MODERNITY, COLONIALISM AND RESISTANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GANDHI AND FANON

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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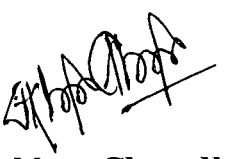
DECLARATION

I, Akbar Chawdhary, declare that the dissertation entitled "**Modernity, Colonialism and Resistance: A Study of Gandhi and Fanon**" submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy is my own work. The dissertation has not been submitted so far in part or full, for the award of any other degree in this or any other university.



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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Modernity, Colonialism and Resistance: A Comparative Study of Gandhi and Fanon" submitted by Akbar Chawdhary in partial fulfillment of requirement for the award of Master of Philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University is an original work and has not been submitted either in part in this or in any other university.

We recommend this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Gandhi and Fanon hold a very important place in the histories of former British and French colonies. Not only were they instrumental in mobilizing the masses against colonialism –through their activism and political writings – but even now in post-colonial states they remain in the midst of discussions and have assumed some sort of iconic status. Despite the differences in their ideologies and approaches to politics, both these historic figures share some basic similarities.

The ideas of Gandhi and Fanon have been able to transcend their historical and geographical boundaries and have proved their mettle by remaining a constant reference points for struggles and movements which are far diverse in scope and objective. This glorious afterlife and continued relevance of Gandhi and Fanon in the contemporary struggles cannot be relegated to cursory eulogistic footnotes of history that iconizes them as figures of the past but has to be seen in the intrinsic strength of their theorization. It needs to be recognized that Gandhi and Fanon were not merely proponents of anti-colonial struggles in India and Algeria, but the struggles of these two countries impregnated their vision with the broad rubric of the dehumanizing content of colonialism. It is this vision that propelled them to chart a thorough going critique of the colonial culture which had got naturalized in the lives of the colonized people. Their strategies bear witness to the fact that they were not merely pragmatic modifications and manoeuvres adopted under the burden of circumstances, as many critics like to believe, but articulations that conveyed the larger picture of colonial destruction of native culture to the broader masses so that the people themselves could participate in the process of rejuvenating from the ruins of colonial culture.

Gandhi's pronouncements on truth and evocative presentation of the colonized subject as a *satyagrahi* have to be seen in the light of Gandhi's articulation of the anti-colonial subject. Gandhi was aware very much like Fanon that the colonized subject was a mutilated being produced by colonial culture[1]. Fanon and Gandhi's ideas almost resonate on the concern they

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[1] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings,* p. 73. Gandhi explains the true purpose of *swaraj* that counters the dehumanizing effect of colonialism on the colonized subject as "But such Swaraj has to be experienced by

shared about the Manichaeism of colonial and anti-colonial culture. The cult of hatred that blinds man from the realization of his rational being is part of the human finitude that colonial oppression rewrites in history and the only way out of this finitude is latent in the possibility of harnessing the ineffable possibilities of self realization that exists in the love and humanity towards the general species. Gandhi and Fanon attempt this almost impossible task of rejuvenating the ineffable in order to overcome the finitude that colonial condition imposes. The practices of a *satyagrahi* and the warm affection the native feels towards the settlers sincere to the cause of liberation, the seeking after truth that Gandhi prescribes to overcome the dehumanizing effect of colonialism and the maturity that Fanon's leader attains by assessing the mistakes wholeheartedly in the ebb and tide of struggle paves the way towards the broader realization of freedom of the entire mankind[2]. It is this primacy ascribed to emancipating the colonized subject from the finitude imposed by colonial condition by harnessing his human potential for the care of the other and awakening him to the cause of the emancipation of entire humanity that is responsible for making Gandhi and Fanon constant reference points for future struggles.

Despite this context the popular perception of Gandhi and Fanon has remained restricted as proponents of non-violence and violence respectively. Indeed if in Gandhi *ahimsa* is a mode of overcoming the fear of colonial apparatus in the colonized subject, in Fanon violence is a mode of self constitution for the colonized subject. Both these concepts are in effect steps towards harnessing the ineffable potentials inherent in human existence. However, essentialising Gandhi and Fanon in terms of this binary obfuscates and undermines an understanding of their larger political project. Therefore the dissertation tries to address the political philosophy of these two thinkers beyond this established academic binary.

A complex set of historical and political factors contributed to the development of the vision of anti-colonial struggle in these two figures. The unities and dispersions, the convergences and departures, therefore have to be explored in the light of the historical and political milieu that both Gandhi and Fanon were encountering, interpreting and responding to.

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each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others."

[2] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* pp. 144-145.

Neither Gandhi nor Fanon had any illusions about articulating their political vision according to the contingencies or the practical demands of the time.

Indeed both these figures were men of their times whose ideas were shaped by the larger political, philosophical and economic context they encountered. Their relevance and contribution to the anti-colonial struggles across the globe has to be seen in the context of their critical engagement with the objective conditions of colonialism and how they formulated their anti-colonial strategy by exposing the loop holes of colonial discourse and employing the strengths of the colonized masses. This dialectical approach which characterizes the political philosophy and mobilization strategies of both the figures calls for a thorough understanding of the intellectual climate that shaped the ideas of the two luminaries of anti-colonial struggle. It is in this context that one needs to place the ideas of Fanon and Gandhi in the light of Modernity which was the epistemological framework through which colonialism sought to justify itself.

Colonialism and Modernity Contested

Both Gandhi and Fanon underwent their tortuous encounter with modernity in the process of articulating their critique of colonialism. For Gandhi modernity was essentially linked to the materialistic philosophy of the West, best expressed in the machines of production. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi's comment on machinery clarifies the relation Gandhi sees in the degeneration of modern civilization and technological progress—"Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin."[3] Gandhi's denunciation of machines and his idea of contesting the evil of modernity, as he says in the last part of the dialogue in *Hind Swaraj*—"It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it."-- shows that Gandhi contested modernity through two distinctly different strategies. Ashish Nandy has pointed out that Gandhi like "critical traditionalists" re-emphasized a model of self control and self realization to counter modernity. Nandy also shows that in doing so he has also substituted the historical determinism that western notion of rational history based on linear causality, with a

[3] See the chapter on "Machinery" in Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, pp. 107-111.

mythical history of Asiatic cultures where the present moment can move towards a rupture without depending on the demands of time through sheer moral intervention.[4]

However, for Gandhi though the present moment can be changed by moral practices of self, he does not believe in the lack of a past. For Gandhi the "past" is not a temporal element like western history but an essence which has been corrupted but can be restored through practices of the self that shirks this source of corruption by immersing oneself in the practical acts of realizing that essence. Gandhi's creative use of the mythical ideas of *Ram rajya*, *Gram Swaraj*--self sufficient village as the prototype of anti-colonial social structure, *Harijan*—a category through which he tries to address the evils of caste system and untouchability without radically altering the caste system engendered in the traditional *Varnasharam;* testifies to the fact that Gandhi was using the synchrony of myths from the past to address the contemporary problems in society.

Fanon's response to modernity however, was of a different order. Like Gandhi, Fanon also claims that the colonial culture imposes itself on the native. He said in *Black Skin/ White Masks*--

> Every colonized people—in other words, every 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; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle.[5]

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[4] See Nandy. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, p. 27.This idea of an alternative history grounded in the mythical idea of time as opposed to the linear idea of time central to modern historical discipline has been seen by Ashish Nandy as a promise in Gandhian politics. It is worthwhile to mention that Dipesh Chakrabarty has skeptically commented upon this attitude of a theoretical expediency of alternative history in his chapter "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History" in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Chakrabarty has commented "There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called "the history of Europe." In this sense,"Indian"history itself is in a position of subalternity; one can only articulate subaltern subject positions in the name of this history."

[5] Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks.* p. 9.

It shows that for Fanon colonial modernity poses a psychosomatic problem. He says the Negro is always an abnormal, a "phobogenic", that is his existence is preceded by a phobia. For Fanon this psychosomatic condition is not moral but psychologically deterministic. It is from this understanding of historical objectivity that Fanon charts his strategy. He completely denounces the notion of a past or essence—"The discovery of the existence of a Negro civilization in the fifteenth century confers no patent of humanity on me. Like it or not, the past can in no way guide me in the present moment."[6] As opposed to Gandhi, Fanon condemns all attempts of disalienation as deemed to failure which refuses "to accept the present as definitive". He claims:

> The problem considered here is one of time. Those Negroes and white men will be disalienated who refuse to let themselves sealed away in the materialized Tower of the Past. For many other Negroes, in other ways, disalienation will come into being through their refusal to accept the present as definitive.[7]

Therefore, one can see that Fanon does not discard the western model of history rather looks for a radical transformation within this epistemic paradigm of time. For him there is no essential negro or a native essence, the ideal conditions of a human world will be created only through "efforts to recapture the self and scrutinize the self.[8]

The alternative model of a national culture has been a mode of articulating the response to western modernity in Gandhi. Gandhi's idea of *Swaraj* proposed in *Hind Swaraj* is a polemic against those ideas of nationalism which measures itself in terms of the Western values of economic and political development. For Gandhi nationalism imbued in *swaraj* is a nationalism based on the essence of Indian civilization and it operates in a revivalist approach where the disease inflicted by West has to be conquered for the formers ultimate ascendance.[9] Gandhi is at the same time careful about the use of the past, he ensures that the past should not be evoked uncritically rather for him, past is a repository of essential values which colonialism has displaced and distorted and the purpose of political action is to restore those values in the present

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[6] Ibid., p. 175.

[7] Ibid., p. 176.

[8] Ibid., p. 181.

[9] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 72.

context. For Fanon, however, the past was not a source of promise rather his experience of newly independent states convinced him that using the past myths as structural models of new society might betray the cause of national consciousness and unity by reinstating the old structures in the hands of the national bourgeois:

> 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 crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been. The faults that we find in it are quite sufficient explanation of the facility with which, when dealing with young and independent nations, the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state. These are the cracks in the edifice which show the process of retrogression, that is so harmful and prejudicial to national effort and national unity. We shall see that such retrograde steps with all the weaknesses and serious dangers that they entail are the historical result of the incapacity of the national middle class to rationalize popular action, that is to say their incapacity to see into the reasons for that action.[10]

In spite of their numerous differences one of the many similarities that Gandhi and Fanon shared was the belief of placing their 'politics' and 'ideology' in the masses. By this, one means that both believed that liberation/change was possible only through 'mass politics'. Where Gandhi brought down Indian national struggle from the realm of 'elite politics', to the rural peasantry, incorporating their beliefs, ritual and religious practices and cultivating traditional structures of rural peasant world view in order to propagate the ideas of passive resistance. Gandhi's strategy to bring different communities in the fold of the national liberation struggle and under the platform of Congress based on a strategy of addressing the different concerns and supporting the issues of the Sikh and Muslim communities was marked by success but Gandhi's approach to unite the people of different communities on the plank of alliance retaining community interests instead of a radical plank of secular national struggle beyond the narrow calculations of community interests had disastrous consequences in the form of partition which show the limitations of Gandhi's idea of national harmony.[11]

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[10]Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 147-148.

[11] Gautam, *Samajdarshan*, pp. 71-76.

On the other hand Fanon had no illusions about the clash of different interest groups in the post-independence nation state. His Marxist materialist calling had convinced him that the only way of fighting such clash of interests was through the empowerment of the peasants and the lower classes. Fanon 'stretching Marxism' declared peasantry the most 'revolutionary class' in the colonies and considered the oligarchic middle class as a class which was too keen to inherit the oppressive power structure left by the colonizers. In this regard Fanon's mass politics is more inclined towards ensuring the participation and education of the oppressed classes so that they can be empowered as the mainstay of the newly independent nation state. He was also convinced that this process cannot be completed within the ambit of the national boundary as he thought that the primary victory of the colonized people did not completely emancipate them from the structures of imperialism which remained an international force to reckon with. It is here Fanon's intervention in the form of mass strategy attains an international significance where he envisions the larger international struggle of the colonized people.

Hence, despite their belief in 'mass politics' Gandhi and Fanon, differed with each other when it came to deeper social content of their respective struggles. But these similarities and differences should not stop us here and will be dealt with in some detail in this dissertation. What is more important here for us is the way in which Gandhi and Fanon have been appropriated and discussed during their lifetime and also after their death.

Till 1970's Gandhi and Fanon were labeled and discussed within the broad spectrum of Nationalist and Marxist schools. But post 1970's a new discourse emerged and soon both Gandhi and Fanon were approached through the disciplinary lenses of Post-Colonial studies. Gandhi also emerged as a key figure to be discussed in an Indian academic venture called Subaltern Studies group. Many Subaltern historians discussed Gandhi, his political thought, mobilization, persona and modus operandi in detail in their works. Notable among the Subaltern historians who worked on Gandhi were Ranajit Guha, Shahid Amin, and David Hardiman. But soon another stream of scholars who were close to Subaltern history group (they were directly or indirectly influential to Subaltern Studies Group) like Ashish Nandy started writing about Gandhi and his politics.

Fanon who called himself a Marxist with some qualifications was also studied till late 1960's as a Marxist who was trying to find a place for 'Race' in Marxist theory. Even when Sartre wrote the first Preface of *Wretched of Earth* in 1961, Sartre tried to fit Fanon's work

within the corpus of Marxist literature. But soon, Fanon was also tried to be placed within the broad spectrum of Post-Colonial theorists. Some even to the extent of calling Fanon along with Aime Cesaire as the two black intellectuals who laid the foundations of Post-Colonialism.[12]

In the march of ideas, certain concepts and terminologies keep on changing their existing meanings, where same old ideas in a changed context/circumstance mean different to different authors. In case of Gandhi and Fanon the idea of 'Nation' and 'National liberation' seems appropriate to elucidate this point. For most of the writers and political activists writing when national struggles were going on throughout the colonial world, Nation seemed to be a liberating force. Nationalism was posed as antitheses to Colonialism. It was a way out of the exploitative nature of colonialism. Popular leaders projected the nation as an entity which would usher in a new dawn of freedom and equality where racial, caste and other inequalities would cease to be. The origin of nation and nationalism might go back to the 16th century[13], but in the colonies it was realized and 'imagined' during the anti-colonial struggles. During the anti-colonial struggle a 'national self' was constructed which tried to flatten history and iron out the differences that existed between the communities constituting the new Nation. A unified, glorious and homogenous past was evoked time and again to serve the national self. Nation and Nationalism were thus made to rule the minds of the 'masses' of these newly decolonized nations. As Irfan Habib argues,

> It must be realized that our nation has been created by the Indian people after centuries of endeavor. First, as we have seen, they began to have vague conception of Indian as a country some two thousand and five hundred years ago... But it was their resistance to colonialism and

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[13] "The concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divine-ordained, hierarchal dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism (direct relationship) between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state." Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp. 6-7.

absorption of modern democratic (and later socialist) ideas that began to transform India from a country – a geographical and cultural entity- into a true nation.[14]

But this euphoria of national liberation from colonialism was short-lived and soon fissures emerged within the newly constructed nations. The emergence of the native ruling classes and bourgeoisie thus opened up the new criticism of nation as a category. As soon as the dust of national struggle settled 'masses' could see how they were deceived into something which was anything, but liberating. The period post-1970 saw mass movements across Asia, Latin America and Africa against the local ruling classes questioning the very ideas which had formed the very base of national struggles against colonialism. Nation and Nationalism, which were seen as undisputed facts of history were now put to a scathing criticism not only in academic circles, but in these mass movements. Nationalism as an idea was now modified and rather than being inclusive, it was now seen as an exclusionary category which kept a large section of its population on the margins. These margins were seen as part of nation but never constituting nation.[15]

Post-Colonialism and Subaltern Studies: Promises and Predicaments

Everything from colonialism, nationalism, history and culture was once again interrogated and it was shown how baseless were the claims of decolonization and nationalism. In India this questioning and criticism lead historian Ranajit Guha and some other scholars to question the whole edifice of Indian historiography. The above debates which had till then remained confined to mainly nationalist and Marxist historians were questioned by Ranajit Guha and later by the subaltern studies group.[16] Subaltern studies, adding Foucault's framework of 'power', argued that power worked at different levels and the distinction between colonized and colonizer was

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[14]Habib, 'The Envisioning of a Nation: A Defence of the Idea of India', pp. 28.

[15] "It has been widely noted that the idea of singular nation ethos, far from being a natural outgrowth of this or that soil, has been produced and naturalized at great costs, through rhetoric's of war and sacrifices, through punishing disciplines of educational and linguistic uniformity, and through the subordination of myriad local and regional traditions to produce Indians, or Frenchman or Britons or Indonesians." Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An essay on the Geography of Anger*, p. 04.

[16] Notable are the works of David Hardiman, Shahid Amin, Dipesh Chakravarty and Sumit Sarkar.

not so clearly demarcated. Terms like nationalism and colonialism were further scrutinized and questioned. Arguing that both 'Marxist' and 'Nationalist' histories had an inherent 'elitist bias', subaltern studies group talked of history writing which will bring 'people' back into the historical narrative. All these academic debates were however grounded in the material conditions of the time. As Vinay Lal quoting Guha, says,

> Subaltern Studies... arose out of the disillusionments of the three decades following independence: the hopes of the young, which relied upon the nation-state for their fulfillment, had dissipated in the wake of the national emergency invoked by Indira Gandhi in 1975, and the suppression of the Naxalite movement, which for all its faults and embrace of violence sought to place considerations of justice and equity at the center of political action.[17]

But the new subaltern history had more to offer than mere "history from below" as was being practiced by British social historians like E.P Thompson, E.J Hobsbawm and others. The subaltern historians didn't remain confined to the idea of the 'subaltern' which had been taken from the prison notebooks of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and the 'Subaltern School' historians soon entered the semiological analyses of Roland Barthes, the post-structuralism, 'governmentality' and power analysis of Foucault, and the critique of Enlightenment epistemologies associated with Derrida, Lyotard, and others in their works.

Along with these varied influences Subaltern Studies group was joined or was highly influenced by the political theorists like Partha Chatterjee, literary critics like Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said and social critics like Ashish Nandy. These varied influences moved the initial Subaltern Studies group from a firm Marxist, class based approach to cultural, post-structural, psychoanalytical discourses. The shift gradually moved from the focus on history to cultural and literary studies and from class to post-colonial identities. In the meantime many scholars across Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Asia where also investigating new ideas and approaches. Authors like Edward Said, Chinau Achebe and others saw a close proximity of their own ideas with the ideas that were coming from India. Soon this whole body of literature that was coming from many former colonies was started to be called by different names like – the Post-Colonial studies, Post-Colonial theory, Post-Colonial literature etc. In this whole rubric of new literature

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[17] Vinay Lal, "Subaltern Studies and its critique: Debates towards Indian history," p. 137.

(which the post-colonial scholars called 'discourse'), Indian scholars settled in the metropolis were most engaged and vocal.

One can start unraveling these various layers of post-colonialism by asking - then what actually is post-colonial theory/discourse? The answer to this question is a tricky one, as unlike many other theories, whether it is Marxism or post-structuralism, there is no one such body of thought which can be called post-colonial theory/discourse. It is in fact a bunch of theories, studies and ideas which at times don't form one coherent thought. So rather than calling it Post-Colonial theory, one can do justice by calling this whole literature as 'Post-Colonial studies'. If there is no one theory and it is an amalgam of many studies, than how does one define post-colonial studies? Can we reach one such definition which can cover every theme taken by post-colonial thinkers from psychoanalyst Ashsih Nandy to historian Ranajit Guha? Again the answer seems no and following Arif Dirlik, one can say that post-colonial studies covers at least three definitions, which are as follows,

> *(a)* as a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies, in which case the term has concrete referents, as in postcolonial societies or postcolonial intellectuals; (*b*) as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism, in which case the usage is somewhat more abstract and less concrete in reference, comparable in its vagueness to the earlier term *Third World,* for which it is intended as a substitute; and *(c)*as a description of a discourse on the above-named conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientations that are products of those conditions.[18]

The concerns which were shared by post-colonial thinkers found resonance in the theories like post-structuralism and in the 'Foucaltian analysis of power'. Post structuralism questioned universality of ideas and structures, and enlightenment theories. Post-colonial critics also had shown their skepticism about the 'universality principle'. For most post-colonial scholars universalism was disguised name for euro-centric approach. Subaltern historians like Dipesh Chakrabarty claimed that enlightened ideas though claimed to talk of universals, but these universals had European culture, history, and ideas at their core. Even when east/third world

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[18] Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*, p. 332.

came in their discourse the post-colonial critics further argued it was only as a reflection of Europe. In this scheme of things third world or east came as an 'other' and never constituted the real 'self' of these universal ideas.

This criticism didn't remain confined to the criticism of the enlightenment ideas only, rather it gradually moved on to questioning every idea that emerged from west and claimed to be some kind of 'universal'. Not only were the ideas criticized, but even the methodology was questioned. One such criticism was the archive based tradition of history and cultural writings. Claiming that the natives and the 'subalterns' had no access to education - reading and writing, so official archives cannot do justice to recover the 'subaltern voice'. The archives remained an official repository of records where a 'subaltern' came only as a 'subject of history', but never as a 'maker of history'. Definition of archives thus had to be expanded and in it one had to include 'material' outside the official discourse. In order to write a 'subaltern history' and recover the 'subaltern consciousness' a renewed effort has to be put on 'memory', folklore, folksongs and a study of signs and symbols. Thus scholars like Roland Barthes who worked on popular culture and studied symbols were used extensively by subaltern school historians and also by post-colonial scholars.

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure claimed that a word didn't have an inherent meaning rather people assign certain meanings to certain words. For example the word 'Red' didn't mean anything if you don't know English language. But once you know English language a certain idea emerges in our mind and only then we are able to comprehend the word 'Red'. Thus for Saussure, languages or words were not understandable themselves. To understand a word one has to be accustomed to the language as well as the social structure of the society. Structuralist Marxist thinker Claude Levi Strauss pushed Saussure ideas further and claimed words, symbols and their meanings don't work randomly, rather argued Levi Strauss that there existed laws which govern how certain signs and symbols worked and got their meanings. Thus for Levi Strauss, it was possible to understand the cultural production of a society if one could decipher the meanings of various symbols.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida questioned this argument and argued that it was not possible to simply deduce the meaning from a symbol. The structures which allowed a symbol to express some meaning also made hide some other. Derrida thus explained that it was not possible

to recover the whole meaning from a symbol and between the word/symbol and its meanings there will always remain a gap, a slippage. Derrida emphasized that if a symbol is subjected to 'deconstruction', it will reveal its internal contradictions which then can be used to give some sort of meaning to the symbol.

These different studies of language and symbols were very important for the post-colonial thinkers. Despite the differences, all these discourses about language, pointed out that it was not the 'subject' that created the language, but rather it was the language that constituted and defined 'subject'. Taking clue from this the post-colonial thinkers claimed that the 'colonial subject' was constituted and reconstituted by colonialism. The images of barbarian, savage, sexually aggressive etc. argued post-colonial thinkers were a construction of the colonial official, the priest and various colonial writers. Thus argued post-colonial thinkers that in order to get the 'real history' of the colonized people along with bringing in new material in writing the colonial past, one has also to deconstruct the colonial language, look for the contradictions and from there one can try and deduce the real image of a 'colonial subject'. Ranajit Guha's classical essay, 'Prose of Counter-Insurgency' is an example of how deconstruction was creatively used by Subaltern School historians to bring forth the subaltern subject from the debris of 'official documents.'[19]

Another very important influence on the post-colonial thinkers was that French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Edward Said's classic work *Orientalism* was highly influenced by the knowledge/power discourse elaborated by Foucault in almost all of his works. Said in his book showed how a certain images of colonized people were constructed and how all Eastern societies were shown to be by highly static ones.[20] Using genealogical approach of history writing, Said traversed a history of west constructing east from the heydays of Greek philosophers to the 20th century colonial officials. Said's *Orientalism* was in fact a watershed in the post-colonial studies which completely divided the whole world in two parts –West and the East and almost all later post-colonial scholars used *Orientalism* as a guide book in their study of Eastern societies.

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[19] See Ranajit Guha, "Prose of Counter-Insurgency."

[20] See Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

In this diatribe against colonialism, even Marxism and Marx himself were put under scathing criticism. Marxism was criticized as one more 'Eurocentric' approach which had all its focus on the 'mode of production' analysis. Marx formulation of 'Asiatic Mode of production' was time and again forwarded to prove that even Marx worked with the notion of western superiority where 'east could not represent itself and thus had to be represented'. Capitalism as a universal category was questioned and it was argued that its advent had very different meanings in Europe and in other parts of world particularly third world. In Europe capitalism lead to the destruction of various pre-capitalist and feudal formations, in third world, Capitalism failed miserably to do so. Rather, not only did Capitalism fail to usher bourgeois democratic revolutions in the third world, it eventually ended up having pre-capitalist formations be it race, caste, gender inequality in its womb. Thus along with universal ideas of enlightenment, Marxism as a 'theory of praxis' and liberation was also discarded.

But along with the emancipatory politics embedded in post-structural and post-modern discourses which post-colonial thinkers never failed to explain,[21] there were certain irreconcilable flaws in these theories. For example when scholars like Ashish Nandy questioned the modernist ideas, he took recourse to something which was highly regressive and anti-modern, utopian ideas. Thus for him there is one homogenous 'colonial self' which has to be recovered from west, for any act of emancipation won't go a long way if it does not take up the task of purging itself from the colonial residues. For him, colonialism doesn't end with decolonization and west even now plays in the minds and hearts of the former colonized. He says, "This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In the process, it helps generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds."[22]

This flattening of history which one can see clearly in the works of Edward Said and Ashish Nandy assumes that there is one homogenous west like the homogenous east. This many

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[21] See Menon, "Orientalism and After."

