whose psychosexualities have been corroded, abnormalized, which in turn incite the cultural mythology of the black male rapist, the sexually voracious black brute, "the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations" (p. 177). Novelist Toni Morrison writes sardonically in *Sula* of white constructions of the "black male-as-uncontrollable penis" and of negrophobic white women obsessed with the black male rapist:

> White men love you. They spend so much time worrying about your penis they forget their own. The only thing they want to do is cut off a nigger's privates. And if that ain't love and respect I

> don't know what is. And white women? They chase you all to every corner of the earth, feel for you under every bed. I knew a white woman wouldn't leave the house after 6 o'clock for fear one of you would snatch her. Now ain't that love? They think rape as soon's they see you, and if they don't get the rape they looking for, they scream it anyway just so the search won't be in vain.[11]

The incessant fear of an improbable rape by the negrophobe is a racist cultural *affect* that cloaks desire; it is a projection of desire, that which Morrison calls "love."

To maintain that Fanon evokes a cultural stereotype of white women again ignores the context of his query.[12] Many white women will not find themselves here. There are white women who behave normally when they meet Negroes (black males). An antiblack culture—which, we should concede, coexists with a misogynist culture—is a structurally ill culture filled with perversities and perverse desires for racial and sexual hierarchies and domination. And if in such cultures (white) female psyches are thusly assimilated, *duped,* masochism is but one culturally induced manifestation of psychosis.

Perhaps one of the most critical feminists on this subject has been Susan Brownmiller, author of the controversial *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (1975). It is important to detail Brownmiller's conflicts with Fanon, as they have informed two generations of feminist critics on the subject. The overall thesis of Brownmiller's book is that she is a woman who changed her mind about rape. In the chapter "A Question of Race," one that Angela Davis took to task in *Women, Race, and Class* (1983) for its racist underpinnings, Brownmiller renders black male lives expendable under the weight of sexist domination encountered by white women, citing such cases as the Scottsboro Boys and Emmett Till. Brownmiller presents black women as victims of those lunatic white males operating on the nonprogressive, racist, and sexually violent radical fringes of society such as the Ku Klux Klan, while the veritable and overwhelming victims of sexual violence in this chapter and throughout *Against Our Will* are white women.

Derisively referring to Fanon as "the darling of the New Left," who borrows heavily from the works of psychoanalysts Helene Deutsch and Marie Bonaparte as well as his own clinical research, Brownmiller writes:

> Rape runs as a curious subtheme in all of Fanon's writings. As a doctor of psychiatry and a student of colonialism, Fanon was in an excellent position to make a substantial, original contribution to the world's understanding of rape as a means of oppressing native women in Algeria and the Antilles, but Fanon's concern to which he returns again and again (it is something of an obsession) is with the native man and the *white* woman. "Whoever says rape says Negro," he announces in *Black Skin, White Masks* in the preface to his morbid rehash of the super-Freudian "A Negro Is Raping Me" theory of white female masochism propounded by Marie Bonaparte and Helene Deutsch. . . . Pure and simply, this radical theorist of third-world liberation was a hater of women.[13]

Brownmiller's argument is riddled with inaccuracies, oversimplifications, and skewed interpretations. Her ire is not at all raised to such vehement levels of denunciation with respect to Freud, Bonaparte, Deutsch, or even her contemporary Nancy Friday's revelations of white female preoccupations/fantasies with black male rapists in *My Secret Garden.*[14] In exactly one chapter, "The Negro and Psychopathology," Fanon analyzes specifically white women's neuroses relating to race, rape, and sexuality. That Fanon dared to undertake such an analysis appears to be the crux of the dilemma; for Brownmiller, one chapter is *too* much. Fanon's discussion translates into obsession: Fanon as morbid freak and rape-obsessed, Fanon as sanctioning rape as revolutionary, as Brownmiller equates *Black Skin, White Masks* with Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice.* But was not the colonial project itself envisioned by European colonizers as conquests over, penetration into, other bodies and lands, in masculine and feminine terms?

In *Black Skin, White Masks, A Dying Colonialism,* and *The Wretched of the Earth,* Fanon makes great effort to detail the violations visited upon and liberties taken with Malagasy, Algerian, and Antillean women. Indeed, in *Towards the African Revolution,* he provides a lengthy discussion of French torture and violations, using the rape and torture of FLN member Djamila Bouhired as well as adolescent Algerian girls as the worst examples of colonial terrorism and sexual oppression.[15] To assert, as Brownmiller does, that Fanon did not view rape as a form of colonial oppression directed explicitly toward colonized women thus reveals itself as questionable.

Fanon's "misogyny" is further posited by Brownmiller in her

citation of a case study of mental disorders brought on by French colonization in Algeria. According to Brownmiller, Fanon interprets rape as "a devious colonial trick to emasculate third world men."[16] Fanon never states such. *Against Our Will* offers as evidence his mere recounting of the effects of rape (impotency, insomnia, depression, violent urges) on the husband of an Algerian woman. Fanon recognizes the complexities of the issue of rape in the colonial project. Rape functions as a direct violation of the Algerian woman's person and equally to destabilize the Algerian community. Angela Davis observes in her essay "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" what Brownmiller clearly misses: "In its political contours, the rape of the black woman was not exclusively an attack upon her. . . . In launching the sexual war on the woman, the master would not only assert his sovereignty over a critically important figure of the slave community, he would also be aiming a blow against the black man."[17]

Because Fanon did not practice psychiatry in Martinique, he did not have the opportunity for direct psychiatric observation of sexual disorders in the lives of Antillean women vis à vis colonial rape. When he arrived at the hospital in Blida, Algeria, the majority of his patients were Muslim men and European women. His psychiatric observations in *The Wretched of the Earth* are, consequently, for the most part drawn from his decolonizing psychiatry in the Algerian hospital. However, on August 30, 1956, at the 54th session of the Congrès des médecines aliéniste et neurologues de France et des pays de langue françaises in Bordeaux, Fanon and psychiatrist Charles Geromini presented a psychiatric study of Muslim women in a paper entitled "Le T.A.T. chez la femme musulmane: sociologie de la perception et de l'imagination."

And while the rape of Algerian women was widespread and well known, it was rarely openly discussed by the women, except perhaps within the feminine collective. For women who are accustomed to being assaulted daily in one way or another by a foreign presence during the course of war, rape was an inevitability; and silence and feelings of grave dishonor, particularly for 1950s–1960s Muslim women, were its counterpart. In *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon writes that

> a woman led away by soldiers who comes back a week later—it is unnecessary to question her to understand that she has been violated dozens of times. . . . When a man welcomes back his wife who has spent two weeks in a French camp and he says hello to her and asks her if she is hungry, and he avoids looking at her and bows his head . . . such things are a daily occurrence. (p. 119)

Tunisian lawyer Gisèle Halimi, attorney for Algerian freedom fighter Djamila Boupacha, who was tortured and raped with a bottle by French soldiers, writes in *La Cause des femmes* that her client was frantically obsessed with the idea of being dishonored by the forcible rape. As a Muslim, virginity was of the utmost importance, for defilement could relegate her to a state of unmarriageability. She was more concerned with her status as a virgin than with the cigarette burns and bruises covering her body. As much as mere talk involving the female body was considered culturally taboo, Boupacha, under great duress and in desperation, finally requested a gynecological examination to determine if she was defiled.[18]

Lebanese feminist Evelyne Accad writes in *Sexuality and War: Literary Masks of the Middle East* of contemporary Arab women's silence, by culture and nature (as a result of culture), regarding their bodies, sexuality, and desire. Paraphrasing Arab feminist Illham Ben Milad Ben Ghadifa on the subject, Accad relates: "Silence reigns over the subject of menstruation, virginity, masturbation, pleasure in general, abortion, birth and the female body as a whole. Moreover, women try to enforce silence on one another with regard to sexual issues."[19] If sexual silence plagues contemporary Arab women, even to the point of censorship on the subject among the women themselves, one can very well imagine the codes of sexual silence in the 1950s and 1960s and subsequently Fanon's inability to write extensively on the sexual lives and sexual neuroses of Algerian women.[20]

Feminist conflicts with Fanon are not, as I have related in the Introduction, relegated to a white and Western terrain, nor are these conflicts found merely in one of Fanon's works. Activist Arab feminists like Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas have also taken issue with Fanon some three decades after his writing *A Dying Colonialism* regarding women's liberation and the independent Algeria. While Euro-American lit-crit feminist and cultural critics take issue with *Black Skin, White Masks*, Arab feminists ground their criticisms in the more political and culturally specific manifesto: *A Dying Colonialism*.[21] The terms of censure are nonethe-

less quite different. That is, Fanon is not uniformly denounced as misogynist and/or antiwomen's liberation. He is rather accused of "mythmaking" by Algerian feminist Helie-Lucas for his descriptions of women as freedom fighters during the Algerian revolution and the revolutionary uses of the veil, which masked the sexism experienced by women. He is accused, also, of being conservative by Egyptian feminist Mervat Hatem for his supposed static approach to culture that relegated women to defenders of tradition through the wearing of the veil.[22] Furthermore, Moroccan feminist Fatima Mernissi's *Beyond the Veil: Male–Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* explains in a footnote that while Fanon was sensitive to segregation and revolutionary assertions of human rights, he found "curiously" the accosting of revolutionary unveiled Algerian women in the streets by men "funny."[23]

And though Fanon's writing had and continues to have an appeal among black materialist feminists, African-American feminist bell hooks takes issue with Fanon's use of masculinist paradigms, which hooks alternately refers to as "sexist" in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* and "patriarchal" in the essay "Feminism as a persistent critique of history: What's love got to do with it?"[24] Poststructuralist Nigerian feminist Amina Mama argues that Fanon's "theory of lactification implicitly pathologises black people" and "typifies the black women he encountered in France and the Antilles."[25]

The complex positionalities embodied in the criticisms of Fanon has led to my use of the plural with the terms "conflict" and "feminism." While gender equity/women's liberation is the underlying commitment of these feminisms, openness to Fanon's thought regarding its usefulness to women's liberation as well as wholesale dismissals and exorcisms of him from feminist theory and practice appear to be contingent upon theoretical issues such as race, progressive radicalism versus reactionary liberalism, and the repressive patriarchal dynamics of nationalism and fundamentalism. Indeed, while there are feminists' conflicts with Fanon, there are equally ideological cleavages *within* feminism which I would like to explore through the prism of three feminists' positions: liberal Euro-American lit-crit feminism, U.S. radical black feminism, and Algerian nationalist feminism. In sum, the moments where and the ways in which Fanon is engaged in feminist theory—i.e., where the conflicts emerge—unmask ideology, race, and the polemics of nationalism and contemporary

LIBERAL EURO-AMERICAN LIT-CRIT FEMINISM

I have detailed much of Euro-American lit-crit feminists' conflicts with Fanon in the passages above, but it is important to elaborate briefly on those conflicts with respect to the aforementioned parameters of ideology and race. Certain facts must be stated at the outset: many Euro-American lit-crit feminists have not read Capécia's novels, but only one another's writing on Fanon and Capécia.[26] Hence, denunciations of Fanon's colonial psychosexual theories as wholly "misogynistic" with respect to Capécia, in particular, demand reevaluation.

What appears especially prevalent and somewhat troubling in these critical works is a recurring antiblack male bias, for these lit-crit feminists appropriate indiscriminately the equally masculinist, oftentimes virulently racist-sexist thought of Freud, Lacan, Foucault, and Nietzsche into their feminist theorizing, even as they aggressively critique Fanon for his "misogyny." The lit-crit feminists appear thus to promote a narrow feminist politics that does not have an antiracist/anticapitalist agenda within the framework of its readings of the racial/sexual/economic complexities of texts like *Black Skin, White Masks* or *Je suis martiniquaise* and *La négresse blanche*.

Ideologically, the leanings of lit-crit feminism are of the "gynocentric" liberal persuasion. Borrowing from feminist philosopher Iris Young, gynocentric feminism "defines women's oppression as the devaluation and repression of women's experience by a masculinist culture that exalts violence and individualism."[27] Equally, social and political theorist Ronald Dworkin regards the liberal as "anxious to protect individuals whose needs are special . . . from the fact that more popular preferences are institutionally and socially reinforced."[28] However, in its gynocentric liberalism, this strain of feminism ascribes to gender/sexual difference the overdetermining power in its analyses; it takes to task forms of patriarchal aggression without an equally strident examination of the retrogressive politics it defends, lacking as it is in an antiracist, antifemale sexist, anticapitalist foundation. It is thus not a liberalism with radical humanist dimensions that would challenge and seek to eradicate all systems of oppression as they intersect with and compound women's experiences.

The attendant results in many of these prodigious scholarly endeavors are representations of Fanon as sanctioning a perverse form of black nationalism;[29] as anti-interracial relationships, i.e., black women/white men, although his own wife was French; and as antifemale, specifically antiblack female.

ALGERIAN NATIONALIST FEMINISM

The revolutionary role played by women in Algeria's successful struggle for national independence is immeasurable by most historians' and writers' accounts. As nationalists, Algerian women advocated and fought for their country's right to exist as a sovereign state with its own cultural values and belief systems. As feminists, they further believed that their participation in bringing about a politically and economically liberated Algeria, a new Algeria, would lead to a reconceptualization of regressive gender relations.

But the Algerian war of independence has come to symbolize a glaring example of the incompatibility of nationalism—the national, that is, or the ideas of the nation—with feminism—that is, women's liberation. According to Tom Nairn, the "nation is the modern Janus," inscribing both progression and regression, political rationality and irrationality in its very genetic code.[30] The nation is at once a cultural construct and a political organization.[31] As a cultural construct, the nation develops and lays claim to certain ideas and values as culturally authentic, traditional, helpful in sustaining its very identity. As Algerian women are viewed as the transmitters of that cultural identity, the bearers of the tradition, they become locked in a discourse on the nation, nationalism, that attempts to impede their progress into modernity and denies their freedom, subjectivity, indeed, their rights. It is particularly around issues of the family, female sexuality, and the body that the most rigid and repressive national codes and laws of regulating gender emerge.

Therein lies the dilemma for Algerian nationalist feminists. They are tied to the idea of an autonomous Algeria, for they fought and died for this progression; but they are literally bound by the retrogressive aspects of the idea of the nation. As Monique Gadant writes:

> Nationalism asked of women a participation that they were quick to give, they fought and were caught in the trap. For nationalism is frequently conservative, even though it appears to be an inevitable moment of political liberation and economic progress which women need to advance along the path of their own liberation. . . . The example of Algerian women is there to remind all women that participation does not necessarily win them rights. From the points of view of those women contributors who have grown up after the war of liberation, everything is still to be done.[32]

It has been a very difficult task, to say the least, for Algerian women to navigate their course between nationalism and feminism.

Algerian feminist Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, born in 1939, belongs to that generation of women born before the onset of the war of liberation in 1954, who struggled during the revolutionary war as young women, and in anguish continue to struggle for women's liberation in the postwar era. As a witness to the patriarchal inflections of Algerian nationalism, Helie-Lucas is torn, believing in Algerian nationhood, but resistant to the sexism and misogyny it seems to engender.

It is particularly around the issue of the veil—especially its uses during the struggle for national independence and abuses in the besieged nationalist and fundamentalist Algerian postcolony—and portraits of women as freedom fighters equal to men during the Franco-Algerian war that the conflict arises between Helie-Lucas and Fanon.

It would be stating the obvious to recount Frantz Fanon's belief in national independence for Algeria. But what is not so obvious or what has been somewhat obscured in Helie-Lucas's discussion of the tensions between nationalism and feminism as they relate to her sketchy criticism is that Fanon did not advocate a narrow, misogynist nationalism, but rather a national consciousness that would lead to internationalism and social democracy. Another little-noticed but important point is that Fanon was equally critical of the "pitfalls of national consciousness," which included a cautionary note on "the dangers of perpetuating the feudal tradition which holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 202).

RADICAL U.S. BLACK FEMINISM

Radical U.S. black feminism is often recognized as a materialist feminism because of its activist legacy and its writerly projects that theorize about the transformation of material conditions that impact the day-to-day lives of black women. By "radical" I mean specifically a feminism that is not "shortminded,"[33] as Sojourner Truth once stated. I will return to this term with its conceptualization of humanity and freedom, knowledge production, and its "speaking truth to power" at this study's conclusion.[34] Radical black feminism recognizes the importance and the interconnectedness of experience and radical thought, theory and practice.

While linked by ethnicity and oftentimes class, not all black feminists are radical; just as not all Euro-American lit-crit feminists are liberal. Some black feminists are ideologically liberal or conservative.

But at its very inception and within its very conceptualization as theory, antiracist and antisexist agitation has been the cornerstone of black radical feminists' agendas. Indeed, the lived experiences of the earliest black women—orators and activists such as Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells-Barnett—articulated through the confluence of race, gender, and class laid the essential groundwork for future radical black women thinkers. These black feminists' predecessors simultaneously addressed the issues of abolition and/or lynching—black liberation—and black women's humanity in their many speeches, lectures, and radical and radicalizing activities.

To be sure, individual and group agendas have evolved and broadened the fundamental premises of radical black feminist thought and activism to reflect their era. By foregrounding black women and black liberation in their politics and critiques of violence and oppression, radical feminists have also moved toward abolishing structural and systematic injustices for all oppressed peoples. In a provocative address given to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), well-known grassroots activist and feminist Fannie Lou Hamer expressed cogently the umbrella-like nature of radical black feminism:

> You know I work for liberation of all people because when I liberate myself, I'm liberating all people . . . her [the white woman's] freedom is shackled in chains to mine, and she realizes for the first time that she is not free until I am free. . . . But we are here to work side by side . . . in trying to bring liberation to all people . . . then we will have a better chance to just act as human beings, and to be treated as human beings in our sick society.[35]

Not only do black women live and exist within a simultaneity of oppressions, so that black progressive feminism is the theoretical and political response to these oppressions. But radical black feminism's political and insurgent offensives to these oppressions will eventually result in—as the Combahee River Collective insists in its "Black Feminist Statement"—"the destruction of all systems of oppression"[36] and the liberation of the most wretched of nonblacks, nonfemales, and the poor. Human freedom and critical consciousness would seem to be the *cause célèbre* of contemporary radical black feminist theory and practice.

Given the range of these women's political and social concerns, and their focus on agency, human freedom, and liberation, it is not at all surprising that the liberation theories of Frantz Fanon—a man obsessed with humanity and justice, a slave of the cause of people, of liberty, who at death's door, emaciated from the leukemia that had eaten away at his flesh, desired to have his body flung into the battlefields of Algeria—would find a place in the writings of radical black women of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. As Fanon biographer Hussein Bulhan relates by way of Aimé Césaire:

> If the word "commitment" has any meaning, it was with Fanon that it acquired significance. . . . This must be understood about him: his revolt was ethical, and his endeavour generous. He did not simply adhere to a cause. He gave himself to it. Completely, without reserve. . . . By hatred of compromise, by hatred of talkativeness. By hatred of cowardliness. No one was more respectful of thought than he, and more responsible in the face of his own thought, nor more exacting towards life, which he could not imagine in terms other than of thought transformed into action.[37]

Radical feminist revolts are equally ethical attempts to legislate justice, decolonize minds corroded by U.S. antiblack, (hetero)sexist, and exploitative politics, and build a new, egalitarian world in which black women in particular are "inherently valuable" and "recognized as human."[38]

There are thus no ever-widening gulfs, uncrossable chasms, unmendable breaches between the emancipatory politics of U.S. black radical feminists and Frantz Fanon's revolutionary theories. The approach to his writings is a more integrative one, even as it is importantly critical of his masculinist worldview.

FANON AS "FEMINIST"

That feminism means different things to different feminists has resulted in schisms, divisions, and contemporary feminisms. Agendas and programs vary from theorist to theorist and from practitioner to practitioner. The pressing issues of race, class, and heterosexism have birthed socialist feminists, radical black feminists, Marxist–Humanist feminists, liberal lesbian feminists, and so on. Whether feminism means "the radical notion that women are human" or "to be feminist one has first to become one," loose and exclusionary definitions abound.[39] Thus it becomes at once a simple and daunting task to speak of Frantz Fanon as a feminist. At the very least, his woman-centered analyses, which will be examined in-depth, contain feminist dimensions. But analyses in and of themselves are not necessarily feminist if they do not interrogate, challenge, or seek to transform the "facts" of women's social realities.

