MOVING BEYOND THIS MOMENT:
EMPLOYING DELEUZE AND
GUATARRI'S RHIZOME IN
POSTCOLONIALISM

by

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this project is two-fold: to discuss the limits of Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theories, and to then present a possible model for turning "the 'thing' colonized [into] a new man" (Wretched 2) by liberating "him" from Fanon's desire for inclusion. Or, to put this in other terms, this investigation seeks to highlight one of the most limiting factors in Fanonian postcolonial theory: Fanon's grounding in European humanism.

The goal is not to criticize Fanon's theories, but to point out the limits of them so that these limits can be addressed in order to further the theories' effectiveness. By demonstrating the origins of Fanon's humanism it becomes possible to truly free postcolonial individuals from the oppressions of colonization. As long as there is even the slightest reliance on colonial logic, there can be no true liberation for the colonized since colonial thought and thinking will be at the very base of the newly decolonized world. As long as there are traces of the colonizer, there can be no true sovereignty, no true humanity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> And this land screamed for centuries that we are beastial brutes; that the human pulse stops at the gates of the barracoon . . . Nothing could ever lift us toward a noble hopeless adventure. So bet it. So be it.
>
> Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*

> The end of colonization should have brought with it freedom and prosperity. The colonized would give birth to the citizen, master of his political, economic, and cultural destiny. After decades of imposed ignorance, his country, now free, would affirm its sovereignty. Opulent or indulgent, it would reap the rewards of its labor, of its soil and subsoil. Once its native genius was given free rein, the use of its recovered language would allow native culture to flourish . . . Unfortunately, in most cases, the long anticipated period of freedom, won at the cost of terrible suffering, brought with it poverty and corruption, violence, and sometimes chaos . . . Certainly, we shouldn't underestimate efforts that bear fruit, but, for the majority, things haven't changed much. There has been a change of masters, but, like new leeches, the new ruling classes are often greedier than the old.
>
> Albert Memmi, *Decolonization and the Decolonized*

The aim of this project is two-fold: to discuss the limits of Frantz Fanon's postcolonial theories, and to, then, present a possible model for turning "the 'thing' colonized [into] a new man" (*Wretched* 2) by liberating "him" from Fanon's desire for inclusion. Or, to put this in other terms, I have sought to show that one of the limiting factors in Fanonian postcolonial theory is that it is too grounded in European humanism. Since the colonizer's humanity is largely grounded in the humanistic view that humans are separate from, and superior to all non-human "things," there seems to be no way to work through the feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and anxiety that were felt during colonization. It becomes difficult to be included if the system into which you desire inclusion is based on exclusion.

Looking at a nation such as Vietnam, one can see the progression from colonization to postcolonization, and its repercussions.[1] Colonized by the Chinese, the French, and the United States, the Vietnamese people fought to liberate themselves from foreign governments, who each instituted its own series of oppressions. Where the Chinese placed its leaders in Vietnam, the French, the Japanese, and the United States left "native" leaders in place, but controlled their movements. In 1945, when Ho Chi Minh began fighting against the remaining colonial powers (the French and later the Americans) his actions were done under the guise of restoring sovereignty to the Vietnamese people. Minh won—and the singularness of this noun is not without irony. True to Memmi's quote, Minh's government became just as oppressive—if not more—than the previous colonial powers. Under Minh's control, land and property were stripped from individuals, citizens were rounded up and killed, and freedoms of speech were denied; however, while common citizens were growing increasingly destitute, members of the government (and their friends and families) grew wealthy.

[1] Because Frantz Fanon himself looks to Vietnam as an example of decolonization in action, I find it a fitting example here as well. In order to avoid the interpretation that this is an "African problem," I would like to expand the discussion to show that similar problems with postcolonial nations exist wherever colonization has occurred. In doing so, I aim to highlight the larger problem with postcolonialism itself, and not the problem with a region or a group of people affected by colonialism. However, this is in no way an attempt to lump all (post)colonized people into one monolithic group, ignoring regional and cultural differences.