[22] Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, p. 11.

scholars have called 'reverse orientalism' in which the nativism (how much regressive) is glorified and whole nations, communities are thought be homogenous. This homogenization of history apart from being ahistorical argued historian Sumit Sarkar also feeds the right wing fascist forces at least in India. Sarkar argued that ideas of Ashish Nandy despite his personal unambiguous stand against right wing forces can act as a fodder for the right wing forces.[23] Moving away from 'archives' might help us to recover 'subaltern voice', but its complete negation of factual history can be taken up by various chauvinist groups who will want and try to portray their glorious past.

Thus one reason for post-colonial studies to achieve such fashionable proportions in the western academia was also that from the very start it was always in the midst of controversies. Thus scholars like Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmad didn't even shy away from calling post-colonial studies as quest of new elites from former colonies for having their due space in the new metropolis. "What it leaves us with is what I have already hinted at: postcolonial, rather than a description of anything, is a discourse that seeks to constitute the world in the self-image of intellectuals who view themselves (or have come to view themselves) as postcolonial intellectuals."[24]

The contexts in which both *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Hind Swaraj* were written were very diverse and different in nature. On one hand, where the African Nationalists parties in South Africa were surrounded by the armed struggle, on the other hand, India was witnessing the ferment of new ideas which later lead to what Partha Chatterjee will call 'passive revolution'. Consequently, as a result emerging from these politically charged backgrounds and contexts, what was witnessed in Algeria and India was two forms of nationalist waves, both very different in nature yet having uncanny overriding similarities at some point of time.

In the study of Gandhi and Fanon the subaltern scholars adopted a new approach. They shifted the eulogistic iconization of Gandhi and Fanon of the nationalist and traditional Marxist schools as the spiritual beacon of national struggle or the vanguard intellectual leader of the third world national liberation struggle. Their primary effort was to understand the strategies of mass

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[23] See Sarkar, *Writing Social History*.

[24] Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*, p. 39.

mobilization that was adopted by Gandhi and Fanon and see it in the light of the interrelation of classes and the modes of dialogue and rhetorical devices which were used to open the gates of participation for the subaltern classes. They used the Gramscian concept of hegemony to explain how the anti-colonial struggle conceived a model of broader class alliance in order to fight colonialism. Ranajit Guha in his book *Dominance without Hegemony* has articulated this difference in approach and emphasis of the Subaltern school:

> Thus, while the bourgeoisie in the West could speak for all of society in a recognizably hegemonic voice, even as it was striving for power or had just won it, in India there "was always yet another voice, a subaltern voice, that spoke for a large part of society which it was not for the bourgeoisie to represent. The voice, unheeded for a long time by those who lived within the walled city of institutional politics and academic scholarship, rang out of the depths of a parallel and autonomous domain which was only partially penetrated by elite nationalism.[25]

In the context of this difference in perceptual practices of the two different social sections the subaltern scholars have tried to see the functional tactical adjustments and modifications in theory that Gandhi and Fanon had initiated. Guha had discussed Gandhi's response to the entry of the new class, the subalterns, in the churning of the national struggle; he realized the inherent potential of this enormous class but at the same time was deeply concerned about the "lack of discipline" and mismatch of ideas and temperament that marked the difference between the stated objectives of Congress and this enormous body of people. The political trajectory he chose was in Guha's words:

> Gandhi did have a use for the masses. It was of fundamental importance for the philosophy as well as the practice of his politics that the people should be appropriated for and their energies and numbers "harnessed" to a nationalism which would allow the bourgeoisie to speak for its own interests in such a "way as to generate the illusion of speaking for all of society."[26]

Fanon remains an important reference point for the postcolonial and Subaltern studies schools. His concern about the pitfalls of national consciousness and apprehension about the

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[25]Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and power in Colonial India,* pp. 134-135.

[26] Ibid., p. 140.

national elite bourgeoisie resonates in the works of Subaltern scholars like Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee. A clear connection between the ideas of Guha and Fanon can be traced where Guha is complaining about the nationalist elite historian's denial to recognize the rural peasants as subjects of history in the anti-colonial project —"To acknowledge the peasants as the maker of his own rebellion, is to attribute, as we have done in this work, a consciousness to him."[27] However, in the works of post-colonial and later subaltern scholars Fanon's ideas on race and psychosomatic constitution of the colonized subject has taken precedence over his radical questioning of pitfalls of nationalism and his class based understanding of the anti-colonial project.

This dissertation is an attempt to locate the historical significance of Gandhi and Fanon in the context of anti-colonial struggle. The strategy and tactics adopted by both these figures are keys to understand how the course of anti-colonial struggles envisioned by these two figures conceived colonialism as an all pervasive political, philosophical and economic system which had to be transcended in order to successfully liberate the colonized people. It is therefore unavoidable to address these two figure in the light of their own political ideologies based on a larger realization of the objective conditions imposed by colonialism on the colonized masses. In the course of the study the dissertation will engage with the renewed theoretical interest shown by Post-colonial and Subaltern scholars about Gandhi and Fanon, and reflect on their propositions in the light of the larger social transformative agenda that both Gandhi and Fanon had primarily emphasized upon.

The first chapter maps the historical context in which Fanon and Gandhi conceived their political projects. Understanding how the specificities of the colonial contexts of both Algeria and India contributed to the formulation of the ideas of anti-colonial struggle in Fanon and Gandhi is an important parameter. The difference in the colonial politics of the two major colonial powers, Britain and France had immense impact upon the manner in which anti-colonial struggle was imagined in colonies governed by these powers. While Algeria was a settler colony India was a colony by indirect rule. While France attempted to convert the natives through its policies the British Colonial power maintained a state of quasi-autonomy for the native

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[27] Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, p. 4.

bourgeoisie. The resistance movements, as brilliantly put by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, which more often than not were led by nationalist intellectuals from the disenchanted native bourgeoisie carried the marks which were indicative of the relation that the latter had with the colonial power.

The second chapter of the dissertation attempts to locate the contours of the colonial subject as delineated in the works of Gandhi and Fanon respectively. It tracks the modalities of the formation of the colonial subject in some of the key writings of Fanon and Gandhi, indicating the similarities and differences in their thought. In this manner, the chapter hopes to be able to establish paradigms through which a comparative framework may be evolved. The chapter aims to look at the philosophical underpinnings of the thinkers and their engagement with the concerns of modernity and history.

The third chapter tries to understand Gandhi's and Fanon's ideas about Nation and Nationalism, Colonialism and Decolonization. This chapter will argue that the real convergence and divergence of Gandhi and Fanon has to be located in their ideas of Nation and Decolonization. In this context it examines the Post-Colonial and subaltern understanding of Gandhi and Fanon's ideas.

Introduction

Gandhi and Fanon hold a very important place in the histories of former British and French colonies. Not only were they instrumental in mobilizing the masses against colonialism –through their activism and political writings – but even now in post-colonial states they remain in the midst of discussions and have assumed some sort of iconic status. Despite the differences in their ideologies and approaches to politics, both these historic figures share some basic similarities.

The ideas of Gandhi and Fanon have been able to transcend their historical and geographical boundaries and have proved their mettle by remaining a constant reference points for struggles and movements which are far diverse in scope and objective. This glorious afterlife and continued relevance of Gandhi and Fanon in the contemporary struggles cannot be relegated to cursory eulogistic footnotes of history that iconizes them as figures of the past but has to be seen in the intrinsic strength of their theorization. It needs to be recognized that Gandhi and Fanon were not merely proponents of anti-colonial struggles in India and Algeria, but the struggles of these two countries impregnated their vision with the broad rubric of the dehumanizing content of colonialism. It is this vision that propelled them to chart a thorough going critique of the colonial culture which had got naturalized in the lives of the colonized people. Their strategies bear witness to the fact that they were not merely pragmatic modifications and manoeuvres adopted under the burden of circumstances, as many critics like to believe, but articulations that conveyed the larger picture of colonial destruction of native culture to the broader masses so that the people themselves could participate in the process of rejuvenating from the ruins of colonial culture.

Gandhi's pronouncements on truth and evocative presentation of the colonized subject as a *satyagrahi* have to be seen in the light of Gandhi's articulation of the anti-colonial subject. Gandhi was aware very much like Fanon that the colonized subject was a mutilated being produced by colonial culture[1]. Fanon and Gandhi's ideas almost resonate on the concern they

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[1] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings,* p. 73. Gandhi explains the true purpose of *swaraj* that counters the dehumanizing effect of colonialism on the colonized subject as "But such Swaraj has to be experienced by

shared about the Manichaeism of colonial and anti-colonial culture. The cult of hatred that blinds man from the realization of his rational being is part of the human finitude that colonial oppression rewrites in history and the only way out of this finitude is latent in the possibility of harnessing the ineffable possibilities of self realization that exists in the love and humanity towards the general species. Gandhi and Fanon attempt this almost impossible task of rejuvenating the ineffable in order to overcome the finitude that colonial condition imposes. The practices of a *satyagrahi* and the warm affection the native feels towards the settlers sincere to the cause of liberation, the seeking after truth that Gandhi prescribes to overcome the dehumanizing effect of colonialism and the maturity that Fanon's leader attains by assessing the mistakes wholeheartedly in the ebb and tide of struggle paves the way towards the broader realization of freedom of the entire mankind[2]. It is this primacy ascribed to emancipating the colonized subject from the finitude imposed by colonial condition by harnessing his human potential for the care of the other and awakening him to the cause of the emancipation of entire humanity that is responsible for making Gandhi and Fanon constant reference points for future struggles.

Despite this context the popular perception of Gandhi and Fanon has remained restricted as proponents of non-violence and violence respectively. Indeed if in Gandhi *ahimsa* is a mode of overcoming the fear of colonial apparatus in the colonized subject, in Fanon violence is a mode of self constitution for the colonized subject. Both these concepts are in effect steps towards harnessing the ineffable potentials inherent in human existence. However, essentialising Gandhi and Fanon in terms of this binary obfuscates and undermines an understanding of their larger political project. Therefore the dissertation tries to address the political philosophy of these two thinkers beyond this established academic binary.

A complex set of historical and political factors contributed to the development of the vision of anti-colonial struggle in these two figures. The unities and dispersions, the convergences and departures, therefore have to be explored in the light of the historical and political milieu that both Gandhi and Fanon were encountering, interpreting and responding to.

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each one for himself. One drowning man will never save another. Slaves ourselves, it would be a mere pretension to think of freeing others."

[2] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* pp. 144-145.

Neither Gandhi nor Fanon had any illusions about articulating their political vision according to the contingencies or the practical demands of the time.

Indeed both these figures were men of their times whose ideas were shaped by the larger political, philosophical and economic context they encountered. Their relevance and contribution to the anti-colonial struggles across the globe has to be seen in the context of their critical engagement with the objective conditions of colonialism and how they formulated their anti-colonial strategy by exposing the loop holes of colonial discourse and employing the strengths of the colonized masses. This dialectical approach which characterizes the political philosophy and mobilization strategies of both the figures calls for a thorough understanding of the intellectual climate that shaped the ideas of the two luminaries of anti-colonial struggle. It is in this context that one needs to place the ideas of Fanon and Gandhi in the light of Modernity which was the epistemological framework through which colonialism sought to justify itself.

Colonialism and Modernity Contested

Both Gandhi and Fanon underwent their tortuous encounter with modernity in the process of articulating their critique of colonialism. For Gandhi modernity was essentially linked to the materialistic philosophy of the West, best expressed in the machines of production. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi's comment on machinery clarifies the relation Gandhi sees in the degeneration of modern civilization and technological progress—"Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin."[3] Gandhi's denunciation of machines and his idea of contesting the evil of modernity, as he says in the last part of the dialogue in *Hind Swaraj*—"It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it."-- shows that Gandhi contested modernity through two distinctly different strategies. Ashish Nandy has pointed out that Gandhi like "critical traditionalists" re-emphasized a model of self control and self realization to counter modernity. Nandy also shows that in doing so he has also substituted the historical determinism that western notion of rational history based on linear causality, with a

[3] See the chapter on "Machinery" in Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, pp. 107-111.

mythical history of Asiatic cultures where the present moment can move towards a rupture without depending on the demands of time through sheer moral intervention.[4]

However, for Gandhi though the present moment can be changed by moral practices of self, he does not believe in the lack of a past. For Gandhi the "past" is not a temporal element like western history but an essence which has been corrupted but can be restored through practices of the self that shirks this source of corruption by immersing oneself in the practical acts of realizing that essence. Gandhi's creative use of the mythical ideas of *Ram rajya, Gram Swaraj*--self sufficient village as the prototype of anti-colonial social structure, *Harijan*—a category through which he tries to address the evils of caste system and untouchability without radically altering the caste system engendered in the traditional *Varnasharam;* testifies to the fact that Gandhi was using the synchrony of myths from the past to address the contemporary problems in society.

Fanon's response to modernity however, was of a different order. Like Gandhi, Fanon also claims that the colonial culture imposes itself on the native. He said in *Black Skin/ White Masks*--

> Every colonized people—in other words, every 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; that is, with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle.[5]

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[4] See Nandy. *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, p. 27.This idea of an alternative history grounded in the mythical idea of time as opposed to the linear idea of time central to modern historical discipline has been seen by Ashish Nandy as a promise in Gandhian politics. It is worthwhile to mention that Dipesh Chakrabarty has skeptically commented upon this attitude of a theoretical expediency of alternative history in his chapter "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History" in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Chakrabarty has commented "There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called "the history of Europe." In this sense,"Indian"history itself is in a position of subalternity; one can only articulate subaltern subject positions in the name of this history."

[5] Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks.* p. 9.

It shows that for Fanon colonial modernity poses a psychosomatic problem. He says the Negro is always an abnormal, a "phobogenic", that is his existence is preceded by a phobia. For Fanon this psychosomatic condition is not moral but psychologically deterministic. It is from this understanding of historical objectivity that Fanon charts his strategy. He completely denounces the notion of a past or essence—"The discovery of the existence of a Negro civilization in the fifteenth century confers no patent of humanity on me. Like it or not, the past can in no way guide me in the present moment."[6] As opposed to Gandhi, Fanon condemns all attempts of disalienation as deemed to failure which refuses "to accept the present as definitive". He claims:

> The problem considered here is one of time. Those Negroes and white men will be disalienated who refuse to let themselves sealed away in the materialized Tower of the Past. For many other Negroes, in other ways, disalienation will come into being through their refusal to accept the present as definitive.[7]

Therefore, one can see that Fanon does not discard the western model of history rather looks for a radical transformation within this epistemic paradigm of time. For him there is no essential negro or a native essence, the ideal conditions of a human world will be created only through "efforts to recapture the self and scrutinize the self.[8]

The alternative model of a national culture has been a mode of articulating the response to western modernity in Gandhi. Gandhi's idea of *Swaraj* proposed in *Hind Swaraj* is a polemic against those ideas of nationalism which measures itself in terms of the Western values of economic and political development. For Gandhi nationalism imbued in *swaraj* is a nationalism based on the essence of Indian civilization and it operates in a revivalist approach where the disease inflicted by West has to be conquered for the formers ultimate ascendance.[9] Gandhi is at the same time careful about the use of the past, he ensures that the past should not be evoked uncritically rather for him, past is a repository of essential values which colonialism has displaced and distorted and the purpose of political action is to restore those values in the present

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[6] Ibid., p. 175.

[7] Ibid., p. 176.

[8] Ibid., p. 181.

[9] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 72.

context. For Fanon, however, the past was not a source of promise rather his experience of newly independent states convinced him that using the past myths as structural models of new society might betray the cause of national consciousness and unity by reinstating the old structures in the hands of the national bourgeois:

> 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 crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been. The faults that we find in it are quite sufficient explanation of the facility with which, when dealing with young and independent nations, the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state. These are the cracks in the edifice which show the process of retrogression, that is so harmful and prejudicial to national effort and national unity. We shall see that such retrograde steps with all the weaknesses and serious dangers that they entail are the historical result of the incapacity of the national middle class to rationalize popular action, that is to say their incapacity to see into the reasons for that action.[10]

In spite of their numerous differences one of the many similarities that Gandhi and Fanon shared was the belief of placing their 'politics' and 'ideology' in the masses. By this, one means that both believed that liberation/change was possible only through 'mass politics'. Where Gandhi brought down Indian national struggle from the realm of 'elite politics', to the rural peasantry, incorporating their beliefs, ritual and religious practices and cultivating traditional structures of rural peasant world view in order to propagate the ideas of passive resistance. Gandhi's strategy to bring different communities in the fold of the national liberation struggle and under the platform of Congress based on a strategy of addressing the different concerns and supporting the issues of the Sikh and Muslim communities was marked by success but Gandhi's approach to unite the people of different communities on the plank of alliance retaining community interests instead of a radical plank of secular national struggle beyond the narrow calculations of community interests had disastrous consequences in the form of partition which show the limitations of Gandhi's idea of national harmony.[11]

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[10]Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* pp. 147-148.

[11] Gautam, *Samajdarshan,* pp. 71-76.

On the other hand Fanon had no illusions about the clash of different interest groups in the post-independence nation state. His Marxist materialist calling had convinced him that the only way of fighting such clash of interests was through the empowerment of the peasants and the lower classes. Fanon 'stretching Marxism' declared peasantry the most 'revolutionary class' in the colonies and considered the oligarchic middle class as a class which was too keen to inherit the oppressive power structure left by the colonizers. In this regard Fanon's mass politics is more inclined towards ensuring the participation and education of the oppressed classes so that they can be empowered as the mainstay of the newly independent nation state. He was also convinced that this process cannot be completed within the ambit of the national boundary as he thought that the primary victory of the colonized people did not completely emancipate them from the structures of imperialism which remained an international force to reckon with. It is here Fanon's intervention in the form of mass strategy attains an international significance where he envisions the larger international struggle of the colonized people.

Hence, despite their belief in 'mass politics' Gandhi and Fanon, differed with each other when it came to deeper social content of their respective struggles. But these similarities and differences should not stop us here and will be dealt with in some detail in this dissertation. What is more important here for us is the way in which Gandhi and Fanon have been appropriated and discussed during their lifetime and also after their death.

Till 1970's Gandhi and Fanon were labeled and discussed within the broad spectrum of Nationalist and Marxist schools. But post 1970's a new discourse emerged and soon both Gandhi and Fanon were approached through the disciplinary lenses of Post-Colonial studies. Gandhi also emerged as a key figure to be discussed in an Indian academic venture called Subaltern Studies group. Many Subaltern historians discussed Gandhi, his political thought, mobilization, persona and modus operandi in detail in their works. Notable among the Subaltern historians who worked on Gandhi were Ranajit Guha, Shahid Amin, and David Hardiman. But soon another stream of scholars who were close to Subaltern history group (they were directly or indirectly influential to Subaltern Studies Group) like Ashish Nandy started writing about Gandhi and his politics.

Fanon who called himself a Marxist with some qualifications was also studied till late 1960's as a Marxist who was trying to find a place for 'Race' in Marxist theory. Even when Sartre wrote the first Preface of *Wretched of Earth* in 1961, Sartre tried to fit Fanon's work

within the corpus of Marxist literature. But soon, Fanon was also tried to be placed within the broad spectrum of Post-Colonial theorists. Some even to the extent of calling Fanon along with Aime Cesaire as the two black intellectuals who laid the foundations of Post-Colonialism.[12]

In the march of ideas, certain concepts and terminologies keep on changing their existing meanings, where same old ideas in a changed context/circumstance mean different to different authors. In case of Gandhi and Fanon the idea of 'Nation' and 'National liberation' seems appropriate to elucidate this point. For most of the writers and political activists writing when national struggles were going on throughout the colonial world, Nation seemed to be a liberating force. Nationalism was posed as antitheses to Colonialism. It was a way out of the exploitative nature of colonialism. Popular leaders projected the nation as an entity which would usher in a new dawn of freedom and equality where racial, caste and other inequalities would cease to be. The origin of nation and nationalism might go back to the 16th century[13], but in the colonies it was realized and 'imagined' during the anti-colonial struggles. During the anti-colonial struggle a 'national self' was constructed which tried to flatten history and iron out the differences that existed between the communities constituting the new Nation. A unified, glorious and homogenous past was evoked time and again to serve the national self. Nation and Nationalism were thus made to rule the minds of the 'masses' of these newly decolonized nations. As Irfan Habib argues,

> It must be realized that our nation has been created by the Indian people after centuries of endeavor. First, as we have seen, they began to have vague conception of Indian as a country some two thousand and five hundred years ago... But it was their resistance to colonialism and

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[13] "The concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divine-ordained, hierarchal dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism (direct relationship) between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state." Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, pp. 6-7.

absorption of modern democratic (and later socialist) ideas that began to transform India from a country – a geographical and cultural entity- into a true nation.[14]

But this euphoria of national liberation from colonialism was short-lived and soon fissures emerged within the newly constructed nations. The emergence of the native ruling classes and bourgeoisie thus opened up the new criticism of nation as a category. As soon as the dust of national struggle settled 'masses' could see how they were deceived into something which was anything, but liberating. The period post-1970 saw mass movements across Asia, Latin America and Africa against the local ruling classes questioning the very ideas which had formed the very base of national struggles against colonialism. Nation and Nationalism, which were seen as undisputed facts of history were now put to a scathing criticism not only in academic circles, but in these mass movements. Nationalism as an idea was now modified and rather than being inclusive, it was now seen as an exclusionary category which kept a large section of its population on the margins. These margins were seen as part of nation but never constituting nation.[15]

Post-Colonialism and Subaltern Studies: Promises and Predicaments

Everything from colonialism, nationalism, history and culture was once again interrogated and it was shown how baseless were the claims of decolonization and nationalism. In India this questioning and criticism lead historian Ranajit Guha and some other scholars to question the whole edifice of Indian historiography. The above debates which had till then remained confined to mainly nationalist and Marxist historians were questioned by Ranajit Guha and later by the subaltern studies group.[16] Subaltern studies, adding Foucault's framework of 'power', argued that power worked at different levels and the distinction between colonized and colonizer was

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[14]Habib, 'The Envisioning of a Nation: A Defence of the Idea of India', pp. 28.

[15] "It has been widely noted that the idea of singular nation ethos, far from being a natural outgrowth of this or that soil, has been produced and naturalized at great costs, through rhetoric's of war and sacrifices, through punishing disciplines of educational and linguistic uniformity, and through the subordination of myriad local and regional traditions to produce Indians, or Frenchman or Britons or Indonesians." Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An essay on the Geography of Anger*, p. 04.

[16] Notable are the works of David Hardiman, Shahid Amin, Dipesh Chakravarty and Sumit Sarkar.

not so clearly demarcated. Terms like nationalism and colonialism were further scrutinized and questioned. Arguing that both 'Marxist' and 'Nationalist' histories had an inherent 'elitist bias', subaltern studies group talked of history writing which will bring 'people' back into the historical narrative. All these academic debates were however grounded in the material conditions of the time. As Vinay Lal quoting Guha, says,

> Subaltern Studies... arose out of the disillusionments of the three decades following independence: the hopes of the young, which relied upon the nation-state for their fulfillment, had dissipated in the wake of the national emergency invoked by Indira Gandhi in 1975, and the suppression of the Naxalite movement, which for all its faults and embrace of violence sought to place considerations of justice and equity at the center of political action.[17]

But the new subaltern history had more to offer than mere "history from below" as was being practiced by British social historians like E.P Thompson, E.J Hobsbawm and others. The subaltern historians didn't remain confined to the idea of the 'subaltern' which had been taken from the prison notebooks of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, and the 'Subaltern School' historians soon entered the semiological analyses of Roland Barthes, the post-structuralism, 'governmentality' and power analysis of Foucault, and the critique of Enlightenment epistemologies associated with Derrida, Lyotard, and others in their works.

Along with these varied influences Subaltern Studies group was joined or was highly influenced by the political theorists like Partha Chatterjee, literary critics like Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said and social critics like Ashish Nandy. These varied influences moved the initial Subaltern Studies group from a firm Marxist, class based approach to cultural, post-structural, psychoanalytical discourses. The shift gradually moved from the focus on history to cultural and literary studies and from class to post-colonial identities. In the meantime many scholars across Latin America, Middle East, Africa and Asia where also investigating new ideas and approaches. Authors like Edward Said, Chinau Achebe and others saw a close proximity of their own ideas with the ideas that were coming from India. Soon this whole body of literature that was coming from many former colonies was started to be called by different names like – the Post-Colonial studies, Post-Colonial theory, Post-Colonial literature etc. In this whole rubric of new literature

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[17] Vinay Lal, "Subaltern Studies and its critique: Debates towards Indian history," p. 137.

(which the post-colonial scholars called 'discourse'), Indian scholars settled in the metropolis were most engaged and vocal.