Fanon believed in and worked for the liberation of the damned of the earth, "men and women who are colonized" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 36). He interrogated and challenged specifically the contradictions in women's lives. Unlike feminisms' centering of women in their analyses of oppression, Fanon's politics worked toward the obliteration of sexist oppression in the scheme of bringing about human freedom. And as Marxist–Humanist feminist Raya Dunayevskaya writes, "there is no such thing as women's history that is not the actual history of humanity's struggle toward freedom."[40] Fanon believed that revolution would transform the exploitative and oppressive spheres of formal and informal political, social, and economic life for men, women, and children—humanity from the bottom up.

But rather than speak of Fanon as a feminist, it is perhaps more appropriate, as the introduction suggests, to speak of Fanon's radically humanist profeminist consciousness. This consciousness is guided by Fanon's envisioning of women's liberation from the confines of repressive patriarchal traditions, and his advocacy of women's movement from objects to subjects of history, converging most poignantly in *A Dying Colonialism*; however, it transcends, as does the bulk of his writings, the specificities of the Algerian, sub-Saharan African, and Martinican experiences.

I would be remiss to close this chapter on feminists' conflicts without some remarks regarding Fanon's curious statement on women of color and psychosexuality. After a lengthy discussion of white women and rape in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes of the woman of color: "Those who grant our conclusions on the psychosexuality of the white woman may ask what we have to say about the woman of color. I know nothing about her" (p. 180). The fact that Fanon the psychiatrist did not have the opportunity to encounter Antillean women as patients would certainly contribute to his "not knowing." His interactions with Antillean women were limited to social interactions: dance halls, student gatherings, and so forth. Any clinical observations regarding Antillean women's sexual phobias were gleaned from snatches of conversation here and there, literature, his own experiences in the Antilles, and pure speculation.

But there has been a certain selectivity in feminists' citations of Fanon's statement. The psychiatrist does proffer an observation. The colonized Antillean woman's phobic object would be a Senegalese type, an inferior, the blackest black, the *nègre's nigger*. The virtual absence of women of color in the status of patients in 1951 subtends the contemporary issue of black women's reticence about seeking mental health care and wellness. Clearly women of color, daily assaulted by racist-sexist objectification in the colonial era, were in need of mental health services.

What does it mean nonetheless for a woman of color consistently subjected to the empirical reality of rape by the colonizer to project rape onto a Senegalese man? Clearly, it points to an extreme form of neurosis brought on by colonialism, cultural domination, and racism. It would only be natural that women of color would fear rape or sexual coercion by a white male colonialist, as its frequency was daily and legal recourse was inaccessible. But for both black and white women, the rapist, the phobic object, is black because of the historical and cultural mythological constructions of blackness in racist cultures. On a symbolic and very real level, white males escape the cultural

stereotype of the rapist when clearly they exercised the most license over black and white women's bodies in the colonies. But as we will see by Mayotte Capécia's phobic responses regarding black male sexual prowess, such is not the case for the inferiorized woman of color.

NOTES

1. Gwen Bergner, "The Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 110, no. 1 (January 1995): 83.

2. See Diana Fuss's "Interior Colonies: Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *Diacritics* (Summer/Fall 1994): 20–39; and Kobena Mercer's "Decolonisation and Disappointment: Reading Fanon's Sexual Politics," in *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Culture*, ed. Alan Read (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996): 114–31.

3. His homophobia has not, however, deterred progressive Marxist–Humanist lesbian feminists like the San Francisco Bay area Subjectivity of Sexuality group from using his writings in their articulation of a "Queer Revolutionary Theory" in *Queer Notions: Thoughts on the Relationship of Sexuality to Revolution*, published by the Subjectivity of Sexuality group. The group is part of the Bay Area *News and Letters* Women's Liberation Committee. This statement set in motion a rather lengthy segment in Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin White Mask.*

4. "*Le noir*" poses a particular problem. While it is used throughout the text more frequently to mean "the black man," as it is generally followed by "*il*," at times, it simply means "the black." There is also in Fanon's use of *man* in certain instances the notion of humanity, 'MAN,' as Homi Bhabba rightly suggests, however objectionable it may seem to our feminist sensibilities. See, for instance, Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995). One cannot simply ignore the issue of the faulty and highly problematic translations.

5. See Mary Anne Doane's essay, "Dark Continents: Epistemologies of Racial and Sexual Difference in Psychoanalysis and the Cinema," in *Femmes Fatales* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 209–48. Doane's essay focuses particularly on Fanon's representation of white women, while Bergner attempts to account for his presentation of black women.

6. Lois McNay, *Foucault & Feminism: Power, Gender, and the Self* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 11–12.

7. Naomi Schor, "Dreaming Dissymmetry: Barthes, Foucault, and Social Difference," in *Men in Feminism*, ed. Alice Jardine (London: Methuen, 1987), 109. Also cited in McNay's *Foucault and Feminism*, 12.

8. Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 36.

9. See Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant's *Lettres créoles: tracées antillaises et continentale de la littérature, 1653–1975* (Paris: Hatier, 1991). But even as she mimics white women, whether through language or through white male love, the material doors opened to the woman of color are quite different from those opened to the male *évolué.*

10. A. Hesnard, *L'univers morbide de la faute* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), 38.

11. Toni Morrison, *Sula* (New York: Plume, 1973), 103.

12. See Homi Bhabba's "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition," in Foreword to *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986). Even if we lend some credence to Bhabba's claim that Fanon does not discuss the "object of desire," we arrive at conclusions that support Fanon's analysis. White women in racist cultures have been historically constructed as objects of black male desire and as able to be raped. These women, however, are equally constructed as not desiring relations with black men. Conditioned by cultures that place a primacy on whiteness, whites are teleologically always the desired object. Under these circumstances, some white women, misled into believing that they are always desired by the black, and that they are in danger of being raped by the black, will certainly manifest negrophobia and paranoia—fears of rape—in the presence of black males.

13. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (New York: Bantam, 1975), 249–50.

14. Nancy Friday, *My Secret Garden* (New York: Trident, 1973).

15. Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution*, chapters 2–3 of section 4: "Algeria Face to Face with French Torturers" and "Concerning a Plea."

16. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, 250.

17. Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: The New Press, 1995), 213.

18. Rita Maran, *Torture: The Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 161–69. Also see Halimi's *La Cause des femmes* (Paris: Grasset, 1973), 29, 35, 38–40, 75; and Valerie Orlando and Sharpley-Whiting's *The Djamila Boupacha Committee and the Women's Cause: Algerian Feminist Resistance/French Women's Activism—Djamila Boupacha, Simone de Beauvoir, Gisèle Halimi, Germaine Tillon* (manuscript).

19. Accad, *Sexuality and War* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 21.

20. Even U.S. women today, although more open about their bodies and desires, when confronted with sexual violations are oftentimes uncomfortable explaining these violations to male examining physicians and police officers. The result has been the hiring of more female physicians in hospital rape crisis units and officers in sex crimes divisions.

21. There are at least two Euro-American lit-crit feminists who analyze *A Dying Colonialism*: Anne McClintock's aforementioned *Imperial Leather* and Diana Fuss in her "Interior Colonies." Fuss unpacks the textual layers of "Algeria Unveiled" specifically within a poststructuralist framework of mimicry. She equally refers to Fanon's misogyny on the question of Mayotte Capécia. What is troubling about the article is that it attempts to read Fanon psychoanalytically in spite of his own ambivalence about psychoanalysis as unable to understand the neurosis of the black in particular. Moreover, Fuss situates Fanon's decolonizing medicine in *The Wretched of the Earth* within the psychoanalytic discourse of *analysand*, etc., when Fanon was not a psychoanalyst but a psychiatrist; that is, he did not practice psychoanalysis. Equally troubling is the erasure of ethnic specificity in her projection of a "black" identity onto Algerians in an attempt to create continuity between the black subject and the psychoanalysis taken up in *Black Skin, White Mask*, the psychiatry in *The Wretched of the Earth*, and the textual metaphors in *A Dying Colonialism*. McClintock's work on "Fanon and Gender Agency," on the other hand, is a complex and insightful read of the shortcomings and contradictions of "Algeria Unveiled" and "The Algerian Family" with respect to women's agency. McClintock and Helie-Lucas are at two extremes of the spectrum. While McClintock insists that Fanon wholly denies women's agency, Helie-Lucas maintains that Fanon, in his celebration of women's agency, inflates it to such an extent that it masked the reality of gender inequity. There is of course a middle ground between these two readings which I hope to open up. McClintock questions where the agency begins for the women in Fanon's text. Fanon's writing, for McClintock, denies feminist resistance prior to the national revolution and ties that resistance into male militancy; that is, he reinscribes heterosexism through the idea of the heterosexual revolutionary family. Fanon did not mention the long-standing resistance of Arab women to patriarchal oppression, but he certainly did not suggest that women's resistance was filtered through men's militancy. There were various phases of women's involvement in the struggle, but Fanon interprets every action of the women as militant, for Algerian women were always active in the struggle. Moreover, Fanon does not deny the historic dynamism of the veil; that the veil functioned to separate the sexes. McClintock's elaboration of the "designated agency theory" and decontextualized excerptings of Fanon to prove this theory are too numerous to cite. While she integrates a good deal of Fanon's other work into her feminist theorizing, suffice it to say that her critique of *A Dying Colonialism* selectively cites Fanon and in doing so distorts his analysis. For an excellent discussion of Fanon's gender politics from a male perspective, see Ato Sekyi-Otu's *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996). Sekyi-Otu painstakingly analyzes Fanon's writing and its dramaturgical turns.

22. Mervat Hatem, "Toward the Development of Post-Islamist and Post-Nationalist Feminist Discourses in the Middle East," in *Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers*, ed. Judith Tucker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 29–48.

23. Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 191, n. 22. Mernissi writes, "It is interesting to note that Fanon thought the incidents were 'funny.' For a man with Fanon's sensitivity to segregation and preoccupation with revolutionary assertion of human rights, his remark is puzzling to say the least." Fanon wrote in *A Dying Colonialism*, "During those interminable minutes when she must avoid standing still, so as not to attract attention . . . incidents that are at once funny and pathetic are not infrequent" (53).

24. Read, *The Fact of Blackness*, 77–85.

25. Amina Mama, *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender, Subjectivity* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 142, 147. Mama's discussion of psychology and black subjectivity nonetheless borrows extensively from Fanon; as the title suggests, she wants to move *beyond the masks*.

26. See, for example, the cultural/gender studies critics within Read's anthology, *The Fact of Blackness*. See also the dialogues and essays of Vergès, Lola Young, Martina Attile, and Kobena Mercer, who unquestionably defer to Young's reading. Vergès, in Isaac Julien's film, references Guadeloupian writer Maryse Condé's reading. Martina Attile inaccurately assumes that the novels are unavailable, while Lola Young simply reads Fanon's "misogyny" with not so much as a citation from Capécia's anti-feminist texts. Similarly, the literary critics explored in this work—Doane, Bergner, and Andrade—do not demonstrate a familiarity with Capécia's works besides Fanon's selective citations from the novels.

27. Iris Young, *Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 74.

28. Dworkin, "Liberalism," in *Liberalism and Its Critics*, ed. Michael Sandel (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 78.

29. Read, *The Fact of Blackness*, 103–13.

30. Cited in Homi Bhabba's introduction to the edited volume, *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 2.

31. See Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

32. Cited in Evelyne Accad's *Sexuality and War*, 18.

33. Cited in Raya Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 50

34. Edward Saïd, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 85–102.

35. Gerda Lerner, *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History* (New York: Vintage, 1972), 609–11.

36. The Combahee River Collective, "Black Feminist Statement" in Patricia Bell-Scott, Gloria Hull, and Barbara Smith's *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982), 18.
37. Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (New York: Plenum, 1985), 52.
38. The Combahee River Collective, "Black Feminist Statement," 15.
39. Words on logo of the National Organization for Women. Second definition is from Sandra Bartky's *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 11.
40. Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution.*

Chapter Two

Fanon and Capécia

> I am a Frenchwoman, as any other.
>
> —Mayotte Capécia, *Je suis martiniquaise*

> What is your real value in the world's economy? What are you worth?
>
> —Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South*

> With the exception of a few misfits within the closed environment, we can say that every neurosis, every abnormal manifestation, every affective erethism in an Antillean is the product of his cultural situation.
>
> —Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

In 1892, Anna Julia Haywood Cooper posed a series of peculiar but thought-provoking questions in a collection of essays entitled *A Voice from the South*: "What are we worth? . . . what do we represent to the world? What is our market value? Are we a positive and additive quantity or a negative factor in the world's elements?"[1]

With a highly methodical practicality, this black feminist "casts up" and "carefully overhauls" the account of blacks.[2] While valuable black resources and raw materials are wasted due to pervasive antiblack racism, classism, and sexism, Cooper concludes optimistically that no amount of blackphobia can mitigate individual and collective black contributions to "those things the world prizes,"[3] nor deny the aggregate worth of blacks as a race. "What are we worth?" recommends industriousness, black philanthropy, education, and other socioeconomic strategies of resistance as a means through which to change the value of blacks to the world.[4]

And while Cooper, in her practicality, resists "brooding" and "orating" over the black problem, her riveting cognizance of the blacks' situation compels us to further examine the existential worth of blacks.

Troubling from a philosophically humanist perspective, a sentiment Cooper concedes but readily dispenses with, her insightful query opens the floodgates for the contemplation of black existence in the midst of racialized cultural and economic domination. To ask blacks what they are worth is in fact to ask them to justify their presence, their continued existence. The existential reality is that blacks are still fundamentally worth less in the world economy because of their blackness. Indeed, they are the antithesis of values and value, a not fully human presence-as-absence dispossessed of inalienable rights. As Fanon observes in his discussion of the "wretchedness" of the colonized, the Arabs, the blacks:

> The natives represent not only the absence of values but also the negation of values . . . they are the corrosive element, destroying all that comes near them; they are the deforming element, disfiguring all that has to do with beauty and morality, they are the depository of maleficent powers and the unconscious and irretrievable instrument of blind forces. (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 41)

Cooper's "What are we worth?" reveals the lived experience of blacks as historical and contemporary markers of negativity within the social world.[5] Hence, if blacks are existentially devalued, worth less, then black contributions are ultimately worthless. In this vein Howard Ward Beecher affirms:

> Were Africa and the Africans to sink to-morrow, how much poorer would the world be? A little less gold and ivory, a little less coffee, a considerable ripple, perhaps, where the Atlantic and Indian Oceans would come together—that is all; not a poem, not an invention, not a piece of art would be missed from the world.[6]

The disappearance of Africa would constitute not the disappearance of viable human life, but merely dent the world's (i.e., the Occident as this world is conceived) supply of raw materials. It is assumed that contributions in the higher forms of art and culture are nonexistent. And the "objects" that inhabit that land

mass, the Africans, are ultimately worthless, as they lack inventiveness; blacks serve absolutely no earthly purpose. The aggregate value of Africans and the black diaspora in the Western, that is, white hegemonic world, amounts to nil.

But what happens when the black recognizes that his or her debt and credit ledger is perpetually in the red: that they owe more to the world than they are worth? How does the black experience his or her devaluation in the world's human economy? Devaluation, as Fanon notes, is not experienced exclusively in material terms. Economic worthlessness, and dis-ease, mediated through racial difference, are experienced internally or psychologically. "What are we worth?" in an antiblack body politic depends on "who we are." If one is white, one is valued; if one is black, one is devalued. Oppression is concomitantly experienced in such a polity along a gender hierarchy. If one is male, one is valued; if one is female, one is less valued—if one is black and female, one has no value.[7] This devaluation is further compounded when class and sexuality are figured into the equation. Trapped in a valued-less existence, what resources are open to the worth less (black males) and the worthless (black females)?

In his clinical study of the colonized Antillean, Fanon observes that, at the moment the colonized black becomes conscious of his or her negation, and worthlessness, a psychoexistential complex occurs. The desire to be rid of the epidermal schema, to slough off the black skin and the historical realities of black existence, arises. The black body becomes a phobogenic object. Escape hatches are sought from the corporeal malediction. And mastery of the colonizer's language is perceived as one potentially liberatory, vindicating, resource, as Anna Julia Cooper remarks:

> Stung by such imputations as that of Calhoun that if a Negro could prove his ability to master the Greek subjunctive he might vindicate his title to his manhood, the newly liberated race first shot forward along this line with an energy and success.[8]

In "The Negro and Language," Fanon theorizes that language is a crucial component of culture; it structures cultures and mediates social intercourse. The acquisition of such and such language represents the acquisition of such and such culture. In the colonial situation, mastery of the language of the metropole is held out as a card of entry to the culturally deprived Antillean

for honorary citizenship among whites, as a carrot to be voraciously and gratefully gobbled up. The Antillean who masters the French language becomes more French, more white, and less black. As language is the organ for the expression of thought, the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am" is tranformed into "I speak, therefore I am." The colonized becomes convinced that the burden of his or her corporeality can be purged through the acquisition of the French language. The more the Antillean strives to assimilate linguistically, hence culturally, the more he or she ascends the *great chain of being*, moves closer to being recognized as fully human.

This strategy proves utterly futile. Forever sealed in blackness, one is unable to become assimilated into French culture by virtue of the "idea" that others have of their bodily schema. The black is a slave of his or her appearance. The language that the colonized have mastered reaffirms their inhumanity and inferiority, with its mulitiplicity of negative values and meanings for their existence. As Jacques Derrida writes in "Racism's Last Word," "There is no racism without language . . . racism always betrays the perversion of man . . . it . . . writes, inscribes, prescribes."[9] The black can never really *be* French because he or she *is* black, the antithesis of white, which *is* French. To *be like* or *as* is never quite the same as *being*: "Wherever he goes, the Negro remains a Negro" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 173). The colonized will be perpetually locked in the state of becoming; they are marked as *évolués*. Therein lies the rub, the angst of their existence. Jean Veneuse, the character from René Maran's *Un homme pareil aux autres*, attests to the illusion and elusiveness of Antillean assimilation: "The Europeans in general and the French in particular, not satisfied with simply ignoring the Negro of the colonies, repudiate the one whom they have shaped into their own image" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 64). The official French position on the "Negro of the colonies," expressed in 1925 by a Monsieur Tesseron, the Directeur Honoraire au Ministère des Colonies, and contained within "Rapport sur la condition légale des sujets dans les colonies françaises et sur les prérogatives qui en résultent," confirms Veneuse's observations:

> The point is to know to what degree it is possible to satisfy the aspirations of the indigenous populations without jeopardizing our domination. . . . Is it politic, is it in our interest to encourage naturalization? Generally speaking, no. Certainly, we must welcome those . . . of our subjects who can genuinely be assimilated, that is to say who have sincerely moved close to us by abandoning their customs, their mores and adopting ours. . . . But how many will we find who fit this category? Obviously very few. The others, those who solicit the status of citizen . . . only to obtain certain advantages will always be dangerous.[10]

Another counsel on the native situation and citizenship read: "Although the new citizen . . . may have personally and momentarily elevated himself . . . he often falls back down before the end of his career . . . from which it is necessary to conclude that [citizenship] is not made for our natives."[11] Besides the abandonment of custom and mores, the colonized had to demonstrate suffficent mastery of the French language for citizenship. The danger for the French was embodied in the delicate balance of cultural and racial domination and their rhetoric of *liberté, égalité*, and *fraternité*.[12] Implicit in the granting of a French identity was the notion that the colonized would assume themselves to be somehow equal to whites, expect the same privileges as whites, most notably, venture to intermarry, subverting the clear-cut boundaries of racial superiority through miscegenation and *métissage*.[13]

Love, in this context, presents itself as another self-deluding resource of emancipation from blackness. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes:

> The person I love will strengthen me by endorsing my assumption of my manhood, while the need to earn the admiration or the love of others will erect a value-making superstructure on my whole vision of the world. (p. 41)

In effect, love, by way of Sartre and Lacan, is a narcissistic investment of feelings; it bestows the beloved with value. One loves in order to be loved. It is, in Sartrean terms, dishonest. And so, when Mayotte Capécia writes in *Je suis martiniquaise*, "I wanted so much to become a respectable woman. I should have liked to marry, but to a white man," this statement should have piqued our curiosity (p. 202). For this woman of color in a patriarchal, antiblack culture, who is presently the subject of our feminist inquiry, the white male stands as the ultimate purveyor of value.

Fanon, unlike Sartre, believes in the possibility of authentic

love. And the aforementioned type of love, linked to the phobogenic complex is, for him, inauthentic and/or perverse. Thus he examined it at length in "The Woman of Color and the White Man," the second chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Using Capécia as his point of departure, Fanon levels deft criticism at the writer and her autobiographical novel, *Je suis martiniquaise*. For Fanon, Capécia is duped. In the view of some contemporary feminists, Fanon is a misogynist. The following revisits the conflicts over disalienation, antiblack racism, sexism, and sexuality by engaging Fanon and feminist theorists in a rereading of Mayotte Capécia and her novels, *Je suis martiniquaise* and *La négresse blanche*.