Granted, this is a gross condensation of both time and history; however, similar patterns can be seen in countries such as Libya, Zimbabwe, and Burma—among others. What remains is a question of "why?" Césaire, too, seems to be (partially) correct in his observation that "the human pulse stops at the gates of the barracoon." However, two things are unclear: first, in cases similar to Vietnam, from which direction does "the human pulse" stop if oppression continues under the new "liberated" nation? And, second, is it that the "human pulse" stops, or is it that the concept of "humanity" stops at the gates? It is from this perspective that I began this project.

From the onset, there has never been, for me, a question of "how do postcolonial individuals 'reclaim' their 'humanity?'" In fact, this question has always seemed a bit strange because humanity, as I have understood it, is something that one is; not something that one finds, or becomes. Therefore, humanity is not something that can be "lost" or "reclaimed. Yet, theorists such as Frantz Fanon have used this as one of the main impetus for decolonization: "And at the very moment when they discover their humanity, [the colonized] begin to sharpen their weapons to secure its victory" (*Wretched* 8). What is unclear from this passage is to who, or to what, does "its" refer? Does it refer to the colonized? To the colonized's weapons? Or to the colonized's humanity? Fanon seems to answer this when he states that "decolonization unifies [the] world by a radical decision to remove [the colonial] heterogeneity, by unifying it on the grounds of nation and sometimes race. . . The minimum demand is that the last become the first" (10). Fanon's desire to be seen as equal to the previous colonizers seems counterproductive because it bases the postcolonial individual's humanity on the humanity of the colonizers.

By combining postcolonialism with posthumanism, it becomes possible to find a mode of existence that is not predicated on a system of categories or on a plea for acceptance. Vying for acceptance is debilitating—and potentially counterproductive to the postcolonial's desire for progress towards a non-segregated existence—because it means assimilation. However, this is

not to say that all acceptances are debilitating and potentially counterproductive. The acceptance discussed here is the acceptance that Fanon asks from the colonizing whites. This acceptance requires the postcolonial to acquiesce, or comply with the established rules of their previous colonizers, in turn re-subjugating them to the same system of power from which they just broke free. Instead of demanding acceptance, as Fanon calls for, postcolonials should instead seek to understand how they fit in the world. They should come to understand—or would it be more accurate to say return to an understanding of—the interconnectivity of their being *in* the world. The postcolonial individual needs to break from the cycle of manipulation and domination which held them captive during colonization, and instead find a way to understand the world as a symbiotic entity that allows for existences that do not require comparison, compartmentalization, or segregation. Illustrating this possibility is precisely the work of this thesis.

I have divided my argument into three chapters. The first chapter establishes Fanon's theory as a theory based in the European humanisms of his time. My purpose is not to point out what Fanon should have done, but to point out what was done, and why. My purpose is to recognize where Fanon's theories lie so that we who use them can better understand how to improve upon them. I have chosen to focus on Fanon because, within the time period that he wrote, he is one of the most prolific theorists addressing the subject of (post)colonization. Therefore, much of his work establishes a ground from which later theorists such as Homi Bhabha and Gyatari Spivak write. Because of Fanon's influence, it is important to understand where he is coming from so that his "destination" can more successfully be reached.

The second chapter introduces a posthumanist argument into Fanon's thinking in order to propose a shift from the European humanism of Fanon's time. This chapter, more than any of the others, is theoretical. For my argument, however, I have forgone the broader posthumanist argument—ideas such as Donna Haraway's cyborg, and Cary Wolfe's new (post)humanities—in favor of a more specific approach. Working with Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattrai's theories

on the rhizome and becomings, I approach Fanon's humanism and show how both the rhizome and becomings offer a new perspective for moving away from the European humanism that informs Fanon's work. The rhizome and becomings are to be viewed as residing within the field of posthumanism because they seek to separate humanity from its place apart from the world. By resituating Being within a framework of inclusion—within a framework of multiplicities—the rhizome and becomings offer Fanon's theories, as well as postcolonial individuals who learn from Fanon's theories, a way to exist with, and not against, other individuals. By weaving together the two theories (of posthumanism and postcolonialism) it is the goal of this chapter to illustrate the visible link between the postcolonial individual and the posthuman individual. As the chapter will be theoretical, it will aim to construct a groundwork from which an application, which will happen in the third chapter's textual analysis, can occur.