One can start unraveling these various layers of post-colonialism by asking - then what actually is post-colonial theory/discourse? The answer to this question is a tricky one, as unlike many other theories, whether it is Marxism or post-structuralism, there is no one such body of thought which can be called post-colonial theory/discourse. It is in fact a bunch of theories, studies and ideas which at times don't form one coherent thought. So rather than calling it Post-Colonial theory, one can do justice by calling this whole literature as 'Post-Colonial studies'. If there is no one theory and it is an amalgam of many studies, than how does one define post-colonial studies? Can we reach one such definition which can cover every theme taken by post-colonial thinkers from psychoanalyst Ashsih Nandy to historian Ranajit Guha? Again the answer seems no and following Arif Dirlik, one can say that post-colonial studies covers at least three definitions, which are as follows,

> *(a)* as a literal description of conditions in formerly colonial societies, in which case the term has concrete referents, as in postcolonial societies or postcolonial intellectuals; (*b*) as a description of a global condition after the period of colonialism, in which case the usage is somewhat more abstract and less concrete in reference, comparable in its vagueness to the earlier term *Third World,* for which it is intended as a substitute; and *(c)*as a description of a discourse on the above-named conditions that is informed by the epistemological and psychic orientations that are products of those conditions.[18]

The concerns which were shared by post-colonial thinkers found resonance in the theories like post-structuralism and in the 'Foucaltian analysis of power'. Post structuralism questioned universality of ideas and structures, and enlightenment theories. Post-colonial critics also had shown their skepticism about the 'universality principle'. For most post-colonial scholars universalism was disguised name for euro-centric approach. Subaltern historians like Dipesh Chakrabarty claimed that enlightened ideas though claimed to talk of universals, but these universals had European culture, history, and ideas at their core. Even when east/third world

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[18] Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*, p. 332.

came in their discourse the post-colonial critics further argued it was only as a reflection of Europe. In this scheme of things third world or east came as an 'other' and never constituted the real 'self' of these universal ideas.

This criticism didn't remain confined to the criticism of the enlightenment ideas only, rather it gradually moved on to questioning every idea that emerged from west and claimed to be some kind of 'universal'. Not only were the ideas criticized, but even the methodology was questioned. One such criticism was the archive based tradition of history and cultural writings. Claiming that the natives and the 'subalterns' had no access to education - reading and writing, so official archives cannot do justice to recover the 'subaltern voice'. The archives remained an official repository of records where a 'subaltern' came only as a 'subject of history', but never as a 'maker of history'. Definition of archives thus had to be expanded and in it one had to include 'material' outside the official discourse. In order to write a 'subaltern history' and recover the 'subaltern consciousness' a renewed effort has to be put on 'memory', folklore, folksongs and a study of signs and symbols. Thus scholars like Roland Barthes who worked on popular culture and studied symbols were used extensively by subaltern school historians and also by post-colonial scholars.

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure claimed that a word didn't have an inherent meaning rather people assign certain meanings to certain words. For example the word 'Red' didn't mean anything if you don't know English language. But once you know English language a certain idea emerges in our mind and only then we are able to comprehend the word 'Red'. Thus for Saussure, languages or words were not understandable themselves. To understand a word one has to be accustomed to the language as well as the social structure of the society. Structuralist Marxist thinker Claude Levi Strauss pushed Saussure ideas further and claimed words, symbols and their meanings don't work randomly, rather argued Levi Strauss that there existed laws which govern how certain signs and symbols worked and got their meanings. Thus for Levi Strauss, it was possible to understand the cultural production of a society if one could decipher the meanings of various symbols.

French philosopher Jacques Derrida questioned this argument and argued that it was not possible to simply deduce the meaning from a symbol. The structures which allowed a symbol to express some meaning also made hide some other. Derrida thus explained that it was not possible

to recover the whole meaning from a symbol and between the word/symbol and its meanings there will always remain a gap, a slippage. Derrida emphasized that if a symbol is subjected to 'deconstruction', it will reveal its internal contradictions which then can be used to give some sort of meaning to the symbol.

These different studies of language and symbols were very important for the post-colonial thinkers. Despite the differences, all these discourses about language, pointed out that it was not the 'subject' that created the language, but rather it was the language that constituted and defined 'subject'. Taking clue from this the post-colonial thinkers claimed that the 'colonial subject' was constituted and reconstituted by colonialism. The images of barbarian, savage, sexually aggressive etc. argued post-colonial thinkers were a construction of the colonial official, the priest and various colonial writers. Thus argued post-colonial thinkers that in order to get the 'real history' of the colonized people along with bringing in new material in writing the colonial past, one has also to deconstruct the colonial language, look for the contradictions and from there one can try and deduce the real image of a 'colonial subject'. Ranajit Guha's classical essay, 'Prose of Counter-Insurgency' is an example of how deconstruction was creatively used by Subaltern School historians to bring forth the subaltern subject from the debris of 'official documents.'[19]

Another very important influence on the post-colonial thinkers was that French philosopher, Michel Foucault. Edward Said's classic work *Orientalism* was highly influenced by the knowledge/power discourse elaborated by Foucault in almost all of his works. Said in his book showed how a certain images of colonized people were constructed and how all Eastern societies were shown to be by highly static ones.[20] Using genealogical approach of history writing, Said traversed a history of west constructing east from the heydays of Greek philosophers to the 20th century colonial officials. Said's *Orientalism* was in fact a watershed in the post-colonial studies which completely divided the whole world in two parts –West and the East and almost all later post-colonial scholars used *Orientalism* as a guide book in their study of Eastern societies.

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[19] See Ranajit Guha, "Prose of Counter-Insurgency."

[20] See Edward Said, *Orientalism*.

In this diatribe against colonialism, even Marxism and Marx himself were put under scathing criticism. Marxism was criticized as one more 'Eurocentric' approach which had all its focus on the 'mode of production' analysis. Marx formulation of 'Asiatic Mode of production' was time and again forwarded to prove that even Marx worked with the notion of western superiority where 'east could not represent itself and thus had to be represented'. Capitalism as a universal category was questioned and it was argued that its advent had very different meanings in Europe and in other parts of world particularly third world. In Europe capitalism lead to the destruction of various pre-capitalist and feudal formations, in third world, Capitalism failed miserably to do so. Rather, not only did Capitalism fail to usher bourgeois democratic revolutions in the third world, it eventually ended up having pre-capitalist formations be it race, caste, gender inequality in its womb. Thus along with universal ideas of enlightenment, Marxism as a 'theory of praxis' and liberation was also discarded.

But along with the emancipatory politics embedded in post-structural and post-modern discourses which post-colonial thinkers never failed to explain,[21] there were certain irreconcilable flaws in these theories. For example when scholars like Ashish Nandy questioned the modernist ideas, he took recourse to something which was highly regressive and anti-modern, utopian ideas. Thus for him there is one homogenous 'colonial self' which has to be recovered from west, for any act of emancipation won't go a long way if it does not take up the task of purging itself from the colonial residues. For him, colonialism doesn't end with decolonization and west even now plays in the minds and hearts of the former colonized. He says, "This colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once for all. In the process, it helps generalize the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds."[22]

This flattening of history which one can see clearly in the works of Edward Said and Ashish Nandy assumes that there is one homogenous west like the homogenous east. This many

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[21] See Menon, "Orientalism and After."

[22] Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, p. 11.

scholars have called 'reverse orientalism' in which the nativism (how much regressive) is glorified and whole nations, communities are thought be homogenous. This homogenization of history apart from being ahistorical argued historian Sumit Sarkar also feeds the right wing fascist forces at least in India. Sarkar argued that ideas of Ashish Nandy despite his personal unambiguous stand against right wing forces can act as a fodder for the right wing forces.[23] Moving away from 'archives' might help us to recover 'subaltern voice', but its complete negation of factual history can be taken up by various chauvinist groups who will want and try to portray their glorious past.

Thus one reason for post-colonial studies to achieve such fashionable proportions in the western academia was also that from the very start it was always in the midst of controversies. Thus scholars like Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmad didn't even shy away from calling post-colonial studies as quest of new elites from former colonies for having their due space in the new metropolis. "What it leaves us with is what I have already hinted at: postcolonial, rather than a description of anything, is a discourse that seeks to constitute the world in the self-image of intellectuals who view themselves (or have come to view themselves) as postcolonial intellectuals."[24]

The contexts in which both *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Hind Swaraj* were written were very diverse and different in nature. On one hand, where the African Nationalists parties in South Africa were surrounded by the armed struggle, on the other hand, India was witnessing the ferment of new ideas which later lead to what Partha Chatterjee will call 'passive revolution'. Consequently, as a result emerging from these politically charged backgrounds and contexts, what was witnessed in Algeria and India was two forms of nationalist waves, both very different in nature yet having uncanny overriding similarities at some point of time.

In the study of Gandhi and Fanon the subaltern scholars adopted a new approach. They shifted the eulogistic iconization of Gandhi and Fanon of the nationalist and traditional Marxist schools as the spiritual beacon of national struggle or the vanguard intellectual leader of the third world national liberation struggle. Their primary effort was to understand the strategies of mass

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[23] See Sarkar, *Writing Social History*.

[24] Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*, p. 39.

mobilization that was adopted by Gandhi and Fanon and see it in the light of the interrelation of classes and the modes of dialogue and rhetorical devices which were used to open the gates of participation for the subaltern classes. They used the Gramscian concept of hegemony to explain how the anti-colonial struggle conceived a model of broader class alliance in order to fight colonialism. Ranajit Guha in his book *Dominance without Hegemony* has articulated this difference in approach and emphasis of the Subaltern school:

> Thus, while the bourgeoisie in the West could speak for all of society in a recognizably hegemonic voice, even as it was striving for power or had just won it, in India there "was always yet another voice, a subaltern voice, that spoke for a large part of society which it was not for the bourgeoisie to represent. The voice, unheeded for a long time by those who lived within the walled city of institutional politics and academic scholarship, rang out of the depths of a parallel and autonomous domain which was only partially penetrated by elite nationalism.[25]

In the context of this difference in perceptual practices of the two different social sections the subaltern scholars have tried to see the functional tactical adjustments and modifications in theory that Gandhi and Fanon had initiated. Guha had discussed Gandhi's response to the entry of the new class, the subalterns, in the churning of the national struggle; he realized the inherent potential of this enormous class but at the same time was deeply concerned about the "lack of discipline" and mismatch of ideas and temperament that marked the difference between the stated objectives of Congress and this enormous body of people. The political trajectory he chose was in Guha's words:

> Gandhi did have a use for the masses. It was of fundamental importance for the philosophy as well as the practice of his politics that the people should be appropriated for and their energies and numbers "harnessed" to a nationalism which would allow the bourgeoisie to speak for its own interests in such a "way as to generate the illusion of speaking for all of society."[26]

Fanon remains an important reference point for the postcolonial and Subaltern studies schools. His concern about the pitfalls of national consciousness and apprehension about the

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[25]Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony: History and power in Colonial India,* pp. 134-135.

[26] Ibid., p. 140.

national elite bourgeoisie resonates in the works of Subaltern scholars like Ranajit Guha and Partha Chatterjee. A clear connection between the ideas of Guha and Fanon can be traced where Guha is complaining about the nationalist elite historian's denial to recognize the rural peasants as subjects of history in the anti-colonial project —"To acknowledge the peasants as the maker of his own rebellion, is to attribute, as we have done in this work, a consciousness to him."[27] However, in the works of post-colonial and later subaltern scholars Fanon's ideas on race and psychosomatic constitution of the colonized subject has taken precedence over his radical questioning of pitfalls of nationalism and his class based understanding of the anti-colonial project.

This dissertation is an attempt to locate the historical significance of Gandhi and Fanon in the context of anti-colonial struggle. The strategy and tactics adopted by both these figures are keys to understand how the course of anti-colonial struggles envisioned by these two figures conceived colonialism as an all pervasive political, philosophical and economic system which had to be transcended in order to successfully liberate the colonized people. It is therefore unavoidable to address these two figure in the light of their own political ideologies based on a larger realization of the objective conditions imposed by colonialism on the colonized masses. In the course of the study the dissertation will engage with the renewed theoretical interest shown by Post-colonial and Subaltern scholars about Gandhi and Fanon, and reflect on their propositions in the light of the larger social transformative agenda that both Gandhi and Fanon had primarily emphasized upon.

The first chapter maps the historical context in which Fanon and Gandhi conceived their political projects. Understanding how the specificities of the colonial contexts of both Algeria and India contributed to the formulation of the ideas of anti-colonial struggle in Fanon and Gandhi is an important parameter. The difference in the colonial politics of the two major colonial powers, Britain and France had immense impact upon the manner in which anti-colonial struggle was imagined in colonies governed by these powers. While Algeria was a settler colony India was a colony by indirect rule. While France attempted to convert the natives through its policies the British Colonial power maintained a state of quasi-autonomy for the native

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[27] Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, p. 4.

bourgeoisie. The resistance movements, as brilliantly put by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*, which more often than not were led by nationalist intellectuals from the disenchanted native bourgeoisie carried the marks which were indicative of the relation that the latter had with the colonial power.

The second chapter of the dissertation attempts to locate the contours of the colonial subject as delineated in the works of Gandhi and Fanon respectively. It tracks the modalities of the formation of the colonial subject in some of the key writings of Fanon and Gandhi, indicating the similarities and differences in their thought. In this manner, the chapter hopes to be able to establish paradigms through which a comparative framework may be evolved. The chapter aims to look at the philosophical underpinnings of the thinkers and their engagement with the concerns of modernity and history.

The third chapter tries to understand Gandhi's and Fanon's ideas about Nation and Nationalism, Colonialism and Decolonization. This chapter will argue that the real convergence and divergence of Gandhi and Fanon has to be located in their ideas of Nation and Decolonization. In this context it examines the Post-Colonial and subaltern understanding of Gandhi and Fanon's ideas.

Chapter I

Gandhi and Fanon: Tracing Colonial Encounters in India, Africa and Algeria

Any account of the socio-political, cultural life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is inevitably coloured by the process of colonisation and its far-reaching impacts. Even though the creation of European colonies under imperial control had begun much earlier in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that this process picked up momentum partly fuelled by the industrial revolution. And under the civilizing garb of the proverbial 'white man's burden', the colonial project spread across the world. In this battle for political hegemony and global control over the abundantly available resources in Asia, Africa and Indo-China, England emerged as by far the most powerful European colonial power – establishing a vast empire on which it was claimed the sun never sets. France, with its colonies in Southeast Asia (including in Laos, Cambodia and in some parts of India) and North Africa was also a colonial power to reckon with in the nineteenth century. At the same time, traditional colonial powers like Spain, Portugal and Holland continued to retain some colonies in the nineteenth century. It was also a period when new colonial powers including Germany, Italy and the United States began to exert their influence. The rubric of the so-called colonial 'governance' and 'development' was inseparable, in a sense, from its underlying dynamics of racism, discrimination and apartheid as well as economic exploitation and subjugation of local socio-economic patterns and cultures in the colonies.

It is in such times and under these conditions that Gandhi and Fanon lived and articulated their views. In the history of anti-colonial struggles during the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, both Gandhi and Fanon justifiably occupy important positions; they lived in times when a groundswell of resistance against the myriad forms in which colonialism manifested itself emerged in different parts of the world. Their experiences, their ideologies, views and struggles were consequently influenced by the simmering discontent and anger in the colonies. Any attempt, therefore, to study the life and work of both Gandhi and Fanon cannot be isolated from the colonial contexts which deeply informed them. It is however important to note at this point that the contexts in which Gandhi and Fanon operated were by no means the *same*, however strong the similarities might have been. The difference

did not lie merely in the fact that one was articulating his views and strategies in a French settler colony and the other under indirect British rule. Colonisation was to have several specific characteristics in different contexts, and a recognition of this difference is a necessary part of the process of analysing colonial histories and different anti-colonial responses. In the following sections, we shall attempt to briefly analyse the differing backgrounds and contexts which informed and influenced Gandhi and Fanon.

Experiencing England, 'South Africa' and India in the 19th and 20th Century: Emergence of 'Gandhian' Thought

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, born in a Modh Bania family in the princely state of Porbandar in Gujarat, had a traditional Vaishnavite Hindu upbringing. His early life was replete with exposures to religion: his mother who was by many accounts "earnest in religious observance", his nurse Rambha who taught the young Mohandas to invoke the name of 'Ram' to overcome his fear of darkness, the daily rendering of the Tulsidas Ramayan at his home when he was thirteen, regular visits of Jain monks to his home, and the influence of Gujarati sant-poets like Narsin Mehta and Shyamal Bhatt with their emphasis on moral fervour for instance.[1] According to Basham, who has tried to trace the impact of Gandhi's early life on his later thought, these influences on Gandhi served to imbibe a deep moral consciousness in him, rather than an overtly 'religious' feeling or respect for orthodox traditional strictures.

For the young Gandhi, religious practices, codes and rituals *per se* held no attraction. Tanika Sarkar sees a "remarkable irreverence for caste orthodoxy" in Gandhi's early life – she points out for instance Gandhi's open defiance of his Modh Bania caste council's injunctions against going abroad.[2] His early religious influences however provoked, in a sense, his penchant to seek the 'truth' at all costs, and to see this search as the ultimate aim of

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[1] Basham, "Traditional Influences on the Thought of Mahatma Gandhi,"p. 20. In the available literature on Gandhi, there are ample references to these influences on Gandhi growing up in Porbandar and Rajkot. Gandhi himself, in his autobiography, has talked about his mother's visits to the local Vaishnava temple, her fasts, vows and rituals. He also mentions, for instance, that Rambha's training him to call upon God (Ram) when in trouble was always an "infallible remedy" in his life. Akeel Bilgrami has also engaged in an analysis of the influence of religion on Gandhi's politics and ideology, touching upon the early influences of the kind of Vaishmavism he encountered in Gujarat. See Akeel Bilgrami, 'Gandhi's religion and its relation to his politics', p.93-116.

[2] Sarkar, 'Gandhi and Social Relations', p.178.

life. Gandhi's experiences viz-a-viz meat-eating in his childhood are a case in point. Even though he belonged to a strictly vegetarian community for whom meat-eating was a serious social and religious taboo, Gandhi secretly ate meat and gave up these clandestine forays only because they involved lying to his mother. In other words, it was more a moral concern that guided him rather than any abiding regard for religious norms. It can thus be argued that Gandhi's early influences helped to lay the foundation for his intensely moral outlook and emphasis in later life. As Basham argues:

> ...several of Gandhi's concepts are fully in keeping with Indian tradition, and were probably developed from ideas which he absorbed in his childhood and youth, fertilized and brought to fruition by his contact with the West...[3]

Gandhi's direct contact with the West, with Europe in particular, began when he left India in 1888 as a nineteen year old to pursue higher education in London. Yasmin Khan locates this decision of Gandhi and several other young Indians in the conflicting vision that British colonialism presented. While the Raj routinely emphasized the 'otherness' and the difference (read inferiority) of Indians and their consequent 'inability' to rule themselves without the 'civilizing' influence of the British, it also promised a share in colonial governance and the administration to the Indians properly trained as "gentlemen".[4] The native bourgeoisie was thus offered a chance to participate, in a sense, in the colonial governance.[5] In order to meet the 'superiority' of the British, many young Indians, therefore, felt the need to acquire a Western education in the English medium, to study law and to assimilate British culture as much as possible.

The next couple of years from 1888 spent in London in the midst of the imperial culture had a profound influence on Gandhi. Jonathan Hyslop terms this period as the "modest beginning of his [Gandhi's] transformation".[6] On the one hand, he tried, like many other young Indians in London to blend in with London's life and culture, his attempts to get trained in Western dance and music being a case in point. At the same time, his London

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[3] Basham, 'Traditional Influences on the Thought of Mahatma Gandhi', 40.

[4] See Khan, 'Gandhi's World', pp. 11-29. For a good account of the social and political life in India when Gandhi was growing up in Porbandar and Rajkot.

[5] This British policy has been identified by many observers as an attempt by the colonial British Raj to 'co-opt' the elite classes in their project of domination over India.

[6] Hyslop, 'Gandhi 1869-1915: The transnational emergence of a public figure', p. 32.

experience also encouraged him to revisit ideas of religion, spirituality and alternatives to the imperial culture and way of life. It was in London that Gandhi actually read the Bhagwat Gita (Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, *The Song Celestial*) for the first time along with theosophist friends, an event which was to deeply influence him. Bilgrami points out that for Gandhi, the Gita even while arguing for war as a tool to fight 'evil', was essentially a revelation of the futility of war and its message therefore ultimately helped Gandhi (perhaps paradoxically) to articulate his vision of non-violence.[7] Gandhi often referred in later life to the Gita as his 'dictionary' which helped him during trials and tribulations.

During the period of his stay in England, Gandhi was introduced to Christianity in a deep way. For someone whose previous experiences with Christianity were restricted to hearing the missionaries standing near his school and "holding forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their Gods", an exposure to the New Testament and its teachings was revealing.[8] He was deeply impressed by Christ's well-known *Sermon on the Mount* and its message. Moreover, his introduction to the New Testament was the beginning, in a sense, of his enduring engagement with Western spiritual, intellectual and philosophical sources – an engagement that led Gandhi in later days to explore the ideas of Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson amongst others.

His London experience introduced Gandhi to several people, groups, ideas and ideologies which he was unlikely to have encountered in his hometown of Gujarat. As the vegetarian Gandhi (before leaving India, he had made a promise to his mother to abstain from meat, women and alcohol) looked for places to eat in London, he encountered for probably the first time literature which made a passionate and rational argument for vegetarianism, as opposed to a cultural-religious stricture prohibiting meat-eating that he was more used to in India. Harry Salt's book *A Plea for Vegetarianism* converted Gandhi from a vegetarian by birth to a vegetarian by choice and soon Gandhi joined the vegetarian society in London. In the process of the long debates and meetings that took place there, Gandhi was moreover able to reject the easy equation between meat-eating and 'modernity' that young Indians were taught was a 'necessary' step to combat the physical and political 'superiority' of the British. As Parel points out, Howard Williams' *The Ethics of Diet* for instance effectively "exploded the myth that vegetarianism was the 'cause' of the defeat of Hindus at the hands of the beef-

[7] Bilgrami, 'Gandhi's religion and its relation to his politics', p. 94.

[8] Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with the Truth,* Part 1, Chapter 4.

eating foreigners".[9] His encounters with the radical vegetarians in London also introduced Gandhi to a cultural critique of sorts to the imperial culture which defined 'development' and 'civilization' primarily in terms of industrialization. It was here that Gandhi was to meet critiques not just of urbanism and industrialisation but also of modern structures of governance, including the legal and police structures established by the British.

After completing his legal education and getting called to the London Bar, Gandhi returned to India, only to struggle to practice law in Rajkot and Bombay. Soon afterwards, he was employed by a Muslim firm to represent them in South Africa – and thus began an ideological, political journey that was to play a fundamental role in shaping Gandhi's ideas. It is important to note at this point that when Gandhi reached South Africa, he was by no means against the British Empire *per se*. His experiences in Gujarat and in London had not really shaken his faith in the empire – in fact during the Boer War between 1899-1902, Gandhi supported the British in their attempts to quell the Boer 'rebel' farmers. Even as the British indulged in the most barbaric means to suppress the Boer guerrillas, Gandhi remained loyal "as a British citizen" and believed that India (and other colonies too by extrapolation) "could achieve her complete emancipation only within and through the British Empire".[10] The same logic was invoked by Gandhi a few years later when the British took on the Banbatha rebellion of the Zulu-speaking groups in Natal. Moreover, even in 1911, Gandhi pledged his 'loyalty' to George V on his coronation as the King of England. It was only much later that this faith was to be shaken to some extent.

Hyslop of course points out that when Gandhi reached Durban in 1893, "no such political entity as 'South Africa' existed".[11] Part of the region which we know as South Africa was the settler colony of Natal where several Indians worked as indentured labour in the sugar estates, along with the local Africans. The adjoining region of Transvaal had been what Hsylop refers to as an "oligarchic white Afrikaner republic, a weak state with a huge African subject population, predominantly living within a subsistence economy"; the discovery of gold subsequently transformed the region and provided a further imperative for stronger imperial control.[12] In both Natal and Transvaal, some Indians (mostly Muslim

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[9] Parel, "Introduction", in Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Wrtings*, p. xlvi.

[10] Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with the Truth,* Part 3, Chapter 10.

[11] Hyslop, 'Gandhi 1869-1915: The transnational emergence of a public figure', p. 34.

[12] Ibid., p.35.

traders) played important roles in the local economies and retail trade, though they were a numerical minority amongst the non-European population.

It was in this 'South Africa' – in the settler colony of Natal and in the Boer controlled region of Transvaal – that Gandhi experienced, for probably the first time in his life an open racial hatred, discrimination, violence and humiliation. It brought home to the young lawyer the pain and existence of racism as something which could affect not just the indentured, uneducated labourers from South India or the Zulu workers but also a London-educated upper caste lawyer. In fact, Gandhi's decision in 1893 to extend his stay in Natal was also driven by a colonial racist decision to deprive franchise to the rich Indian merchants who constituted only "a tiny handful" of the non-European and Indian population.[13]

Subsequent efforts by Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress to help form a campaign against various forms of racism, discrimination and exploitation of Indians in the southern part of Africa hardly need elaboration, since they have been well-documented elsewhere. At this point, it is however important to take note of two issues: the exact manner in which colonialism played itself out in Natal and Transvaal, and the nature of the campaigns themselves. Economic exploitation of course informed colonial policy in India as well as in southern Africa; and racism undoubtedly did play a role in British policy in India. However, overall, the colonial government in India did prove amenable to involving Indians to a limited extent in the administrative process. In order to exercise control over the vast expanse that was India and to quell adverse public opinion back home, the British administration that was indirectly ruling the country found it prudent to involve the national bourgeoisie and sections of the educated elite, especially in the twentieth century.

In Natal and Transvaal on the other hand, the situation was vastly different. Apartheid, discrimination and racial violence were the defining features of colonial rule – the very presence of non-Europeans in important public places (such as in hotels, railways and courts) was neither permitted nor tolerated. Even the merchant elite were not exempted from the colonial state's discriminatory policies. As we have seen, rich Indian merchants were also denied simple franchise in Natal, and despite organised protests and petitions (led by Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress), a Bill to this effect was passed. In 1896, Gandhi himself – who was by that time an established leader of the Indian community in Africa – become the target of a vicious, xenophobic, racist campaign by the white colonists and traders in Natal

[13] Ibid., p. 36.

when he returned to the country with his family. Later on in 1906, in Transvaal, the Smuts government introduced the openly racist policy known as the 'Black Act' requiring all Asians to 'register' with the government and give their fingerprints.