In 1949, Mayotte Capécia would become the fourth Antillean and the first black woman to be awarded the renowned *Grand Prix Littéraire des Antilles* for *Je suis martiniquaise* (1948). The annual award, paying the handsome sum of 20,000 francs, was established in 1946 in Paris for novels, historical novels, essays, and poetry. Interestingly, the jury who found Capécia's work worthy of recognition was composed of thirteen Frenchmen.

The autobiographical novel was hardly seen as a *chef d'oeuvre* among the writers of the negritude movement, nor did it even gloss the pages reserved for literary criticism and book reviews in *Présence Africaine*. And the authenticity, i.e., Capecia's authorship, of the book has recently come under scrutiny.[14] Notwithstanding Maryse Condé's bibliography of Francophone Antillean women writers in *Paroles de femmes*,[15] Capécia's work is not mentioned in Patrick Chamoiseau's and Raphaël Confiant's historical-literary tour de force on writings by Antilleans, *Lettres créoles: Tracées antillaises et continentales de la littérature 1635–1975*.

One could certainly argue that the marginalization of black women writers by black male literati is not surprising and even that it is indicative of persistent attempts to privilege male voices and silence women's candid articulation of their experiences. However, such a statement would be in haste, for the monthly 1940s–50s issues of *Présence Africaine* include scores of writings by black and white women, and *Lettres créoles* does in fact have a cadre of Antillean women writers, including Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, and Suzanne Césaire.

Capécia's resurgent popularity among and recovery by American literary and cultural studies feminist theorists is thus owing primarily to Frantz Fanon.

Of Capécia and *Je suis martiniquaise*, Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks*:

> One day a woman named Mayotte Capécia, obeying a motivation whose elements are difficult to detect, sat down to write 202 pages—her life—in which the most ridiculous ideas proliferated at random. The enthusiastic reception that greeted this book in certain circles forces us to analyze it. For us all circumlocution is impossible: *Je suis martiniquaise* is cut-rate merchandise, a sermon in praise of *unhealthy behavior*. (p. 42)

Fanon's scathing condemnation of the novel and writer were rooted initially in the novel's commercial success, literary kudos, and appeal to French audiences, an appeal undeniably linked to Capécia's seemingly effortless adeptness at acting as a mirror for the French, reflecting back their idealized conceptions of themselves. But it is precisely this dismissive critique that has led Fanon into a myriad of conflicts with feminists and helped to catapult him into misogynist and sexist orbits. As Gwen Bergner notes:

> The terms of Fanon's censure reveal much about the economy of gender, class, and sexuality that binds black women. Fanon belittles Capécia's life story in terms of economic worth ("cut-rate merchandise") and sexual morality ("a sermon in praise of corruption")—the charges conventionally brought against women's writing and other assertions of feminine autonomy.[16]

Bergner continues, "Capécia sometimes—but not always—lapses into valorizing whiteness in her aspirations to privilege."[17] In *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, Mary Anne Doane states: "Fanon is relentless in his critique of Capécia's overwhelming desire to marry a white man. . . . Fanon sees the black woman's desire as representative of a black pathology which he despises."[18]

And finally, we cite at length Susan Andrade's equally aggressive critique of Fanon in her article "The Nigger of the Narcissist: History, Sexuality, and Intertextuality in Maryse Condé's *Hérémakhonon*":

> The figural supplement to the European representation of the oversexed black woman, that of the betrayer of black men, is powerfully articulated in Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs*.
>
> Fanon launches a virulent critique of Mayotte Capécia, using her first-person narrative as a transparent paradigm of black alienation, even comparing her to the arch-racist, Gobineau. His reading permits no ironic distance between the author and her first-person narrative. Most damning of all, he accuses Capécia and, by extension, all Caribbean women of color who marry lighter men (either white or mulatto) of lactification, or attempting to whiten the race.[19]

It is criticisms accented with adjectives like "relentless" and "virulent" that call for an examination of Fanon's and Capécia's texts in greater detail. Capécia's text not only uses the first-person narrative voice, but the character's name is Mayotte Capécia. Hence the charge regarding Fanon's inability to separate author from the work of fiction appears moot. Moreover, Fanon does not accuse *all* Caribbean women of wanting to whiten the race via their marital choices, merely the duped. The Fanonian context seems to have slipped by the latter feminist literary critic.

In Andrade's, Doane's, and Bergner's scenarios, Fanon wants to police black women's desires and damn them as sexually immoral if they demonstrate agency by selecting partners outside of their race. But there is something particularly troubling within Bergner's and Andrade's attempts to rescue the Antillean novelist from Fanon's "sexist-patriarchal circumscription" of her sexual autonomy and economic mobility. Both construct unpersuasively their own justifications for Capécia's exclusive desire for white men as economically motivated, which the novelist herself explicitly rejects throughout *Je suis martiniquaise*.

In sum, according to Bergner and Andrade, Capécia's predilection is a matter of survival, a black woman working in the service of whites, using the only commodities of exchange she has to eke out her existence in the colonies: her body. Here one is reminded of the black women described at the Bronx slave marts in Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke's study[20] or even the black women forced to prostitute themselves in Martinique, contemptuously and unsympathetically described by Capécia in her second novel, *La négresse blanche*. But Capécia's sagas in *Je suis martiniquaise* and *La négresse blanche* are quite different; these feminists' observations simply do not gel with the recountings in the novels. In both texts, she is self-sufficient, an entrepreneur: a laundress in the former, a bar owner in the latter.

She expressly refuses to *use* André, the French officer in *Je suis martiniquaise*, for financial mobility, safety, or anything else besides his presence. She even refuses a gold and diamond ring from the officer, declaring that he "is treating her like a prostitute" and if he "had given her an object without value," she would have believed he was not treating her disrespectfully (p. 145). Indeed, Mayotte gives André a gold medallion. Once Mayotte moves into the officer's house, she pays for the food, the maid, and the laundry in order to establish herself as a "legitimate" woman, as respectable and worthy of his love (p. 148). She becomes infuriated when he leaves money in her purse to meet the household expenses: "One morning, I found some unexpected bills in my purse. For the first time, I was violently angry with André." She tells him, "I put them back in your drawer. I do not sell my love and my services!" (p. 147). After André leaves Mayotte, sending her a check, a veritable sign of her worth, she refuses to pursue him legally in order to obligate him to recognize and financially support their son, François.

These feminist critics deny Capécia's agency or at least circumscribe her autonomy and agency more than Fanon ever could. In their logic, the only way a colonized black woman would ever acquiesce emotionally/sexually to her oppressor was under extreme economic duress; it becomes unfathomable that a black woman would *desire*, "love," or "sleep with the enemy," so to speak. Clouded it seems by images of the black superwoman with a will and psychical makeup of steel, inserted within the folds of these analyses is a sheer lack of understanding of the terrorizing effects of colonialism and systemic racism and sexism on the psyche of the colonized.

So what does Mayotte's desire for white men convey, if not the socioeconomic privilege put forth by Andrade et al.? Here we turn to Fanon's clinical observations of the epidermalization of oppression. It would appear that "all she wants is a bit of whiteness in her life" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 42). Her motivation represents a psychoexistential complex. André's love humanizes Mayotte in the virulently dehumanizing colonial world. She is "unable to see herself as equal to whites" (*Je suis martiniquaise*, p. 191). By loving her, he proves that she is worthy of white love;

she is loved like a French woman. She is a French woman (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 63).

Bergner's citing of Fanon's criticisms stick very closely to Charles Lamm Markmann's translation of *Peau noire, masques blancs*. The "unhealthy behavior" used in the aforementioned translation is indeed more in keeping with Fanon's clinical investigation of the epidermalization of inferiority. Bergner realizes the glaring difference in the translation in footnote 22 of her article. She concludes, however, that either translation—"a sermon in praise of corruption" or "unhealthy behavior"—suggests that Capécia is a degenerate influence. But does it? A sermon in praise of corruption with the sexual immorality ascribed to it *by* Bergner is clearly not the same as someone indulging in behavior that is in effect "unhealthy" to his or her own mental and physical well-being.

To romanticize *Je suis martiniquaise* as a "rare, unapologetic, and *invigorating* representation of a black woman's effort to carve economic and sexual autonomy"[21] that "sometimes lapses into valorizing whiteness" and to suggest that this is not on a profound level "unhealthy behavior" decontextualizes the colonialist framework out of which Capécia was writing. This colonialist framework, in its a priori function, inspires acute racial/sexual *malaise* in the psyche of colonial subjects. Fanon writes:

> the (white) man who adores the negro is as "sick" as the one who abominates him. Conversely, the black who wants to turn his/her race white [who valorizes the white] is as miserable as he who preaches hatred for the whites. (*Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 8–9)

Both the negrophobe and exoticizing negrophile as well as the *cauca*phobe and *cauca*phile are emotionally crippled. The desire on the part of the black to whiten herself or flee the black body to a white or whiter body is indicative of affective erethism and lactification, a miserable state of affairs. And Mayotte Capécia is indeed miserable. Capécia is blackphobic, and as we will discuss in *La négresse blanche*, a black black*femme*phobe:

> I found that I was proud of it. I was certainly not the only one who had white blood, but a white grandmother? . . . So my mother, then, was a mixture? . . . I found her prettier than ever, and cleverer, and more refined. If she had married a white man, do you suppose I should have been completely white? . . . And life might not have been so hard for me? . . . I could never stop thinking of our priest, and I made up my mind that I could never love anyone but a white man, a blue-eyed blonde, a Frenchman. (*Je suis martiniquaise*, p. 59)[22]

Whiteness represents beauty, intelligence, privilege. Her mother is suddenly, magically, transformed before the adolescent's eyes into a "prettier, cleverer, and more refined" woman because of this infusion of whiteness. The lived experiences of black women in colonial Martinique are indeed arduous ones. Hence, our heroine finds a bit of solace in her musings that she could have been a white woman. But because Capécia cannot be a white woman, she can at least have the love of a white man, which she believes will liberate her from the black female body, endow her with value, and thus ultimately allow her to exist as a human being. André, for his part, has indeed followed manuals along the lines of Dr. Barot's *Guide pratique de l'Européen dans l'Afrique Occidentale*, which suggests: "For those who lack the moral strength necessary to endure two years of absolute continence, only one line of conduct is possible: a temporary union with a well-chosen native woman."[23] And André does indeed live with Capécia for two years.

After the heroine has been sexually exploited, impregnated, and abandoned by the French officer just days before she gives birth, she concludes *Je suis martiniquaise* with the realization: "I would have liked to marry, but to a white man. Only a woman of color is never all in fact respectable/valued in a white man's eyes. Even if he loves her, I knew this" (p. 202).

To be sure, there is something saddening about Capécia's resignation. While Fanon may have been "relentless" in his critique of Capécia's desire to marry a white man, Capécia is equally relentless in her blackphobia, her self-hatred. For all of *Je suis martiniquaise*'s frankness, its unapologetic tone (as it should be, for Mayotte Capécia has every right to present her autobiographical narrative), this is "unhealthy behavior" par excellence.

Fanon's endeavor to explore the imperfections of love must again be examined. Authentic love is free of conflict. Both Capécia and André are sealed in the respective social constructions of their inferiority and superiority. She offers him little value in an antiblack and antifemale world, while he is valued in this same world. Fanon's impatient, dismissive reading of Capécia is not related to her interracial relationship proper, nor to his own de-

sire to "circumscribe black women's sexuality and economic autonomy in order to ensure the patriarchal authority of black men,"[24] but to the internalized oppression she invokes in articulating her desire. The articulation of authentic love without racial *malaise* or exoticism guides Fanon's critique. Love—more specifically, white male love—as a strategy of evasion/redemption, as a *moyen* through which to liberate oneself from the black female body and hence the historical reality of black femaleness, is as futile as the mimetic strategies deployed with language.

Fanon's diagnosis of Capécia's affective erethism is unique to this woman of color. It is not specific to all colonized women of color. As Fanon concedes, "there was a touch of fraud in trying to deduce from the behavior of Nini[25] and Mayotte Capécia a general law of behavior of the black woman with the white man" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 81).

That love has failed in its redemptive capacity and that Mayotte Capécia realizes its failure are sadly evident toward *Je suis martiniquaise*'s denouement. She and her son, François, attempt to depart for Guadeloupe in order to follow André. She is denied a passport. She relates in *r*-eating dialect, nonetheless, to the French administrator: "Je suis F'ançaise, tout comme aut'./I am a French woman as any other" (p. 178). But the French commandant reassures her that she is "forget[ting] that you are a woman of color" (p. 181).

The identity crisis typical of the colonized, the "In reality, who am I?" described in Fanon's treatise on mental disorders in *The Wretched of the Earth*, is here presented (p. 250). Mayotte believes that she *is* a Frenchwoman because she has been "loved" by a Frenchman. But she is not. The Fanonian *évidence* rests with her *r*-eating dialect and her blackness. She is not *Française*, but *Martiniquaise*. Just as Frenchman means white male, Frenchwoman means white female. Capécia, even with her white grandmother, is undeniably "native." And so, the novel reflects this abject realization as it is titled: *Je suis martiniquaise*.

Fanon's phenomenology of oppression has been useful in discerning the disalienation of the colonized woman of color, specifically Mayotte Capécia. Love has played a strategic but futile role as a resource of emancipation, redemption, and mimicry for the inferiorized native. Let us turn now to Fanon's psychology of oppression amid feminist conflicts for a reading of Capécia's seldom-read, semiautobiographical novel, *La négresse blanche* (1950).

Although it was not an award-winning work, reviews of this novel in the French press were complimentary. For instance, critic Robert Coiplet wrote:

> The style of Miss Mayotte Capécia is lively . . . her narrative is pleasant, free. . . . *La négresse blanche* has this tone . . . it is the story of a mixed-race woman who tends bar. . . . At twenty years of age, she has a three-year-old son whiter still than she. Her black blood taunts her. It also brings her some humiliations. She will leave the island for France.[26]

Capécia's heroine suffers humiliation because of her strain of black blood. Blackness, not colonial oppression and its psychological and material manifestations, is the fundamental source of angst. Her convoluted responses to this existential dilemma range from condescending pity to hatred toward the island blacks and desire to be recognized as anything but a Negress by the whites. Hence, our reading will focus particularly on Capécia's black*femme*phobia exhibited in her oftentimes contemptuous and stereotyped sexualized portraits of black femininity, in which the heroine incessantly tries to situate herself as "different" from, or a step above, black women.

The Adlerian exaltation that Fanon ascribes to Capécia is no longer exclusively premised upon "white male love," but bound up with such a feeling of inferiority linked explicitly to black femininity that transcendence is necessarily articulated in terms of a mixed-race female identity. Given Capécia's conclusion regarding the respectability of the woman of color (to be read: black woman), the desire to transcend black femininity in *La négresse blanche* becomes ever-pressing.

For Capécia, a woman of color is a woman who is perceptibly black. In her construction of the mixed-race female identity, her heroine is consistently rendered not necessarily white but, most importantly, not black. Yet whiteness is undoubtedly, as this exploration will reveal, the ultimate goal.

Written two years after the successful *Je suis martiniquaise*, *La négresse blanche* recounts the story of the twenty-five-year-old Isaure. The plot of *Je suis martiniquaise* frames that of *La négresse blanche*. The heroine, Isaure, is a single, working mother, whose child, François, is fathered by a white Creole who seduced and abandoned the trusting Martinican some years before. Isaure will marry a white childhood friend, Pascal, who was ostracized by

the white Creoles because of his family's poverty, but whose family nevertheless objects to his marrying a black woman. Pascal ironically declares a profound affinity for and understanding of the island "Negroes," but insists that his wife, Isaure, is not really black. He, Isaure, and François live on the sugar plantation where Pascal works as overseer of the black natives. In an upheaval over pay inequities and colonial injustices, Pascal is brutally murdered by the "savages" he so loves and (mis)understands, and Isaure flees Martinique for France.

Fanon writes of Capécia's work:

> She must have recognized her earlier mistakes, for in this book one sees an attempt to reevaluate the Negro. But Mayotte Capécia did not reckon with her own unconscious. As soon as the novelist allows her characters a little freedom, they use it to belittle the Negro. All the Negroes whom she describes are in one way or another either semi-criminal or "sho good" *niggers*.
>
> In addition—and from this one can foresee what is to come—it is legitimate to say that Mayotte Capécia has definitively turned her back on her country. In both her books only one course is left for her heroines: to go away. This country of niggers is decidedly accursed. (*Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 52–53, n. 12)[27]

From the novel's opening scenes, blacks are described as sexually jealous and *sales nègres* ("dirty niggers"). When questioned about the sexual practices of black men by the white colonial officers who frequent her bar, Isaure reveals, "They can make love in a terrible fashion. I have never made love to a black man. They disgust me, they scare me" (p. 12).

Isaure affects the same fears of black (male) sexuality as the colonialists. In this instance, the black male is projected as having the keys, namely an overendowed penis and overzealous sex drive, to a frenzied sexual universe. The black is the biological and hence represents a biological danger. By way of Fanon, we cite Michel Cournot on black male sexuality:

> The black man's sword is a sword. When he thrust it into your wife, she has really felt something. It is a revelation. In the chasm that it has left, your little toy is lost. Pump away until the room is awash with your sweat, you might as well just be singing. (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 169)

Isaure insists, however, that she has not suffered such defilement, a chasmic space left by a hefty black sword. Such a concession would equally imprison her sexual impulses within the same imaginative lascivious universe of the black female body she intends to flee.

Following her revelation of sexual purity, Isaure then proceeds to reflect on her negrophobia:

> It was true, she had never had a black lover. Perhaps solely because the first, who had taken her at seventeen years old and who had fathered her son whose skin is so white, was white. The first lover orients one's life. It could have been very different. Perhaps if she would have married. . . . Marriage with a black, would it not be worth/valued [*valoir*] more than concubinage with a white? The children, at least, wouldn't have been bastards. (p. 12)

The character poses nothing short of a rhetorical question around value: "Would not marriage to a black be valued more than concubinage with a white?" As the scales of humanity are unbalanced, legitimate black children weigh comparatively less, are valued less, than illegitimate "whiter" children to Isaure.

Isaure even refuses to allow her black compatriots in her bar, calling one patron a *sale nègre*. She is, however, punished for this indiscretion in a court of law when the judge tells her, "One does not use 'black' and 'nigger' interchangeably, for Martinique is not part of the United States" (p. 13).

But one is struck straightaway by the novel's title, a reification of Capécia's *mal de couleur* presented intially in her autobiography. *La négresse blanche* or *The White-Negro Woman* seemingly supports Fanon's assertion that Capécia's entrepreneurial endeavor as laundress in *Je suis martiniquaise* was indicative of a desire to whiten (*blanchir*) herself (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 45). Isaure struggles with her racial identity, eschewing both blackness and whiteness for the concept of *métissage*. She cannot claim to be a *mulâtresse*, but she will not accept the term *négresse*. This refusal to situate herself racially is betrayed by a clear desire to flee blackness.

Capécia's heroine mulls over the profound alienation of being "alone, neither black nor white," and even offers quasi-philosophical thoughts on the "unfairness" of the categories of race. Race, it seems, is pure fiction; however, every one of Isaure's

pronouncements on black women is undergirded by racist logic. Superficial distinction after distinction, reducible to color, between the heroine and black women is proffered as evidence of difference. Besides Isaure's color, a blend of fruits—banana, coconut, orange—and coffee, her difference manifests itself in the articulation of the notorious French *r*:[28] "She had a soft voice, a bit melodic: the accent of Island girls that resembles English accents. It was not at all like that of the black girls who completely eat the r" (p. 9). Even Isaure's cheekbones "had the appearance of a white face" (p. 10). And to highlight her appearance, she would put a "touch of pink on her cheeks which she thought made her appear less black. . . . She did not exaggerate like those black women disgustingly made up, whom one encounters in the cafes at the port" (p. 92).

Capécia chronicles each and every minute detail of Isaure's difference—in gestures, accent, physiognomy—from the "black girls" toward whiteness via the unfixed racial identity of *femme métissée*. And character after character affirms Isaure's *métissage*. Yet in the chapter entitled "The Love of Lucia," Capécia provides another yardstick by which to measure Isaure's veritable difference.