Finally in the third chapter, Octavia E. Butler's *Xenongenesis* series (focusing on the final book, *Imago*) is used to illustrate the theories discussed within the first two chapters. As the second chapter is highly theoretical, chapter three seeks a more practical approach to the theory. Although *Xenogenesis* is a novel about alien encounters, in no way does the chapter's argument propose "interspecies" mixing as the final result of a rhizomatic postcolonialism. Instead, the chapter focuses on the relationships explores within the novel in order to illustrate the theories of Fanon and the rhizome.

In all, this thesis sets out not to criticize Fanon's theories, but to point out the limits of them so that these limits can be addressed in order to further the theories' effectiveness. By demonstrating the origins of Fanon's humanism it becomes possible to truly free postcolonial individuals from the oppressions of colonization. As long as there is even the slightest reliance on colonial logic, there can be no true liberation for the colonized since colonial thought and thinking will be at the very base of the newly decolonized world. It is for this reason that countries such as Vietnam, Zimbabwe, and Burma have succumbed to corrupt and oppressive

governments once they won liberation from their colonizers. As long as there are traces of the colonizer, there can be no true sovereignty, no true humanity.

CHAPTER 2

FANON'S HUMANISM

> Within one week after his appearance Fanon was carrying out what are still regarded as feats. He had interviewed as many doctors and nurses as he could when he first arrived. He asked them what their ideas of mental illness were, and he made it clear that unlike his predecessor he did not regard his role as a passive one. He meant to be a working doctor and teacher, for Blida was not only a hospital but a teaching institution. And in effect, Fanon's influence was felt in his dealings with patients, colleagues, and students. As in other mental hospitals of the day, at Blida patients considered seriously ill or dangerous were confined to their beds by being tied to the springs. When Fanon saw this he wasted little time in changing the situation. He walked through the hospital wards unchaining men and women, informing them that henceforward they would be free to walk and talk, to consult with him and with other doctors and nurses. The effect was electric. Those who were witnesses to the event recall it as a historic day for Blida.
>
> Irene L. Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon: A Critical Study*

In her biography of Fanon, Irene L. Gendzier narrates this striking image of Fanon, the psychiatrist, defiantly marching through psychiatric wards "unchaining men and women." Here, Gendzier's narration is significant because it sets Fanon up as the "mythic liberator" (Vergès 48)—some years before the revolutionary Fanon of *Wretched of the Earth*—by clearly foreshadowing his role as the liberator of colonized peoples. Gendzier's narrative serves two

purposes: first, it is highly illustrative of Fanon's investment in liberating individuals from their system of imprisonment; second, it is illustrative of the fact that Fanon, for all of his forward thinking, remained a man "of his time" (49) who employed—to no fault of his own—those methods which he knew.

As Françoise Vergès notes, in her essay "Chains of Madness, Chains of Colonialism: Fanon and Freedom," "it does not matter whether [Gendzier's] story is true or not" because its image serves a greater purpose, which is to mark the "birth of a new era" (48). Narratives such as Gendzier's "tend to tell a story in which, in a corrupted or degraded situation, a man emerges and with the power of his will and his humanistic concern, radically transforms the situation" (48), and this is a befitting image for Fanon. Yet, here enters the second purpose for Gendzier's narrative: Fanon, despite his best efforts, remained dependent on the very ideologies that he sought to destroy. Although he marched through the wards "unchain[ing] men and women," the fact that he went to Blida "as a salaried member of the French colonial psychiatric service" cannot be ignored (Hall 31). As Stuart Hall argues in "The After-life of Frantz Fanon," it is necessary to recognize that, within Fanon's work "is also—and not just by chance—the product of . . . inter-related but unfinished dialogues" within French[2] ideology (26). As seen in his works, from *Black Skin* to *Wretched*, Fanon is constantly returning to an internal dialogue with "the traditional French colonial psychiatry and within that, with psychoanalysis, Freud and the French Freudians" (26); and with Sartrean existentialism (28) and its roots in Hegelian phenomenology; and with Negritude, "or the idea of black culture as a positive sources of identification, and the question of cultural nationalism and race as an autonomous force" (31).