As for the strategies used by Gandhi in Africa, they were somewhat similar to those used by the Indian nationalist movement in the early part of the twentieth century: petitions were drafted, extensive campaigns were run, pamphlets were distributed, educational groups were organised, lobbying with government and administrative officials as well as with the colonial offices in London and Johannesburg was done and the media in India as well as England was actively used to mobilise support. These strategies, while they reflected Gandhi's self-proclaimed faith in the British Empire and in a sense banked on the fact (as Gandhi himself put it) that the oppressed Indians too were 'British citizens', were targeted at naming and shaming the nature of the colonial regime. The basic idea behind the campaign was to mobilise Indians to reclaim their self-respect and to persuade the colonial regime into undoing its indefensible policies.

It was also in Africa that Gandhi developed 'satyagraha' as a political strategy; in 1906 this was used for the first time against the racist and anti-Asian immigrant Black Act. Though his protracted struggle in Transvaal did not succeed in revoking the draconian law, it did help Gandhi to forge, probably for the first time, a movement and mobilisation that united all sections of Indians irrespective of caste, class and religious difference. During the course of the satyagraha, black workers in the coal mines of Newcastle were mobilised in large numbers against the Black Act; they were soon joined by the sugar plantation workers too. This successful pan-Indian mobilisation strategy in Transvaal, which targeted the British colonial power and underplayed internal contradictions, was later on used in India to create a similar mass mobilisation for transcending problematic internal differences in the Indian polity.

This first engagement in satyagraha, and its aftermath, was also an indicator of Gandhi's approach to colonial powers. For one, Gandhi found it a good tactic to play one part of the imperial apparatus against the other in order to ensure certain short-term gains for his movement. In Transvaal, the London office of the British Empire was embarrassed under public pressure and adverse media coverage into condemning the Smut regime it supported and in fact helped to set up. Secondly, Gandhi was also to use the strategy for entering into tactical supportive alliances with the colonial government. In Transvaal, Gandhi agreed to support the Smut government in its battle against white workers by calling off his own anti-

Black Act movement. In return, the government offered to abolish the extra taxes imposed on Indian workers and also to recognise Indian marriages, so that it could have a free hand to curb the white workers' militant movement which was threatening its power. However, as Hyslop points out, this agreement also meant an end to large-scale emigration from India and an "abandonment of the attempt to end restrictions on interprovincial migration".[14]

Before we look into Gandhi's experiences and campaigns in India from 1915 onwards, after he returned with his experience of decades of anti-colonial mobilisation in Africa, we need to briefly overview the various intellectual influences he encountered in Africa. This overview is particularly necessary, given the range of these influences and also the profound impact they had on Gandhi in the subsequent years.

Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson: Western and Christian Influences on Gandhi

In the preface of his epic *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi mentions that he has "endeavoured humbly" to follow several western philosophers including Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and Emerson.[15] It was in southern Africa that Gandhi was introduced to the writings of these philosophers and intellectuals – a process which deeply affected his ideas and ideologies. We have noted that in London, Gandhi was introduced to an entire set of writings on vegetarianism, alternative living, and deep critiques of industrialisation. In Africa, this introduction was expanded to involve Gandhi's deep and intense study of Christianity. Though he always remained sceptical of evangelical Christian missionary activity, Gandhi was impressed at their attempt to make religion meaningful and practical to people in their everyday lives.

Gandhi developed several close friends and acquaintances amongst Christian missionaries – including Joseph Doke and Lancelot Booth. In the latter's hospital, he learnt nursing and compounding; and the Mariannhill Christian monastery near Durban remained a long source of inspiration. What particularly impressed Gandhi was the practical training that the monastery imparted to its inmates in farming, carpentry, shoe-making, baking, printing and the like. The Mariann hill model was in fact used by Gandhi to develop his ideas on alternative economic and livelihood patterns, later on back home in India: the idea of largely self-sufficient villages and the emphasis on 'traditional' skills and production patterns was

[14] Ibid., p.48.

[15] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 6.

arguably influenced by what Gandhi saw in Mariannhill. And if the Booth's hospital and the Mariannhill monastery provided Gandhi with instances of how Christian religious practices could also carry along people's practical and felt needs, Tolstoy's writings provided Gandhi with an alternative view of Christian thought.

We have already noted Gandhi's deep discomfort with the evangelical, anti-Hindu Christian missionary activity in Gujarat. Though this discomfort was somewhat altered by Gandhi's reading of the *Sermon of the Mount* (when he was a student in London), it was the entire gamut of Tolstoy's works that provided Gandhi with a model of Christianity that emphasized ethical living and practice. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi tells the reader to refer to six of Tolstoy's works, which touch upon various aspects – notably linking the practice of Christianity with ethics and a critique of industrialisation in the name of 'civilization' and 'development'.

Gandhi read Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* in 1894, and mentions in his autobiography that he was "overwhelmed" by Tolstoy's *redefinition* of Christianity, in a sense – a redefinition and interpretation that emphasized a passionate defence of non-violence. Non-violence was thus justified by invoking human conscience, and organised (rather institutionalised) Christianity's penchant for supporting wars in the name of defending 'holy' religion was seen by Tolstoy as an absolute travesty of Christianity's actual message. Gandhi was also to be impressed by Tolstoy's denunciation of the institution of the state, yet again through an invocation of the Christian religion. In Europe, the institution of the Church has always intervened in matters of the state – often anointing rulers, and dictating state policy on a variety of issues.

In general, the debate on the Church's intervention in state affairs centred around the notion of 'secularism' and the need to separate religion from the state. In other words, this debate posed religion as something that was not needed for people in decision-making, or in policy for instance. It primarily stressed the need to separate the institution of religion from that of the state and policy-making and to place them on different planes. Tolstoy was to fundamentally intervene in this debate: to begin with Tolstoy was scathing of any view that regarded religion as 'unnecessary'. For Tolstoy, it was in fact only religion (at least the way he interpreted Christianity and religion) that could and should dictate decisions and everything that mattered in one's life, and therefore he was critical of any 'artificial' separation of religion from decision-making. Secondly, Tolstoy was no advocate for the institution of the state. Since state stood for power and organised, centralised, depersonalised

(or rather without taking account of one's conscience) decision-making, he saw the institution of the state as a possible subversion of the real aim of life as defined by Christianity and religion. These views articulated in the *Kingdom of God is Within You* struck a deep and emphatic chord with Gandhi, who translated this work into Gujarati and later on often articulated its message in his own words.

It was not only Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* which impressed Gandhi. Tolstoy's trenchant criticism of the industrial paradigm of the western civilisation, and his emphasis on feelings and individual experiences also came in for considerable admiration. In this context, several of Tolstoy's works were used by Gandhi, for instance his *Letter to a Hindoo*, *The First Step*, *The Slavery of Our Times* and *How Shall We Escape*. Tolstoy inspired Gandhi to rethink the idea of manual labour and technology and their role in society. Moreover, these texts together posed the problems presented by colonialism in a very different perspective: colonialism was in a sense divested and divorced from any relation to structures of power, it was rather seen as a civilisational or a *moral* issue for which the colonised were as much to blame as the coloniser. Tolstoy was of the view that "it is not the English who have enslaved the Indians, but the Indians who have enslaved themselves...because the latter recognised and still recognise force as the fundamental principle of social order".[16] Gandhi picked up many aspects of this logic and used them extensively in his *Hind Swaraj*.

If Tolstoy provided Gandhi with a fresh outlook and interpretation of Christianity, and with a vision of non-violence and civilisational ethos, Parel points out that Gandhi derives the "basic principles of his economic philosophy" from Ruskin.[17] It was Ruskin's *Unto This Last* which had the most profound impact on Gandhi, as he acknowledged in his autobiography. It has in fact been claimed that Gandhi's idea of '*antyodaya*' (reaching out to the proverbial 'last', poorest, weakest, most needy person) and '*sarvodaya*' was derived from Ruskin. Gandhi thus commented on what he learnt from Ruskin:

> (1) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all. (2) That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work. (3) That a life of labour, i.e, the life of the tiller of the soil and handicraftsman, is the life worth living. The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly

[16] Quoted in Parel, "Introduction," p. li.

[17] Parel, "Introduction", p. lii.

realised. The third had never occurred to me... I rose from the dawn, ready to reduce these principle into practice.[18]

We can thus see that several of Gandhi's basic ideas, that have defined him and his campaign strategies were in fact deeply inspired by a variety of Western intellectuals and philosophers whose works he encountered while in southern Africa. Apart from campaigning against the colonial state's racist policies, mobilising Indians, lobbying with officials in Africa, London as well as in India and even coordinating with nationalist leaders back home in India, Gandhi used his stay in Africa to try and put in place some of these ideas he had imbibed. The setting up of community settlements such as the Phoenix Settlement as well as the Tolstoy Farm in Africa can actually be seen in this light, embodying as they did the anti-industrial ideas which so inspired Gandhi. This period between 1893-1915 which Gandhi spent mostly in Natal and Transvaal was to provide Gandhi with a solid foundation on which to build what is now termed as 'Gandhian' thought.

The influence of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Thoreau on Gandhi has been well-documented, and is in fact something that Gandhi himself was never hesitant to acknowledge. Basham however, has attempted to problematize various influences on Gandhi's life, to take into account his early life in Rajkot and Porbandar. Basham essentially argues that Gandhi built on the experiences of his childhood and youth, even as he assimilated with great enthusiasm several ideas he gained in/from the West. According to him, Gandhi's western influences only served to awaken and kindle several ideas that were part and parcel of traditional life and thought in India – ideas that Gandhi had already grown up with. In fact, according to Basham, several of Gandhi'a ideas have a distinctive and unique Indian feel to them, as witnessed in the particular interpretation invoked by Gandhi. This included Gandhian civil disobedience, satyagraha, his strict adherence to truth and non-violence for instance. Delivering a speech at the Khadi and Village Industries Exhibition in Dacca in 1940, Gandhi himself had once claimed that he had only "given a new form to the traditional [wisdom] of India".[19] To sum up Basham's argument:

He [Gandhi] was no doubt a great innovator, but he built firmly on the foundations of his own tradition. It is possible that if he had never read the Gospels, Tolstoy, Ruskin and much

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[18] Gandhi, *Collected Works*, p. 239.

[19] Quoted in Hardiman, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours: The Global Legacy of His Ideas*, p.10.

> Western literature, Gandhi would never have entered politics at all, or, if he had done so, would have devised techniques and policies different from those which he actually did device. But had he not been brought up in a middle class Hindu-Jain environment of the type that was to be found in nineteenth-century Porbandar and Rajkot, his techniques and policies would have been very different indeed.[20]

It is probably difficult, if not downright impossible to exactly evaluate where Gandhi derived his ideas from. Suffice to say at this point that Gandhi was deeply influenced by several factors which contributed to his overall worldview. The fact that he grew up in a Hindu Vaishnavite family, lived for two decades in a settler colony in Natal and the Transvaal under British rule, experienced firsthand racism and discrimination as well as life in a city like Johannesburg inevitably shaped his ideas. For someone who paid such a high premium for 'truth', lived inner experience and the like, each and every aspect of his life were to leave an indelible impact.

The Nationalist Movement and Gandhi (1915-1948)

In 1915, Gandhi returned to India, with a formidable reputation of being a mass leader and an anti-colonial voice of resistance. Almost immediately, he set up the Satyagraha Ashram (later known as the Sabarmati ashram) on the lines of the Phoenix Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm in Africa and travelled by rail, third class, across the country in order to experience for himself the reality of existence encountered by people of the country. But soon enough, Gandhi was irrevocably drawn into the cauldron of resistance that was brewing across the country, for instance into the protests against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Khilafat movement. It was moreover a time when Gandhi launched the mass mobilisations of various sections of Indian society.

Champaran in Bihar was seething under the colonial diktats of forced indigo cultivation, workers in the textile mills in Ahmedabad were agitating against their masters and Indian mill owners. In Kheda, peasants were refusing to pay revenue to the colonial government. Gandhi was drawn into all these struggles and led them. Tanika Sarkar points out that Gandhi was in fact the first nationalist leader to lead peasant struggles in India. In Champaran and Kheda, Gandhi succeeded in tactics he had mastered in southern Africa –

[20] Basham, 'Traditional Influences on the Thought of Mahatma Gandhi', pp. 40-41.

bringing together different (and opposing) classes and castes together against the common 'enemy' in the form of the British. But Sarkar points out Gandhi's extreme reluctance to stand by peasant resistance which was fuelled by *internal* contradictions in Indian polity rather than by colonial rule. Citing Gandhi's response to the agrarian depression between 1929-34 when he refused to support anti-rent movements by the peasants or even to advice landlords not to extract rents in such trying times, and also the refusal of Gandhians to back the peasant sharecroppers in Midnapur in their struggle for a larger crop share, Sarkar asserts that "Gandhi knew – and none better – how to speak *to* the peasant. But he did not always speak *for* the peasant".[21] In other words, the unprecedented mobilisation of the peasantry was essentially not a *peasant* mobilisation *per se* solely for *their* rights; it was much better described as an anti-colonial resistance.

Similarly, Gandhi did not encourage the setting up of working class bases; frowned at the idea of workers' strikes; advocated the 'trusteeship model' which was premised on the goodwill of the factory owners to 'look after' the rights and needs of the workers. Sarkar also points out that business houses continued to exercise considerable pressure on Gandhi, and time and again succeeded in getting him to regulate movements as per their convenience. She reminds us that it was business houses who forced Gandhi to call off the first phase of the civil disobedience movement fearing loss of business.[22] The remarkable process of democratisation that Gandhi's mass mobilisations led to therefore had their limitations: one gets an overall picture of an attempt to forge united struggles as far as possible, not to question internal contradictions that would inevitably emerge in the course of struggles. It was in fact in the mass anti-colonial mobilisations against the British that Gandhi emerged as most effective – in the call for mass boycott of foreign goods, the burning of cloth produced in British mills, or the mass production of salt in open and non-violent defiance of the British for instance.

Gandhi – as a person, as a leader and mobiliser, as a symbol of anti-colonial resistance, as someone for whom separation or division on religious lines was a misfortune to be avoided – undoubtedly emerged as one of the most important pillars of the nationalist resistance in India. The *Time* magazine in fact selected him as joint runner-up (with Franklin Roosevelt) to Albert Einstein as 'person of the century' for being a foremost representative of

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[21] Sarkar, 'Gandhi and Social Relations', p.175.

[22] Ibid., 176.

"the crusade for civil rights and individual liberties".[23] Gandhi, however, presented several seeming contradictions. Here was a mass leader who had no interest in public office; one of the best known faces of the Indian National Congress and yet someone who advised the Congress to disband itself post-independence; a leader who frequently used Hindu metaphors and analogies in his communication (including the well-known references to the idyllic *Ramrajya*) and yet who died as a result of the bullets fired by a Hindu fundamentalist. In our study of Fanon and Gandhi, our concern is to place both in the context of their respective anti-colonial milieus.

Franz Fanon: Martinique, France, Algeria and the Creation of Anti-Colonial, Anti-Racist Psyche

Franz Omar Fanon – trained psychiatrist, revolutionary by choice, philosopher and intellectual – emerged as an important figure of anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance in France and the French colony of Algeria. Fanon was born (in 1925) neither in France nor in Algeria but in what was then a French colony, the Caribbean island of Martinique. Right from the time he was born, Fanon was exposed to the reality of brutal racist oppression. His father Casimir Fanon himself came from a family which had a painful history of enslavement – they were one of the several thousands of families that had been brought as slaves from Africa to the West Indies by colonial regimes to work in the sugar plantations. His mother was said to be an 'illegitimate' child of African, French and Indian descent. The young Fanon therefore grew up with memories and realizations of the worst possible subversion of human dignity, justified in the name of 'race' and 'colour'.

Fanon's family has been described as being typically 'bourgeoisie' and 'middle class'. They belonged to a section of blacks who were desperate to underplay their black and African identities, and 'assimilate' themselves into the so-called 'mainstream'. In 1925, slavery could not possibly exist in the manner it did in the nineteenth century; racism had found different and arguably less visibly barbaric ways in which to manifest itself. Fanon's family, therefore, made use of the opportunities available to 'progress' in life. His father was a customs inspector in Martinique, his mother owned a hardware store and the family could afford to provide a decent education to the children. Fanon studied in the prestigious high

[23] *Time*, 6.

school Lycee Schoelcher in Martinique, and five of the eight Fanon siblings went to pursue higher education in various French universities after completing high school.

It was at Lycee Schoelcher that Fanon met and was taught by Aime Cesaire; Cesaire introduced the young Fanon to ideas of 'Negritude' and an aggressive espousal of Negro and black identity. This ideological movement, spearheaded by several French black intellectuals, was in a sense a response to the new patterns of racism inherent in the French colonial model. It was simultaneously a response to the tendencies of 'assimilation' within the black community. Negritude essentially held that racism was hardly a bygone concept, and it was only in the shared histories of black oppression and shared solidarities that the Negro should locate resistance to French colonialism. Moreover, it tried to inculcate in black communities not just acceptance but also pride and appreciation in their history and culture. The young schoolboy Fanon was impressed by these ideas, and it was only later that he was to show his discomfort with the identity-centred approach that characterised Negritude.

The teenage Fanon was soon confronted with a chaotic political situation. The French had been defeated by the Nazi forces in 1940, and the pro-Nazi Vichy French army stationed in Martinique exposed Fanon to the open racism of the Marshal Philippe Petain regime. Fanon became part of the guerrilla struggle against the Vichy government and tried to join the pro-De Gaulle forces in Dominica. Later on in 1943, Fanon joined the French Army and was sent to Algeria in North Africa for training. His biographer David Macey notes that this experience with the French Army stationed in Algeria revealed to Fanon the inherent racism of the French colonial regime (and not just the pro-Nazi Vichy French establishment): he encountered segregation of blacks *within* the French army which was part of the 'anti-Nazi' Allied forces, and saw for himself that "colonized blacks and Algerians were liberating their French colonizers".[24]

The disillusioned Fanon was thus to realize that the second World War was hardly the war for 'freedom' and 'democracy' that he had imagined. One can note here the difference in how Fanon and Gandhi were to view the World Wars fought between the major European powers. On the one hand, Gandhi enthusiastically participated by organizing the Indian Ambulance Corps in the first World War and the Boer War; he essentially saw himself as a loyal 'British citizen' of the Empire. Fanon, who had seen himself (much like Gandhi) as a colonial (French) citizen when he joined the French Army, was however to return from the

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[24] Macey, 'Frantz Fanon: 1925-1961', p. 491.

second World War with a deep sense of resentment and anger at being 'used' as a mere foot soldier by the French colonial and imperial powers.

After the war, Fanon returned home to Martinique to complete his schooling and also to campaign for his former teacher Aime Cesaire who contested on a communist ticket for the elections to National Assembly. In 1945, he moved to France to study medicine and psychiatry at the university at Lyon. After qualifying as a psychiatrist in 1951 and completing his residency in France, Fanon shifted base to Algeria. For someone who was so acutely aware and sensitive about being black, it was probably surprising that Fanon married a white French woman, Josie, before leaving for Algeria.

It was however in France that he published his first book, *Black Skin, White Masks* – a record of sorts of his childhood and experiences in the French colonial Army. Originally intended to be his doctoral thesis, this study of the psychological impact of colonial rule over the collective black psyche was rejected by his supervisor as being 'unsuitable'. Macey points out that *Black Skin, White Masks* covered several issues, not just the everyday discrimination faced by the blacks in France, but also the far more subtle condescending and patronizing attitudes encountered as part of the routine culture in France. For Fanon, it was the success of colonial masters in instilling demeaning cultural stereotypes about the colonised that was most disturbing and dangerous. It was in this context that Fanon therefore tried to locate the reason behind the aggressive attempts of the black to let go of their histories, cultures and identity and to subscribe to some version of colonial 'modernity'.

Once in Algeria, as a practicing psychiatrist in the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital, Fanon used his experience of psychiatry and his deep belief in the debilitating impacts of negative acculturisation. He introduced new forms of treatment and therapy that included socio-therapy and took into account patients' differing cultural milieus and backgrounds.[25] These experiments catapulted Fanon into a situation of conflict with the colonial authorities, as well as the traditional practitioners of psychiatry in France and Algeria. Yet again, Fanon was to be confronted with dangerous cultural stereotypes prevalent in Algeria of the Arab, and also with colonial regime's fear, ignorance and distrust of traditional Arab life – even seemingly innocuous acts like organising Friday prayers and

[25] These included trying to create the traditional Arab social space within the clinic, complete with local paintings, traditional floor mats and low tables, celebrating traditional festivals in the clinic, organizing Friday prayers in the clinic by the local Mufti, inviting traditional story-tellers, and encouraging patients to engage in physical work.

story-telling sessions by the traditional wandering story-tellers as part of psychiatric treatment was frowned upon by the colonial regime. This discourse with the traditional practitioners of psychiatry in France saw the emergence of Fanon as a pioneer 'anti-psychiatrist'. Fanon moreover realised that his goal of 'disalienation' of the Arab was an impossible task in French-controlled Algeria.

When the Algerian revolution against the French colonial regime broke out in 1954, he therefore joined the FLN (Front de Liberation Nationale, or the National Liberation Front). As his involvement with the movement increased, Fanon's break with his childhood French assimilationalist training intensified and finally he resigned from his job at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric Hospital in 1956 to work for the FLN and engage himself completely in the Algerian struggle for independence from the French. Working for the FLN, Fanon was involved in many ways in helping the struggle. He travelled and worked with armed guerrilla camps in different parts of Africa including Mali and Sahara, training nurses to care for the wounded. He also worked briefly as an ambassador of the Algerian government to Ghana. He founded Africa's first psychiatric clinic in 1959, and in 1960 he undertook a long intelligence expedition from Mali to Algeria which was to have serious health consequences.

An important focus of Fanon's intellectual work was on the psychological and cultural impacts of colonialism – which he believed had adverse impacts not just on the black and colonised but also on the white coloniser. Colonisation, he believed, created a false 'superiority' in the coloniser and a consequent equally false 'inferiority' in the colonised. During his career as a practicing psychiatrist, he had frequent differences with the 'Algiers school' of psychiatry, which tended to equate Arab and even Muslim culture as inherently and pathologically 'criminal', given to violent outbursts, naive and credulous, stubborn and fanatical. These racist conceptions of the Arab world and Islam promoted the psychiatrist Fanon to engage in a deep analysis of the processes which create such stenotypes.

It was arguably his psychiatric training and his concern for the deep-rooted mental processes that colonialism sets in motion that ultimately drove him to be critical of 'Negritude' and its exclusive focus on oppressed black identity. This preoccupation with identity, argued Fanon, did not take into account the complex *processes* involved in building a negative perception of the black person. Without understanding these processes, argued Fanon, Negritude would be reduced to a meaningless symbolic ritualism and celebration, which had little to do with even the emancipatory potential of invoking black culture and shared histories of resistance.

Fanon identified three stages of anti-colonial struggle: the first stage wherein the colonised intellectual (primarily from the bourgeoisie) completely accepts the hegemony of colonialism's cultural model, and hence willingly participate in the process of assimilation. In the second stage, one sees in response to the assimilationist tendencies an aggressive invocation of black identity, to search for a 'national culture' and to recall the past, in a sense. In the third stage (which according to Fanon was most significant and necessary), the anti-colonial struggle moves towards thoroughgoing changes in existing social structures, develops a 'combat culture' and moves beyond mere symbols of assertion to actual cultural and political assertion.[26]

One must note here the similarities and differences in Fanon and Gandhi's attitudes to the processes of colonisation. We have seen earlier that Gandhi essentially located colonisation in moral terms, as a moral and even civilisational failing. For Gandhi, the structures of power that were responsible for keeping colonialism going (both the external imperialist forces as well as internal elite within the colonies) were not so much a source of concern as were the *values* of 'power', 'greed' and consumption that it was *seen* as promoting. In other words, colonialism was equated not with issues of power, imperialism and resource control but rather with an (im)moral and unsound civilisational ethos. Therefore, it was the paraphernalia that came to India with British colonialism – the model of economic development, industrialisation, mechanisation and the subjugation of human labour as well as the structures of bureaucracy and concentrated power – that caught Gandhi's attention. Given this emphasis, Gandhi thus blamed the colonised for accepting the 'civilisational' and developmental model brought by the coloniser.

In Fanon's identification of the first two stages of the anti-colonial struggle, we find some echoes of Gandhi: the denunciation of the colonised intellectual and his/her inability to reject the colonial model and thought process for instance. One can also arguably draw comparisons between Fanon's analysis of the deep psychological impact of colonialism and Gandhi's concern about the problematic civilisational ethos brought about by colonialism. However, for Fanon the structures of power (both internal and external) were deeply implicated in the colonial project, and one can notice a distinct difference between Fanon and Gandhi here. Even with his deep concern for the psychological impacts of colonialism on

[26] Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 147-148. This concept is discussed throughout the chapter 'National Culture' in *Wretched of the Earth*.

both the coloniser as well as the colonised, Fanon held the power structures singularly responsible.