Lucia is Isaure's buffoonish, "r-eating" maidservant. Capécia describes Lucia as

> not being able to wear real shoes. Like many other negresses, she had large heels. She was of the most pure African type. She had full lips, a flat nose, frizzy hair and brilliant black skin. She was beautiful in her way, distinguishing her from all the half-whites and half-blacks which form the foundation of the population of Martinique. Since her distant ancestors, imported by slave traders from the time of Father Labbat, there must not have been any mixing in her ancestry. Not a drop of white blood. . . . A sort of familiarity was established between the black woman and the mixed woman. (pp. 34, 36)

Indeed, Capécia's comparing and contrasting reads like a nineteenth-century text on natural history or Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des race humaines*, as Lucia's pure blackness is physiognomically, physiologically, and psychologically gleaned and syncretized. Her devotion and deference—a remnant of "her slave mentality" bequeathed by her ancestors—to Isaure is so self-sacrificing, deprecating, according to Capécia, that Isaure could have

been a white woman (p. 36). Isaure's attitude toward the Negress is one of condescension, indulging Lucia's tales of her many wanton sexual escapades:

> The mistress was up to date on all her servant's adventures which were numerous. . . . She sought pleasure with such a frenzy, she was worse than a cat in heat. Isaure listened to her with a mysterious smile. Sometimes she was envious of the black woman who didn't have any more scruples than an animal. (pp. 36–37)

And while Isaure contemptuously envies Lucia's reckless abandon, she, possessing "drops of white blood," is governed by an entirely different and higher morality. Lucia is the embodiment of the lascivious Negress stereotype. This black woman is reduced to her base corporeal, specifically sexual, function, copulating like an unscrupulous animal with the poor *békés* (whites) and even poorer *sale nègres*. Love is as fleeting as an orgasm; Lucia is forever on the lookout for a quick fix. For Lucia, love is sex, and sex is love. Thus her love story, or rather love stories, are ones driven by sheer need for satiation.

For Capécia, black femininity represents bestiality and immorality; black women are either hideously made-up prostitutes, like the Negresses at the cafés, or possess prostitute proclivities like Lucia. They are aberrations for Isaure; her mirrors, rearing their loathsome black female heads in identification, dragging her down with their very presence and proximity. Yet one is left wondering why Isaure expresses such a profound alienation in Martinique where the population is, as she relates in the novella's first chapter, utterly mixed. Why does she at the novel's end seek to exile herself to a country where she is neither black, nor white, but "raceless"? And finally, how does this self-imposed exile and desire to flee blackness cloaked in the ambiguity of racelessness relate to her contempt for black women? For Fanon, the answer is simple. To situate oneself as a *négresse blanche* among hypersexual Negresses is but a small feat, a too-easily drawn fine line. It is most essential, writes Fanon, "to avoid falling back into the pit of niggerhood" that black femininity represents (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 47).

And so we conclude our engagement with and rereading of Fanon and Capécia with a few observations on the preceding feminist critiques of Fanon. To dismiss Fanon as antifeminist,

anti–Caribbean woman of color because he does not fit liberal feminists' paradigms of feminism undermines intellectual and pragmatic integrity, leaving instead a postmodern mythology—Fanon as a misogynist. Nowhere is this "truism" more apparent than in specious feminist readings of gender inequity in Fanon's rigorous critique of Mayotte Capécia and his "sympathetic" reading of the equally popular novelist, poet, negritude proponent, and Prix Goncourt winner René Maran, whose *Un homme pareil aux autres* was written one year before *Je suis martiniquaise* in 1947.[29]

What "sympathetic" tenor rings out in Fanon's observations that "Jean Veneuse . . . is a beggar. He looks for appeasement, for permission, in the white man's eyes"; or "*Un homme pareil aux autres* is a sham, an attempt to make the relations between two races dependent on an organic unhealthiness"; and better still, in embarking upon uncovering Veneuse's complicated neurosis, Fanon offers: "Veneuse is the lamb to be slaughtered. Let us make the effort" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 76, 80, 66)? Suffering from an acute "Cinderella complex," Veneuse "wants to prove to the others that he is man, their equal" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 77, 66).

Veneuse is an abandonment-neurotic of the negative-aggressive type (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 80). And race, more specifically blackness, becomes the mask for this alienation. Capécia's psychical crises are culturally produced, emanating from without, while Veneuse's emanate from within: blackness functions as the vehicle through which he can externalize his neurosis. Reading Fanon's observations within this schema, Veneuse, rather than Capécia, emerges as debilitated by a congenital neurosis exacerbated by his appearance—his blackness. Just as one cannot deduce a general law of behavior between black women and white men from Capécia's example, "there would be a similar lack of objectivity, I believe in trying to extend the attitude of Veneuse to the man of color as such" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 81).[30]

While black women clearly experience oppression differently from black men, one can even explain away Capécia's complicity in her sexploitation, but one has to go a long way to ignore Capécia's re-inscription of sexually racist stereotypes of black women ironically heaped upon Fanon by lit-crit feminists.

The conflation of Fanon's analyses of two very distinct psychoses of novelists whose works are written in two extremely different authorial tones represents a feminist literary/cultural criticism strangely unconcerned with racist and sexually racist logic. Readings of this nature are at the heart of poet Audre Lorde's critical observations that "it is easier to deal with external manifestations of racism and sexism than it is to deal with the results of those distortions internalized within our consciousness of ourselves and one another."[31]

A more appropriate and plausible critique of Fanon's gender politics with respect to Mayotte Capécia lies ultimately in his *not* exploring her sexism, specifically her antiblack woman phobia, her intraracial gendered relations. While Euro-American lit-crit feminists' gendered criticisms of Fanon are undercut by their lack of antiracist, anticapitalist, and antifemale-sexist analyses, Fanon's analyses of Capécia fixate on antiblack racism, alienation, and economic disease. One is left with gaping holes, "blind spots," if you will, in both critical analyses.

To reconstruct Capécia's story as an example of black feminism in practice because she is a black woman and because she was vigorously, but importantly, taken to task by Fanon is, to say the least, a dangerous feminist politics. One has to ask equally what is so invigorating about Capécia's representations and for whom are they invigorating? Are they invigorating merely because of their candor, the openness with which the novelist recounts her innermost racial, sexual, and class conflicts? Capécia's works should not be panned, but rather seriously engaged because of their troubling conclusions. Indeed, as bell hooks writes in her "Feminist Challenge: Must We Call Every Woman Sister?": "While it is crucial that women come to voice in a patriarchal society that socializes us to repress and contain, it is also crucial what we say, how we say it and what our politics are."[32]

Fanon's honesty in *Black Skin, White Masks* may be brutal, but it is not brutalizing. In an antiblack world, black male and female bodies are imagined as excess. Black males are constructed as more sexist, violent, and sexual. And black females, who have been vilified as sexually licentious and consequently rendered more vulnerable to sexual victimization by black and white males, are often solely and more comfortably highlighted as victims of black males. Given these constructions, it is not surprising that Mayotte Capécia would be immortalized in feminist writings as the lamb at Fanon's sacrificial altar, rather than the complicit victim of the sexploitative, antiblack woman colonial condition.

NOTES

1. Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 233.
2. Cooper, *A Voice*, 229.
3. Cooper, *A Voice*, 285.
4. Cooper, *A Voice*, 284–85.
5. I am not using "negativity" in the Hegelian sense of "absolute negativity."
6. Cited in Cooper, *A Voice*, 229.
7. See Audre Lorde's "An Eye for an Eye," in *Sister Outsider* (New York: Book of the Month Club, 1993).
8. Cooper, *A Voice*, 260.
9. Jacques Derrida, "Racism's Last Word," in *Race, Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Special Issue of *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Autumn 1985): 292.
10. Cited from Alice Conklin's "Redefining 'Frenchness': The New Politics of Race, Culture, and Gender in French West Africa, 1914–1940," 12. (Paper delivered at the University of Rochester, November 3, 1993)
11. Conklin, "Redefining Frenchness," 17.
12. Contemporary French policies on immigration and citizenship continue to reflect this ambivalence. Campaigns such Jean-Marie Le Pen's "France aux Français" appeal to the vast number of (white) French citizens, who see Arabs, Africans, Antilleans, even French-born people with colonial origins as a threat to employment, responsible for crime, etc. While Jacques Chirac's rhetoric on naturalization is not as openly hostile as Le Pen's, his social policies reflect these same animosities and fears. Chirac's pledge when running for office was to crack down on immigration and naturalization. The fiasco in Paris over immigration involving the teargassing and beating of Africans in church and the Debré Law has reopened the immigration debate. See "French police attack church oust 300 African immigants," *Indianapolis Star*, Saturday, August 24, 1996, p. A-10. The article reveals that the status of immigrants is "confused by a succession of sometimes contradictory immigration laws. Some of the protesters, for instance, have gone from being legal residents under older laws to illegal ones under more recent statutes. Others have achieved at least a claim to legal residency with the birth of children on French soil." Deportations of illegal immigrants have significantly increased since Jacques Chirac's winning the presidential office with his unbending rhetoric on immigration. Also see "Illegal African immigrants routed by Paris cops: Rage, astonishment fuel protest marches," *Chicago Tribune*, Saturday, August 24, 1996, Section 1, p. 3.
13. See Rene Maunier's *Sociologie coloniale: Introduction à l'étude du contact des races* (Paris, 1932). Maunier among others condemned hybridization and influenced colonial policy on such issues. He believed that the "native type," a "return to the primitive," was inevitable.

14. See Clarisse Zimra's "Righting the Calabash: Writing History in the Female Francophone Narrative," in *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1990), 143–60. See also Zimra's "Patterns of Liberation in Contemporary Women Writers," *L'Esprit Createur* 17, no. 2 (1977): 104–114; and "A Woman's Place: Cross-Sexual Perceptions in Race Relations; The Case of Mayotte Capecia and Abdoulaye Sadji," *Folio* (August 1978): 174–92. Many of the issues in Zimra's articles are raised by Doane et al. And many of the analyses presented in this essay suffice to cover those issues. Fanon is, for Zimra, a hater of women as well. And black women who sleep with white men are especially unnerving to Fanon, according to the Zimra script. But more importantly, Fanon's woman-hating comes full circle as his thoughts on liberation, etc., were espoused by sexist, Marxist black men during the 1960s–70s. For Zimra, this reflects Fanon's sexism. How would one explain then Fanon's theories on liberation coming out of the mouths of black revolutionary feminists of this same era?
15. While Condé believed Fanon was a bit harsh on Capécia, the heroine of her own novel explains that while she dates white men, she is "no Mayotte Capécia." See *Heremakhonon* (Colorado Springs: Three Continents Press, 1982), 30.
16. Gwen Bergner, "Who Is That Masked Woman? or, The Role of Gender in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*," *PMLA* 110, no. 1 (January 1995): 83.
17. Bergner, "Who Is that Masked Woman?," 83.
18. Mary Anne Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 219.
19. Susan Andrade, "The Nigger of the Narcissist: History, Sexuality, and Intertextuality in Maryse Condé's *Heremakhonon*," *Callaloo* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 219.
20. See Joy James, "Ella Baker, 'Black Women's Work,' Activist-Intellectuals," in *Spoils of War: Women of Color, Cultures, and Revolutions*, ed. Sharpley-Whiting and White (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).
21. Bergner, "Who Is That Masked Woman?," n. 23.
22. Much has been made regarding the "cruelty" of Mayotte's father (see the feminist commentary in Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask)*. But we must remember that once Mayotte was abandoned by André, it is her father who welcomes her with open arms and to whom she turns for moral support. He accepts her child without question or admonishment. And when the women of Martinique accuse her of "betraying her race" and ostracize her and her child, her father takes the child's hand to show his love and support. Mayotte is quite touched by this gesture, considering her son recoils when he is introduced to his black grandfather. Mayotte explains this by saying that the child was just put off that a man *so* black could be related to him. But this is a child. And children learn certain racist behaviors. Why would this child recoil if the question of color and race were of no consequence to Mayotte?

23. Barot's *Guide pratique* (Paris, 1902), 329.
24. Bergner, "Who Is That Masked Woman?," 81.
25. *Nini* was written by a man, Abdoulaye Sadji. Sadji wrote frequently for *Présence Africaine*.
26. Robert Coiplet, "*La négresse blanche* (revue)," *Le Monde* (Avril 22, 1950): 7a.
27. Exile is a recurring theme in postcolonial and colonial writings. However, Capécia's pursuits of exile do not fit the traditional paradigms of the novel of exile. She longs to go to France in order to avoid a racial identity. But it is precisely in the metropole that the constructions of these racial identities were born. See M. Salvodon's discussion of exile in "Contested Crossings: Identities, Gender, and Exile in *Le baobab fou*," in *Spoils of War: Women of Color, Cultures, and Revolutions*, ed. Sharpley-Whiting and White (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997).
28. It is interesting to note that, in the autobiographical novel, Capécia eats the *r* like all the other black women and natives. There are even Creolisms sprinkled throughout the first part of the book. André does try to teach Capécia to roll her *r*'s, but her tongue, she tells the reader, just wouldn't cooperate. Again, the desire to flee the black body was exclusively premised upon white male love. In this novel, the escape route is multilayered.
29. Maran won the *Prix* in 1921 for his novel, *Batouala*. He also wrote *Le Coeur serré* (1931) and documentaries on Africa (*Le Tchad*, 1931). He was considered a forerunner of the negritude movement, and he hosted many Afro–Caribbean writers at his home in Paris.
30. René Maran, *Un homme pareil aux autres* (Paris: Arc-en-Ciel, 1947), 185. Andrade also assumes that Fanon's discussion of the ways that interracial sex between white women and black men is perceived by the colonized as a "giving rather than a seizing," as something "romantic," reflects Fanon's own perceptions; hence, he endows white women with an agency he denies black women. He was merely remarking on the way the "duped" Antillean thinks of the relationship, particularly Mayotte Capécia and Veneuse. She was astounded that any white woman would want a Martinican. Thus, her white grandmother had to have really loved her grandfather. And because of white men's consistent and not so often clandestine sexploitation of black women, leaving in their wake thousands of mulattoes, etc., Capécia could cling to the notion that her mother was not "made in the bush." The fact of the matter is that, even today in the United States, most black-white interracial relationships are made up of white women and black men, a fact that may lead one to conclude that Capécia's observation that "a woman of color is not altogether respectable in a white man's eyes" has some validity. Studies have shown that African-American women are the least likely to marry outside of their race. Whether this is due to choice is debatable.
31. Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, 147.
32. In bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 80.

Chapter Three

Colonialism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Liberating Algeria

I made up my mind to fight for my country's independence. . . . Why? . . . Because our cause is just. Because, come what may, we shall achieve it.

—Djamila Boupacha, in Simone de Beauvoir's and Gisèle Halimi's *Djamila Boupacha*

The Angel and the Man work for unity; Satan and the Woman for division.

—Algerian proverb

Algeria! . . . "When your son has grown up, treat him like your brother," says an Arab proverb; it was certainly painful, but the son had become a man, our equal, our brother. That was what one had to understand.

—Jacques Soustelle, Governor-General of Algeria, 1955–1956

The unveiled Algerian woman, who assumed an increasingly important place in revolutionary action . . . discovered the exalting realm of responsibility.

—Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*

The Algerian revolutionary war for independence is oftentimes referred to by historians of Franco-Algerian history as "The War without a Name," one that had no major battles (except the Battle of Algiers), major frontiers, or borders. The war began November 1, 1954, on All Saints' Day, a Catholic holiday ritually

observed by the Algerian European minority or *pied-noirs*. The war ended in June 1962 with the establishment of a newly independent Algerian nation under the presidency of Ahmed Ben Bella, an original member of the *neuf historiques*, the visionary architects of the revolution. The eight-year bloody engagement in Algeria exacerbated the already tenuous political stability in France. Still suffering from the humiliating German occupation during World War II and the final loss of Indochina at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, France returned to its *mission civilisatrice* in its remaining colonies, determined to save face as a European World Power. The Algerian war, however, equally proved financially, politically, morally, and mortally ruinous to France, leading to the dissolution of the Fourth Republic. [1]

Prior to All Saints' Day 1954, Algerian Muslim discontent had been brewing and finally culminated in organized riots in Sétif on May 8, 1945, V.E. Day in Europe. The French response was fierce and extreme. The death toll for Europeans was in the hundreds, while the range for Algerians was between 15,000 and 45,000. Besides the economic deprivation associated with colonialism, other specific sociohistorical and political factors led up to the violent confrontation in Sétif. In 1871, the French had enacted the Crémieux Decree, which extended French citizenship to Jewish settlers without their having to renounce their religion.[2] The Arabs and Berbers were not extended this privilege. In addition, the European *colons* began a process of expropriation of Arab lands under the legal protection of the Warnier Law of 1873; the proposed 1918 Algerian Charter, extending French citizenship to Algerian Muslims who served in the French military during World War I, was rejected by the French National Assembly; and in 1936, the Blum-Violette Bill, whose aim was to grant French citizenship to Muslims, was again rejected by the National Assembly.[3]

In the aftermath of the riots and repression at Sétif, the French government attempted again, albeit feebly, to reform the Algerian condition and pacify Muslim resistance by revisiting issues such as citizenship, political representation, the separation of church and state, recognition of Arabic as an official language, and enfranchisement of Muslim women. These reforms were unanimously rejected by the *pieds-noirs*, demonstrating to the Muslim Algerians that they were unworthy of French citizenship and by extension not covered by the principles of *liberté, égalité,*

and *fraternité* embodied in the 1789 French *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*.[4]

It would take the Algerian liberation movement nine years to reassemble and attempt a bolder confrontation with the *colons* and the French *métropole*. During this phase of regrouping, splinter nationalist groups arose, consisting of the less religiously orthodox Kabyles (Berbers) and Arabs.[5] By April 1954, the Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité et d'Action (CRUA—Revolutionary Unity and Action Committee) was formed. The organization appointed nine leaders, three Kabyles and six Arabs, who would also be known as the *neuf historiques*. On October 10, 1954, CRUA created the revolutionary Front de Libération Nationale, the FLN.

The FLN's mission was "National independence through restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social within the framework of the principles of Islam; preservation of all fundamental freedoms, without distinction of race or religion," with the means of struggle "by every means until the realization of our goal."[6] Yet, the FLN proposed a compromise, "an honorable platform for discussion with the French authorities," as a way to "limit bloodshed."[7] The revolutionary proclamation offered the following in exchange for restoration of the Algerian state:

> French cultural and economic interests will be respected, as well as persons and families; all French citizens desiring to remain in Algeria will be allowed to as foreigners, or for Algerian nationality, in which case they will be considered as Algerians both in rights and duties; the ties between France and Algeria will be defined by agreement between the two powers, on a basis of equality and mutual respect![8]

The ambitious terms of negotiation were based on mutual recognition, equality, and respect. However, the irrational colonialist mind-set of the French and privileged feelings of encroachment experienced by the *pied-noirs* led them to resist all negotiations—in fact, any intimation of the possibility of an autonomous Algerian nation-state. Algeria *belonged* to France; it *was* unquestionably French. On November 12, 1954, Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France delivered a speech to the National Assembly, adamantly refusing compromise or secession of Algeria. Algeria, declared Mendès-France, "c'est la France!"[9] The FLN, in

turn, adopted the principles of "no compromise" and revolutionary violence.

As an integral political strategist and ideologue for the FLN, Frantz Fanon edited *El Moudjahid*, the FLN's journalistic organ, and wrote *A Dying Colonialism*. It is the latter treatise that is of interest here: on the one hand, because of its Algerian specificity, and on the other, because it is in two essays of this political work, "Algeria Unveiled" and "The Algerian Family," that Frantz Fanon can be situated among the twentieth century's most progressive male modernist thinkers on the interlocking nexus of ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. In his analysis of the dialectical relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, the Algerian woman becomes a centrifugal force. She was the axis upon and around which the colonizing mission and anticolonial resistance often spun. "This war," Fanon wrote in July 1959, "has mobilized the whole population, has driven them to draw upon their entire resources and their most hidden resources" (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 23). The veiled and cloistered Algerian woman could certainly be counted among those resources most hidden.

Before undertaking an examination of the profeminist dimensions in "Algeria Unveiled" and "The Algerian Family," let us first take up some feminist readings of Fanon's positions on women's liberation during the Algerian liberation struggle as well as analyses of the regressive status of women since national independence. Among Fanon's critics on the subject is Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, an Algerian feminist and founding member of the Network of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, which assists Muslim women living under oppressive Islamic laws.[10] As feminist philosopher Linda Bell rightly suggests, we cannot simply accept and dismiss Helie-Lucas's challenge to Fanon's sociological and historiographical study as just another point of view.[11] Bell continues, "Male assumptions of objectivity have been a camouflage covering male dominance and hiding the way male interests and desires are imposed on females."[12] What are those hidden interests and desires proposed in general by Bell, yet clearly at issue in Helie-Lucas's reading of Fanon?