It should not be mistaken, what is being questioned here is not Fanon's call for each individual to be acknowledged as a human being; such a call is both noble and necessary—especially for postcolonial individuals who have had to "discover their humanity." What is being

[2] Throughout this essay, the term French and European have been used interchangeably. This practice stems, mostly, from Fanon's own interchanging of French for Europe, as he presents indictments against all European colonization when his immediate experiences have been within French colonies. This interchange is not to collapse, or ignore the fact that each European country had its own streams of philosophy and thought, each with their own particular flavor and tones.

called into question is the fact that Fanon calls postcolonial individuals to a humanism that is grounded in the very system which he seeks to overrun. As both Hall and Vergès have noted, Fanon was undoubtedly affected, and influenced by the French systems of thought which he learned during his studies and during his career as a psychiatrist. The result of these deeply woven connections is that Fanon does not simply call postcolonial individuals to humanity; he calls them to "endeavor to create a new man" (*Wretched* 239). Or, to put it in another set of terms: because of his "colonial" influences, he calls them to create another *institution* of humanity. By creating the institution of "man," a man who "can be for himself only when he is a 'being-for-the-Other'" (Hall 28), European humanism has been successful in maintaining systems of binary exclusion, situating the world in a system of representations. Therefore, Fanon is not stating that decolonization simply seeks to "change the order of the world" (*Wretched* 2), when he speaks that

> what [the colonized] demand is not the status of the colonist, but his place. In their immense majority the colonized want the colonist's farm. There is no question for them of competing with the colonist. They want to take his place (23)

he means to say that the colonized set out to reinstitute a new *order* of man. This need to take one's place can also be seen in his call for postcolonial national consciousness (which he is quick to point out is not "nationalism")[3] , and is regarded by him as the "highest form of culture" as it "is capable of giving [the colonized] an international dimension" (179). In his call for a national consciousness, Fanon has focused his internal conversations on one topic. By calling for consciousness he simultaneously summons Sartrean existentialism, which calls for human subjectivity through "becoming aware" of oneself and one's responsibility for his/her actions (Sartre 36), and training in French psychiatry, which (at the time) sought to "enable man no

[3] Fanon makes clear that national consciousness is different from nationalism in his chapter "On National Culture " (179). The difference, as Fanon asserts, is that nationalism threatens to substitute one "system of exploitation" with another (94), while national consciousness comes through a complete "redistribution of relations between men (178).

longer to be a stranger to his environment" and return him to consciousness by way of reason (Vergès 51). And by making this a national consciousness, he brings the masses to an awareness of their actions and their responsibility to themselves.

Each of these conversations remains linked to European institutions of humanism in their own way. Both Fanon's career as a psychiatrist and his use of psychoanalytical theories in his own works is a direct result of his training. As Vergès notes, "Fanon brought to the colony the practice of the most progressive school of French psychiatry" (51), which laid the foundation for many of his concepts about the colonial situation. Although he "added to its insights his understanding of the psychological consequences of racism and colonial domination" (51), he still continued to work within his French training. When he comments that "since the other hesitated to recognize me, there remained only one solution: to make [himself] known" (*Black Skin* 115) he, as Hall recognizes, has pulled from Lacan's concept of the 'mirror phase' and its system of misrecognition yet he "substitut[es] the psychoanalytic concept of 'identification' for the Hegelian concept of 'recognition'" (26). This switch to a Hegelian recognition is important because it simultaneously calls one to understand that the object being called into recognition is a universal[4], and that the truth of that object's recognition is a "process which expresses what the [object] in truth really *is*: namely a result, or plurality of [objects] all taken together" (Hegel 157). So, even when Fanon remarks that, during decolonization, the colonized subject "discovers that his life, his breathing and his heartbeats are the same as the colonist's . . . [and] that the skin of a colonist is not worth more than the 'native's'" (*Wretched* 10), his recognition is still based on a European concept of identification stemming from recognition. In other words, he is still stuck in a system of binaries, placing the colonizer against the colonist.

[4] A Hegelian universal can be summed up as an entity "which is by and through negation, which is neither this nor that, which is a *not-this*, and with equal indifference this as well as that" (Hegel 152). In addition to this existence through presence and negation, in language, the universal not only calls the single object into focus, but it simultaneously calls all of the same objects (154). For example, when one holds a pencil and says "pencil," it is not just the immediate pencil which one calls, but all pencils, which become known through the fact that they are not pens, or markers, or etc. Universals, then, mean that an object in its singularness becomes itself by being what it is in relation to what it isn't, and in this process comes to represent all other similar objects like itself.