Fanon was scathing, for instance, in his denunciation of the "national elite", for their "apathy", lack of ties with the masses and their "cowardice" at crucial moments of struggle and therefore exhorted them to shed their "bourgeois" character and give up networking and scheming with the colonists.[27] Moreover, for Fanon, the process of real 'decolonisation' had to include a complete restructuring of social relations and hierarchies. Fanon thus describes his vision of the process of decolonisation: "replacing a certain species of men by another species of men...a total, complete, and absolute substitution ...To tell the truth, the proof of success lies in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up...decolonisation sets out to change the order of the world".[28] In fact, some commentators on Fanon have pointed out that he is "disposed" to essentially "conflate decolonisation with revolution", to collapse "class struggle and national liberation struggle into each other".[29]

Rather than concentrating his energies on blaming the Negro for 'accepting' the model of black inferiority, Fanon argued for an understanding of how the model is formed and propagated. And therefore, for Fanon, it was necessary to fight all forms of 'assimilation' within the colonial cultural model and power structure, since the process of assimilation effectively helped to propagate colonialism. One must however note that for Fanon, this struggle against assimilation did not necessarily mean a rejection of industrialisation and technology *per se*; it rather meant putting an end to the exploitative economic order that colonialism had put in place, wherein the colony was a mere supplier of raw materials and profits to the metropolis. And in this fight against assimilation, Fanon found himself debating with the national bourgeoisie who in Algeria and also in France showed strong assimilationist tendencies:

> Independence does not bring any change in the direction of the economy. The new nation continues to ship raw materials and grow produce for the West. Nationalization does not mean, as it should, the transfer of the economy into the hands of the people but the transfer

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[27] Ibid., pp.97-98.

[28] Ibid., p.35.

[29] Lazararus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p.164.

> of power from the hands of the colonizers into the hands of a small group of indigenous rulers. The National bourgeoisie merely apes the Western bourgeoisie.[30]

France, Africa and India: Different Colonial Contexts and Processes of Decolonisation

Fanon and Gandhi, both deeply informed by the harsh realities of colonialism as we have seen, had distinctly different encounters. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the rise of what has sometimes been termed as 'white settler colonies' or racial states. In several parts of the world – in Australia and New Zealand, large parts of the African continent, in British Columbia and even in parts of the United States – settler populations aided, abetted and protected by the political and military might of the powerful imperialist forces put in place 'White Men's Countries'. Lake and Reynolds point out that in these 'White Men's Countries', there were explicit efforts to protect 'racially defined interests'; more specifically the interests of the white workers and business houses run by the white elite.[31] This wave of racist mobilisation, and openly racist policies aimed at protecting white interests, in turn spawned self-assertion movements of various kinds across the globe.

Fanon lived in France and North Africa during a period of emerging 'liberationalist Third Worldism'; according to his biographer, Fanon actually helped to create that 'Third Worldism'. It is to be noted that Algeria was by no means the only cauldron where liberation movements were brewing, and the Algerian guerrilla struggle can in fact be seen as part and parcel of the struggles elsewhere in Cuba for instance. As Macey puts it:

> A generation's disillusionment with the orthodox left, and particularly with the Communist Party coincided with the rise of nationalism in the Third World and gave birth to the belief that the emergence of new states there would create a new humanism or even a new socialism. Algeria, like Cuba, seemed to have a leading role in this process of rebirth.[32]

Post-1945, there was an upsurge of revolutionary anti-colonial nationalism. In Africa, this took the shape of Arab nationalist movements, emphasizing independence in policy making and freedom from colonial and imperial domination in the economic as well as

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[30] Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, p. 101.

[31] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*

[32] David Macey quoted in Lazararus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p. 163.

political spheres. Moreover, given the racist nature of the colonial regimes which controlled Africa, Arab nationalism was often defined as 'Arabo-Islamic'. Though neither an Arab nor a Muslim in the strict sense of the terms, Fanon was deeply affected by the Arab encounter with colonial regimes. It is therefore in this milieu of militant Arabic self-assertion, this resistance to white settler regimes, to racist colonial regimes that promoted demeaning cultural stereotypes of the 'indolent', 'criminal', 'stubborn' and 'susceptible' Arab Muslim, that Fanon has to be located.

If Fanon was deeply informed by the brewing Arab nationalism of the twentieth century, Gandhi's experiences were more varied. Yasmin Khan points out that Gandhi's "ideas and philosophies were ..sharpened in a number of imperial settings; living in a princely state, in African colonies, in the margins of the British empire in Gujarat, and also in its imperial centre, London".[33] As an upper caste Indian growing up in a relatively affluent and religious Hindu Vaishnavite family, Gandhi lived in an India governed by a British Raj that was dealing with the aftermath of the 1857 revolt. Unlike Algeria (or even Natal), India was not a settler colony, it was more an administrative colony for the British, and an extremely important one. For the young boy living in a princely state, the Raj was hardly invisible. Part of Rajkot, were Gandhi grew up, was a British cantonment town.

Over the decades and especially after 1857, the British had strengthened their control over the country, and the role of India as a colony supplying raw materials and profits to the metropolis only intensified during Gandhi's time. From cotton and jute, coal and coke, indigo and tea, Indian raw materials were being shipped out and were essentially fuelling the British colonial machine. Gandhi was also a witness to the process of colonial rule bringing in a variety of changes in India's economic as well as governance patterns: the railways and shipping, dams and canals, postal services and printing for instance. It was also a time when India's traditional knowledge systems and occupations were facing an unprecedented challenge.

For probably the first time in India's history, the country's vast forest tracts were brought under the eminent domain principle, tribals were being declared trespassers on the land of their ancestors, the movement of wandering nomadic groups was severely curtailed and they were termed as 'criminals', traditional water management practices were being replaced by the colonial administration's penchant for dams and canals, mines, tea plantations

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[33] Khan, 'Gandhi's World', p.11.

and jute factories emerged as (highly exploitative) sources of employment. However, even though the British had successfully quelled the 1857 uprising, various rebellions were brewing in different parts of the country: no-revenue peasant movements against agricultural taxation in Maharashtra, tribal movements demanding implementation of the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (and recognition of the traditional tribal ownership patterns), labour strikes in the Kolkata jute mills and Moplah uprisings to name just a few.

India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries faced complex and sometimes contradictory colonial imperatives: state repression combined with cooption of the elite, inclusion of educated (and primarily upper caste) Indians in lower levels of bureaucracy and colonial institutions. As we have seen, the British Raj tried to accommodate the suitably 'modernised' Indian gentlemen in the colonial project, and in fact several of the leaders of the nationalist movement were drawn from this section of Indians. It is also important to note here that when Gandhi returned to India, the activities of the nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress was largely dominated by what has been termed as 'genteel' lobbying with the imperial government; political 'reform' and representation was the main thrust of the demands. And frustrated with the lack of success of this model, there were also responses in the form of assassinations and terror bombings.

As we have noted earlier, Gandhi personally encountered open, unadulterated racism for the first time in Natal and Transvaal, and this experience of racism in a white settler colony was instrumental in shaping his thoughts. The political situation in southern Africa was indeed different from India. In Africa, the few Indians who had franchise were denied this political right, all Indians were subjected to demeaning registrations and their marriages were not recognised.[34] In India on the other hand, legislative councils had been created in 1892 and by 1909, Indians could actually form majorities in the legislative assemblies.[35] Way back in 1863, Satyendranath Tagore became the first Indian to qualify for the Indian Civil Services (ICS) examination.[36] The racial discrimination was of course apparent, but nevertheless Gandhi was growing up in a world where the "solidity of British power in India was not as secure as it seemed at first glance and where the extension of power to Indians

[34] Hyslop, 'Gandhi 1869-1915: The transnational emergence of a public figure', pp. 36, 44-45, 47.

[35] Khan, 'Gandhi's World', p. 16.

[36] Ibid.

within the civil service, military, and policing arms of the state was the only way to underpin the continued structures of the Raj".[37]

During his long stay in Africa, Gandhi became aware of the work of several western philosophers and intellectuals, as we saw in a previous section. But it was not merely this theoretical encounter which had a profound impact on him and his ideas on civilisation, industrialisation and mechanisation. During his long ship journeys, Gandhi would undoubtedly have noted the mass transport of raw material from colonies like India to the imperial metropolis; he lived in cities like London and Johannesburg where he saw for himself the realities of life in these so-called centres of 'progress'. Hyslop in fact claims that "Johannesburg was to be the most important city for Gandhi's personal, intellectual and political growth".[38] This city was the centre of mining activity, and was the base of some of the world's most powerful mining magnates. Cheap African labour, as well as tens of thousands of Chinese indentured workers laboured in the most horrific harrowing, dangerous and disease-ridden conditions. Even British artisanal workers suffered from industrial lung disease and often died before the age of forty. Pollution, belching smoke from chimneys were a routine presence, their impacts exacerbated by living conditions in the shanties where the poor of the city lived. In 1904, Gandhi was to tend to the sick when a massive plague broke out. The experience in Johannesburg was thus instrumental in shaping Gandhi's ideas on the negative features of industrialisation.

We thus see different colonial encounters shaping the ideas and ideologies of two anti-colonial figures of the last century. From white settler colonies and the emergent Arab nationalism, to battling the inherent and arguably more subtle racism in administrative colonies, Fanon and Gandhi responded to the situations of their times in different ways. In the subsequent chapters, we will trace some of these responses.

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[37] Ibid., 17.

[38] Hyslop, 'Gandhi 1869-1915: The transnational emergence of a public figure', p.40.

Chapter II

Perspectives on the Colonial Subject in Gandhi and Fanon

In Leela Gandhi's introduction to *Postcolonial Theory*, we are asked to think specifically of the manner in which Mohandas K. Gandhi and Frantz Fanon have emerged as figures within the canon of postcolonial thinkers and indicating the differences between them, she says:

> The differences between Gandhi and Fanon are stark and self-evident. If Gandhi speaks in an anachronistic religio-political vocabulary, Fanon's idiom is shot through with Sartre's existential humanism. If Gandhi's encounter with British imperialism generates a theology of non-violence, Fanon's experience of French colonialism produces a doctrinaire commitment to the redemptive value of collective violence.[1]

In depicting them thus, she indicates the dominant intellectual thrusts of their thought. She also however indicates their similarities as does Ashis Nandy in his work (1983) by pointing to the resistance to colonialism, which is formulated through providing alternative paradigms of visualising the colonised subject. In this chapter, an attempt shall be made to locate the manner in which the colonized subject has been produced – in the case of Gandhi and Fanon. I shall try to discuss the manner in which the 'slave' figure, the colonised, has been written and theorised in opposition to the colonial master by these figures. In doing so, it also hopes to along the way probe the conscious and unconscious intellectual strands and influences that may or may not be obvious, in the thought of both Gandhi and Fanon.

The probing of the colonial subject's theorisation, peculiarly with regard to these two figures, is important given the emphasis that they both placed upon the *transformation of the subject*. For Gandhi, of course, it is about *swaraj – swa-raj*; translated literally, self-rule, but implying the *rule of the self* for the individual self, community and nation, i.e., the rule of the self over the nation but also the rule of the self over itself. For Fanon, it is the insistence on *total liberation*, about which he insists in *The Wretched of the Earth* that "it concerns *all sectors of the personality*" (emphasis added).[2] Both Gandhi and Fanon insist upon forging a new understanding of civilisation, the colonised being and rule rather than championing uncritically an old, forgotten, golden past. Even Gandhi's engagement is not a

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[1] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 18.

[2] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 250.

straightforward championing of the past and as we will see is imbued with critical revaluations.

To this end, this chapter will engage specifically and hope to produce a close textual analysis of some of the key texts of both theorists, namely, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* (1910, English translation) and Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1956,Trans. C. L. Markman). The works while historically almost four decades apart, speak to each other with a contemporaneity that perhaps characterizes the post-colonial moments and movements. Before moving forward to the analysis of individual texts, let us take a short detour through Leela Gandhi's rather persuasive positioning of the above-mentioned Gandhi-Fanon texts in relationship to the Hegelian master-slave dialectic, which is explicitly evoked by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks.*

Master, Slave and Fanon's re-positioning

Let us briefly consider the Hegelian paradigm of the master-slave dialectic as provided in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Hegel uses the metaphor of the relationship between master and slave in order to elucidate the process of self-consciousness. He says that the master is "a consciousness existing *for itself* which is mediated with itself through another consciousness" (original emphasis).[3] The slave, according to Hegel, is inextricably linked to thing-ness or thing-hood and is considered by his master to be a thing – because the slave is as Hegel says "...the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another," in other words, he is a being-for-the-other and hence, a thing.[4] In other words, there is a relationship set up wherein the master is subject and the slave, the object. The master and slave are, for Hegel, locked in a compulsive 'struggle-unto-death' as it were.

According to Hegel, the slave finally finds liberation through his labour because it is finally his labour that teaches him to see a representation of himself in the object created by him of himself, which was to imitate what the master did to him that is, produce an object of the slave. It is through this process of the slave's recognition that the master eventually becomes the object of the slave's fear, indicating that the slave now has an independent consciousness. It is this consciousness that produces a spirit of resistance and rebellion

[3] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 115.

[4] Ibid.

against the master. As a result, it is the master who now functions as the 'other' to the slave but is also the moment that the slave is seen to, according to the Hegelian paradigm to enter the state of subject-hood and becoming the object. The slave at this moment continues to fear the master but now because he perceives the master as thing and object, he is also able to overcome this fear. In this process, however, the slave has produced an object to know, control and dominate; ironically, it is an image of what he was in front of the master. In other words, in the Hegelian paradigm, the tables have been turned – the slave considers the master an object after realising that he (the slave) was an object that needs to become a subject.

Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* draws upon both Hegel and Sartre while examining the colonial predicament and as a psychiatrist, diagnosing the condition of the colonized or the 'slave'. He does this, as Leela Gandhi (1998) points out, by indicating to it as a "symptom of 'imitativeness.'"[5] Fanon further argues, in this text that the fact that there is a racial difference between master and slave produces a new, differing dynamic. There is now, in the black slave – the experience and force of desire, when confronted with the thought of the white master. He says in *Black Skin White Masks* that "...man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognised by him."[6] "The white man considers," as Charles Villet paraphrasing Fanon says, "Black men as "machine-animal-men": they are partly human, partly animal, completely thing and object, and is there solely to perform labour."[7]

Fanon further writes that the black man/negro "wants to be like the master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns towards the object. Here the slave turns towards the master and abandons the object."[8] The white man regards the black slave only as labour and does not seek any recognition from him. The black slave, says Fanon, can find no pleasure or liberation in the work of the master, unlike the Hegelian slave; as a result, he never enters into the process through which he might embark upon becoming subject and affix the master as an object, unlike the Hegelian slave. Rather the colonized/black slave always already considers the subjectivity of the master, never his own and never makes his master the object; instead the

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[5] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 20.

[6] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 216.

[7] See Villet, "Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis."

[8] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 221.

colonized subject/ black slave desires to *imitate and be like* the white master; the Hegelian slave had no such desire. Hence, the colonial subject is never able to obtain the degree of independence that the Hegelian slave can. Paradoxically, the black slave desires as Villet indicates,

> ...to be recognised as a subject, but the master will not provide such recognition because in his consideration the slave is not human but part of nature and therefore an animal. Serequeberhan (1994, p. 46) points out that in the Hegelian sense, nature is equated with objecthood. Therefore, the white colonial master's attitude rests exactly on a Hegelian presupposition concerning humanity. Human (or spiritual) existence is equated with self-conscious freedom [...] in other words subjecthood, which is on a higher level than that of the unfree and naturally determined, namely the nonhuman.[9]

The Hegelian slave is able to form an independent self-consciousness and he can even radically force his master to become dependent upon the slave to uphold his own self-consciousness. Such a situation is not available to the colonised/ black slave. Interestingly, Gandhi seems to gesture toward a similar idea, articulated albeit in terms of the slave and his freedom. He says (Gandhi quoted in Skaria, 203) "To a slave [*gulam*], his master seems free, and he *strives to be like* the latter [...] Such a slave never really becomes free" (emphasis added).[10] The slave's desire in other words, is always to take the place of the master, which places him as unable to ever fully become a subject. Fanon would say that it "... is always a question of the subject; one never even thinks of the object."[11]

It becomes even more necessary then for Fanon to state explicitly that the master was not desirable, that white was not the colour to be and that black was beautiful and in so doing attempt to posit yet more complex understandings of the self from the position of the colonised. The slave was urged to see itself next to the master. The colonised/ black slave must refuse recognition to the colonial/white master. Fanon's image of the slave is in Leela Gandhi's (1998) words, that of a "resolute colonised subject politely declining the primacy of Europe...."[12] But this refusal/ decline by the slave is not part of the slave morality that

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[9] Villet, "Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis," internet article, see Bibliography.

[10] Gandhi quoted in Ajay Skaria, "Relinquishing Republican Democracy: Gandhi's Ramrajya." pp.203-229.

[11] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 212.

[12] Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, p. 19.

Nietzsche says that the slave acquires. Indeed, even the Gandhian methods of *ahimsa* are argued by Leela Gandhi (1997) as not being part of the slave morality at all.

The slave is urged as Homi Bhabha says, to imagine the "...image of the post-Enlightenment man tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of colonised man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries ... disturbs and distorts the very time of his being."[13] If Bhabha's words are indicators of the agenda of Gandhi and Fanon – we may note that there is an attempt to rewrite the narrative of Western modernity to include the histories of marginalised and repressed figures. However, the task is not merely to rewrite history to include those left out but rather to make them question fundamentally the basis of Western civilisation. Fanon categorically and unequivocally, in *The Wretched of the Earth* refuses a "return to nature" for the colonised.[14] For both Gandhi and Fanon, as Leela Gandhi says, "...the project of national liberation as an imaginative pretext for cultural self-differentiation from Europe and, thereby, as an attempt to exceed, surpass – even improve upon – the claims of Western civilisation" (1998: 20).

Interestingly, this suggestion appears not only in Fanon but also comes obliquely from Gandhi. He says in *Hind Swaraj*, "...that we want the English rule without the Englishman. You [the editor addressing the reader/public] want the tiger's nature but not the tiger...."[15] In other words, there was an attempt by Gandhi and Fanon both to make the colonizer seem less desirable to the colonised, and by inverting the gaze inward, there was an attempt to recast the history of the slave for its own consideration and not as the master's narrative. In other words, there was an attempt, in their theorisation to look at the slave not only anew but also civilisations. Both Gandhi and Fanon are deeply critical of the claims of European modernity, progress and humanism. And both are staging new conceptions of not merely the colonized subject as we saw, but interestingly through that of the subject itself.

The '*Maha-atma*': Gandhi and the narration of the colonized subject in *Hind Swaraj*

One of the most interesting moves made toward delineating another conception of the colonised subject was made by Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj*. The book was critiqued by many

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[13] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 44.

[14] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 253.

[15] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 30.

as has been reported by Anthony Parel in his introduction to an edition of *Hind Swaraj*. Among the text's many critics were S. A. Dange (1921) and MN Roy (1922). Dange in *Gandhi vs. Lenin* (1921) placed the Gandhian and the Communist impulses in direct confrontation with each other insisting that the two were fighting similar ills. And he indicates, at length, Tolstoy's influence on Gandhi, which produces the nature of the man as well as the characterization of history and society that emerges in *Hind Swaraj*. According to Dange (1921), quoting Tolstoy and elucidating his influence on Gandhi, the

> ...cause of the miserable position of the workers cannot be found in the seizure of the means of production by capitalists, the cause must lie in what drives them from the villages. The labourer's misery [...] consists in the fact that they are obliged to work in harmful unnatural conditions often dangerous and destructive to life.... And the thing that does this, the Gandhian says, is modern mechanism, in fact, the whole of modern civilisation.[16]

Further, Dange adds that Gandhi's methods to achieve this were "...a return to old methods of spinning and weaving on handlooms, which would naturally dissolve the labour mass into smaller units."[17] Intrigued, as Dange is, by Gandhi and his methods, he cannot acquiesce to them since it is not the method that will bring true freedom (a true democracy and ownership of means of production) to the worker. Not only that, he adds a very crucial question about Gandhian practices and methods and supplies the Gandhian answer; "...how will men leave ideas and habits that they have come to acquire by custom and by education? So the root of the whole thing lies in the minds of men. And the solution cannot be anywhere else but in the minds of men. It lies in "Purification.""[18] It is critical to note at this juncture the seeming contradiction between the practices of the body and the purification of the mind that Gandhi advocates. Thus, what Gandhism required it seems was individual purification, individual consciousness and conviction and individual action. The necessity was that everyone acts as per his / her own conscience. In this mode of constructing the world, the underlying conception was simply that the tyrants were able to tyrannise because the tyrannised slaves participated in the act. There was thus, in the Gandhian method and mode of description of the colonised, Dange says partly sardonically, a "...complete absence of coercion of any kind and complete freedom of action ... (This nearly veers upon the English idea of liberty that

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[16] Dange. *Gandhi vs. Lenin*, p. 31.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., p. 32.

minimum of government control or coercion is maximum of individual liberty)."[19] This detour through Dange not only provides us with cues to the first reception of the text *Hind Swaraj* or indeed a communist's opposition to it – it shows us how quietly and effectively, there was a new subject that was being forged.

This new subject was the colonised subject and he stood not merely in opposition to the English 'master' but also that he was a being with agency and subjectivity. Gandhi saw the emergence of law and rule as not merely belonging to the realm of jurisprudence but also ethics. He saw the minds as being important, not giving over to the senses but crucially, Gandhi cannot in spite of, in his own writing the importance of the abstracted-mind, soul etc. negate the body. At each moment, it is only through certain practices of controlling the body, materially, that Gandhi proposes to bring a new/ de-colonised subject into being. In other words, the dichotomy and hierarchy that Gandhi so carefully sets up between mind/ soul and body is one that is undone if we look at greater care with what Dange told us about Gandhism – a focus on the spinning and weaving and through that the mind. Thus, even as Gandhi insists upon the abstraction of the colonised slave's mind and being/ conscience, he is in effect speaking about a control of the body and the practices of everyday living.

Thus, as Leela Gandhi says, the "...sphere of Gandhian interiority is the product of rigid disciplinary procedures."[20] This production of interiority was one of the methods through which Gandhi countered what he deemed as the machinic, materialistic and industrial philosophy of the West, best expressed in his remarks on machinery in *Hind Swaraj*: "Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin."[21] Gandhi's denunciation of machines and his idea of contesting the evil of modernity as he says in the last part of the dialogue in *Hind Swaraj*—"It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it." Furthermore, as Gandhi emphasizes and insists in a speech at Mirzapur Park in Calcutta in 1921, "...this is a religious battle ... to

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[19] Ibid., pp. 35 – 36.

[20]Gandhi, "Concerning Violence: The Limits and Circulations of Gandhian "Ahimsa" or Passive Resistance", p. 117.

[21] The chapter on "Machinery" in Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*. pp. 107-111 elaborates upon this thesis in great detail.

revolutionize the political outlook ... to spiritualize our politics."[22] This 'spiritualization' of politics then needs must be dwelled upon.

"The spiritual," remarks Partha Chatterjee "...is an "inner" domain bearing the "essential" marks of cultural identity. [... And] the greater [is] the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture. This formula is, I think, a fundamental feature of anticolonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa."[23] While making this claim, Chatterjee speaks with tremendous accuracy of the discourse that Gandhi promotes. Intriguingly, one finds most direct reference to this in the speech that Gandhi makes in 1930 at the First Round Table Conference in London. He says,

> I do feel [...] that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law, for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings.... That *law then which governs all life is God. Law and the law-giver are one* (emphasis added).[24]

Gandhi invoked the spiritual/ moral and made it the content of his political speech at the Conference in London. He coalesced the oft-rigidly marked domains of the legal and the spiritual and moral to invoke a notion of the subject that he ostensibly grounded in 'tradition' or the notion of the 'Ramrajya'. Let us look at another instance from the same speech: "... the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world, and therefore in the *supremacy of the moral law*, the law of truth and love" (emphasis added).[25] This intertwining of law and morality is perhaps Gandhi's rejection of the law as exemplified in the modern nation-state. The Editor says in *Hind Swaraj* that the law is merely another "form of the exhibition of brute force."[26] Interestingly, the sovereignty that the law assumed unto itself or indeed, the sovereignty that the subject might have assumed before the law becomes subjugated to the authority and sovereignty of the lawgiver/ God because Gandhi seems to coalesce in his body the both the sovereignty and authority of the law itself, as well as his own. The intertwining of the Law with the moral, governance with the spiritual signals a move – one that is perhaps modern, even as it claims authority through the move to God,

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[22] Gandhi quoted in Skaria, "Gandhi's Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram."

[23] Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, p. 6.

[24] Gandhi, "Speech at the First Round Table Conference."

[25] Ibid.

[26] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings,* p. 90.

spirituality, morality and most of all 'tradition'. Interestingly, Ashis Nandy (1983) reads Gandhi as being a "critical traditionalist" because he emphasized a model of control, discipline and self-realization to counter modernity in his understanding of the colonial subject.

In view of Gandhi's emphasis on 'self-discipline', perhaps it is possible to read him as a modern thinker.[27] The notion of 'moral governance' with an emphasis on the soul/ mind through the body and its daily practice recalls nothing if not the discipline that is so characteristic of the modern subject. Perhaps one may suggest that the influence of Christianity that Anthony Parel notes in his introduction to *Hind Swaraj* was not merely to citations of the Bible in *Hind Swaraj* but rather a powerful and evocative model which is incorporated into Gandhi's scripting of what the colonial subject should become. Interestingly, we may see this colonial subject as being brought forth not only through the writing and/ or speeches of Gandhi but also through the positioning and *figuring of himself* – through image, vocabulary and bodily practice. The mahatma, *mahan atma* (great soul) so called – the sobriquet given him; the articulation of his 'I' / self in the introduction to his autobiography, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1993 (1925)) and through these stages the colonial subject through the body (visually, ascetic-like and emaciated) of Gandhi and elsewhere, attempts to theorize it.