Featured in the anthology *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writings*, Helie-Lucas's essay, "Women, Nationalism, and Religion in the Algerian Liberation Struggle,"[13] argues that Fanon's books have shaped mythologies surrounding Algerian women as freedom fighters equal to their male counterparts:

> The image that the outside world has formed of women in the Algerian liberation struggle is shaped by Frantz Fanon's books, a very widely distributed film called *The Battle of Algiers* and the true story of a few national heroines. From these sources, the Algerian woman appears as a freedom fighter who carried arms against French colonialism and its army, a "terrorist" who planted bombs in the city during the Battle of Algiers, who was equal to men in the struggle and who shared decision-making both at the political and at the military levels. (p. 105)

Helie-Lucas's criticism is multilayered. Using freedom fighter Djamila Amranes's *La Femme Algérienne et la Guerre de Libération Nationale (1954–62)* to support her discussion of inequities and Fanon's "mythmaking," she emphasizes several elements: the ways that gender hierarchies persisted in the percentage of tasks parceled out to women along traditional gender roles during the liberation struggle; the erasure of women's contributions in the archival records, i.e., in the registry of the Veteran's Ministry, the relegation of women and their performed tasks to that of "helpers" of men "fighting for the cause" rather than freedom fighters; and the continued subordination of women in the postcolony.

While the revolutionary phase of the war occasioned transformations in sexual relations and women's status, under the "new" Algerian government that transformative component dissipated. It stopped short in revolutionizing the patriarchal nature of Algerian society, its institutions and customs, and in dismantling the discriminatory practices meted out against women in the public spheres of employment and education and within the family. Shortly after national independence was gained, women were for the most part shuttled back into the kitchen under the secular, nationalist military government of the FLN. In 1984, under President Chadli, the most repressive blow was dealt to women with the passage of the *Code de la Famille*. Working hand in glove with the *Sharia*, the code, with its 224 articles and explicit claim to a return to tradition, sanctions polygamy, mandates women's subservience to their husbands, and allows a husband to repudiate his wife at will. And since 1989, with the decline in popularity of the FLN—due to its failed economic programs, its repressive Western-backed military junta, and the rising appeal of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)—Algerian women have been forcibly enveloped in the *haik* (veil).

"So much," Helie-Lucas writes, "for Fanon's and others' myth of the Algerian woman liberated along with her country" (p. 107).

Women's liberation and nationalism, whether in the form of the FLN's patriarchal secular nationalism in Algeria, or conservative and fundamentalist nationalism, appear to be irreconcilable. Many Arab feminists point to nationalism as one of the primary oppressive factors impacting women's daily lives and consequently sound the call for a postnationalist feminism. The crux of the nationalism/women's liberation polemic is rooted in the fact that traditional gender relations and the regulation of gender are critical to conservative and fundamentalist nationalist ideology in Algeria and other Islamist countries. Even the secular nationalism of the FLN has, as Mai Ghousoub relates, "reclaimed many of the most patriarchal values of Islamic traditionalism as integral to Arab cultural identity."[14] Indeed, the language used to articulate Algerian national identity and culture was and continues to be highly feminized. The land, "nation-state," culture, and the woman are merged, conflated. Culture and identity are imagined as uniquely transmitted through women. The Algerian woman becomes the symbolic repository for group identity.[15] Hence, in order to protect and preserve the nation and the family, which is the foundation of patriarchal culture, the woman must be sheltered from the immorality and corruptions of modernity and, as in the prescriptions of conservatives and fundamentalists, the West. The land, like the female body, must be policed, protected from rape, Western feminisms, and other intrusions. Algerian nationalist discourse and ideology lock women into "tradition" and thereby deprive them of the citizenship rights enjoyed by their male compatriots.[16] The discourse becomes, according to Helie-Lucas, recycled, reinvented, and reinterpreted ad infinitum to suit the needs of the nation-state in its various evolutionary and developmental phases. The more threatened the Algerian nation-state, the more conservative or traditionalist, even rising to the level of fundamentalist, the nationalist discourse and its systemic mechanisms become. Women are at once the custodians of national identity and culture and the wards of the nation-state, central to the preservation of the state and relegated to the margins of the body politic.

Helie-Lucas notes:

> Since there was "no humble task in the revolution" we did not dispute the roles we had. . . . The overall task of women during liberation is seen as symbolic. Faced with colonisation the people have to build a national identity based on their own values, traditions, religion, language and culture. Women bear the heavy burden of safeguarding this threatened identity. And this burden exacts its price. . . . Women are supposed to raise sons in the faith and traditional moral standards and to teach the language of the forefathers. Women should be bound by tradition, while men had some access to modernity. (pp. 107–108)

Confronted with the potential destruction of their local culture and customs by the French colonial and imperialist project, Algeria turned virulently inward with particularly regressive gendered ramifications. This turning inward has been reproduced in our postmodern times, a "kind of 'siege mentality' in which stripping Arab women of their rights has become well justified and condoned as a protective act."[17]

As educators, nurses, nurturers, mothers, liaison agents, as veiled and unveiled freedom fighters, women's roles during the revolution were refashioned and molded in the simultaneous service of the "higher" goals of the struggle— national liberation—and within a narrow, antifeminist political discourse. As Egyptian feminist Nawal el-Saadawi insists, women were "used by the revolution as tools, as cheap labor, cheap fighters—to die first and be liberated last!"[18]

The working plans for Algerian liberation did not particularly identify women's emancipation as one of its aims. Many Middle Eastern feminist thinkers, activists, and writers such as Helie-Lucas, Mervat Hatem, Deniz Kandiyoti, Evelyne Accad, Nayereh Tohidi, and Nawal el-Saadawi maintain that women assumed national liberation meant the destruction of oppressive forces from without *and* within Algerian society: that it was, in effect, inclusive of women's liberation from Algerian patriarchal oppressions. Women's liberationist dimensions were manifested through women's collective participation in national struggle. Their feminism "was not however, autonomous, but bound to the signifying network of the national context which produced it."[19] The feminism of Third World and other women of color was and is importantly tied to anti-imperialist, antiracist, anticolonialist, and anticapitalist struggles.[20] However, as Iranian feminist Nayereh Tohidi writes in hindsight, women must demand that their

liberation, their needs, and their specific oppressions be clearly addressed and incorporated into nationalist liberation movements from the outset.[21] Since those measures were not proactively taken, Algerian women's various innovative strategies of resistance during the national liberation struggle were turned against them, appropriated by the postcolonial nationalist Algerian nation-state and used to police feminine conduct and conformity.

The veil is emblematic of such usurpation of Algerian women's methods of resistance; during the revolution and since the massive 1990 victory of the FIS in the legislative body of Algerian governance,[22] it has been used as a means of turning back the clock on the socially transformative potential the revolution offered. Helie-Lucas explores the uses and abuses of Algerian women with respect to the veil:

> Although there is no doubt that veiling women is a measure for control and oppression, it became for a time a symbol of national resistance to the French. During the war, French officials had insisted that Algerian women should be freed from the oppression of the veil. French army trucks had transported village women to urban areas. There the women were forced to unveil publicly thereby proving their renunciation of outworn traditions. Both Algerian men and women resented this symbolic rape. In addition to its symbolic role, the veil was supposed to have a practical function. Fanon praised the revolutionary virtue of the veil—it allowed urban women freedom fighters to escape the controls of the French army. . . . How, therefore, could we take up the issue of the veil as oppressive to women without betraying both *nation* and *revolution*? . . . The FLN (the National Liberation Front) encouraged such an attitude that emphasized women's modesty and could also be labelled "fighting for the Cause." (p. 108)

The complexity involved in the Algerian woman's decision to wear the *haïk* is indisputable. Islamist traditions demanded a rigid separation of the sexes, and the veil served this purpose in traditionalist Algeria. Even though the Koran (24:30–31) demanded modesty from both sexes, the veil came to be identified exclusively as a mandate for women and signified modesty and adherence to the traditions of Islam. The veil was rarely worn by practicing Muslim Algerian women in the rural areas where a great deal of the fighting took place. And Kabyle women never donned the *haïk*. Prior to 1957, the veil had been abandoned by the women in the city. Notwithstanding this virtual abandonment, there were women who continued to wear the veil. The public unveiling of Algerian women to the battle hymn "*Vive l'Algérie française!*" prompted Algerian women again to don the veil. Even women who had long stopped wearing the veil once again enveloped themselves in the *haïk*.[23] Yet one cannot overlook the coercive element manifested in this "voluntary" decision. As Helie-Lucas reasons, "How *could* women resist wearing the *haïk* without betraying both nation and revolution?"

Further, as Mervat Hatem suggests, "Besides frustrating colonial designs, it was not clear what concrete benefits women derived from being defenders of tradition."[24] But as demonstrated by the French campaign of unveiling, not all women were struggling to be rid of the veil at that historic moment. And in parts of the contemporary Muslim world, there are still a great many women who voluntarily don the veil.

The appeal of conservatism and fundamentalism today and their mandates to veil women and return them to their place are as much structured around attempts to regulate women's bodies as they are symptomatic of postcolonial economic, political, and social disarray; structural maladjustments aggravated by Western imperialist powers and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the modernization of the family; disillusionment and the failure of socialism; and rising youth unemployment. In Algeria specifically, there were riots in October 1988 as a result of this postcolonial disarray. Algeria's economy is literally fueled by a dependence on its petrochemical exports. In the 1980s, the plummeting global price of oil seriously diminished its national revenues.[25] The veil, as perceived by fundamentalist and conservative Islamist groups, symbolizes adherence to traditional values; it comforts and appeals to those weary and fearful of the rigors of modernity and female sexuality; and it signals a return to tradition as a cure to postmodern *malaise*.[26]

In her book *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives*, Syrian feminist Bouthaina Shabaan chronicles stories of women whose decision to wear the *hijab* provides them access to certain public spaces and authority denied secular women.[27] Turkish feminist Deniz Kandiyoti observes that there is a "patriarchal bargain" between women like Egyptians Zainab al-Ghazali and Safinaz Kazim and the men who endeavor to return women

and men to their "rightful" places. And this bartering has helped to maintain social, economic, and political structures that at the very least strengthen male hegemony.[28]

And so it would appear inevitable that Frantz Fanon, with his discussion of the revolutionary uses of the veil in *A Dying Colonialism*, would run into conflicts with contemporary Algerian feminists. Helie-Lucas has, however, simplifed Fanon's analysis of the veil, Algerian women's liberation, and the family during the Algerian liberation struggle.

As the war for independence progressed, the means of combat strategy mutated. When Algerian women unveiled themselves, acting as *assimilées*, Fanon praised the "revolutionary virtue" of this strategy. Indeed, as the epigraph from Fanon attests, it was the "unveiled Algerian woman" who assumed an increasing importance in revolutionary action. But more than this, Fanon saw that the veil, like the radio described in "This Is the Voice of Algeria," was no longer a static cultural symbol; it too could be transformed, modified under revolutionary circumstances. During the doffing and donning commanded by the revolution, the veil ceased to function as an inert traditional symbol. When the French discovered this ruse and began publicly and forcibly unveiling women in the streets (symbolically raping the women, both Fanon and Helie-Lucas concur), the Algerians' methods of combat again mutated and, in effect, regressed. Fanon writes at length on the subject:

> Removed and reassumed again and again, the veil has been manipulated, transformed into a technique of camouflage, into a means of struggle. The virtual taboo character assumed by the veil in the colonial situation disappeared almost entirely during the course of the liberating struggle. Even Algerian women not actively integrated into the struggle formed the habit of abandoning the veil. It is true that under certain conditions, especially from 1957 on, the veil reappeared. . . . The adversary now knew. . . . French colonialism, on the occasion of May 13th, reenacted its old campaign of Westernizing the Algerian woman. . . . Before this new offensive old reactions reappeared. . . .
>
> Algerian women who had long since dropped the veil once again donned the *haïk*, thus affirming that it was not true that the woman liberated herself at the invitation of France and General de Gaulle.
>
> Behind these psychological reactions, beneath this immediate and almost unanimous response, we again see the overall attitude of rejection of the values of the occupier, even if these *values be objectively worth choosing* [my emphasis]. . . .
>
> In organizing the famous calvacade of May 13th, colonialism obliged Algerian society to go back to methods of struggle already outmoded. In a certain sense, the different ceremonies have caused a turning back, a regression.[29]

Fanon notes that this particular value of the occupier, the removal of the veil, may be worth choosing, but that the occupier's drive to save, to convert violently, the savages "in spite of themselves" forced the redonning of the veil (p. 63). The fact that the French focused a significant amount of their energies on the veil and the Algerian woman as the last vestige of resistance served merely to "strengthen the traditional patterns of behavior" (p. 49).

Given Fanon's views on human freedom, it is interesting to find analyses of his work on Algerian women and the veil as constituting a denial of female oppression by Algerian men, a pro-male cultural supremacist bias, and a camouflage for male desires and interests. But what is particularly unsettling is Helie-Lucas's assertion that Fanon maintains that the "Algerian woman was liberated along with her country." Fanon identifies women's liberation with national liberation (p. 107). Indeed, he spoke of the transformation of value systems and sexual and familial relations that silenced and rendered woman the complement of man (p. 109). The Algerian woman "developed her personality and discovered the exalting realm of responsibility" (p. 107). This realm did not make her the symbolic repository for group identity, nor did she become the body through which language and customs are passed; she assumed an individual responsibility for herself and her actions denied by traditional Islamist laws, yet challenged, overturned, during the course of revolutionary struggle. At that moment in Algerian history, Fanon saw many Algerian women liberated from time-honored traditions of silence, invisibility, and sequestration.

That the veil is being used in contemporary Algeria and other Muslim countries as a tool of repression and justification for the murder of women[30] by the outlawed FIS and other fundamentalist and traditionalist factions—that the "threat" of the Occident and modernity is consistently recalled in order to circumscribe women's behavior and deny their access to the true fruits of citizenship described by el-Saadawi, Helie-Lucas,

Mernissi, et al.—represents one of the many "Pitfalls" or "Misadventures of National Consciousness":

> History teaches us clearly that the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism. . . . It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps. National consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell. . . . A government that calls itself a national goverment ought to take responsibility for the totality of the nation . . . it must guard against the danger of perpetuating the feudal tradition which holds sacred the masculine element over the feminine. Women will have exactly the same place as men, not in the clauses of the constitution but in the life of every day: in the factory, at school, and in the parliament. (pp. 148, 201–202)

The innermost hopes of the whole people have not been embraced in Algeria. Women's particular interest, their liberation, was subjugated to the "common good" of the nation, embodied in the particular interest of Algerian patriarchy. Helie-Lucas reveals that nationalism, religion, and socialism helped to elaborate and legislate antiwomen state policies.[31] Embroiled on the one hand in Algeria's anti-imperialist stances and, on the other, in a patriarchal social structure and fabric, Algerian women continue to bear the brunt of politically conservative social and ideological maneuvers.

Fanon, who died before seeing the evolution of the independent Algeria, witnessed a transformation in the Algerian family and the status of Algerian women during the war. As feminists write in hindsight concerning the shortcomings of the architecture of the Algerian liberation struggle, it is clear that Fanon was at worst optimistic ("Mankind, I believe in you," *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 7) in assuming that the progressive changes, however minute, in many areas (sexual relations, the transformation of the veil from a static to a nonstatic element, the temporary change in traditional marriage laws for women in the maquis, women's establishing a new dialetic with their body and the world), and, in sum, that the path toward the liberation of

Algerian women opened by the women's organized and collective participation in the revolution would continue to evolve, be embraced by all, and form the basis of the new Algeria.

In contemporary Algeria, the rise of fundamentalism, reactionary antiwoman policies and family codes in keeping with the *Sharia*, which condones stoning (women) for adultery, is undeniably narrowly tied to those transformations. Those transformations, occurring at the moment women entered into the fighting phase of the revolution, spurred the century's long legacy of Algerian women's activism into a collective feminist consciousness and provided the momentum to continue the organized fight for contemporary Algerian women's liberation.[32]

In light of Helie-Lucas's important criticisms of Fanon on the question of gender, the veil, and oppression, we now turn our concern to the question of Fanon's commitment to women's liberation as discussed within the very pages that Helie-Lucas challenges. We will ask, in effect: Does Fanon's analysis of Algerian women, the veil, and the family represent a profeminist consciousness, that is, a belief in "woman's right to life as a free woman and as a complete social being"? Or does it merely camouflage male interests and reinscribe conventional gender roles?[33]

FANON'S "ALGERIA UNVEILED"

"Algeria Unveiled" goes a long way in explaining the intricacies and developments of the Franco-Algerian war. Not only does Fanon offer insights into the insurrectional role of the women, but he exposes the fundamental flaws of Western liberal strategies from the 1930s onwards to unveil the Algerian woman and thereby colonize and unveil Algeria—the nation—to remove Islamic darkness and savagery and replace it with the light of Western ideas and idealism. From a quasi-sociological point of departure, Fanon attempts to explain the "hows" and "whys," the evolution, of the Algerian woman's integral role in the liberation struggle.

In France's application of liberal democratic ideals, which border on paternalism fueled by cultural imperialism, racism, and economics, the *haïk* would come to be perceived as an interference in the Algerian woman's individuality by the French. And while Fanon recognized and clearly advocated Algerian women's right to exist as free and autonomous beings, he equal-

ly realized that Algerians, men and women alike, had to come to this realization on their own terms; that the occupier, in attempting to violently and clandestinely prevent the Algerian man from interfering with the Algerian woman's cultivation of her subjectivity, equally violated the liberal principles of noninterference; and finally, that those terms would be realized through their collective participation in revolutionary struggle which inevitably transforms the lives and histories of individuals, communities, and countries.

In effect, group culture and tradition are generally signified by dress. And, in the Arab world, the veil worn by women suffices generally to characterize Arab society to the foreigner (p. 35). While a culture or society may be essentially patriarchal and patrilineal in structure and in its doling out and denying of equitable gender roles, the essence of the culture and land (whether it be in the United States and its citizens or France and its colonies) assumes peculiarly feminized dimensions. While feminized language was and is deployed by Algerian nationalist rhetoricians, this same language and thought pattern was assumed by the French in 1954. Algeria was envisioned as having a "feminine" cultural essence. To secularize, to unveil the women, would mean to secularize Algeria proper. Hence, as much as the veil represented cultural symbology, it equally reflected for the French occupier the status of Algerian women—repressed, hidden, and cloistered by an omnipresent and oppressive Arab patriarchy. Following the principles of a skewed Millsian liberalism,[34] the French sought simultaneously to liberate the Algerian woman from the veil and destroy the structure of Algerian society. In doing right by Algerian women, the French would be doing right for themselves. The formula of "Let's win over the women and the rest will follow," based on research from Western sociological pundits, became colonial policy (p. 37).

Liberating the women, unveiling the women, would also represent a disrobing of the Algerian man, a usurping of his power over the women and, thus, Algeria. It was hoped that the unveiled women would, like tilled, fertile soil, facilitate the sowing of Western colonial seeds throughout Algeria: "Converting the woman, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of destructuring Algerian culture" (p. 39).

In French efforts to save the women from the brutish Algerian men, a multitude of strategies were deployed, most notably one involving French women, advocates of women's liberation through colonialization:

> Mutual aid societies and societies to promote solidarity with Algerian women sprang up in great number . . . in the course of which droves of social workers and women directing charitable works descended on the Arab quarters. The indigent and famished women were the first to be besieged. Every kilo of semolina distributed was accompanied by a dose of indignation against the veil and cloister. The indignation was followed up by practical advice. Algerian women were invited to play "a functional, capital role" in the transformation of their lot. They were pressed to say no to a centuries-old subjection. (p. 38)

Nothwithstanding the fact that Algerian men were equally indigent and famished, Algerian patriarchy and its "arcane" and "archaic" cultural traditions of cloister and the veil were posited as the primary cause of the women's wretched existence. Colonialism, on the other hand, as espoused by the French missionary women, with its explicit political doctrine bent on cultural destruction and exploitation, was transformed into a liberatory women's movement.

Fanon reveals the hypocrisy of these "colonialist" feminists; he points to the reality of the unequal distribution of *intragender* power as well as the complicity and benefits derived from the expropriation of resources, raw materials, and labor to colonialist women at the mere cost of Algerian cultural identity.