Another aspect of Fanon's link to Europe's institution of the human comes from his "bottomless admiration for Sartre" and Sartre's existentialism (Cherki 1), which states that "subjectivity must be the starting point" of existence (Sartre 13). Sartre's existentialism comes from his interpretation of Hegel, therefore reinforcing Fanon's connection to European ideology. For Fanon, Sartre's existentialism, which Sartre himself describes as a system where "man is constantly outside of himself" and "in projecting himself, he makes for man's existing" (50), coincided with Fanon's idea that, as Vergès puts it, "man constructs his own history, free from the chains of both alienation and desire" (49). More specifically, for Fanon, "man must seize his freedom and be free to act, to choose" (49). This can most clearly be seen in Fanon's assertion that "the black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man" (*Black Skin* 110). As Penelope Ingram discusses, in her book *The Signifying Body*, "the black man must also embrace his materiality, his 'blackness,'" because, "in a colonial setting, the black man experiences his body only through the eyes of the colonizer" (xxv). In this recognition, Fanon's internal dialogue with Sartre and Negritude come into conflict. Fanon was drawn to black consciousness as something that "is immanent in its own eyes" (*Black Skin* 135).

> [I]n terms of consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in its own eyes. I am not a potentiality of something, I am wholly what I am. I do not have to look for the universal . . . My Negro consciousness does not hold itself out as a lack. It *is*. It is its own follower. (135)

At this moment, Fanon seems ready to dive into black consciousness as the answer to his relationship to his body. If he is going to be forced into an experience of his body he would embrace his "virtuous color" ("West Indians" 23). Since Fanon found his role—as a psychiatrist—was to "restore the patient to his consciousness" (Vergès 51), finding his way to black consciousness only makes sense because it means finding a full "humanity." However, Fanon's "ascent" to black consciousness was short lived as Sartre and Lacan's influences are seen sneaking in, destabilizing Fanon's understanding of black consciousness.

> But, when one has taken it into one's head to try to express existence, one runs the risk of finding only the nonexistent . . . [A]t the very moment when I was trying to grasp my own being, Sartre, who remained The Other, gave me a name and thus shattered my last illusion . . . Not yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned" (137-38).

Fanon was reminded that his "blackness was only a minor term" (138). Through language, it has been possible to evaluate and set the parameters on what it means to exist. European based understandings of existence has found themselves caught in systems of binary oppositions (a system of "I am because I am not;" it is because it is not) which allow language to categorize things so that they can be understood in a neat order. In similar ways, Sartre and Lacan also come from an understanding of these systems of binaries, and these binaries weigh heavily in their theories. For Sartre notes that "to choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose . . . Thus, our responsibility is much greater than we might have supposed, because it involves all mankind" (*Existentialism* 17).

The binary system of language comes, as Ingram notes, from "capacity to represent, giving the subject a means by which to articulate desire" (5). Representation, then, "enables the subject to substitute for the insatiable Other" (5). In other words, language allows for one to replace the thing being called with a version (a representation) of that thing, thus pushing the "Other" into a sort of non-existence. Because the representation comes with its meaning attached, the actual "Other" that is being called loses its ability to "speak" for itself. As Heidegger understands this relationship between representational language and things, "no representation of what is present, in the sense of what stands forth and of what stands over against as an object, ever reaches to the thing *qua* thing" ("The Thing" 166) since the true "nature of the thing never comes to light, that is, it never gets a hearing" (168). Because he refuses Fanon's attempt to find his origins in Negritude, or black consciousness, Sartre remains an "Other" to Fanon. Here, it is not simply that Fanon's black consciousness has failed to free

him from this system of "Us" versus "Them." Fanon's black consciousness has failed him because Fanon has never left his European ideals of humanity behind, Sartre's recognition of black consciousness as "a transition and not a conclusion, a means and not an ultimate end" (qtd in *Black Skin* 133) further destroys the black man's ontology.