This spiritual in relationship to the political is also important – particularly when we consider that the theorisation of the colonial subject is not a narrative of the *individual* or the individuated subject, it is rather the *theorisation of the subject as collective* – a point that maybe noted with even greater clarity and engagement in the work of Frantz Fanon. This entanglement between the spiritual, the political and the colonial subject forces a consideration of its implications, as Ajay Skaria (2010) does, in relationship to the question of history and as he will argue it to be: *itihaas*.[28] Particularly since the political and history

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[27] Michel Foucault's reading of St. Augustine's *Confessions* may help to see Gandhi's constitution of the colonial subject in a new light. Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995 (1997)) as well as *The History of Sexuality, Vol. I: The Will to Knowledge* (1998 (1976)) engage with this thesis far more elaborately and in much greater nuance. He uses several sites to think through this including prisons, schools, sexuality and sexual practices and discourses in the nineteenth century and the practice of the confession in Christian tradition.

[28] In his translation of the text from the original Gujarati and not Gandhi's rendition, Skaria uses more evocative phrases – he says, for instance that "In 'history' [English word in original Gujarati text] we find only the stories of the noise of the world" in Ajay Skaria, "The strange violence of satyagraha: Gandhi, Itihaas, and History," 144. He further goes on to elucidate this by using the idea of noise [kolhaal] and

are not perhaps quite properly, the domain of the individual, even if traditionally narrated as such. Furthermore, they also are arguably the sites for the struggle for identity, subject-formation, knowledge, and control of both colonizer and colonized – and in *Hind Swaraj*, one may locate these intersections, which allow for further probing into the construction of the colonial subject. The Reader (the figure in Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* who stands as the representative of mainstream nationalist thought/ discourse) asks the Editor (who is the spokesperson for Gandhi), "Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul-force or truth-force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul-force."[29] To which the Editor replies, in the fashion of a true Socratic dialogue (the manner, form and dominant structure of the *Hind Swaraj*)[30]:

> But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: 'It so happened'. If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence [of *satyagraha*]. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul-force or passive resistance in such history. History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world.... [31]

The Editor further says, "History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. [...] History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul-force, [as he seems to refer to Satyagraha] *being natural*, is not noted in history" (emphasis added).[32]

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saying that history can only accommodate it and not "happening." Furthermore, he uses the word '*itihaas*' as being the word that appears in the original, rather than the manner in which Gandhi translates it as the "Gujarati equivalent" a term that I will draw upon as part of the discussion of Gandhi's construction of history. There is a distinction that both Gandhi and Skaria draw, philosophically, between the idea of history and that of *itihaas*. It is important to remember at this time that there are several scholars in addition to Ajay Skaria who have attempted to look at the idea of *itihaas* including Romila Thapar and Ranajit Guha.

[29]Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 88.

[30] Several writers and scholars including Leela Gandhi (1997) and Ashis Nandy (1990) have commented upon the similarities between Gandhi' styling of himself and Socrates. He had translated Plato's *Apology* in Gujarati as well. Thus, this style of text in the form of the Socratic dialogue is not accidental.

[31] Ibid., p. 89.

[32] Ibid, p. 90. In a footnote a few lines later, the text [by the editor, Anthony Parel] reads, "The Gujarati version of this definition is as follows: 'Satyagraha or soul-force is called passive resistance in English. The word is applicable to a method by which men, enduring pain, secure their rights. Its purpose is the opposite of the purpose of using force of arms (*ladaibal*). When something is not acceptable to me, I do

A few things seem to emerge from this exchange. One, that the Editor is the person standing in for Gandhi. The editor, as a professional category was not only a recent, modern category – associated with the newspapers/ journals and education but he also seems to embody textually the role of the author. In this case, while adopting the persona of the editor, Gandhi literalizes his role as author and scripter of the colonial subject, persuading the reader (and interpreter) of not merely the tract *Hind Swaraj* but also providing the reader with cues as to *how to read* the very situation of colonialism, through the new technologies of print. Except that in choosing the new, emergent profession of the editor, Gandhi aligns himself, without exception with the upcoming middle-class in this moment. Hence, even as we explore the formation of the colonial subject in Gandhi's writing, we must remember how he has chosen to locate and represent himself in the figure of the editor, reminding ourselves that the colonial subject that he formulates perhaps then always-already excludes the poor, the working-classes and the peasantry as Tanika Sarkar in her essay on "Gandhi and Social Relations" also seems to indicate. She says, "His diagnosis [of poverty] does not address the problem of class power under capitalism, or the structural features of its system of production and property. Poverty appears as the moral failing of the poor."[33] Sarkar's remarks tell us in no uncertain terms about the location of Gandhi's politics. Thus, it is not merely that the figure of the editor occupies the position of the middle-class intellectual but rather that consistently Gandhi is unable in his writing and theorisation to examine the poor or class war which Fanon does.[34]

Two, in his understanding of *itihaas* he presents us with the narrative of the ordinary. The value that Gandhi is placing then is not on the official narration of history-tellers or the documents associated with the life of military, political or economic campaigns. 'It so happened' suggests that there *itihaas* might be a narration coming from a text, a memory or indeed, from an experiential narrative. It might be myth, a story or an event. *Itihaas* allows

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not do that work. In so acting I use satyagraha or soul-force'" Ibid. It is this note by the editor that allows for the translation of the phrase soul-force as satyagraha and also urges a sharp contrast with how Antonio Gramsci understands and articulates the notion of passive resistance/ passive revolution.

[33]Sarkar, "Gandhi and Social Relations," p. 173.

[34] Indeed, as Dennis Forsythe (1973) argues for Fanon to be a different kind of a Marxist, particularly given some of Fanon's statements in *Black Skin White Masks*, for instance, "All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same object: Man," p. 88. He also wrote that "I want that the enslavement of man by man cease forever," Ibid., p. 183.

for then, an inter-weaving of several kinds of sources, and opens up the understanding of time as different from a merely linear one. According to Ashis Nandy:

> Gandhi's position on history was based on [...] assumptions [...] derived from the traditional Indian orientations to time. The first [...] was the salience given by Indian culture to myth as a structured fantasy which, in its dynamic of the here-and-the-now, represents what is another culture would be called the dynamic of history. [...] In Gandhi, the specific orientation to myth became a more general orientation to public consciousness. Public consciousness was not seen as a causal product of history but as related to history non-causally through memories and anti-memories. [...] Gandhi ... was a special case of an all-embracing permanent present, waiting to be interpreted and reinterpreted.[35]

The difference in linguistic register, from English to Gujarati, from history to *itihaas*, is an attempt to restage history itself, not merely to narrate the history of the colonised but rather it participates in revising the very understanding of history itself, much in the way in which he may be seen as restating the paradigms of the subject itself. His understanding of history releases it through *itihaas* from its demands of empiricism and determinism – 'it thus happened' not it was recorded such; imbuing it with the animation of the soul-force; making *itihaas* then a force of the living, rather than the dead.

The presence of the soul-force or the spirit/ual finds itself as not merely intertwined with politics, as Gandhi would explicitly state but also then with history from the outset. He also tells us, as the editor of *Hind Swaraj* that this soul-force is natural. Interestingly, Ajay Skaria tells us that the word that Gandhi uses is *swabhavik*, which he translates as natural. Skaria also points out critically, that "... *swa* is also a cognate of the family of words involving *se*, 'proper', 'ownmost'. *Bhav*: orientation. Swabhavik: 'of one's proper (or ownmost) orientation.'"[36] Implying that the idea of *satyagraha* is not merely about non-violence and passive resistance; but also gestures toward the *collective sense and belonging* of the colonial subject – a belonging and a collective that cannot find its register in the annals of History because it belongs to realm of the everyday, the sites of family and community, as

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[35] Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, pp. 56 – 57.

[36] Skaria, "The strange violence of satyagraha: Gandhi, Itihaas, and History", p. 145.

the *Hind Swaraj* text says.[37] And as the Editor of *Hind Swaraj* further says, "...what is true of families and communities is true of nations"; thus, extending the soul-force of an individual colonial subject to become the soul-force of the nation and demonstrating that the two were always-already intertwined.[38]

Skaria takes this relationship in a different direction however, and locates in the idea and practice of *satyagraha* "...a politics that, [by] never claiming agency, essentially thinks resistance."[39] Because, as he says, if the same is to be thought "...through the subject, the order of domination is reinscribed."[40] In so far as history allows only the measurable and the Cartesian model of the individual subject to speak or find voice (even as it may not be interested in the individual per se) – the notion of *itihaas* and *satyagraha* allow for the emergence and articulation of the *socius*, as Skaria points out. And it is through this socius that the colonized subject's articulations will come forth – because it is the socius that speaks, not in fact, the individual subject. Thus, the spirit/ual, the soul-force/*satyagraha*, *itihaas*, the everyday – all become nodes into staging not merely the articulation of the/a colonial subject but rather provide a strong thrust to counter the very notion of the Enlightenment subject which was formed on the principles of rationality, Cartesian logic and a division between the subject and the object. Thus, what is proposed then by Gandhi is not perhaps merely a mode of the colonial subject, but a different paradigm of the subject altogether. A subject that is based not in the rational but in the spiritual; based in the soul-force against the cold-logic of the survival of the body alone (without its animating impulse or soul-force)[41]; based on the

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[37] Ajay Skaria (2010) makes this point later in his essay, phrasing it rather eloquently, as he says, "... [The itihaas] was rather another everyday – that of a world invisible to (and also 'made invisible by'), and which could not be apprehended by history and autobiography" Ibid, p. 152.

[38] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 90.

[39] Skaria, "The Strange Violence of Satyagraha: Gandhi, Itihaas, and History," p. 146.

[40] Ibid.

[41] In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi through the Editor spends some length of time commenting upon the work and knowledge production of and by modern medicine and medical practices. Through the process of this commentary, there is a critique of the practice of contemporary medicine and its focus on the separation of body and mind (atma). Not only does Gandhi perform a seemingly Foucauldian analysis by locating the body at the centre of several kinds of discourses, especially medical ones and their relationship to power but he also makes it clear that the body must be attended to in a more holistic fashion – by attending to the mind/ atma/ soul. Thus, as noted earlier, for Gandhi is there a relationship between the external and internal – body and mind – the two are, in spite of his best efforts to privilege only the mind, inseparable. But this division between the mind and the body was also indicative of the split between subject and object that underlay Cartesian impulse of the knowledge of the body and medicine. And it is precisely this

everyday workings of family, community and the emotive ('love' as Gandhi calls it in *Hind Swaraj*) which together constitute *itihaas* and more integrally, *satyagraha* itself. For Gandhi, the most important force in the creation of this true civilisation is the *force of passive resistance*, the soul-force. This particular force rests upon precisely the ability and force of love. This force, which is non-violent in its nature, as per Gandhi is pit in opposition to the force of arms and violence. The force of this love, collective and non-violent as it is in nature relies upon both a sense of sacrifice and duty to this notion of *satyagraha* as well as what Leela Gandhi calls, quoting Martha Nussbaum, "the fragility of goodness."[42]

Furthermore, for Gandhi these differing paradigms constituted different understandings of civilisation itself. He positioned his understanding of civilisation (which he also referred to as *sudhaar*) against another contemporary – Narmad. Skaria argues that "while Narmad emphasized hakikat or truth as verifiable fact," indicating that he perceived truth as an objective and almost quantifiable, Gandhi was concerned with "...satya as Being, as outside the realm of verification or falsification."[43] In making this crucial distinction, Gandhi also used this as the basis to distinguish between *aadhunik sudhaar* 'modern civilisation' and *kharu sudhaar* 'true civilisation.'[44] Here, it is interesting to note another context and debate that Gandhi enters into, with his emphasis on the 'truth'. Leela Gandhi suggests that he attempts to counter the conquistador's impulse that Curzon introduced in the very meaning of the word truth by claiming that the rationale for imperialism appeared because of the burden on them (the colonisers) to "...stimulate truth in the morally deficient East."[45] Thus, what Gandhi attempts to do, quite literally, is to claim truth-value for his subject position and his discourse. The *satyagrahi* however must firmly believe in the position of the truth that he holds.

Leela Gandhi is of the view that Gandhi's move of *ahimsa* in turn relies upon the position taken up "...by Kantian ethics in its distinction between moral and nonmoral value

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division that Gandhi undoes in his theorisation of the colonial subject or the subject itself, re-written through and by the colonial.

[42] Gandhi, "Concerning Violence: The Limits and Circulations of Gandhian 'Ahimsa'", p. 106.

[43] Skaria, "The Strange Violence of Satyagraha: Gandhi, Itihaas, and History," p. 180.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Gandhi, "Concerning Violence: The Limits and Circulations of Gandhian 'Ahimsa' or Passive Resistance", p. 123.

and consequent refusal to mediate between the conflicting claims of goodness and luck."[46] In her analysis of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* as well as the notion of *ahimsa* she indicates another point at which Gandhi's theorisation of the subject fails, whether that of the colonial subject or an alternative paradigm of the subject itself – that is, the body of the woman. As she notes, *ahimsa* and the political-nationalist movements allowed for women to enter the 'world' as opposed to the home, they nevertheless espoused "...ideological containment and repression of female desire".[47] Thus, even as Gandhi's understanding of the subject is one that lends itself to varied attacks on the notion of the colonial subject as presented by the colonizers, and it carries with it powerful echoes of a battle waged, it still could remain blind both to issues of class and gender. As one turns to Fanon however, one notes that for him – society, both race and class relations are part of the consciousness through which the colonized subject is forged.

Skins, Masks and Revolution: The colonial psyche in Fanon

Fanon's work, remarks Homi Bhabha, is split "...between Hegelian – Marxist dialectic, a phenomenological affirmation of Self and Other and the psychoanalytic ambivalence of the Unconscious...."[48] The strands that Bhabha gestures toward form the basis of Fanon's writing and his theorisation of the colonial subject. It is also a reference perhaps to the shift that Fanon makes between *Black Skin White Mask* and the *Wretched of the Earth* (1963, Trans. Constance Farrington). He traces a trajectory of the constitution of the colonised subject as a divided self between the two works, moving from an understanding that is dominantly rooted in the psychological to a subject that demands a greater political freedom and one that actively intervenes to change the colonial condition. The subject thus, in his

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid., 110. Two excellent fictional examples of this exist – one is the character of Bimala, from Rabindranath Tagore's *Ghaire Baire* (1916) and the other are three key female activists in Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* ((1938) Leela Gandhi mentions this novel in her essay (1997) as well). Both novels have strong women characters that are drawn into the nationalist movement. But the problem remains, for instance with a figure like Bimala who not only enters the world from her home but is also sexually attracted toward Sandip, the revolutionary nationalist figure. Within the Gandhian paradigm, the first was acceptable, even desirable but the second was to be erased in its entirety – a point that comes through very clearly in *Kanthapura* even though it does not focus on this transition. *Kanthapura* indicates rather the popularity of the Gandhian call among women.

[48]Bhabha, "Foreword: Remembering Fanon" in *Black Skin White Masks*, p. x.

writing emerges simultaneously as structured through the frames of class warfare (he says, "... racism belongs to the shameless exploitation of one group of men by another which has reached a higher stage of technical development..."[49]) as well as through his body and his experiences, both conscious and unconscious.

Crucially, like Gandhi, this formulation of the colonial subject is not an individual; rather it is one that is forced to construct a subject that is formed through the collective – a collective bonded together and forged through the bodily and cultural experience of racism. Indeed, Bhabha goes so far as to say that in Fanon's writing there is an elaboration of the alienation produced in the colonised as a result of the experience of colonial and racial domination. The awareness of the need to speak not for an individual came from Fanon's own writing: "It was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person ... I was responsible *for my body, for my race, for my ancestors*" (emphasis added).[50] This responsibility that Fanon claimed for the colonised subject was critical. He could not and did not pretend, unlike Gandhi, that the body was to be disciplined – while the mind or the soul was to be the focus. For Fanon, the responsibility is clear – it is historical, it is material and physical, and it is collective. It is also a partial recognition of tradition and by that stroke, a partial recognition of identification.

A subject that has been produced only by the colonial encounter because Fanon says, "A normal black child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world."[51] Fanon makes, as Françoise Vergès says:

> ...a radical departure from Freud, who insists all along that family and infantile sexuality are the sources of complexes. To Fanon, the encounter of the child with difference – sexual, social and gendered – is situated in the *social* of postinfancy. It is the white world that is responsible for the alienation and neurosis of blacks. The white world makes the "Negro." Fanon fully embraces Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis in *Réflexions sur la question juive* (*Anti-Semite and Jew*) where Sartre affirmed that "it is the anti-Semite that *makes* the Jew."[52]

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[49] Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, p. 11.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 144.

[52] Vergès, "Creole Skin, Black Masks: Fanon and Disavowal", p. 583.

The difference between Fanon and Freud become starkly obvious and Fanon's closeness to Marx becomes more evident. Sartre's influence on Fanon is of course palpable, especially as it comes from his work on Negritude as well as the work *Black Orpheus*.[53] The trauma of the black wo/man is placed, very clearly in the realm of the social and the collective. The colonial subject that emerges in Fanon's narrative is one that is traumatised and must consciously work through that trauma – there is a class or race enemy in Fanon, unlike Gandhi.

Bhabha further goes on to say that Fanon's writing and his theorisation of the subject come

> ...from the tradition of the oppressed, as Walter Benjamin suggests.... The struggle against colonial oppression changes not only the direction of Western history, but challenges its historicist 'idea' of time as a progressive, ordered whole. The analysis of colonial depersonalization alienates not only the Enlightenment idea of 'Man', but challenges the transparency of social reality, as a pre-given image of human knowledge. If the order of Western historicism is disturbed in the colonial state of emergency, even more deeply disturbed is the social and psychic representations of the human subject. [54]

It is also precisely this condition that prompts Fanon to ask "What does the black man want?"[55] Let us examine the subject at the core of this sentence: the black man. Fanon at the outset says that the black man is no more than a thing, an object; he is in a "zone of nonbeing."[56] This man is an object because not only is he in a slave-like condition – he also desires to be the white man. This desire is not simply to be white however. Rather, it is the desire to be considered human because in the hierarchy created between the races; it was the whites who were human and their language (French) considered perfect – it could not be pidgin-French or Creole. It is this desire in the black man to be white, to be human, to speak his tongue perfectly that produces the tension that characterizes the colonized subject, the

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[53] It is important to note that with Sartre's tremendous influence on him, Fanon has some disagreements that he states in *Black Skin, White Masks*. It also becomes the text where Fanon will actively start re-thinking the positions and usefulness of Negritude and the positions adopted by Aime Césaire, Leopold Senghor among others.

[54] Bhabha, "Foreword: Remembering Fanon" in *Black Skin White Masks*, p. xi.

[55] Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, p. 10.

[56] Ibid.

black man, in Fanon's writing. It is this tension that Fanon discusses in his work – he points to it as an inferiority complex which he registers as being the result of double processes – one that is economic in nature and the other which is the "internalization – or, better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority."[57] This inferiority finds particular resonance in the treating the black man as a child, as Fanon notes, a little better than an object – befitting his status as not quite a human being or a being of a lower order. Throughout *Black Skin, White Mask* Fanon draws the reader's attention toward the *facticity of being black* through speaking of the black man's experiences of language, his being treated as a child, the sexual attractions and repulsions between black and white, men and women, economics among others.[58]

Let us take a brief detour through the story of Mayotte Capaécia that Fanon narrates to us, to illustrate this. Mayotte Capaécia is a woman of colour in love with a white man and married to him. In her long narrative there are a few things she mentions which are worth considering: one, she believes *only* a white man is worth loving. Two, she takes pride in the fact that her grandmother was white. Three, she desires to live in that part of the city (which is on a hill) where only the Europeans live, and indeed chides her partner frequently for not taking her with him there to meet his other European friends and their wives. Not only does Fanon's narration of Mayotte Capaécia's story reveal very clearly the inferiority complex that inhabits the fact of being black but is also reveals, very painfully, the site of this complex – the sphere of domesticity. Capaécia's home, her familial relations and her love become the site of the tensions of race – it becomes *unhomely*. The public and the private coalesce in the space of the interior to re/produce the colonial and racial predicament – the fact of blackness in a world where white is privileged. The colonised subject is condemned then as it were to never-be-at-home; even his/ her worlds of domesticity are made simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar because of this.

While one might read Mayotte Capaécia's story through the dimensions of space, and the unhomely, the dimension of time has to be factored in through Fanon saying clearly that his

> ...work is rooted in the temporal. [...] And this future is not the future of the cosmos but rather the future of my century, my country, my existence. [...] The future should be an

[57] Ibid., p.13.

[58] "One is white above a certain financial level" says Mayotte Capaécia, quoted by Fanon. Ibid., p. 43.

edifice supported by living men. This *structure is connected to the present to the extent that I consider the present in terms of something to be exceeded* (emphasis added).[59]

In so doing, he indicates not only its precise historical location but maintains a Marxist thrust by making the black man the agent of transformation of his own history. The present and the future are placed in a linear narrative, unlike the 'permanent present' of Gandhi which allowed for past, present and future to swirl together and be interpreted and re-interpreted. For Fanon, the problems and tensions of colonialism include the "...interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes towards these conditions."[60] However, even as it is not the present that Gandhi inhabits and even as it is linear – the future and the present are connected through structures of excess as well. This structure of excess pushes us toward the *liminal site of beyond*, the space that Bhabha argues for as a "...space of intervention in the here and now."[61]

The conception of the man, of the colonized subject lies embedded within the Enlightenment narratives of rational man and his abilities and agency in his ability to transform his own history and future. Nevertheless, Fanon delves into the recesses of the unconscious and gestures toward the complexes that form part of the colonial situation, indicating the unconscious, desires and the non-rational even as his framework of man seems to be predominantly that of the Enlightenment model.[62] However, interestingly, as Fanon does this – draw up the rigid differences and binaries between black and white, the poor and the rich, respectively (the 'objective historical conditions') – it is the *presence of desire* that suddenly blurs these rigid boundaries. The desire to be white for the black man, the desire for the black woman by the white man *leaks* into these objective conditions that constitute the colonial predicament, rendering them unstable as Bhabha would argue.

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[59] Ibid., p. 14 – 15.

[60] Ibid., p. 84.

[61] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 7.

[62] While it is true that Freud himself ruptures the Enlightenment narrative of man and Fanon maybe said to adding to that break even more by inserting the question of race – both these statements would hold true of the European man (not man in the universal here). In the context of the formulation of the colonial subject, the black man, Fanon seems to be drawing upon the Enlightenment model, with Freud's critique intact and thus, unlike Gandhi does not perhaps provide as stark a contrast in his theorization of the colonized subject to the universal subject.

Yet as Fanon says very clearly, it is these objective conditions that must be foregrounded for solutions to be found or new routes forged ahead: "...Though a psychological interpretation of the black problem is crucial, yet the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic...."[63] We must note here how Fanon adapts to the problem of race and class – a problem fundamental to labour, as Marx tells us – alienation. Furthermore, it is within an analysis of these same conditions, that there lies a view of history, a view that demands a historical look at the colonial predicament. As Fanon says (quoted in Dennis Forsythe) "...a historic look at history requires that the French colonist retire, for it has become historically necessary for the national time (in Algeria) to exist.... A process has begun which if one could trust stereotyped formulas, might be called irreversible."[64] Not only does this serve as a clarion call to action but it also re-emphasizes his view of history that is both material and dialectical. But *the actor is always man* and not an abstract sense of the events of history. Further, Fanon says, "The body of history does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation. And it by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom."[65] He iterates this even through his own self and profession for he says, "As a psychoanalyst, I could help my patient to become conscious of his unconscious [desire/ wish to be white] and abandon his attempts at hallucinatory whitening, but also to act in the direction of a change in social structure."[66] Yet again, one might note that Fanon's presentation of his own self and its conflicts and alterations become (in addition to case studies) one of the modes through which the colonised subject is constructed. And this subject is one where as Fanon says, "...the *socius* is more important than the individual."[67] With Gandhi, it lay in the reader's interpretation and his reading skills to determine the precise nature, contours and importance of the socius; Fanon leaves one with no doubt as to how he understands the relationship between the psychological and the material. Indeed, he proceeds to quote Pierre Naville as saying:

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[63]Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 13.

[64] Fanon quoted in Forsythe, "Frantz Fanon – The Marx of the Third World", p. 162.

[65] Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 187.

[66] Ibid., p. 100.

[67] Ibid., p. 105.

> To speak of society's dreams as one of speaks of the dreams of the individual, to discuss collective will to power as one discusses individual sexual drive, is to reverse the natural order of things once more, because, on the contrary, it is the economic and social conditions of class conflicts that explain and determine the real conditions in which individual sexuality expresses itself, and because the content of a human being's dream depends also, in the last analysis, on the general conditions of the culture in which he lives.[68]

What Fanon argues for very persuasively then is that there is a

> ...slow composition of [the black] my *self* as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world – such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world – definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world.[69]

It is with a pressing sense of history, the world present in all its material and social force that Fanon thinks of the production of the colonial self, a historico-economic-social-racial colonial reality producing the nightmares of being a black man and wanting to be white. By the end of *Black Skin, White Mask* Fanon has made the shift that will make him assert that he, the black man, will create his own meaning, instead of allowing a pre-existing meaning to be there for him to enter into. He will shift consciously away from Negritude, its writers and lyrics by refusing being stereotyped. He will insist that his (the black man's) consciousness does not define itself through a lack, in the way in which the white man's narrative about the black man had assumed. And once Fanon has made this assertion – we note afresh the call for revolution – which comes from opening the closing chapter of his book with a quote from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which urges the social revolution to abandon the past joyfully to look to the future. And it is this that Fanon too urges for the black man – an attention to the present condition and the future, because it is in that future that he can hope to locate his liberation.