The case of Suzanne Massu, a colonialist feminist and wife of General Jacques Massu, an agent of the French military who ordered and defended the torture of thousands of Muslim Algerians and participated in the Battle of Algiers, is worth mentioning here as an illustrative example. In 1958, Suzanne Massu established Le Mouvement de Solidarité Féminine. The movement purported to "be an action of deeply humane and fraternal social order . . . for friendship between the women of the two communities."[35] It was not an attempt to "provoke any kind of revolutionary change from tradition."[36] Suzanne and Jacques Massu even adopted two Muslim children, a boy and a girl, "as a symbol of the integration [they] were planning."[37] The largesse of these two colonialists was duly repaid, for the girl, Malika,

delivered a speech that can only be characterized as colonialist's propaganda to a crowd of 30,000 of her Muslim Algerian brethren, saying explicitly: "I wish with all my heart that Algeria remain French."[38]

And as much as the donning of the veil and cloister are decried as antiwoman, Fanon relates that the rending of the veil has particularly sexualizing, indeed violently sexual, antiwoman implications for Algerian women in the male colonialist imagination. Replete with metaphors of flesh laid bare and rape, Fanon taps into the European male unconscious with a psychiatric evaluation of stereotypes and dream content. What he unveils is the hypocrisy of the male colonizer's desire to unveil/liberate the woman only to imprison her in stereotypes that render her violable, more ripe for rape:

> The rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of a European is always preceded by a rending of the veil. We here witness a double deflowering. . . . The European's aggressiveness will express itself likewise in contemplation of the Algerian woman's morality. Her timidity and her reserve are transformed. . . . The Algerian woman becomes hypocritical, perverse, and even a veritable nymphomaniac. (p. 46)

For as much as the Algerian woman is described as the "demonetized" object of the Algerian man, she is instantaneously objectified, degraded, in the European male psyche at the moment of her unveiling, her liberation, her entering into "subjectivity."

The occupier wrongheadedly assumed that the Algerian woman exercised absolutely no will; she was envisioned as "inert," "a dehumanized object," a puppet whose strings were pulled by Algerian male puppeteers (p. 36). They equally erroneously estimated that she had no identity, and certainly not one rooted in any aspect of Algerian customs and traditions.

In the course of the intensified struggle over the women and the veil, the colonized reacted violently: "To the colonialist offensive against the veil, the colonized opposes the cult of the veil" (p. 47). As the war progressed to Clausewitzian total war, the Algerians drew upon their entire arsenal, inclusive of the women. And it is at this moment that Algeria entered into veritable revolutionary warfare.

Body Politics: Revolutionary Women, Revolutionary War

Fanon's discussion of the Algerian woman thus far entails his recounting of the factors and events that led to her participation in aspects of the liberation struggle that would require her to step outside the binding ties of traditions and create a woman-outside-of-herself. She was always involved in the war as a nurse, typist, seamstress—in various traditional gender roles—via the occupier's use of her as a symbol of oppression, as well as the Frenchman's real and imaginative raping of the woman. Yet different forms of combat were introduced in 1955 as a result of the occupier's relentlessness in making the women so visible and integral to their colonial enterprise.[39] The decision to involve women was wholly, as Fanon acknowledges, entrusted to the males.[40] The male's *extending* of the privilege to women to join the struggle for Algerian independence does not mitigate the fact that women agitated and volunteered to participate. The first women revolutionaries were married women whose husbands were militants; later, divorced and widowed women and then young unmarried women joined the ranks. With the swelling of the numbers of women volunteers from various age categories and marital statuses, the roles of the women multiplied, ranging from nurses to mountain guides to liaison agents responsible for carrying money, messages, fuel, arms, identity cards, or medicine. Fanon writes that a "moral obligation and a strength of character that were altogether exceptional would therefore be required of the women" (p. 48). Unlike the Algerian male freedom fighter, rape and death were certain for the captured Algerian woman revolutionary. Revolutionary warfare and violence are tragic; lives are lost, but freedom is gained. For Fanon, there is continuity between the woman and the revolutionary. She rises directly to the level of tragedy, as her death is certain (pp. 49–50).

There were no training camps, extensive preparation, or characters from novels or plays to emulate for Algerian women. When either pared down (to appear as an assimilated Algerian) or swelled (carrying various essentials under the *haïk*), the Algerian woman had to appear at ease in the European streets. Yet, for the woman who has never wandered the streets alone and without her veil for fear of punishment, ostracism, and public,

familial, and personal humiliation, the experience is at once daunting and liberatory. She had to appear confident with easy strides, overcoming all timidity and awkwardness. She had to relearn her body, invent new dimensions and muscular control (p. 59). Hips freed, legs bared, the body, unleashed from the "disciplining," "tempering," "isolating" *haïk*, was naturally in conflict with itself (p. 59). After years of sequestration and draping in the layers of the veil, she was in the most profound sense bare, naked. In reinventing her corporeal pattern for the revolutionary struggle, she refamiliarizes herself with her own bodily schema, creates a completeness by reestablishing her body in a new and "totally revolutionary fashion" (p. 59). There is, Fanon writes, a "new dialectic of the body of the revolutionary Algerian woman and the world" (p. 59). Abandoned for the revolutionary cause, the veil would again be taken up in the course of struggle. Algeria's willingness to change and accept new ways of fighting colonialism created a space where the Algerian woman could and did change. She was and could no longer be characterized as an "inert object," but as a woman of action. This liberatory path, now opened, could lead to the creation of a new woman.

FANON'S "THE ALGERIAN FAMILY"

Fanon opens his analyses of the Algerian family with references again to the centrality of the Algerian woman. Her transformation "could not have occurred without having profound repercussions" on the Algerian family (p. 59). The war for national liberation has had significantly positive consequences for Algerian women, feeding their collective and organized political consciousness and radicalism; it equally challenged the concept of the nuclear "patriarchal" family with the killing of fathers and brothers and through the participation of women as revolutionary actors and agents of freedom.

However, for Fanon, traditional ideas and modes of behavior are ineffective and counterrevolutionary and must be abandoned during revolutionary warfare. And as contemporary events in the aftermath of national independence continue to unfold, regressive traditions prove equally confining in the face of postmodernity and feminist consciousness.

Fanon divides the essay on the Algerian family into several sections, addressing various familial relations and traditional rules governing those relations. In each section—The Son and Father; The Couple; The Daughter and Father; The Brothers; Feminine Society; Marriage and Divorce—he outlines the transformations in and of relationships occasioned by the revolution and explores the futility of adhering to and enforcing centuries-old traditions during and even after the struggle, specifically in the case of the young Algerian woman.

In the section "The Daughter and Father," the revolutionary theorist provides insight into the structure of the traditional father-daughter relationship and girls'/women's place in prerevolutionary Algerian society. "In the Algerian family," he observes, "the girl is always one notch behind the boy." He continues:

> The male . . . enjoys an almost lordly status. The birth of the boy is greeted with greater enthusiasm than that of the girl. . . . The girl has no opportunity, all things considered, to develop her personality or to take any initiative (pp. 105–106).

Clearly aware of the hierarchical nature of gender relations, Fanon reveals how women are marginalized in the household and treated as "minors." The facility with which divorce can be granted to the male "imposes the weight of an almost obsessional fear on the Algerian woman of being sent back to her family" (p. 106). The young girl adopts her mother's attitude of acquiescence and obedience to male authority. At the moment she reaches puberty, she, a "childwoman," is married off (p. 106). While still considered a "minor" in married life, she nonetheless receives a semblance of authority as head of her own domestic space in her husband's household. Unlike the Western modern[41] model for female development, characterized by childhood, puberty, and marriage, Fanon states that the Algerian knows only two: childhood-puberty and marriage (p. 107). In this analysis, Fanon is careful to explain that illiteracy, poverty, and unemployment in Algeria, exacerbated by colonialism, leave the childwoman no other options (p. 107).

The fight for national liberation forced the abandonment of many of these traditional modes of behavior and customs. The revolutionary war paved the way for the woman-as-revolutionary agent to liberate herself from the veil, to relearn her body and develop her personality. Let us again cite Fanon at length:

> This woman, who . . . would carry grenades or submachine-gun charges, this woman who tomorrow would be outraged, violated, tortured, *could not* put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behavior of the past [my emphasis]; this woman who was writing the heroic pages of Algerian history was, in doing so, bursting the bounds of the narrow world in which she had lived . . . and was at the same time participating in the destruction of colonialism and in the birth of a new woman. . . . The woman-for-marriage progressively disappeared, and gave way to the woman-for-action. . . . The men's words were no longer law. The women were no longer silent. . . . The woman ceased to be a complement for man. *She literally forged a new place for herself by her sheer strength.* (pp. 107–109)

That Fanon recognized the Algerian woman's right to exist as an autonomous and complete social being is clear. That he acknowledged her marginalization is equally clear. She was an actor, an agent, in trying to bring about freedom for Algeria and her own liberation. The father could no longer question the woman-revolutionary's right to speak nor her morality when at the maquis for months, weeks, or days on end. She no longer bowed her head when speaking to the patriarch. Women began to agitate for the right to choose their own partners. More importantly, Algerian women began to forge their place in history, to rewrite the historical record, to refuse to be silent, invisible, and obsequious. They were creating a new woman and a new womanhood to which other Algerian women, the "Feminine Society," could look and emulate. These women could not go back to their silent existences. And it is this literal forging of themselves in the history, into traditionally "forbidden quarters" of work, school, public spaces, that has helped to give rise to contemporary fundamentalist activities.

The Writing of Algerian Feminine History

Throughout his writings on Algerian feminine society and the Algerian liberation struggle, Fanon resists the notion that women should be mere "replacement parts for men," for "revolutionary war is not a war of men" (p. 48). Hence its benefits, namely liberation, should not uniquely extend to men. Generally depicted as *fatmas*, doe-eyed, inactive, and voiceless in historiographic records and texts, Algerian women's contribution to the national liberation struggle is often forgotten, diminished

in contemporary cultural memory, in the French archival records of the war, and in the archives of the Algerian Ministry of Veterans.

Contemporary feminist writers, like Algerian Assia Djebar,[42] Fadela M'Rabet, and Djamila Amranes have undertaken the task of rewriting the historical record to give voice and presence to Algerian women. The surface of this feminist project, however, was merely scratched in July 1959 with Fanon's writing of *A Dying Colonialism*. "Algeria," Fanon insists, "is not a womanless society" (p. 67). And women must have a place in the writing of the history of the "new" Algeria. It is not simply the nurses, the women who carry grenades, the submachine gun charger carriers, nor the liaison agents whose voices, stories, and struggles should be heard and written, but

> the woman in the city, in the *djebel*, in the enemy administration; the prostitute and the information she obtains; the women in prison, under torture, facing death, before the courts. All these chapter headings, after the material has been sifted, will reveal an incalculable number of facts essential for the history of the national struggle. (p. 60, n.15)

Unlike the Ministry of Veterans in its attempt to deny women's roles in the revolution and thus their access to jobs and retirement benefits in the postcolony, each and every role and every woman who participated in the national independence struggle is acknowledged in *A Dying Colonialism* as revolutionary, as a fighter for an independent Algeria and the feminine collective. As a revolutionary thinker, theorist, and participant in the Algerian revolutionary war, Fanon provides in his writing, if nothing else, a testament to women's resistance to oppression from within and without.

While Fanon's work on Algerian women may provide the stuff of contemporary mythmaking, his writing is not the least bit mythical. To proclaim such is to dismiss the experiential nature of Fanon's writings, what he witnessed and interpreted. It is clear that he did not intend nor did he believe that his work represented the definitive, complete historical picture on the Algerian national struggle when he wrote that "after all the material has been sifted . . . an incalculable number of facts essential for the history of the national struggle" will be revealed. The research of Amranes and Helie-Lucas, Rabet's *La Femme Algéri-*

enne and Djebar's historiographic novels and films disclose a number of important facts and contradictions.

That women fought, died, and helped to bring about a free Algeria should be duly noted. That a male writer chooses to chronicle women's activism demonstrates an awareness of the importance of women and their contributions at historical moments and to historical movements. It represents equally a resistance to what feminist critics have long pointed to as the patriarchal tendency to exclude women from history. Algerian women entered themselves into history. History was made by the women. Fanon has merely related Algerian women's resistance in a way that can be remembered, recalled, and corrected by women in their present quests for self-actualization.

As of late, Fanon has been put into a lurch of sorts, the clichéd "damned if you do, damned if you don't." In writing about Algerian women, he has been accused of reinscribing silence, male privilege, and ventriloquism.[43] If, in 1959, he had written of the Algerian revolution without a word on the women, he would have been accused of sexism; as he has written of the subject, he now stands accused of mythmaking with a sexist/conservative subtext.

In our rethinking of Fanon in contemporary culture and feminist resistance politics, it certainly does not serve our interests to inscribe "myths" onto Fanon's thought at the very moments when we are claiming to unpack his "myths." An ethics of feminist criticism should allow one to critically engage and expose flaws in Fanon's writings and versions of history without aggressive misreadings and textual revisionism.

It is possible, as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., observed of Homi Bhabba, that one "wants Fanon to be even better than he is."[44] Yet, in all earnestness, I must say that there are many feminist critics who refuse to acknowledge and put to use the best of Frantz Fanon.

NOTES

1. Sources that will be referred to throughout this part of this chapter and those that inform the history put forth are the following: Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace* (New York: Viking, 1978); Philip Dine, *Images of the Algerian: War, French Fiction and Film, 1954–1992* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Rita Maran, *Torture: The Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954–1962* (Stanford: Stanford University Press/Hoover Institute Press, 1978); Alexander Harrison, *Challenging De Gaulle: The O.A.S. and the Counterrevolution in Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Praeger, 1989); and PierNico Solinas, ed., *Gillo Pontecorvos's The Battle of Algiers: A Film Written by Franco Solinas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973).

2. Under the Nazi-collaborating Vichy regime, the Crémieux Decree was repealed by Maréchal Henri Pétain.

3. Harrison provides an excellent snapshot of the sequence of events, xxiii–xxvi.

4. Horne, *A Savage War*, 69. Horne suggests that fifteen of the Muslim deputies abstained from voting. The reforms were defeated 328 to 33.

5. This religious orthodoxy would prove to be a constantly divisive factor in the leadership, as the Kabyle women did not wear the *haïk* and the central committee leaders were predominantly Arab. The current rise in fundamentalism in contemporary Algeria has similarly polarized the Arab and Berber populations. The military government in Algeria has been backed for the most part by Western powers who see the secular FLN as a better alternative than the fundamentalist FIS. Ideologically, the FLN leaders tended to clash as well. While Ramdane Abane stressed the political over the military (the National Liberation Army [ALN]), other leaders stressed the military over the political. Houari Boumédienne would eventually ride into the presidency on the strength of the ALN in 1965. It is suspected that Boumédienne and the other colonels of the ALN had a hand in the attempted bombing of Fanon, for he was highly opposed to the supremacy of the military over the political. This is an important point to elaborate upon, as Mohammed Harbi, a participant in Isaac Julien's film, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask*, insists that Fanon closely aligned himself with Boumédienne. The position of "no compromise" is perhaps the one issue upon which Fanon and Boumédienne agreed, as it was obvious that the French were not going to negotiate and/or recognize an independent Algeria.

6. Horne, *A Savage War*, 95.

7. Horne, *A Savage War*, 95.

8. Horne, *A Savage War*, 95.

9. Horne, *A Savage War*, 98.

10. Barbara Burris, "The Fourth World Manifesto," in *Radical Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1973), 352–57, also takes Fanon to task in her discussion of "National" Culture as the Dominant Male Culture. Burris's premise is that Fanon is pro-male cultural supremacy. Her reading is flawed on the most fundamental levels as she begins by insisting that Fanon and not the French identified the veil as an Algerian cultural artifact. Her analyses then spiral out into a cascade of misreadings. She appears at odds with Fanon primarily because of his "hatred" of European colonizers. She goes on to maintain that Fanon does not recognize

female oppression. National culture in Algeria *has*, unfortunately, turned out to be pro-male supremacy. But Fanon certainly would not condone such a view of national culture or the struggle for independence as will be shown in this chapter and as his son attests in Isaac Julien's *Frantz Fanon; Black Skin, White Mask* and Algerian feminist-writer-activist Assia Djebar remarks in *Le blanc de l'Algérie*. Burris's other charges in this essay are marred by her "common oppression" rhetoric and her attempts to deny white women's privilege in an antiblack culture. It is apparent that her reading of *A Dying Colonialism* stopped at "Algeria Unveiled."

11. Linda Bell, *Rethinking Ethics in the Midst of Violence: A Feminist Approach to Freedom* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 59.
12. Bell, *Rethinking Ethics*, 59.
13. Marie-Aimée Helie-Lucas, "Women, Nationalism, and Religion in the Algerian Liberation Struggle," in *Opening the Gates: A Century of Arab Feminist Writings* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 104–114.
14. Cited in Evelyne Accad, *Sexuality and War* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), 14.
15. Deniz Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 376–91.
16. Here I want to stress that there are feminists who believe that nationalism and feminism can be reconciled if the discussion of sexuality is opened. See Accad's *Sexuality and War*. There are even feminist nationalists who argue that feminism can change the "masculinist face" of nationalism. See Lois West's *Feminist Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1996). There are then differences between nationalist discourses. There are modernists, conservatives, and fundamentalists. The secular nationalism of the FLN, however, has failed in Algeria because it consistently reinscribes sexist and misogynist practices with the monetary support of the West.
17. Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents," 385.
18. Cited in Nayereh Tohidi's "Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism," in *Third World Women and Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 260. Also see Nawal el-Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World* (London: Zed Press, 1980).
19. Kandiyoti, "Identity and Its Discontents," 380.
20. See "Women and Liberation: Fatima Babikar Mahmoud talks to Patricia McFadden," *Journal of African Marxists* 8 (January 1986): 3.
21. Tohidi, "Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism," 251–67.
22. Although the FIS won the municipal elections by a landslide (850 municipalities out of 1,500), with 54 percent of the popular vote and only 28 percent for the incumbent FLN, through gerrymandering the Western-backed government expanded the parliament in order to favor the FLN. Violence resulted because of this manipulation of the electoral process, and the FIS declared holy war on the secular government. As a result, the FIS is outlawed in Algeria. For more, see Peter St. John's "Insurgency, Legitmacy, and Intervention in Algeria," *Commentary* 65 (January 1996): 1–9.
23. Tohidi explains this phenomenon in Iran. Women who deemed the *hajib* as unprogressive voluntarily wore the veil as a form of solidarity against a common enemy, the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran.
24. Hatem, "Toward the Development of Post-Islamist and Post-Nationalist Feminist Discourse in the Middle East," in *Arab Women: Old Boundaries, New Frontiers*, ed. Judith Tucker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 45.
25. St. John, "Insurgency," 3.
26. See Fatima Mernissi's *Beyond the Veil: Male and Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); *Doing Daily Battle: Interviews with Moroccan Women* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989); and *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1992).
27. Bothaina Shabaan, *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).
28. Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender and Society* 2, no. 3 (1988): 274–90.
29. Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 62–63. All susequent parenthetical page numbers in the text of this chapter refer to this source in this edition.
30. In a paper delivered at the "Spoils of War: Women, Cultures, and Revolutions" Conference at Purdue University in February 1995, Valerie Orlando opened her essay "Women, War, Autobiography in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la fantasia*" with a discussion of twelve women who were murdered by the FIS for going "bare-faced" in Algiers. Orlando's essay appears in *Spoils of War: Women of Color, Cultures, and Revolutions*. Also see St. John's "Insurgency." Hundreds of women have been killed since 1995.
31. Helie-Lucas, "Women, Nationalism," 111.
32. See Cynthia Enloe's *Making Feminist Sense of Internationalist Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); for a comparative view of fundamentalism, the family, modernization, and women, see Accad's, Gilliam's, and Tohidi's essays in *Third World Women and Politics of Feminisms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). See also F. Azari's *Women of Iran: The Conflict with Fundamentalist Islam* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983); and E. Sansarian's *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran: Mutiny, Appeasement, and Repression from 1900 to Khomeini* (New York: Praeger, 1982).
33. See Patricia McFadden's "Women and Liberation" cited in Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Fido's *Out of the Kumbla* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1990), xii–xiii.
34. See Eddy Souffrant's essay, "To Conquer the Veil," in *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, ed. Gordon, Sharpley-Whiting, and White (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996), 171–79.