Yet, Fanon is comforted by Sartre's appropriation of the Cartesian *cogito* as being "the absolute truth of being" (Sartre 36). For Sartre, which is also something Fanon clings to, the *cogito* "is the only [theory] which gives man dignity, the only one which does not reduce him to an object" (37). However, as Ingram explains, "because the Cartesian model requires a self-knowing subject . . . Being is dependent on a prior system of representation" (xix). When Sartre insists that "man is what he conceives himself to be" after his "thrust toward existence" (15), he ignores the fact that the *cogito* necessitates a "being present to itself" (Ingram xix). Fanon's reliance on the *cogito* is seen when he remarks that he was "walled in" as "no exception was made for [his] refined manners, or [his] knowledge of literature, or [his] understanding of the quantum theory" (*Black Skin* 117). While he *thought* himself as above the stereotypes of blackness, the colonial situation showed him he was in fact not recognized as what he thought himself to be. There was a discrepancy between his thinking and his reality; and it was this discrepancy which caused his state of alienation. When in contact with the colonizing language, colonized individuals are met with the absence of self because in colonial language "there are two camps: the white and the black" (*Black Skin* 8) which, as Fanon puts it, leaves the black with "only one destination. And it is white" (10). While "black men want to prove to white men the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect" (10), colonial language prevents this because, according to its very structure of negation, requires the black to be without both intellect and real value.[5]

In relation to Fanon's desire to "forg[e] political as well as psychological bonds among African-heritage persons throughout the diaspora" (31) from the basis of experiences with

[5] Stating this in no way ignores the systems of value that have been established for colonized individuals: economic (in that they can produce wealth for the colonizer) and linguistic (in that their very "presence" allows for the negation necessary to validate the presence of the colonist.

colonization, trouble is seen as Fanon's humanism begins to create ripples in his stance on black unity, creating a tension that he was never able to work through (Hall 34). Speaking is more than an instantaneous act; rather, it carries with it a history of "speakings." For Gayatri Spivak, this concept of speaking, as it relates to the colonial Other, has been troubled because every "speaking" of the Other occurs as a form of violence as it forces the colonized to constantly adjust new "speakings" (or narratives) onto previous, "failed" narratives (280-81). Even as Fanon encounters this problem, as evidenced when he discusses how he "found that [he] was an object in the midst of other objects" that had been "put together again by another self" (*Black Skin* 109), finding the realization that "it is not [he] who make[s] a meaning for [himself], but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for [him]" (134).

As a colonized subject, Fanon understands that he has never made his own history, has never given validity to his Self, and, as a psychiatrist, he understands that all knowledge of who, and what, he is has been cast and recast on him time and again through the discursive practice of colonization. Since language names things, each speaking attempts to retrieve (if only mentally) that thing which is spoken so that "the calling," done through and by language, "calls into a nearness" that is never really near ("Language" 196). In other words, in the colonial situation language—because it is encoded with stereotypes and preconceptions—is dangerous for colonized individuals because the language with which they have been given to reference themselves (to summon an understanding of themselves in their new categorically structured lives) constantly forces them to be present yet keeps them at a distance. Fanon, in his chapter "The Negro and Language," highlights this tension—this "inner landscape"—within the colonial system, showing how the origins of colonial differences directly stem from the contact between the language of the colonizer and the language of the colonized. This is both the trap of colonization and the trap of postcoloniality because, due to the contact, the two systems of language become welded together, creating a new Creole/pigeon language. (Even if the two

languages remain syntactically and grammatically distinct, psychological overlaps that affect the perception of colonized individuals are still present.)

Still, language maintains an interesting place within colonization; it operates through leisure and necessity. The colonizer is able to view the language of the colonized as exotic and to acquire it as an exercise of leisure, all the while never having to rely upon it. When colonists come to invade it is they who look at the natives as if they are bumbling fools. No faculty of reason is granted to this new cultural context because, after all, it is the colonizer who brings "reason" with the colonial mission. The colonized, however, find themselves in a different position. From the first moment of "contact" their language is handed back to them and they gain the ability to experience language in this way. They become reliant upon it for survival and this is problematic for colonized individuals because the language with which they come into contact constantly attempts to deny them "humanness." While Fanon attempts to "unpack [the] inner landscapes" of colonization's racism and to "consider the conditions for the production of a new kind of subject and the decolonization of the mind" (Hall 19) the new subject which he attempts to create seems destined to be a return to its point of departure. Fanon seeks "nothing short of the liberation of the man of color from himself" (*Black Skin* 8), but his end result is, "quite simply the substitution of one 'species' of mankind by another" (*Wretched* 1).