The colonised subject and its reflection in Gandhi and Fanon might allow us to make some tentative closing remarks on the similarities and differences between the two thinkers and their positions – an attempt that has informed the entire chapter. On the one hand, we note that both Gandhi and Fanon understand the colonial subject as a part of a socius and a

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., p. 111.

collective, not as an individuated being. Both create the colonised subject as the slave who needs to attain his freedom or his ability to construct himself as a subject not desirous of his master. Both in the final analysis probe closely the relationship between the mind and the body, even though Gandhi seems to insist otherwise. And in Fanon, the body of the black man appears in all its corporeality. Moreover, both are charting a colonised subject capable of transformation so that there is the potentiality of a revolution, passive in one case and active in the other. In so far as both Gandhi and Fanon theorise a subject within the conditions of colonial rule and racism, their theorisation of the colonial subject is one that takes place in a 'state of emergency' and not within the norm. Arguably perhaps, then the colonial subject is one that always carries with it a trace of this state – and it is the presence of this trace that marks the postcolonial condition. It is important to keep in mind that both have often ignored gender in their formulations of the colonial subject or that their understanding of women left much to be desired. That both constructed modern subjects imbricated on the nation-state as well as stressed a new-ness within the figure of the subject is also perhaps a similarity.

In their construction of the emancipated subject, Gandhi and Fanon also laid out their differing understandings of history and modernity. Gandhi in his understanding of the revolution and the colonised subject does not take into account any comprehensive or historical understanding of colonial society. And his account of the colonial subject is one that rests upon the idea of the 'spirit' and the 'soul-force' which yet again discounts a materialist understanding of the world. He posits an alternative understanding of history itself. Fanon while not providing in such clear terms an alternate vision of history does nevertheless write the black man/ colonised subject into history and understands the relationship between man and his history as one of a dynamic interrelationship. Fanon says, "The thesis that men change at the same time that they change the world has never been so manifest as it is now in Algeria."[70] Furthermore, Gandhi's analysis of the colonial subject was one that did not take into account adequately the social relations of society, whereas for Fanon, social relations were central to his thesis on the colonised subject and indeed, he was not blind to the differences and hierarchies even between the black men. When Fanon performed his examination of the psyche of the colonised self, he did it with the sensibility of a dialectical materialist and demanded from the black man, the promise of liberation – a complete revolution.

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[70]Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, p. 30.

Chapter III

Nation and Anti-colonial Struggle in Fanon and Gandhi

> The condition of England at present is pitiable. I pray to God that India may never be in that plight. That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute. Both these are harsh terms, but exactly fit the case.[1]
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> The Third World today faces Europe like a colossal mass whose aim should be to try to resolve the problems to which Europe has not been able to find the answers. . . . No, there is no question of a return to Nature. It is simply a very concrete question of not dragging men toward mutilation, of not imposing upon the brain rhythms which very quickly obliterate it and wreck it.... If we want to turn Africa into a new Europe, and America into a new Europe men let us leave me destiny of our countries to Europeans. They will know how to do it better than the most gifted among us. But if we want humanity to advance a step farther, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, men we must invent and we must make discoveries. If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe.[2]

While going through these two rather longish quotes one from M.K Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* and another from Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth,* one cannot ignore the similarities between these two political figures. A deep contempt rather anguish, a pain for the loss of their own cultures, concern for their respective degrading civilization are some of the points which echoed continuously in the writings of Gandhi and Fanon. Not only do they share their contempt for civilizational decadence of Europe as seen in the above quotes, they also seem to be hitting against the same goal while accusing Europe. The root of the problems in third world and within Europe both Gandhi and Fanon thought were due to the culture decadent modernity[3] of Europe running on the engines of capitalism. And both of them alerted their fellow countrymen to be away from the malaise underlined by the colonial context.

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[1] Gandhi , *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 30.

[2] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 311-316.

[3] *Gandhi , Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, pp. 31-32.

The point where the thoughts of Gandhi and Fanon seem to converge is also the point where they (their thoughts) start to diverge. Europe might be an immediate name for their problems, but both go much beyond that initial 'Europe' and 'European' problem.

But as soon as one asks the questions like –What in Europe is exactly problematic? How does one understand this problem and what are the solutions, what is the role of third world masses and intellectuals? Both Gandhi and Fanon seem to be speaking two different languages rather two different 'discourses'. This is what this chapter will try to explore. To see where Gandhi and Fanon agree and where there disagreements start.

This chapter will approach these questions in three different parts. The first part will deal with the ideas about Nation and Nationalism and try to see how the image of a nation gets delineated in their writings. The chapter will also attempt to understand the discourses through which Gandhi and Fanon address the questions and interests of different social groups in their imagination of the anti-colonial project and in the lineaments of nationalism. The second part will chart the terrain of discourses associated with their understanding of colonialism and ideas about decolonization as a political process. Fanon was a psychiatrist by profession, while Gandhi was a lawyer for some time and later turned to mass politics. Both had at a personal level suffered racism. So the chapter will also try to build connections between their 'lived experience' as well as their own understanding of the society and thereby contextualize their theories on the anti-colonial project.

These two parts will than lead to the final part of the chapter where a brief assessment of the postcolonial positions on Gandhi and Fanon will be conducted in order to understand how the contributions of Gandhi and Fanon have been received by these school of thought. Through the assessment of the works of these schools the chapter will try to see how recent scholarship deconstructs the ideas of the two figures. This chapter will also argue that though post colonial and subaltern schools have provoked a new interest in looking at Gandhi and Fanon from the hither to unexplored conceptual paradigms like race theory, hybridity and hegemony over subaltern classes, however, they have also encouraged certain dislocations in the reading of Gandhi and Fanon where certain fragments of their ideas prevail over others. For instance the dominant trend of characterizing Fanon as an icon of race theory and a proponent of the psychoanalysis of violence is a partial reading of Fanon and is restrictive representation of the

potential of his ideas. Fanon's ideas were deeply rooted in a class based understanding of the colonial context and anti-colonial struggles, but most of the post-colonial readings try to "move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories" which according to Bhabha is an innovative development that has resulted in "an awareness of the subject positions—race, gender..."[4]. This positing of class awareness as essentially opposed to the awareness of other subject positions excludes and obscures the emphasis Fanon had laid upon the political oppression of the colonized deeply coloured by his materialist class based critique of colonialism. This is not only taking life out of Fanon's writings, it is also in a way ahistorical, given the fact that the context of his writings, his intellectual journey is often ignored.

I. Nation and Nationalism

Nationalist discourse has been put to scathing critiques, particularly post 1980's, by various scholars for being exclusionary, elitist, totalitarian, essentialist. Many authors like Homi Bhabha have argued that Nationalism (particularly in former colonies which came as a result of anti-colonial struggle) is a derivative discourse, which takes meanings, symbols from colonialism itself and thus is doubly colored by colonialism. Thus, this derivative discourse makes it impossible for a former colony to move out of the colonial lineage.[5] There are many others scholars who have contributed in this debate. While some have gone to affirm the importance of Nationalism in former colonies, many others like Bhabha completely reject the idea of 'nation' and 'Nationalism'. This complete rejection of Nation in a way is ignoring the history of colonialism where nationalism is not only an idea but a historical need. As Partha Chatterjee puts this,

> Pitting itself against the reality of colonial rule... [anti-colonial] nationalism succeeds in producing a different discourse. The difference is marked, on the terrain of political-ideological discourse, by a political contest, a struggle for power, which nationalist thought must think about and set down in words. Its problematic forces it relentlessly to demarcate itself from the

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[4] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 1.

[5] Bhabha, "Interrogating Identity: The Postcolonial Prerogative", pp. 183-209.

> discourse of colonialism. Thus nationalist thinking is necessarily a struggle with an entire body of systematic knowledge.... Its politics impels it to open up that framework of knowledge which presumes to dominate it, to displace that framework, to subvert its authority, to challenge its morality. Yet in its very constitution as a discourse of power, nationalist thought cannot remain only a negation; it is also a positive discourse which seeks to replace the structure of colonial power with a new order, that of national power.[6]

Nationalism thus remains an indispensable weapon in the hands of colonized in their struggle against colonialism. This is the only way by which the whole colonized population can talk and resist as one, and not fighting infinite battles at infinite points.[7] Given the historical need the question thus should not be to question the whole idea of Nation as Eurocentric, exclusive etc. rather these criticism should be deployed to investigate every definition of nation. In the words of Ranajit Guha, "What...historical writing of this kind cannot do is to explain...nationalism for us. For it fails to acknowledge, far less interpret, the contribution made by the people on their own, that is, independently of the elite to the making and development of...nationalism"[8] Against this backdrop one can then study the ideas of Nation and nationalism as a historical need, rather than as a construct.

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[6] Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, pp. 40-42.

[7] Lazarus, 'Disavowing Decolonization: Fanon, Nationalism, and the Problematic of Representation in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse,' p. 76.

[8] Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, p. 3.

In case of Fanon, the idea of nation and nationalism is quite complex but falls within the paradigm of colonialism and nationalism as an articulation of responses against it. Gandhi's ideas of nation and nationalism however, do not easily fit in this accepted paradigm of Nationalism. Scholars such as Hiddleston are of the view that Gandhi never talked about nation and his ideas cannot be studied under the framework of nationalism.[9] But before we talk of Gandhi, let us try and see what Fanon had to say on Nation and Nationalism. Let us read what Fanon says in this context in some detail,

> On every hill a government in miniature is formed and takes over power. Everywhere--in the valleys and in the forests, in the jungle and in the villages—we find a national authority. Each man or woman brings the nation to life by his or her action, and is pledged to ensure its triumph in their locality. We are dealing with a strategy of immediacy which is both radical and totalitarian: the aim and the program of each locally constituted group is local liberation. If the nation is everywhere, then she is here. One step further and only here is she to be found. Tactics are mistaken for strategy. The art of politics is simply transformed into the art of war; the political militant is the rebel. To fight the war and to take part in politics: the two things become one and the same. This people that has lost its birthright, that is used to living in the narrow circle of feuds and rivalries, will now proceed in an atmosphere of solemnity to cleanse and purify the face of the nation as it appears in the various localities. In a veritable collective ecstasy, families which have always been traditional enemies decide to rub out old scores and to forgive and forget. There are numerous reconciliations. Long-buried but unforgettable hatreds are brought to light once more, so that they may more surely be rooted out. The taking on of nationhood involves a growth of awareness. The national unity is first the unity of a group, the disappearance of old quarrels and the final liquidation of unspoken grievances.[10]

This definition in a way clears the mist of what Nation means to Fanon. It is surely not an elitist project meant for a selected few. Fanon's nation is for the poorest of poor, the village dwellers, those who are in jungles, the factory workers, the peasants, of youth, of women. It's not a bourgeois nationalism which will again privilege those few who have been traditional rulers and elites, rather Fanon's Nation will be forged within the deep villages of Africa and Algeria. These

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[9] Hiddleston, *Understanding Post-Colonialism*, p. 55.

[10] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 300-301.

were the constituents of the Fanon's nation, but what about the base from which Fanon is trying to launch his nationalism? To realize a Nation, a self has to be constituted, a past has to be remembered, and a culture has to be claimed. How is then Fanon trying to reconstitute the self of his modern nation?

> National identity only carries meaning insofar as it reflects the combined revolutionary efforts of an oppressed people aiming at collective liberation. ... To fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of the nation, that material keystone, this makes the building of a culture possible. There is no other fight for culture which can develop apart from the popular struggle.... A national culture is not a folklore, not also an abstract populism that believes it can discover the people's true nature. It is not made up of the inert dregs of gratuitous actions; that is to say actions which are less and less attached to the ever present reality of the people. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.[11]

The past of a nation, its culture is not some abstract term for Fanon. He grounds it as a living process, nourished by the struggle of the people, in their day to day lives. Fanon doesn't construct a nativist construction of national culture that espouses a revivalist discourse. Rather Fanon understands the contemporary, considers past and then suggests that national culture is not folklore. For Fanon, it is not a matter of simply going backwards which will than create a national culture. It's rather an interaction with the present problems and conditions. The culture is based in the ongoing struggles of the people. Fanon argues,

> The colonized man who writes for his people ought to use the past with the intention of opening the future, as an invitation to action and a basis for hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, he must take part in action and throw himself body and soul into the national struggle. You may speak about everything under the sun; but when you decide to speak of that unique thing in man's life that is represented by the fact of opening up new horizons, by bringing light to your own country, and by raising yourself and your people to their feet, then you must collaborate on the physical plane. The responsibility of the native man of culture is not a

[11] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 233.

responsibility vis-à-vis his national culture, but a global responsibility with regards to the totality of the nation.[12]

Like a true Marxist, Fanon brilliantly brings the 'idea of praxis' here. He doesn't agree that we can shape our consciousness from things which have become irrelevant for the national life; rather the culture in a colonial situation has to be developed in the popular struggles – i.e. in the anti-colonial struggle. Thus Fanon argues, "The culture that the intellectual leans toward is often no more than a stock of particularisms. He wishes to attach himself to the people; but instead he only catches hold of their outer garments. And these outer garments are merely the reflection of a hidden life, teeming and perpetually in motion."[13] To get hold of this life in motion and not stick to something frozen in national past is what Fanon asks the anti-colonial thinker to achieve.

Fanon encourages the anti-colonial thinkers to write and definitely trace their past, in a way he is asking the thinkers to write a counter narrative – a people's history. But he moves beyond the simple glorification of the past and asks the intellectuals of the third world, to not simply glorify everything that was there in the colonies before colonialism, rather Fanon asks the anti-colonial thinkers to 'Instead of according the people's lethargy an honored place in his esteem' to turn himself/herself 'into an awakener of the people', from where Fanon argues 'comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature'[14].

Emancipatory politics seems to be one of the criteria of Fanon's idea of Nation and national culture. Fanon throughout his writings talks about imagining a nation coming into being from the struggles of people for their rights. Thus Nation doesn't seem to be an ideal end product for Fanon, but a process – a continuous evolution of thoughts which becomes more and more inclusive and brings within it diverse thoughts, communities and cultures.

From the above discussion, we have been able to construct Fanon's vision of Nation and Nationalism which apart from being inclusive seems largely to be based on class politics.

Scattered, ambiguous, and ever changing Gandhi's ideas on Nation and Nationalism are not easily comprehended. More than that problem with Gandhi's ideas on Nation is that he never

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[12] Ibid., p. 231.

[13] Ibid., pp. 222-223.

[14] Ibid., pp. 221-222.

uses the word 'Nation' to define the future course for India. He even detests the use and meaning of word Nation as a European borrowed definition which for Gandhi had no place in Indian thought. But surely he had something in mind for the future of the people of South Asia. Should this future vision of Gandhi for Hindus, Muslims, Dalits, Tribals, women and other sections of the society be called 'Nation'? Or has Gandhi ever brought a new definition of this future South Asia? What is the *Hind* in *Hind Swaraj* for Gandhi? Answer to these questions will be sought below.

Comparing Gandhi with Fanon, Jane Hiddleston argues,

> Gandhi, however, nowhere recommends Indian Nationalism, and this is both his unique strengths and, for some, as we shall see, one of the possible limitations of his vision.... Concomitantly Gandhi believed that the real conflict lay not between two nations, nor between east and west, but between modernity and tradition. His anti-colonialism is a reclaiming not of a national culture but of an intricate web of customs and beliefs opposed to the individualist, competitive spirit of modern civilization and capitalism.[15]

Inadequacy of Gandhi's thoughts on nation seem to be much clearer from above, because one can clearly see that Gandhi doesn't seem to be actually questioning the concept of 'Nation', rather he seems to be questioning the modern form which the Nations in Europe had acquired i.e. individualist, competitive and capitalistic'. But as we saw above how, Fanon also develops his definition of Nation by questioning this capitalistic 'modern spirit of Nation'. So, it will not be wrong to call Gandhi's future vision of India as a nation which is not only steeped in tradition but also purged of the 'evils' which come with the 'modern, European nation'.

Defining Nation, Renan had set two set of criteria for a successful modern Nation. He says,

> Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form."[16]

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[15] Hiddleston, *Understanding Post-Colonialism,* p. 55.

[16] See Renan, *What is a Nation?*

When Gandhi defines his future of South Asia/India isn't he also talking of the same two things – where Muslims, Hindus, Dalits, Women, Tribals and other sections of the society have always lived together and who according to Gandhi have a will to be together in the future also. Renan further adds, "Forgetting, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation, which is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for [the principle of] nationality."[17] Now, doesn't Gandhi tell his followers and general masses to forget the Hindu-Muslim clashes which whole Indian history is marked with? Doesn't he tell the lower castes to forget the past oppression and join the new forces in the construction of new India? This is where Gandhi despite trying his level best couldn't come out of the definition of nation and despite not setting a new definition creates a new identity of the modern Indian nation.

Once we have established that Gandhi despite his rhetorical opposition to idea of Nation, couldn't come out of it, now let's try and see what a future Indian nation meant to him. Reading Gandhi as reading some other scholars will mean reading a thought in evolution. Gandhi though was rigid in some of his ideas seems to be flexible in many others.[18] Taking a clue from Renan, we will try and see how Gandhi revisited the Indian past and how he wished Indians to live in future.

Much scholarship on Gandhi has been mostly concerned with his moral discourses, rather than his political discourse – the way he meant to be doing politics. But this question whether Gandhi's philosophy is more 'moral' than 'political' seems to be emanating from a slippery plane where often his 'moral' ideas seem to be linked with his 'political' ideas. In many ways it can be shown that Gandhi is not at all utopian in his ideas except in some cases and his philosophy – moral or political - address the everyday concerns of the masses. So let's start from something very basic from which ideas of Gandhi seem to evolve themselves. Gandhi changed his views throughout his life on many things – caste, class, women, sexuality etc. but what he didn't change were his particular religious views. He always remained a strong believer and

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[17] Ibid., p. 02.

[18] Gandhi's thoughts particularly kept changing on the question of caste.

proponent of Vaishnavite thought. It is from this base that we can see how, many divergent ideas of Gandhi emerged.

Gandhi says, "The reader will note that I have purposely refrained from using the word divine origin in reference to the Vedas or any other scriptures. For, I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe that the Bible, the Quran, and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures doesn't require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired."[19] With this comment suddenly you have someone who is surely not a fanatic, and still a staunchest believers who dares to question the religious scriptures when need comes. This is a fine balance which Gandhi maintained throughout his life. Thus his many ideas while contradicting the scriptures still find a place among the same scriptures that he criticizes.

Like Fanon, Gandhi also remains the foremost figures who brought Indian masses out from their homes into the streets against the colonial rule. He spoke to masses and ensured the participation of the poorest of the poor in the anti-colonial struggle. Unlike earlier Congress leaders he didn't only talk of elite politics which alienated masses from its ambit, Gandhi, right from his first mass movement in Champaran where Gandhi became a voice against *tinkathia system* till his last days, worked and lived among the general masses. Again, on the face of it, both Fanon and Gandhi might be doing the same politics i.e. the mass politics, but there remains an important difference between the two political philosophers. Let us try and see how.

Initially Gandhi started his stand as one who completely opposed untouchability, but his position on caste kept changing till his last days. Once back from Africa, where he himself had faced discrimination, Gandhi tried to convince the *Santan Dharmis* (he thought of himself as a *sanatani*)[20] of the evil of untouchability, but failed miserably. Thus slowly his stand on untouchability from 'an evil in hinduism' he called a Brahmin true only the 'one who possesses the attributes of khastriya, a vaishya and a shudra and has, in addition learning...' and shudras for Gandhi, 'are not, of course wholly devoid of learning but service is their chief

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[19] Gandhi, 'Young India', pp. 6-7.

[20] Ibid., pp. 10-11.

characteristics.'[21] This was not the first time when Gandhi's changed on the question of caste, many more changes were about to come.

From 1930's onwards Gandhi for next two decades was continuously confronted by B. R Ambedkar on the question of caste and untouchability. But his whole idea of caste came from the notion of pollution, i.e. the nature of work the lower caste carried. In case of caste, Gandhi again questioned the scriptures, but only on the question of untoucabilty and continued supporting the *Varna* division of Hindu society. What he tried to do for the untouchable was not any radical change in their position in the society,[22] 'but in small, concrete ways, primarily by removing the stigma that their work and name carried.'

He could never imagine lower castes asking for their rights, but expected that it to be dependent on the 'upper-caste penitence'. The lower castes, he thought were not accustomed to the ways of struggle, thus the onus always lied with the upper caste. He opposed separate electorate demand of untouchables and said that 'if they were given separate electorates, they would join hands with Muslim hooligans and kill caste *hindus*.'[23]

Gandhi's ideas on poverty again had the same understanding. Though he opposed Capitalism, but it was more as a hate for western culture, economy and modernity rather than as critique of the very foundations on which capitalism stood. Again as a radical position he was never against abolishing private property. Rather his *Swaraj* was imbedded with the idea of 'trusteeship' where the rich had to think that they were nothing more than trustees of their properties and fruits of labour belonged to everyone. Practically Gandhi's position was worse than this. After the Textile labour Association which he had formed, he made the association accept the trusteeship ideal and wrote, "We seek not to destroy capital or capitalists, but to regulate the relations between labour and capital".[24]

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[21] Sarkar, 'Gandhi and Social Relations,' p. 180.

[22] Ibid., p. 180.

[23] Ibid., p. 183.

[24] Quoted in Sarkar, Ibid., p. 176.

Gandhi's views on women and tribals have the same paternal approach where the masses were projected as deaf and dumb, who could be mobilized in mass movements, but their demands at times could be compromised.

II. Colonialism and Decolonization

Both Gandhi and Fanon emerged as the two most important figures against colonialism. Though both presented a thorough critique of colonialism, still in more than one way they differed in understanding colonialism and decolonization.

For Gandhi, Indians were colonized precisely because they couldn't defend themselves from the foreign rule. For him, Indians in a way were more responsible for their condition rather than Europeans. It is not strange thus that in his early days, Gandhi was believer of the benevolent British rule. Only after he faced discrimination, did he revolt against the British rule and racism that was attached with it. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi wrote, "The English have not taken India; we have given it to them. They are not in India because of their strength, but because we keep them."[25] Apart from forwarding an economic critique of colonialism which had completely drained Indian economy, Gandhi thought of Colonialism as a system which had disrupted the Indian civilization and its traditions. For Gandhi, Colonialism had thus not only mutilated Indian bodies, but also enslaved minds. Let's quote Gandhi in some detail to see how he explains British annexation of India in its colonialism.

> Recall the Company Bahadur. Who made it Bahadur? They had not the slightest intention at the time of establishing a kingdom. Who assisted the Company's officers? Who was tempted at the sight of their silver? Who bought their goods? History testifies that we did all this. In order to become rich all at once, we welcomed the Company's officers with open arms. We assisted them. If I am in the habit of drinking Bhang, and a seller thereof sells it to me, am I to blame him or myself? By blaming the seller shall I be able to avoid the habit? And, if a particular retailer is driven away, will not another take his place?[26]

He further explains,

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[25] Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 39.

[26] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

> We have already seen that the English merchants were able to get a footing in India because we encouraged them. When our princes fought among themselves, they sought the assistance of Company Bahadur. That corporation was versed alike in commerce and war. It was unhampered by questions of morality. Its object was to increase its commerce and to make money. It accepted our assistance, and increased the number of its warehouses. To protect the latter it employed an army which was utilized by us also. Is it not then useless to blame the English for what we did at that time? The Hindus and the Mahomedans were at daggers drawn. This, too, gave the Company its opportunity, and thus we created the circumstances that gave the Company its control over India. Hence it is truer to say that we gave India to the English than that India was lost.[27]

One can see how Gandhi while critiquing British Colonialism, develops a critique for the Indian society also. He felt troubled to see how Indian princes and general masses shunned their culture and tradition for money and easy profits from the British. Gandhi thus like Fanon had no problem in criticizing his own people along with British. But his criticism somehow fell short of the 'real issues at hand'. The reason for such an approach in Gandhi's thought was because of his belief that people are not simply divided into classes, but rather there are layers of hierarchies in which each men and women find themselves. Power for Gandhi didn't lie at one focal point, but was multidimensional and having many sites. For Gandhi everyone was the center of some sort of power, where not only one gets exploited, but the exploited, exploit others. Thus for Gandhi 'quest for autonomy, harmony, and justice is never ending'.[28]

One can see from here that problem for Gandhi was not the people, but the institutions which shape them and which they work with. The problem of colonialism in Gandhian thought thus doesn't end with British leaving India, as it will continue with the culture and economy they will leave behind. Defining Swaraj, Gandhi says, "In effect it means this: that we want English rule without the Englishman. You want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India English, and, when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want."[29]

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[27] Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[28] Terchek, 'Gandhi, Nonviolence and Conflict,' p. 120.

[29] Gandhi , *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, p. 28

Gandhi was highly critical of the modern world which Europe and particularly Britain had embodied. He completely rejected the notion of modernity as evil, as satanic and longed for his own true Indian civilization:

> Let us first consider what state of things is described by the word 'civilisation'. Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life. We will take some examples... Formerly, people had two or three meals consisting of homemade bread and vegetables; now, they require something to eat every two hours, so that they have hardly leisure for anything else. What more need I say? And, if anyone speaks to the contrary, know that he is ignorant. This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor of religion... Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth... This civilisation is irreligion, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad... This civilisation is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed. According to the teaching of Mahomed this would be considered a satanic civilisation. Hinduism calls it the Black Age... Parliaments are really emblems of slavery. If you will sufficiently think over this, you will entertain the same opinion, and cease to blame the English. They rather deserve our sympathy...[30]

So decolonization for Gandhi meant an escape from 'modernity' – railways, western cultures, modern capitalistic system and moving back to that pristine, and religious Indian civilization. For him, taking the road of modernity meant alienation, injustice and being irreligious.