35. See Jacques Massu, *Le Torrent et la Digue* (Paris: Plon, 1972), 99–104.
36. Massu, *Le Torrent*, 103–104. Contrary to Suzanne Massu's claims, Le Mouvement clandestinely acted to convert Algerian women, represented by the fact that many members burned their veils during the Battle of Algiers. *Le Torrent*, 96–7, 102.
37. Massu, *Le Torrent*, 114.
38. Massu, *Le Torrent*, 288–89.
39. At the Tenth Berkshires Conference on the History of Women, Indian feminst Tanika Sarkar also discussed how the British made Indian women critical to their colonial campaigns and versions of history.
40. Burris takes offense at the fact that men made this final decision to involve the women. The situation was clearly no different in the United States. Women agitated in order to join the fighting ranks of the U.S. military. Fanon applauds the males for such a decision because the fight for decolonization is just as much women's as men's fight. Moreover, through revolutionary struggle, the status of the women would be changed to sister and comrade-in-arms. At least that is what he believed. More importantly, Fanon insisted that the women should not be regarded as replacement products/subordinates to/for the men.
41. It is particularly the modern model. As late as the nineteenth century, French men were allowed to take child-women, that is, pubescent teenagers, as brides.
42. See Djebar's historical/autobiographical novel. *L'amour, la fantasia*. Also see her *Le blanc de l'Algérie* in which she relates her friendships with Josie and Frantz Fanon and mourns their passing. Djebar celebates Fanon's commitments to Algerian independence; she also recognizes that Fanon would have been distressed over the course of history in Algeria and its contemporary crises.
43. See Rajanna Khanna's unpublished paper, "The Fourth Cinema" on *The Battle of Algiers* which she maintains borrowed heavily from Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*. Saadi Yacef, however, a member of the FLN/ALN who was critical to the Battle of Algiers, informed much of Pontecorvo's rendition. Yacef stars in the film as himself. See also Diana Fuss's problematic reading of Fanon's discussion of Algerian women, mimicry, and vetriloquism in "Interior Colonies; Frantz Fanon and the Politics of Identification," *Diacritics* (Summer/Fall 1994): 20–39.
44. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Critical Fanonism," in *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Spring 1991): 460.

Chapter Four

Affinities: U.S. Radical Black Feminists and Fanon

We are nothing on earth if we are not, first of all, slaves of a cause, the cause of the people, the cause of justice, the cause of liberty.

—Frantz Fanon, cited in P. Geismar's *Fanon*

As Fanon says, "They were not in history, they were outside of history." What we see today in the development of the women's liberation movement is the beginning of the entrance of woman into history, the woman beginning to speak for the woman. The woman beginning to understand, analyze the history of woman; the woman seeking the roots of the source of her oppression in order to be able to deal with this.

—Kathleen Cleaver, "*The Black Scholar* Interviews Kathleen Cleaver"

I maintain that the true liberation of black people depends on their rejection of the inferiority of women, the rejection of competition as the only viable relationship between men, and their reaffirmation of respect for general human potential in whatever form—man, child, or woman—it is conceived.

—Linda La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation"

As detailed in the survey of feminists' conflicts with Fanon in chapter 1, there is an affinity between Fanonian thought and contemporary U.S. radical black feminists' agendas, although the use of Fanon varies from feminist to feminist. In this chapter, these feminist affinities with Fanon's body of ideas, found ex-

pressly in writings by Linda Jo La Rue, Frances Beale, and bell hooks, present themselves in the following ways: the envisioning of a socially democratic and gendered New Humanism occasioned by revolution-in-permanence; and the political and social theorization of black liberation, decolonization, and phenomenologies of racism and racist representations. But even more striking, these radical black feminist affinities can be read as oppositional, for all intents and purposes, to the misogynist-laden and agency-curbing analyses put forth by liberal, Euro-American lit-crit feminists. In effect, Fanonian thought is explicitly apprehended as gender progressive and/or useful to feminist resistance politics.

LINDA LA RUE: (WHITE) FEMINISM, (BLACK) SEXISM, AND FANON'S GENDER PROGRESSIVISM

In the May 1970 issue of *The Black Scholar* devoted to the theme of black revolution, Linda Jo La Rue's article, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," appeared. La Rue, then a graduate student in political science at Purdue University, evinced the principles of an emerging black feminist consciousness. Here I must stress "emerging," for La Rue, in keeping with the skepticism of many activist black women of her day with respect to the bourgeois ideology undergirding the dominant/mainstream women's liberation movement, expressed arguments that could be and have been challenged as "antifeminist" by feminists such as bell hooks. La Rue does indeed overlook multiracial organizing between women on the ground during this era. While her criticisms are leveled directly at the Betty Friedan *Feminine Mystique* variety of feminists, she equally does not recognize that as long as women of whatever class or race are subject to objectification, then they are not free, or truly valued as human. And yet, La Rue is keenly aware of sexist oppression and the need for women's liberation, which can undeniably be characterized as a progressive black feminist consciousness.

La Rue not only took to task the "common oppression" rhetoric of the blossoming women's liberation movement, a criticism that would emerge strongly in hooks's 1984 *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center,* but she insisted that the predominantly white middle-class women's movement's "sudden attachment" to the

black liberation movement "was done with only marginal concern for black women and black liberation and with functional concern for the rights of white women."[1] Insightful and often withering in its criticism, La Rue evoked a suppression/oppression dichotomy to differentiate between what she perceived as patriarchy's circumscription of white middle-class women's social, economic, and political mobility and white hegemony's outright denial of black people's humanity. She maintained that the common oppression analogy had about as much validity as comparing the "neck of a hanging man with the hands of an amateur mountain climber with rope burns," or a "black woman on welfare who has difficulty feeding her children" to "the discontent of the suburban mother who has the luxury to protest the washing of the dishes on which her family's full meal was consumed" (p. 36).

La Rue questioned whether the interests of black people as a whole, and black women, in particular, were best served in an alliance with mainstream women's liberationists whose agenda was of the reformist, social equality ilk, and whose strategies for social transformation called for new gender relations within a racialized social class. La Rue recognized that there are progressive radical elements within the women's liberation movement. Yet she also realized that the social equality feminists far outweigh that element, which leaves the movement ripe for cooptation by the status quo.[2] That is, given the opportunity, many feminists will settle for concessions and reforms; they will opt to share in, as bell hooks notes, "white power," rather than struggle for radical social transformation for all oppressed peoples.

La Rue's analyses do not stop at the erasure of differences between poor and working-class black women and middle-class white women, between blacks' "oppression" and middle class white women's "suppression." She also takes on the sexism of blacks (men and women) involved in liberation movements. She first attempts to appeal to black men's sense of racial solidarity, shared oppression, and the importance of accepting—in view of the mobilization of white women committed to white middle-class interests—black women's active roles in the movement. This acceptance would require a rejection of stereotypes regarding (black) women's inferiority: "Can blacks afford to relegate black women to 'home and babies,' while white women reinforce the status quo? . . . The movement needs women in a position of struggle not prone. The struggle blacks face is not between

knives and forks, at the washboard, or in the diaper pail" (p. 41). In trying to disclose these regressive gender politics—the attempts to box activist black women into "the warmed-over throne of women's inferiority, which white women are beginning to abandon" (p. 41)—and in praising what she termed the "role integration" of blacks (p. 38) for survival under the revolutionary circumstances and stresses of slavery, Jim Crow, and a host of other historical and present-day moments of racial terrorism and sexual exploitation, La Rue turned to Frantz Fanon.

Citing at length Fanon's discussion of Algerian women in *A Dying Colonialism*, La Rue observes, "Fanon wrote in glorious terms about this role change":

> The unveiled Algerian woman, who assumed an increasingly important place in the revolutionary action, developed her personality, discovered the exalting realm of responsibility. . . . This woman who, in the avenues of Algiers or of Constantine, would carry the grenades or the submachine gun charges, the woman who tomorrow would be outraged, violated, tortured, could not put herself back into her former state of mind, and relive her behavior of the past. (p. 107)

By merely exchanging context and ethnicity, La Rue demands:

> Can it not be said that in slavery *black women assumed an increasingly important place in* the survival *action* and thus developed their *personalities* and senses of *responsibility*? *And after being outraged, violated and tortured,* could she be expected to *put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behavior of the past*? (p. 39)

La Rue argues that prescribed male and female social roles are not immutable, that the idea of the masculine as superior and the feminine as inferior is retrogressive. While putting forth her intraracial, antisexist agenda, she demonstrates the ways in which some African-American men and women have overidentified with the dominant culture, and thus reified in their replication the most irrational and regressive of sexual politics. The unwillingness to accommodate the modifying principles introduced by survivalist circumstances into black sexual politics is akin to repressing black female agency, subjectivity, and autonomy. Black women's resistance and survivalist strategies have been impugned with the derogatory resonances of Patrick Moynihan's "black matriarch." As blacks struggled against colonialism and social injustices in the United States, many attempted simultaneously to sexually colonize black women.

Realizing the impact of Fanon's political treatises on liberation and decolonization in the many factions of U.S. black liberation movements, La Rue shrewdly evokes Fanon's writing to buttress her analysis of sexism and internalized oppression, the latter evidenced in blacks' identification with conventional gender roles. The evocation undeniably underscores the hypocrisy of those liberationists who extolled women's participation in the Algerian war for independence as described in Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism* and captured in Gilles Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers*. It equally demonstrates the movement's deep investment in sexist practices, notwithstanding Fanon's own gender progressivism. The frequent references to Fanon by the predominantly black male leadership and male and female rank-and-file members of such organizations as SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), the Black Panther Party, and US (United Slaves), purported to be verbal badges of progressive-mindedness and critical consciousness, actually reveal themselves in many instances as mere empty recitations. The liberationists have missed the fundamental premises of Fanon's thought on the interconnection between successful social movements and "the range and quality and female participation."[3]

La Rue has in effect appropriated Fanonian thought from an essentially narrow and overwhelmingly male interpretation of liberation. She has then repositioned that thought within the framework of a black feminist resistance politics that involves a debunking of the myth of the matriarch, a rejection of women's inferiority, and an epistemologically humanist reconceptualization of liberation theory and practice. Here, Frantz Fanon's antisexism stands as a critique of the movement's chauvinism and crudely retrograde gender politics.

FRANCES BEALE: "THE NEW WORLD," A NEW HUMANISM, AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

First published in Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (1970) and later that same year in *The Black Woman* anthology edited by Toni Cade Bambara,[4] Frances Beale's "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" was, according to Beverly Guy-Sheftall, "the most anthologized essay in the early years of women's liberation

publications."[5] A biting examination of the triple bind of racism, sexism, and class exploitation, Beale left no stone unturned in her accounting of state policies and violence in the areas of reproduction and birth control, the economic exploitation of black women, sexism among men of all colors, and racism and antimale biases among white women in their feminist organizing. An activist-intellectual of the tumultous 1960s and '70s, Beale's exegesis of race, sex, and class biases represents a reconciliation of Marxist, Fanonian, and black feminist thinking.

A founding member of the New York branch of SNCC's Black Women's Liberation Committee in 1966, Beale lived in Paris for six years (1960–66), at the height of the Franco-Algerian war for national independence; she had arrived in Paris one year after Fanon's *L'An cinq de la révolution* (*A Dying Colonialism*) was published by François Maspero.[6]

Many activists proclaimed *The Wretched of the Earth* to be the handbook for the black revolution. Yet *A Dying Colonialism*, with its discussion of a new Algeria and the call for the full participation of Algerian women in the fruits of national independence, would equally inform Beale's envisioning of "The New World" in the United States.

The similarities between La Rue's and Beale's essays are uncanny, converging notably in their respective applications of Fanon on women and liberation. What La Rue calls "sexual colonialism," Beale denounces as "legalized prostitution" (p. 91). Both challenge the American construction of male and female social roles. Beale writes, "America has defined the roles to which each individual should subscribe. It has defined 'manhood' in terms of its own interests and 'femininity' likewise. . . . We unqualitatively reject these respective roles" (pp. 90–91). Beale is also highly critical of the ways in which black women have been demonized as emasculating matriarchs because of their necessary participation in the workforce—defeminized because much of the work they perform is dehumanizing, which merely compounds the reality that work, constructed as a "public space," signified maleness in the 1960s–70s American sociocultural imagination.

In response to the assaults on black womanhood as emasculating and unfeminine, Beale recalls the historical record of black women's degradation and suffering under racism and economic hardship. That black men bore the weight of racist oppression was undeniable; that black women had, as well, needed to be

acknowledged. Assumption of dominant cultural roles by black liberation movement participants is, for Beale, a "counterrevolutionary position" (p. 93): "To wage a revolution, we need competent teachers, doctors, nurses, electronics experts . . . and so on and so forth. Black women sitting at home reading bedtime stories to their children are just not going to make it" (pp. 93–94). While not devaluing the importance of mothering and motherhood, Beale explicitly calls for a multiplicity, a "range" in the roles that women assume in the Black Power and civil rights movements.

The concluding section of "Double Jeopardy," on the New World, also calls for a radical transformation in institutions and laws governing social relationships as well as the elimination of racist and capitalist exploitation. Beale sets forth an agenda for the black community and black women to fulfill, namely, envisioning what the New World should be like and moving toward eliminating oppressions through progressive institutions and community-building.

Beale insists that the New World must represent a new and egalitarian society. And poor and working-class black women, the most "wretched of the earth," and their renewed status will stand as the gauges, the yardsticks, by which the progressiveness of the New World, the true liberatory nature of the revolutionary struggle, will be measured. Reminiscent of Fanon's sage counsels in *The Wretched of the Earth* regarding the veritable measure of the success of the decolonizing project lying in the structure of the colonial world being changed from the bottom up, Beale reflects that "the value of this new system will be determined by the status of the low man on the totem pole" (p. 99).

While Fanon refers to the turning of the Manichean nature of the colonial world on its head, a reversal of the dialectical relationship between the colonized and the colonizer, Beale annexes these salient points in order to further her gendered revisioning of the New World radicalized by total revolution, rather than a partial/incomplete revolution. Poor and working-class women of color will no longer be devalued, but valued. Male hegemony and racist and capitalist practices will be eliminated; and "citizen[s] can . . . live as decent human beings" (p. 100). Indispensable to this radicalization of gender relations and the elimination of racist-capitalist exploitation are progressive and active black women. Like their revolutionary Algerian women counter-

parts, black women are integral to bringing this New World into existence.

Clearly assimilating Fanonian observations on the regressiveness of outmoded traditions during the course of struggle, transformations in the family and other relations occasioned by the revolution, and the postcolonial resistance of Algerian women to gender regressivism, Beale reasons:

> Unless women in any enslaved nation are completely liberated the change cannot be called a revolution. If the black woman has to retreat to the position she occupied before the armed struggle, the whole movement and the whole population will have retreated in terms of truly freeing the colonized population. . . . A people's revolution that engages the participation of every member of the community, brings about a certain transformation in the participants as a result of this participation. . . . Once you have caught a glimpse of freedom or experienced a bit of self-determination, you can't go back to old routines that were established under a racist, capitalist regime. . . . It means changing how you relate to your wife, your husband, your parents, and your coworkers. . . .We [black women] must be liberated along with the rest of the population. (pp. 99–100)

Unlike La Rue, Beale does not cite Fanon's "glorious terms" on the Algerian situation verbatim; she paraphrases. Like La Rue, however, she elaborates upon his insights on "a total war" in order to rearticulate them in a feminist analysis of U.S. black social movements and black women's liberation (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 66). Black women cannot *relive* their past behavior; they cannot be viewed as mere *complements* to men. Relationships, familial and otherwise, as laid out in *A Dying Colonialism*, must change accordingly in the context of the New World created by the collective participation in the liberation struggle.

The identification of (black) women's liberation with national (black) liberation as presented in Fanon would become a key issue for emerging radical black feminists of the civil rights and Black Power movements. For as Fanon writes, "a revolutionary war is not a war of men" (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 66), and as Beale echoes, "so far as I know revolutionaries are not determined by sex . . . men and women must take part in the struggle" (p. 100). Likewise, the fruits of black liberation, as we have outlined in "Liberating Algeria," should not be extended solely to black men. Attempts to relegate black women to the home-

front as "knitters" or "mourners" in the black movement (*A Dying Colonialism*, p. 66) or as "housekeepers and mothers" ("Double Jeopardy," p. 100), and then to push them to the margins of political and social life after they were at the helm and backbone of political agitation, were not in the spirit of veritable revolutionary transformation. These points further speak to the selective, male-privileging appropriations of Fanon and, in our postmovement era, the partial successes of black liberation movements in America.

Revolutionary social change acts as a cleansing force, an obliteration of all oppressions. It transforms societies. Borrowing heavily from *The Wretched of the Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism*, Beale asserts that revolutionary struggle is one that will eliminate the oppression of *all members* of that society "from the bottom up"; that the success of a revolution has a direct correlation to women's unrestrained activism; and that the continued progress of a nation can be measured by the renunciation of patriarchal values, reflected in women's total liberation from regressive sociocultural traditions and roles (p. 100).

In La Rue's essay, Fanon himself stands as a critique of sexism. Within Beale's criticism of regressive gender politics, his liberation theories are paraphrased. Appropriated, paraphrased, and integrated, Fanon has undeniably influenced these liberatory feminists' agendas. But more importantly, his body of writing exists as a linchpin of sorts, helping to further elaborate, to shore up, their respective radical feminist visions of the New World and New Humanism without the conditions of (internalized) antiblack racism, sexism, and economic exploitiation.

BELL HOOKS AS A CONTEMPORARY BRIDGE: RADICALISM, ACADEMIC FEMINISM, AND FANONISM

bell hooks, née Gloria Watkins of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, is one of the most prominent voices on the contemporary academic feminist front and an influential figure in black intellectual life. U.S. feminism is in the midst of its "third wave"; hooks, emerging in the 1980s, during the second wave, has managed to ride the tide into this wave. Author of twelve books on feminism, race, and oppression, hooks in her first work, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1984), provided a fresh analysis on

black women and race, sex and slavery in the United States, with one of the most key contributions being her emphasis on the not-too-novel idea of black women's defeminization.[7]

Considered controversial since *Ain't I a Woman*'s publication, hooks has become a polemical figure in the world of academic letters as much for the experiential and informal nature of her successive works as for the radicalism articulated therein, represented especially by her candid and continuous discussions of white supremacy, black (hetero)sexism, sexuality, homophobia, and class issues. It is, of course, this distinction in a postmovement era that has earned hooks a place among radical feminists. Besides what she refers to as the "ancestral legacy of woman-speaking—of woman power," a mapping of her critical consciousness and liberation-theorizing would surprisingly lead one back to a host of male moderns, including, most recognizably, Paulo Friere and Frantz Fanon. As hooks writes: "I am often asked to chart a critical genealogy of my intellectual development. In the years before I became deeply engaged with the feminist movement and with the writing of feminist theorists, all the progressive critical thinkers who nurtured my emergent radical subjectivity were men: Fanon, Memmi, Cabral, Freire, Malcolm X."[8]

As an educator for critical consciousness and as a woman from a marginalized race that has historically insisted on education as a means of improving its lot, she shares a particular affinity for Brazilian-born educator Paulo Freire's prescriptions for a transformational pedagogy, an engaged pedagogy. In the throes of criticism regarding her lack of feminist praxis/activism, hooks duly subscribes to Freire's concept of "theory as liberatory practice." Through the accessibility of her feminist theorizing, she aspires to "integrate feminist thinking and practice into daily life . . . to assist women who live in sexist households in their efforts to bring about feminist change" (1994a: 70).

As a black, feminist, liberation theorist, bell hooks reflects the spirit of Frantz Fanon, a global theorist of oppression, in her feminist exegesis of decolonization, phenomenologies of racism and racist representations, the dialectical relationship between colonized and colonizer, and black liberation. Embodied in her essays on race and representation—specifically, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance" (1992: 21–39) and "Critical Interrogation: Talking Race, Resisting Racism" (1990: 51–55)—are Fanon's

musings on "the black soul as a white artifact" (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 14). Her "Loving Blackness as Political Resistance" (1992: 9–19) and "Dreaming Ourselves Dark and Deep: Black Beauty" (1993: 79–90) are partially indebted to Fanon's epidermalization/internalization of inferiority (*Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 11). Indeed, with the exceptions of *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (1989), *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery* (1993), and *Art on My Mind* (1995), the books of Frantz Fanon (*Black Skin, White Masks, The Wretched of the Earth*, and/or *Toward the African Revolution*) are listed in the bibliographies of seven of hooks's collections of essays, including her "talking book" with Cornel West, *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (1991).

hooks's resistance to hegemonic dismissals of Fanon and Freire have given rise to some awkward moments in her feminist engagements. And it is to such moments that we now turn.

At a London conference on Frantz Fanon, "Working with Fanon: Contemporary Politics and Cultural Reflection," hooks was asked to participate on a feminist panel. She relates this experience in her essay "Feminism as a persistent critique of history: What's love got to do with it?" anthologized in *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation*, an "after-effect" of the conference:

> Our panel began with the moderator presuming that we would concentrate on interrogating Fanon's sexism, stating that we would not only engage in the rigorous task of working with Fanon but that we would also be "working him over." This metaphor immediately situated all three female speakers in an antagonistic and symbolically violent relationship to Fanon. . . . I want to begin by saying that I have no interest in "working over" Fanon. (p. 79).