The tension between Fanon's desire for a consciousness (a complete humanity) and Sartre's view that Fanon's newly found consciousness was simply a "means to an end" can be seen in Fanon's claim that "for once, that born Hegelian had forgotten that consciousness has to lose itself in the night of the absolute, the only condition to attain consciousness of self" and "in his work, [he] has destroyed black zeal" (*Black Skin* 133-35). Fanon claims that Sartre "had forgotten that the Negro suffers in his body quite differently from the white man" (*Black Skin* 138). While, in a footnote, Fanon acknowledges that "though Sartre's speculations on the existence of The Other may be correct (to the extent, we must remember, to which *Being and Nothingness* describes an alienated consciousness)," he finds that "their application to a black

consciousness proves fallacious . . . because the white man is not only The Other but also the master, whether real or imaginary" (138). Here two things occur: Fanon seeks to raise the black man to the (Hegelian) universal humanity of Sartre's existentialism, while simultaneously seeking recognition of a difference between the experiences of "men." In other words, Fanon wants to "be a man, nothing but a man" (113) but he wants to be understood as being different. In and of itself, Fanon's claim of difference is not problematic; however, what becomes problematic about it is his that his concept of man is grounded in a European concept of man. Fanon cannot "be a man" because he is preoccupied with looking for man—with looking for meaning outside of himself. By allowing himself, as Ingram argues, to signify his own meanings, acknowledging that his "ego is a psychic projection of lived bodily experiences" not a tablet of dictated meanings (44).It seems that Fanon's desire to "be a man" comes because he finds that he is not *recognized* as a man. In other words, being a man—being human—is not something that one is; it is something that one is recognized as—which is direct reflection of European humanism's binary structure (I am because I am not). More importantly, the fact that Fanon remains entangled in his European ideologies of man can be seen in the trajectory between *Black Skin* and *Wretched*. At the end of *Black Skin* Fanon has concluded that "it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for a human world . . . why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself?" (231). However, by the time he arrives at *Wretched*, he has finally decided that "if we want humanity to take one step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, then . . . we must look elsewhere besides Europe" (239). But Fanon has left himself nowhere else to look. Africa has rejected those who forgot their "Africanness," only to find it later ("West Indian" 25), and he has now overturned European consciousness, which from the start had rejected all non-Europeans. The very same feeling of being "without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity" which left him "weeping" in the theater (*Black Skin* 140) has carried itself into the claims of *Wretched*.

The full force of *Black Skin*'s claims of the psychological baggage of colonization can be felt in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Here, Fanon, advocating—practicing, and living—the literal destruction of the colonial system, seems to be directly responding from a perspective of self-internalization of this system. In other words, Fanon desires the destruction of colonization because he feels that his efforts to assimilate into it have been rejected. One moment he felt successful in his assimilation into white culture, "and then the occasion arose when [he] had to meet the white man's eyes. . . [and] the world challenged" his assumed assimilation (Black Skin 110). Fanon's call to action, then, seems to arise from this internal schism as he sets the stage for a showdown between "two protagonists": the colonized blacks and the white colonizers (*Wretched* 3). The binary system of black/white can be seen in Fanon's definition of decolonization, which he describes as "the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces that owe their singularity to the kind of reification secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation" (2). This definition reiterates the psychological effects discussed in *Black Skins*, and then seeks to reverse the order of the colonization's power structure by "hav[ing] the last move up to the front" (3). Instead of attempting to cope with one's postcoloniality and its lingering "traumas," Fanon calls for a new form of humanism, as if a new form of the same problem could remedy postcolonial individuals of their dependence on the colonizer. What happens here is that, under this call to action, postcolonial individuals find themselves, once again, subjects of the colonizer. However, this time subjugation comes by sure power of the newly liberated "post"colonials themselves. In order for postcolonial individuals to move away from the damages of the stereotype, away from the pains of subjugation, they cannot build a self-understanding on the humanist principles because humanism maintains its ontological origins in European society —even if the humanism is one constructed by postcolonial individuals themselves. As Albert Memmi articulates, newly decolonized individuals would be nothing more than "puppets . . . believ[ing] he controls his own movements" (13).