Fanon though stood on the same ground with Gandhi when it came to understand the question of colonialism. But he moved much beyond Gandhi's simplistic formulations and generalizations. His arguments are much layered and quite complex as compared to those by M.K Gandhi. Being a psychiatrist himself, colonialism for Fanon wasn't only exploiting the physicality (Economy, body, etc.) of the colonized, but also the mental (consciousness, culture, history, etc.) But still Fanon escapes oversimplification of facts and tries to enter the ruins of the colonized and from it he creates his own understanding of colonialism. Thus argues Fanon that under colonialism "the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action

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[30] Ibid., pp. 36-38.

maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force."[31]

Many scholars have erroneously picked up Fanon's argument of colonial violence and counter-violence as his main theses. Fanon doesn't actually stop at this simplistic division of violence vs. non-violence, but he broadens the definition of violence and adds many new angles to avoid this simplistic understanding. An exclusive focus on violence in reading of Fanon comes either by reading some selected parts of his works or misappropriating him. Like Gandhi, Fanon also doesn't seem to believe that once colonizers leave, it will end colonialism. Fanon's understanding of decolonization takes many things under its ambit, one of which is the class analysis of the colonized. He takes good stock of the revolutionary and the collaborator forces within the colonized community. Unlike Gandhi, he doesn't glorify the past to be passed on for the future, rather he appreciates critical understanding of self. Thus writes Fanon,

> Self-criticism has been much talked about of late, but few people realize that it is an African institution. Whether in the *djemaas* of northern Africa or in the meetings of western Africa, tradition demands that the quarrels which occur in a village should be settled in public. It is communal self-criticism, of course, and with a note of humor, because everybody is relaxed, and because in the last resort we all want the same things. But the more the intellectual imbibes the atmosphere of the people, the more completely he abandons the habits of calculation, of unwonted silence, of mental reservations, and shakes off the spirit of concealment. And it is true that already at that level we can say that the community triumphs and that it spread its own light and its own reason.[32]

Fanon seems to be having problem with various aspects of modernity within the confines of bourgeois definitions. Unlike Gandhi he doesn't simply negate 'modernity', rather he contextualizes it and then redefines most of the terms, be it decolonization, colony, nation, justice, industrialization, democracy etc. Like Gandhi his definition of 'decolonization' comes after he defines colonialism and colonial exploitation. Fanon argues that it (decolonization) will mean nothing to the natives, if the 'wand of power' is simply passed from colonizers to the natives. For him, future of a 'nation' depends on the classes which will possess the resources

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[31] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 37.

[32] Ibid., pp. 46-47.

and device policies on behalf of the entire nation once colonizers leave the colony. He is very critical of 'national bourgeois' whom he believes will betray the cause of anti-colonial struggle by occupying and imitating the oppressive structure left by the colonizers, in Fanon's words the national bourgeoise 'will soon discover its historic mission: that of intermediary'[33] and for them Fanon further argues, 'For them, nationalization does not mean governing the state with regard to the new social relations whose growth it has been decided to encourage. To them, nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period.'[34]

Thus decolonization for Fanon means something where power remains with the people and not with the bourgeoisie, and where people will continuously fight for a 'critical past' for reconstituting the 'new self' and for an egalitarian future. At times Fanon's idea of decolonization resembles a socialist revolution and this remains the most powerful and complex formulations of Fanon. This realization comes from the fact that Fanon doesn't believe that a new bourgeoisie in the former colonies can stand on its feet, and thus it will necessarily support the mother country to carry forward its imperialist mission. Fanon loathes the new bourgeois so much so that he says, "The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries must not be opposed because it threatens to slow down the total, harmonious development of the nation. It must simply be stoutly opposed because, literally, it is good for nothing."[35] In Gandhi, one misses these clear cut and honest observations about various classes of a colony.

Fanon is very categorical that after the 'national liberation' one party leading the government and one leader who has become a 'cult', a 'legend' will not help the new nation in any way. What is needed according to Fanon is 'people's participation' in the new nation building otherwise if left to few chosen, it will lead the former colony into degeneration. Describing the relation between the party and the people, Fanon argues, "The masses should know that the government and the party are at their service. A deserving people, in other words a people conscious of its dignity, is

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[33] Ibid., p. 151.

[34] Ibid., p. 151.

[35] Ibid., p. 174-175.

a people that never forgets these facts."[36] One can see how dialectically Fanon reaches the very practical questions which a former colony will be facing after decolonization in a very detailed manner. And this he does unlike Gandhi (who remains a utopian in his ideas) in a very historical way, keeping in view the space and time he is talking about.

Gandhi, Fanon and Post-Colonialism

The above discussion has now made us reach a point where we can see for ourselves that how Gandhi and Fanon developed their thought and how despite their similarities, they were far apart in more than one ways. While one can go on arguing that both Gandhi and Fanon resemble in various facets, but once we scratch the surface of their respective ideologies, we can see how different and how diverse their thoughts were. But there has been a trend going on since 1980's where names and ideas of both Gandhi and Fanon are taken in same breath and thought to resemble more than they differ. Before 1980's Gandhi was mostly appropriated in the Nationalist discourse by various South Asian and Indian scholars. Similarly Fanon was a part of nationalist and Marxist discourses in his first *Avatar*. But since 1980's, the division of 'east and west', 'colonizer and colonized' became sharp enough and Gandhi and Fanon were and are being placed in same compartment. This new theorization comes from the post-colonial and post-structural scholars like Edward Said, Homi Bhaba, etc.

Post-colonial scholars base themselves on the basic idea that 'east and west', 'orient and occident' are fundamentally different. The ideas and structures which define West they argue cannot help us in the understanding of the East. Thus the ideas of 'modernity' and various other 'universals' like justice, democracy, humanism etc. cannot define east/the orient. What east needs, argue these scholars is its own ideas, own philosophers and its own strictures to understand its own 'self'.

In this new discourse, the post-colonial scholars try to recover 'the native self' wherever they can – from arts, politics, culture to history. Many political activists, writers etc. are thus purged from their 'western adulteration' and their native self is recovered. Gandhi and Fanon are also part of

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[36] Ibid., p. 197.

this grand discourse – of this new 'metanarrative'. From Said, Bhaba to Ashish Nandy almost every post-colonial thinkers tries to delink Fanon and Gandhi from their western ideas and prove them to be the vanguards of the new 'nativity'. But after going through the writings of both these political theorist, it seems impossible to put them in the same box and define their thought in the same definitions. Despite both being thoroughly anti-colonial theorists both Gandhi and Fanon differ a lot in their political philosophy. Where Gandhi's philosophy is a moral-spiritual one, Fanon is clearly a 'materialist philosopher' who has a 'concrete solution for a concrete problem'.

As we saw above Gandhi's philosophy is in fact anti-modernity and is somehow a call for 'nativity' and he doesn't shy away from these bold calls. Here we will be discussing the merits of these claims, but rather whether they can be labeled as 'post-colonial'. Gandhi's faith in the Vaishnavite philosophy, his rejection of modernity, and his ambivalence on the idea of nation make him a thinker who can be easily tagged under the 'post-colonial' discourse.

Fanon's case is very different as compared to Gandhi. Though he questions various ideas about 'modernity', but he never rejects them out rightly. Rather his interventions in a way enrich many ideas – be it socialism, nationalism etc. As we saw above he broadens the definitions of these concepts and adds the colonial specificity to them. But problem arises when one starts reading Fanon's works selectively, choosing few over others and leaving much of his writings. Also historical context and evolution of Fanon's ideas are ignored while studying Fanon. Thus we don't have one Fanon, but at least three Fanon's – the anti-colonial Fanon, psychoanalyst Fanon, and the revolutionary socialist Fanon. But most of the times, scholars don't think to ask, what connects these three Fanon's. Rather what is tried to prove time and again is the difference that one can see between earlier Fanon and later Fanon. Thus scholars like Bhaba have continuously tried to prove Fanon to be walking the post-colonial path where he not only criticizes universals, but even shed them at times and thus turns to specificities. Thus argues Bhaba,

> Fanon's question is not addressed to such a unified notion of history nor such a unitary concept of Man. It is one of the original and disturbing qualities of *Black Skin, White Masks* that it rarely historicizes the colonial experience. There is no master narrative or realist perspective that

provides a background of social and historical facts against which emerge the problems of the individual or collective psyche.[37]

While trying to prove Fanon having no 'master narrative' or any universal category in his armory, Bhaba ignores certain ideas which continuously work as a thread throughout the writings of Fanon. The idea of class remains persistently all through the works of Fanon. This has been clearly emphasized by scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein, Aijaz Ahmad and Lazarus.[38] Wallerstein argues, "the class struggle, is never centrally discussed as such anywhere in Fanon's writings. And yet it is central to his world-view and to his analyses. For, of course, Fanon was brought up in a Marxist culture—in Martinique, in France, in Algeria. The language he knew and that of all those he worked with was impregnated with Marxist premises and vocabulary."[39]

Along with 'class' Fanon, understood and wrote about 'imperialism' and its dangers in quite detail. In the age of Global capital, when whole world seems to be in the grip of imperialism, Post-colonial and post-structuralist scholars like Bhaba would like us to be believe that we are not only in post-nation, post-colonial, but also in post-imperial age. Their whole focus is on the 'fragments' and not on the 'whole' thus obfuscating the systemic significance of modern imperialism. Lazarus has summed up our current situation quite well. He argues, "If the grim unfolding of events in Afghanistan and Iraq over the course of the past decade have taught us anything at all, it must surely be that all the millennial post-cold war talk, on both sides of the political ledger, of a 'new world order', was premature. For this vaunted 'new world order, has already turned out not to be so very different, after all, from the 'old world order' of Fanon's time."[40]

This statement by Lazarus points to the fact that the divisions 'new and old world', the arguments of 'end of ideology' and 'end of history' were in fact farce and a creation of new changed scenario. Post-colonial studies was a product of this period and very well took within it many of these formulations one of which is the contempt and negation for every universal

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[37]Bhaba, 'Remembering Fanon,' p. 1.

[38] See Wallerstein, 'Reading Fanon in 21st Century.'

[39] Ibid.

[40]Lazarus, *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, p. 182.

category. Despite the tall claims against universals, imperialism as a category survived and took a new form. Fanon seems to be aware of the dangers of imperialism and how it can slowly crawl back into the new spaces. Thus he not only cautioned against it, but also talked of destroying it completely. Thus, Fanon wrote in *The Wretched of the Earth,* "That imperialism which today is fighting against a true liberation of mankind leaves in its wake here and there tinctures of decay which we must search out and mercilessly expel from our land and our spirits."[41] He further argues,

> Colonialism and imperialism have not paid their score when they withdraw their flags and their police forces from our territories. For centuries the capitalists have behaved in the underdeveloped world like nothing more than war criminals. Deportations, massacres, forced labor, and slavery have been the main methods used by capitalism to increase its wealth, its gold or diamond reserves, and to establish its power."[42]

Thus, unlike Post-Colonial thinkers, Fanon very much grounded his arguments with Colonialism, Capitalism and Imperialism in his mind. What he suggested might be specific for the context of Algeria and some other African countries, but he nowhere forgets that universal drive of global capital which he captures well in his writings.

The difference between Gandhi and Fanon comes out strikingly when it comes to historicizing ideas and structures. Gandhi's moral-spiritual philosophy ignores history and bases itself more on idealism and romanticism of past, but Fanon's strength lies in his focus on historical specificity and a materialist understanding of 'colonial experience'. His ideas are not restricted only to 'colonial experience', neither 'nationalism' nor 'nation', rather in his writings he continuously links national liberation with internationalism. Fanon's intellectual journey and revolutionary praxis may indeed inspire 'a process of intense discovery and disorientation'[43], but it is restrictive if not misplaced to present him within the post-colonial framework. Fanon's unequivocal assertion that national liberation struggles are transitory stages leading towards larger anti-imperialist struggle of the colonized people makes it amply clear that Fanon had no

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[41]Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 248.

[42] Ibid., p. 100.

[43]Bhaba, 'Remembering Fanon,' p. 1.

intention of restricting his worldview according to the postcolonial categories of race and hybridity. One cannot miss how Fanon wrote so clearly in the following lines,

> If man is known by his acts, then we will say that the most urgent thing today for the intellectual is to build up his nation. If this building up is true, that is to say if it interprets the manifest will of the people and reveals the eager African peoples, then the building of a nation is of necessity accompanied by the discovery and encouragement of universalizing values. Far from keeping aloof from other nations, therefore, it is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows. And this two-fold emerging is ultimately only the source of all culture.[44]

[44] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 247.

Conclusion

> The Third World today faces Europe like a colossal mass whose aim should be to try to resolve the problems to which Europe has not been able to find the answers.[1]

Rise of a new human civilization emerging from the fetters of a dying colonialism was the key theme in the political philosophy of Fanon and Gandhi. While it remained the horizon of their political thought they were not blind to the fact that the liberated nation itself faced certain challenges from both within and outside. In a sense both Gandhi and Fanon had the opportunity to witness the traumatic and unforeseen denouement of the anti-colonial project in their own lives. While Gandhi was witness to the tragic event of the partition and the communal bloodbath that followed the Indian independence, Fanon could see how the new ruling classes in the independent nations embroiled the nations in neo-colonial fetters. In this regard both these luminaries had the opportunity to glimpse at the future of their own legacy.

This dissertation within its limited scope has tried to survey the historic contribution of Gandhi and Fanon to the anti-colonial project. It has tried to delineate the historical context in which they operated and the epistemological foundations that informed their political and philosophical formulations. Both of them had to engage with modernity which was the philosophical edifice of colonial discourses and expose the fissures that were obfuscated by colonial knowledge apparatus. While they differed on issues related to the future of the colonial project in terms of the correlation of classes and role of the national consciousness in uniting the newly independent states, their scathing critique of the colonial culture being instrumental in destroying the native culture was one area where their convergence will remain a lasting pillar in the larger panorama of anti-colonial agenda.

This dissertation has also attempted to approach Gandhi and Fanon beyond the theoretical paradigm formulated on violence and non-violence. Obviously the question of violence is an important reference point for these two luminaries of anti-colonial struggle but by no means is the question of violence central to their political project. What this dissertation has tried to bring to focus is the political nuances of their anti-colonial project. While the post-colonial and

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[1] Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. p. 313.

subaltern schools have tried to assess the contribution of these two figures from the perspective of fragments and margins of the political spectrum which has obviously enriched the understanding of the reception and ramifications of their political formulations, it goes without saying that neither Gandhi nor Fanon can be restricted within sectional and ideological paradigms. What this dissertation tries to appreciate is the fact that both these figure were trying to develop a critique of the all pervasive philosophical, political, social and economic system that colonialism had developed. Moreover their ideas were not formulated in isolation from the masses which comprised of multiplicity of differences. Rather their ideas developed from the churning of the anti-colonial mass struggles which galvanized and equipped the masses in their struggle against colonialism. While this dissertation does not claim that the ideas they formulated had a transcendental character but the mass reception and lasting legacy of their ideas testify to the fact that they manifest a genuine awareness of the mass world view of the anti-colonial struggles. It is this phenomenon which Gandhi and Fanon had articulated in their philosophical intervention that has kept them relevant as reference points for new struggles.

The legacies of Gandhi and Fanon have seen many transformations. Their legacies continue to be invoked in India, Algeria and elsewhere. In India, Gandhi is the 'Father' of the nation, his pictures adorn the walls of major institutions in the country, from the Indian Parliament to police stations and court houses across the country. However, this routine invocation of Gandhi by the state and the powerful elite has perhaps ironically been accompanied by a systematic marginalisation of Gandhian ideas in the policy discourse. Even before independence, the Gandhian economist J.C. Kumarappa, who had been appointed to the National Planning Commission (NPC) in 1937, resigned in protest against the NPC's refusal "to put the village at the centre of planning".[2] After independence he was deputed by the Sarva Seva Sangh to represent it in the Planning Commission's Advisory Body. However, he soon resigned – realising, as Ramachandra Guha puts it, that he was a "minority of one".[3] Guha refers to Kumarappa's career to point out what he calls "the marginalization of the Gandhian alternative".

This 'marginalisation of the Gandhian alternative' has played out in various ways. Similarly the official position of many African nationalist leaders and third world political

[2] Guha, 'Mahatma Gandhi and the Environmental Movement' in Mahesh Rangarajan , p. 123.

[3] Ibid., 123.

parties who identified closely with the anti-colonial intellectual contributions of Frantz Fanon have ignored most of the concerns that Fanon raised about the pitfalls of national consciousness. A major instance of empty iconization of Fanon can be traced in the post-Apartheid South Africa where the regime change did not initiate the process of democratization of society and equal distribution of resources as envisioned by Fanon. Fanon in fact, was highly suspicious of the national bourgeoisie whose weaknesses he succinctly characterized in *The Wretched of the Earth*: "It mimics the western bourgeoisie in its negative and decadent aspects without having accomplished the initial phases of exploration and invention that are the assets of this Western bourgeoisie whatever the circumstances."[4]

Fanon calls attention to two distinct tendencies in the newly independent states. He observes that the ruling elite of the newly independent states instead of fostering a fraternal relationship with the tribes and sections in colonized society who were part of the anti-colonial project takes a devious route of creating divisions in the federal unity by dividing the society on caste, tribe and religious lines. They exploit the oppressive fissures created by colonial policy to create a set of collaborators in the tribal groups who will follow the divisive policies of the national elite:

> As far as national unity is concerned the party will also make many mistakes, as for example when the so-called national party behaves as a party based on ethnic differences. It becomes, in fact, the tribe which makes itself into a party. This party which of its own will proclaims that it is a national party, and which claims to speak in the name of the totality of the people, secretly, sometimes even openly, organizes an authentic ethnic dictatorship. We no longer see the rise of a bourgeois dictatorship, but a tribal dictatorship. The ministers, the members of the cabinet, the ambassadors and local commissioners are chosen from the same ethnological group as the leader, sometimes directly from his own family. Such regimes of the family sort seem to go back to the old laws of inbreeding, and not anger but shame is felt when we are faced with such stupidity, such an imposture, such intellectual and spiritual poverty....These heads of the government are the true traitors in Africa, for they sell their country to the most terrifying of all its enemies: stupidity. This tribalizing of the central authority, it is certain, encourages regionalist ideas and separatism. All the decentralizing tendencies spring up again and triumph, and the nation falls to pieces, broken in bits.[5]

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[4] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 101..
[5] Ibid., p. 183.

The purpose of the national elite as Fanon scathingly puts is not to awaken the consciousness of the masses for a larger development of the productive forces as that will involve larger sharing of the resources and power. Instead the national elite creates a façade of national services and institutions which are less inclined to empower the people by providing services and more inclined to develop a relationship of client and patron where the bureaucracy consolidates itself by preferential treatments and nepotism:

> The party, instead of welcoming the expression of popular discontent, instead of taking for its fundamental purpose the free flow of ideas from the people up to the government, forms a screen, and forbids such ideas. The party leaders behave like common sergeant-majors, frequently reminding the people of the need for "silence in the ranks." This party which used to call itself the servant of the people, which used to claim that it worked for the full expression of the people's will, as soon as the colonial power puts the country into its control hastens to send the people back to their caves.[6]

Gandhi perhaps did not envision the degree of sheer authoritarianism that would become a hallmark of governance in the new nation State and its ruling parties. But Fanon's observation about the authoritarian metamorphosis in the political culture of the very same party that had claimed to represent the popular, democratic anti-colonial will, seems especially prescient in the Indian context, as much as it is so in the African one. With the formation of the Indian nation State, the vigorous energies of popular uprisings, democratic dissent, civil disobedience, even non-violent modes of dissent and protest that all contributed directly to throwing off the colonial yoke, are now treated by the ruling elite as akin to sedition.

Fanon also comments on the authoritarian and centralizing model of leadership:

> "Leader": the word comes from the English verb "to lead," but a frequent French translation is "to drive." The driver, the shepherd of the people, no longer exists today. The people are no longer a herd; they do not need to be driven. If the leader drives me on, I want him to realize that at the same time I show him the way; the nation ought not to be something bossed by a Grand Panjandrum.[7]

This tragic denouement of the call of anti-colonial unity of the people and democratic spirit of the anti-colonial struggle had obviously pained Fanon, but his acute sense of

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[6] Ibid., p. 182.
[7] Ibid., p. 183.

revolutionary intellectual honesty called upon him to draw the attention of the people to the sad destiny of anti-colonial project. But Fanon does not take refuge in pessimism, he prescribes that the only way to restore the radical content and democratic potential of the unity of different classes is forging practical unity through decentralization of power:

> The awakening of the whole people will not come about all at once; the people's work in the building of the nation will not immediately take on its full dimensions: first because the means of communication and transmission are only beginning to be developed; secondly because the yardstick of time must no longer be that of the moment or up till the next harvest, but must become that of the rest of the world, and lastly because the spirit of discouragement which has been deeply rooted in people's minds by colonial domination is still very near the surface. But we must not overlook the fact that victory over those weaknesses which are the heritage of the material and spiritual domination of the country by another is a necessity from which no government will be able to escape.[8]

And Fanon elaborated on the perspective and priorities that would characterize a truly democratic and national mode of governance, fundamentally different from the colonial one:

> The settler was singularly forgetful of the fact that he was growing rich through the death throes of the slave. In fact what the settler was saying to the native was "Kill yourself that I may become rich." Today, we must behave in a different fashion. We ought not to say to the people: "Kill yourselves that the country may become rich." If we want to increase the national revenue, and decrease the importing of certain products which are useless, or even harmful, if we want to increase agricultural production and overcome illiteracy, we must explain what we are about. The people must understand what is at stake. Public business ought to be the business of the public. So the necessity of creating a large number of well-informed nuclei at the bottom crops up again.[9]

For Fanon, expressions of democratic intent on part of leaders or rulers were not enough to guarantee a democratic and anti-imperialist model of governance: the only guarantee of that could be to ensure that the people, the 'public,' can participate in a fully informed and democratic way in the decision-making process.

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[8] Ibid., pp. 193-194.
[9] Ibid., p. 193.

While the dominant discourse emanating from the ruling elite of nation states try to appropriate the legacy of Gandhi and Fanon by emptying the anti-colonial and democratic participatory content of both the figures, a whole range of new social movements have started deriving their ideological formulations from the works of Gandhi and Fanon. These new social movements have opened many new avenues of perceiving the modes of struggle enshrined in Gandhi and Fanon in the context of analyzing the assault of rapacious global capital in the third world countries. Most of these movements are questioning the model of development that is being foisted by the ruling oligarchic elite at the behest of the imperialist capitalist interests. While the planks and terrain of the struggles remain multifarious like indigenous rights over land, forest and resources, environment, national self determination, anti-caste movements etc, what unites these movements in purpose, irrespective of their different philosophical origins, is the context of imperialist oppression which has re-incarnated itself in a neo-colonial mode of the global North and controls the resources of the global South with active collaboration of national bourgeois leadership which Fanon so pithily describes in his *The Wretched of the Earth.*

Two major tendencies can be noticed in the new social movements which invoke Gandhi and Fanon in a completely new method. One set of movements approach the question of development from the perspective of participatory nation building that was envisioned by Fanon. Fanon's prescription is edifying in the context of the content and meaning of development in the newly independent nations:

> If the building of a bridge does not enrich the consciousness of those working on it, then don't build the bridge,...the bridge must not be pitch forked or foisted upon the social landscape by a *deux ex machine*, but, on the contrary must be the product of the citizen's brain muscles...And there is no doubt architects and engineers, foreigners for the most part, will probably be needed, but the local party leaders must see to it that techniques seep into the desert of the citizen's brain so that the bridge in its entirety and in every detail can be integrated, redesigned, and reappropriated. The citizen must appropriate the bridge.[10]

This tendency is not overtly against modern technology but maintains the crucial rider that the technological development should have the active participation of the people and the authority of the resource distribution circuits should remain with the people. The other tendency which is far more akin to a radical reorientation of Gandhi looks at technology as a problem. This school

[10] Ibid., p. 200.

appropriates Gandhi's ideas against modern technology and *Gram Swaraj* in a completely new eco-critical fold. For them the modern economy based on neoliberal development and technological progress is undesirable in its very essence. As opposed to it they propose a participatory sustainable model of alternative development which is rooted in the celebration of traditional wisdom of communities and self sustaining ecologies of human interaction and exchange as enshrined in Gandhi's vision of *gram swaraj*. These social movements locate the origin of the problems not in the hierarchical power relation of social class forces but in the manifestation of the contradictions that the global capitalist developmental model unleashes on the global south. As distinct from this, the tendencies that reincarnate Fanon are rooted in a class based understanding of global developmental designs. Despite these philosophical differences both these tendencies have opened new possibilities of vibrant mass resistance against the rapacious assault of global capital. Increasingly, mass movements in erstwhile colonies that are resisting neoliberal policies and asserting the rights of peasants or indigenous people to national resources against the moves to transfer them to local and global corporations, are informed by perspectives, concerns, and insights that can be said to draw from both Gandhi and Fanon. It is in the churning of the new social and political movements that a completely new radical appreciation of the ideas of Gandhi and Fanon has become possible.

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