Indeed, the energetic setting up of Fanon as anathema to feminist resistance politics, as fundamentally misogynist, is embedded in what appears to be the equally satisfying task of "working him over." The primary auspices under which this "working over" occurred were in relationship to discussions of Mayotte Capécia. While feminist co-panelist Lola Young was clearly up for the task, her talk, reprinted in the anthology, is plagued by many of the same intellectual voids as those other feminist readings taken up in this study: notably, a lack of fa-

miliarity with Capécia's works and the absence of antiracist and antifemale sexist analyses as they apply to women's retrogressive politics of identification.

Sexism and/or misogyny appear to be the definitive routes through which lit-crit and cultural studies feminists can enter into Fanon's texts. In a position of dissent, hooks remarked that "usually when a panel of women discuss feminist approaches to a male scholar, the assumption is that the focus will be solely on interrogating his sexism" (p. 78). It is not that hooks does not recognize Fanon's limitations. Nor are her conclusions regarding Fanon's patriarchal epistemology unproblematic. It is that her empowerment as a feminist thinker has opened her to the possibility of the substantive contributions his writings make to her feminist theorizing as praxis: "It was the practice of being a resisting reader that enabled me to hear in Fanon's theories of decolonisation, paradigms I could use constructively in order to liberate myself" (p. 81). In *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, hooks responds to (white) feminists' particularly virulent dismissals of black male scholars and writers despite their liberatory import:

> It is rare to hear such condemnation of white male writers. Within literary studies racism often shapes this response. White women who cannot imagine excluding Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Joyce from their reading list (even though their works reflect sexism and racism) easily use this criterion to defend their ignorance of writing by black men. . . . In the academic world, the trend among women in critical theory or postcolonial discourse, is to overlook as much as possible the sexism and racism of white male thinkers whose work is deemed "important" (Derrida, Foucault, Jameson, Saïd, for example). (1990: 66)

Sexism in whatever color it manifests itself should be an issue for all women. Critiques of sexism in writings by black men are equally necessary. And feminists should expound, expand, and engage the narrowness of the vision of revolutionary thinkers like Fanon. The tendency has been, however, in the case of Fanon in particular, to dismiss his relevance to feminism and indict his thoughts as not simply "sexist," nor masculinist or phallogocentric, a substantially more accurate assessment, but misogynist.

hooks's willingness to go against the grain, i.e., her refusal to have her vision of feminist liberation dictated by totalizing feminist paradigms, presents itself through her continued use of Fanon's writings in her feminist pedagogy for critical consciousness and theorizing on women's liberation.

"Feminism as a persistent critique of history: What's love got to do with it?" is an autobiographical recounting of hooks's intellectual journey to, away from, and back toward Fanon. In this journey/essay, she engages Fanon's "notion of freedom and its relation to contemporary liberation struggles" and offers a reading of his New Humanism in *The Wretched of the Earth* as "homophilic," that is, "love of the same," as opposed to "homosocial," which necessarily has to purge the female/black maternal body (pp. 79, 83). Informed to a certain extent by a biographical portrait of a matriphobic Fanon, hooks attempts to explain the masculinist paradigms articulated in Fanon's radical humanism in racialized, quasi-psychoanalytic terms. A bonding of a male intelligentsia of like minds, a fraternity of sorts, becomes the end goal of Fanon's prescriptions for revolution and New Humanism.

hooks frames her interrogation of Fanon with his own affirmation of the possibility of love and hence his endeavor to explore its imperfections in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Turning this statement back on Fanon, hooks attempts to explore Fanon's own imperfections regarding the possibilities of love. Fanon tries to purge the world of its corporeality in relation to sexualized and racialized bodies, which the black female body ultimately signifies, in attempting to establish that transcendental space where the meeting of enlightened like minds can occur without "the body and its skin color " (p. 83). Consequently, Fanon forecloses his humanism to the (black) female, whom he presents, in hooks's words, as "a sexualised body, always not the body that 'thinks,' but also appears to be the body that never longs for freedom" (p. 84).

It is only when speaking of Algeria in *The Wretched of the Earth* and *not* black Africa that Fanon appears ostensibly to consider women's participation in struggle, in liberation. The site of struggle is always male, between men; thus, the humanist bond is a fraternal one (p. 84). In this respect, hooks concludes that Fanon does not move toward "the incorporation of a progressive dialectics of revolution that would demand the creation of a world where women and men in general, and black women and men,

in particular, would dialogue together" (p. 85). All of this hooks traces not to a particular misogynist proclivity, but to a biographical narrative, which seems to have pervaded the "Working with Fanon" conference, as evidenced within the dialogue sections of the anthology *The Fact of Blackness*. Fanon represses and suppresses the maternal body, the black female body, because of childhood traumas revolving around his mother, who comes to personify the negated black female, that weighty presence-through-absence in his texts.

While this narrative resonates within hooks's analysis, there is a potential danger in projecting too much biography onto Fanon's political philosophy. How would hooks and company, for instance, reconcile their matriphobic narratives with Fanon's own expressions of "profound love" for his mother in personal letters and the dedication to his mother in his dissertation, "Troubles mentaux et syndromes psychiatriques dans Hérédo-Dégénération-Spino-Cérébelleuse"? The biography as critical intervention to political philosophy risks reductive conclusions, for one can arbitrarily decide when Fanon is in an anguished autobiographical mode or offering equally anguishing experiential psychiatric observations/psychoanalytic engagements wherever it suits a particular ideological bent. Such use of biography detracts as well from Fanon's uncompromising belief that revolution begins with the subject, within the individual. In attempts to demystify Fanon, he can be equally deradicalized. Following hooks and others' portrayal, one would have to conclude that Fanon deeply repressed/suppressed his anger over being his mother's darkest child (according to Fanon biographer Irene Gendzier's script) and simultaneously resented his mother for "sing[ing] me French love songs in which there is never a word about Negroes. Whenever I disobey, when I make too much noise, I am told to 'stop acting like a nigger'" (the invocation of the arbitrary autobiographical/experiential narrative).[9] Thus, this repression/suppression surfaced consistently in those moments of (patriarchal) writing. In the end, one has locked Fanon into a pathologizing psychoanalytic discourse.

Despite the shortcomings that hooks reads into Fanon's works/psyche, as well as those that have been read into hooks she journeys back to him as a feminist. Where Fanon suppresses the maternal, the feminine, hooks recovers both the father (Fanon) and the mother (women activist-intellectuals) through

feminism. hooks concludes, "More than any other thinker, he provided me with a model for insurgent black intellectual life that has shaped my work. . . . I found feminist thinking transformed my understanding of Fanon" (p. 85). Rejecting the either/or dichotomy, the superficial binary erected between women's liberation theories and Fanon's liberation theories, hooks as a black radical feminist opts to negotiate a place in Fanon's masculinist texts around issues of domination, colonialism, and liberation and to integrate Fanon in (black) feminist resistance politics, while simultaneously critiquing those moments where Fanon apparently falters in his radicalism vis à vis gender politics.

As radical black feminists La Rue and Beale have demonstrated through their appropriations of Fanon's philosophy of revolution in their critiques of sexism, capitalism, colonialism, Fanon was importantly relevant to an era of mass protests and social movements for equality and liberation. hooks's intellectual journey with Fanon and her incorporation of Fanon's thought into her feminist theorizing further speak to his influence as a personal/subjective radicalizing force and point to his continued relevance to black and women's liberation struggles in the post–civil rights era, as filtered and popularized through hooks's radical feminist voice which extends beyond the elite enclave of the American academy[10] into the popular feminist mainstream and communities of color.

Critical feminist liberation theory requires critical feminists' engagement and/or interrogations rather than smoldering readings, "antagonistic" dismissals, and "violent" confrontations. Does the entire Fanonian corpus with its ever-timely analyses for resisting racist domination (which many women of color continue to experience) and sexual oppression prove so utterly irrelelant to feminist liberation politics? And as Marxist-Humanist Raya Dunayevskaya cogently demands of feminists with respect to Marx—demands that, in my view, could aptly apply to Fanon:[11]

> Isn't it time to work out a philosophy so urgently needed by the Women's Liberation Movement which does not, *does not*, limit the question of women's liberation to an exposé of "the Man" and thereby becomes practically no more than a bystander to Marx's philosophy of liberation on the excuse that it is "male defined"? . . . can we afford, as Women Liberationists today, to be without

> a total philosophy, because [one of] the greatest philosoph[ies] for uprooting the exploitative old and creating ground for the new was formulated by "man"?[12]

Feminism should be a corrective to male-centered historicism and theories. Identifying sexism, patriarchal dimensions, and misogyny where they exist is but one of feminism's goals. The treatises and praxes of progressive black feminism clearly reveal that women's liberation should remain at the forefront of feminist agendas with an unwavering eye toward total human freedom, irrespective of class, race, sexual orientation, and gender.

NOTES

1. Linda Jo La Rue, "The Black Movement and Women's Liberation," *Black Scholar* (May 1970): 37. All subsequent parenthetical page numbers in the text are to this journal article.
2. La Rue's analysis seems to bear itself out even in our contemporary times. The exit polls of women from the 1996 presidential elections demonstrated that white women who worked at home and raised their families voted like their husbands, for Bob Dole; white women who earned over $100,000 a year equally voted for Dole as did women who carried guns. Working-class women voted for Clinton, pushing Clinton's lead among women voters to 58 percent to Dole's 32 percent.
3. Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," in Beverly Guy-Sheftall's *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 215.
4. All citations for Beale's essay come from Toni Cade Bambara's *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York: Mentor, 1970), 90–100. All subsequent parenthetical page numbers in the text are to this essay.
5. Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 145.
6. *L'An cinq de la révolution* was banned the year of its publication (1959) in France. That same year, the French government made an attempt on Fanon's life while he was in Rome for medical treatment.
7. Supposedly Sojourner Truth, from whom hooks borrows her title, initially articulated these concerns. hooks provided a book-length analysis. However, historian Nell Irvin Painter's biography *Sojourner Truth* relates that it was in fact a white woman who wrote the speech.
8. bell hooks, "Feminism as a persistent critique of history: What's love got to do with it?" in *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation*, ed. Alan Read (Seattle: Bay Press, 1996), 81. All subsequent parenthetical page numbers in the text refer to works by hooks. Identified by date in the text, the full references may be found in the bibliography.
9. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 191.
10. "American academy" is used here strictly in terms of institutions of higher learning in the United States.
11. See Dunayevskaya's discussion of Fanon in *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and From Marx to Mao* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
12. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), 82.

Epilogue

Pitfalls, Postmodern Academic Feminist Consciousness, and U.S. Social Crises

It may appear odd to some that I would conjoin the word "pitfalls" with feminist consciousness. After all, what could be so wrong about something so right, so empowering? That is, what are the possible shortcomings engendered by women's coming into consciousness of themselves as subjects and makers of history, by their cognizance of "women's right to exist as free and complete social beings"? I have borrowed this term from Frantz Fanon's cautionary counsels to underdeveloped nations in "Pitfalls" or "Misadventures of National Consciousness" in *The Wretched of the Earth*. For Fanon, once the smoke has cleared and the dust has settled, once the colonized have questioned the injustices of colonialism and articulated that emphatic "no" to colonial domination that led to the national liberation struggle, the new nation must set about the arduous task of creating new and egalitarian relations. However, left in the hands of the national middle class—the bourgeoisie—the nation's pitfalls begin fundamentally with its not "being the all-embracing innermost hopes of the whole people, the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 148).

The calling up of this provocative essay with respect to feminism is certainly not a turning back to the dated concept of woman as nation; clearly, women's liberation is no longer an idea but a fully developed project. But there are certain parallels between, on the one hand, the "tragic mishaps" described by Fanon in a nation's movement from national liberation (national con-

sciousness) to a socially democratic (inter)nationalism and, on the other, academic women scholars' movement from the demands for women's studies programs and curriculums in the 1970s (feminist consciousness) to a feminism that is, as defined by progressive academic feminist bell hooks in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center,*

> a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore, it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires.[1]

In what follows, I would like to present a brief exploration of those "mishaps" and "pitfalls" by using Fanon's essay as a point of departure and critique of the third wave of feminism, specifically the *ludic*[2] forms of lit-crit and cultural studies feminisms, hereafter referred to as postmodern academic feminisms. My reasons for singling out these academic feminist disciplines rest primarily upon a stake, if you will, in the fields of literature and cultural studies.[3]

We are all living in a postmodern era, as this term is used to differentiate itself from the era of modernism, its coming after. But we do not all necessarily subscribe to the worldviews that the "postmodern condition"[4] has seemed to birth with its antitheory theory: to wit, its deconstruction of master narratives propagated by the Enlightenment; its renunciation, in the words of Edward Saïd, of "universal values of truth and freedom for local situations and language games";[5] and, within the larger U.S. sociocultural fabric, its nonmovement, promotion of the cult of individualism, and overwhelmingly bourgeois ideology. It is equally an era that troublingly signals, as sociologist William Julius Wilson writes, the disappearance of work, impacting particularly urban dwellers of whom African-Americans are a disproportionate number.[6]

Postmodern academic feminisms can be collectively characterized by their inability to popularize and organize a liberationist project among and with poor and working-class women, even in the midst of some of the most retrogressive and repressive public policies in U.S. history. These policies have led, for example, to the feminization of poverty, the first female chain gang, the

privatization of prisons, reforms in welfare that pummel poor women and children, and full-scale attacks on the educational gains of people of color and women under affirmative action, reified in Texas's *Hopwood* and California's Proposition 209.

It has of course become commonplace to criticize feminisms of all ideological persuasions. As Susan Faludi attests, feminisms are experiencing backlash from all corners: from the neoconservative male right concentrated in the political bodies of the 104th and 105th Congresses, to members of the ultraconservative female right, personified in Phyllis Schlafly, who blame liberal and radical feminism for the decline in family values, higher rates of abortion among white, middle-class women, and the creation of a "divorce culture"; all the way to the just-right-of-center policies of the Clinton administration with the welfare reform bill, the dismissal of Joycelyn Elders, and the public ridicule of Lani Guinier.[7] It is therefore ever-pressing for feminist academics to be self-critical, particularly in the midst of this backlash, and particularly at this historical moment of sociopolitical and economic repression where there should be but is not any foreseeable movement involving the collective efforts of feminist academics and the masses.

What Sojourner Truth refers to as "shortmindedness," Frantz Fanon characterizes as "pitfalls." In different centuries, at different historical moments, both recognized that the liberatory processes had to be total and in-permanence. Like the underdeveloped nation in its stagnated development described in Fanon's "Pitfalls of National Consciousness," the current pitfalls of postmodern academic feminisms lie essentially in their consistent inability to connect, address, and represent the hopes, needs, and interests of women within (e.g., professoriate to professional and custodial staff) and outside of the academy. This inability has led academic feminism to a turning in on itself that does not recognize the importance of a philosophy of social, economic, and political change that moves from "the top down and bottom up which creates and guarantees democracy, which would make it possible dialectically [for feminists] to leap ahead" into transformative action (*The Wretched of the Earth,* pp. 179, 198).

Plagued as it often is by "the lack of practical links with the masses" of women (*The Wretched of the Earth,* p. 148), the work of "leading feminist scholars," as black feminist Gloria Joseph writes, "typically excludes working class and black women from

their elite private enclaves."[8] And even when the scholarship produced within those "elite enclaves" is broadened to include these experiences, analyses and demands put forth are generally from positions divorced from feminism's original political activism and grassroots organizing.

I certainly do not wish to fall into the trap of what lit-crit academic feminist Elaine Marks clumsily, by her own admission, refers to as "feminist dogmas, purities, pieties" or "feminist fundamentalism" which, from her discussion, seemingly stresses the political over the aesthetic and attempts to structure (police?) feminist discourses.[9] Marks writes:

> Perhaps . . . I have . . . even changed my mind about . . . one of the fundamental assumptions that underlies U.S. feminisms . . . the belief in social change . . . it may well [be] part of my hidden agenda to displace a fundamentalist, literal, and political feminism by a more heretical, imaginative, and poetical-ontological feminist inquiry. . . . I will also try to show how the denunciation of rhetorical, psychoanalytic, and deconstructive theories by some U.S. feminists as elitist and apolitical may have contributed . . . to the dominance of the political over the poetical and ontological.[10]

In opposition to the "totalizing" political feminist narratives and theories, Marks erects another superficial binary which sacrifices the socially transformative origins of feminism. Lit-crit academic feminists can simultaneously indulge in poetical and ontological practices and more politically engaged endeavors that reflect the raison d'être of feminism. Just as the divide between theory and praxis must be bridged, the primacy of a reactionary aestheticism, ontology, and poetics over the political must equally be challenged and resisted within postmodern feminist circles. If feminism is to fulfill its liberatory role, there can be no onlookers who immerse themselves uniquely in the life of mind processes, in word play and linguistic signification, who take refuge in *a room of their own* (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 199).

While many postmodern academic feminists readily lay claim to the badge of intellectual, those leading feminist scholars who fall prey to this binarism, who eschew social responsibility for the aesthetic and thus withdraw into their elite enclaves within the ivory towers of academe, are not in keeping with Fanon's native or engaged intellectual, Gramsci's "organic intellectual,"

Saïd's "amateur intellectual," or more appropriately for our feminist contexts, the feminist-intellectual; they will have rather wholly given themselves over to a feminist professionalism.[11] As Domna Stanton, former editor of the publications of the Modern Language Association, and Abigail Stewart note in their introduction to *Feminisms in the Academy*, the battle for "academic legitimacy" has "failed to restructure the academy" as well as to "reconnect or heighten links between feminist scholarship and the 'community,' fusing theory and praxis into . . . 'action research.'"[12]

And the desire among some postmodern academic feminists to create an exclusively woman-based theory, culture, politics, a utopian gynocentric community in the traditions of French feminists like Luce Irigaray, has equally resulted in the excision and exorcism (like demons) rather than the integration of progressive male theorists of oppression and liberation (like Fanon) into feminist theory simply because of their maleness and/or masculinisms. In fulfilling such feminist prescriptions for social change, we are left with a "dialectic of history—the history of mass struggles of women and men for freedom—that becomes a history of 'tensions' between two separate cultures, 'male and female.'"[13]

Indeed, postmodern academic feminisms will remain a closed book so long as the consciousness of postmodern feminists remains closed to the theoretical and practical thrust of poor and working-class women's experiences; so long as feminism's relevance remains "cloudy" to the consciousness of the masses of women; and so long as the consciousness of postmodern feminists remains fixed on academic legitimacy and assimilation, rather than academic restructuring and social and political transformation (*The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 193).[14]

NOTES

1. bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984), 24.

2. Teresa Ebert, *Ludic Feminism and After: Postmodernism, Desire, and Labor in Late Capitalism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). According to Ebert, *ludic feminism* is "founded upon poststructuralist assumptions about linguistic play, difference, and the priority of discourse and thus substitutes a politics of representation for radical social transformation," 3.

3. Ludic feminists can also be found in the disciplines of law (Drucilla Cornell) and philosophy (Judith Butler); see Ebert's *Ludic Feminism and After* for more on Cornell and Butler. Influential U.S. postmodern cultural studies feminists include, for example, Naomi Wolf with her *Beauty Myth, Fire with Fire*, and disconcerting essay in Rebecca Walker's third-wave feminist anthology, *To Be Real*. Also see Camille Paglia (*Sexual Personae*), who is an aberration for some, but clearly a symptom of postmodernism. See also French feminist Luce Irigarary (*Speculum de l'autre femme* and *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*) and Nigerian poststructuralist feminist Amina Mama (*Beyond the Mask*). U.S. lit-crits include Diana Fuss (*Essentially Speaking*), and Jane Gallop (*Thinking Through the Body*).

4. Borrowed from Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

5. Edward Saïd, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 18.

6. William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

7. For a discussion of family values, cultural woes, and feminism, see Judith Stacey's *Name of the Family: Rethinking Family Values in the Postmodern Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996) and for a discussion of welfare, see Catherine Pélissier Kingfisher's *Women in the American Welfare Trap* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

8. Cited in Olga Domanski's preface to Wayne State University Press Edition of Dunayevskaya's *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), xi.

9. Elaine Marks, "The Poetical and the Political: The 'Feminist' Inquiry in French Studies" in *Feminisms in the Academy*, ed. Domna Stanton and Abigail Stewart (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 274.

10. Marks, "The Poetical and the Political," 274–76.

11. Saïd, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 65–83.

12. Stanton and Stewart, ed., *Feminisms*, 4, 11. Research that may address social problems does not necessarily replace participation in progressive social movements.

13. Olga Domanski, "A Summary of Six Lectures for International Women's Year," in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, 105.

14. See also Stanton and Stewart, ed., *Feminisms*, 1–16.

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