Fanon contends that language is the key to unlocking the cultures and communities of humanity since “a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language” (*Black Skin* 18). It has been argued that since language is a key element in deciphering reality, it is only through a new understanding of language that it is possible to redefine what it means to be human (Ingram xi). Part of the problem with this is the concept, as Lacan states, that “[l]anguage and its structure exist prior to the moment at which each subject at a certain point in his mental development makes his entry into it” (Lacan 81). Language, then, is a structure that exists outside of the body; it is, as Cary Wolfe states, a “phenomenon” which “require[s] an interplay of bodies as a generative structure but does not take place in any of them” (Wolfe xxiii). Fanon’s quote, then, misleads one into believing that simply acquiring language grants one access to a world, and that *any* world is capable of creating. It is this assumption that leads Fanon to be shocked when he—in the language, in the world, that he has worked so hard to master—is recognized as “a Negro” (*Black Skin* 109). He had done everything to gain access to the humanity established by the French, yet he was rejected.

In fact, Fanon’s mimicry was impeccable, as Alice Cherki, in her book *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait*, notes. Upon her first encounter with Fanon at a conference put together by the AJAAS (Association of Algerian Youth for Social Action), Cherki (rather curiously) noticed how his lecture—of which she “do[es] not remember the content”—“had been carried off in the most impeccable French” (3). In fact, she “had not realized he was black the first time [she] met him,” a point that had stopped Fanon “in his tracks” when she, for all of her good intentions, “mentioned [this to him] in passing” (3). Cherki’s recollection belies the fact that she *did* eventually “realize he was black,” no matter how “impeccable” his French was. This is precisely the problem that Fanon saw in language. Language did not erase his physical presence in the sense that it would grant him access to French “humanity.” In a colonial situation, Fanon had been constructed by the very language that he tried to master. French was used to not only

construct his place as outside of society, but to interrupt his place within society as well. There is “no longer talk of *the* body or even, for that matter, of *a* body in the traditional sense” (Wolfe xxiii; emphasis in original), only talk of representations of bodies which fail “to take account of material significations outside of these constructions” (Ingram 5). In essence, what transpires is that language becomes representative of the body of reality in that it speaks the body into existence by forcing all non-bodies into absence. For, “there is no reason why André Breton should say . . . ‘Here is a black man who handles the French language as no white man today can’” (*Black Skin* 39), other than a recognition—an admittance—that the black man is indeed not white.

And here the Sartrean humanism (existentialism) plays an important role because, if, “once thrown into the world, [the human] is responsible for everything (s)he does” (Sartre 23), then Fanon has no choice but to recognize the power he himself has given French. Since “to speak a language is to take on a world” (*Black Skin* 38), the choice to speak means to aid in “creating the man that we want to be . . . [and] at the same time create an image of the man as we think he ought to be” (Sartre 17). While Fanon continues to create his image of the French man through his appeal to French ideologies, he is constantly recognized as being outside of the system. This tension between Fanon’s desire for “the world to recognize, with [him], the open door of every consciousness” (*Black Skin* 232) and his existential recognition that his dependence on French ideologies concerning man have “contributed to an impoverishment of human reality” (“North African Syndrome” 3) is what, in his later work, draws him to call for a “substitution” of “species” (*Wretched* 1) instead of an “ethical relation with the Other” (Ingram 108). The difference between “substitution” and an “ethical relation with the Other” is that substitution implies a “simple” reversal of roles. For postcolonial individuals, no good can come from reversing roles, therefore Fanon’s call to “take” the colonizer’s place comes from the voice of a Martinican intellectual who, as Hall argues, carried with him the French Republican “ideology, with its rallying cry of liberty, equality and fraternity” (31). As Hall reminds the critics of

Fanon who “believe that the status of Fanon as a black hero and icon is damaged” by the simplest “suggestion that he might have learned anything or—worse—actually been in dialogue with the themes of European philosophy” (31-31) that to be an intellectual in Martinique, and “to be anti-colonial and opposed to the old white indigenous plantocracy was to be *for* French Republican ideology” (31; emphasis in original).

The work that Fanon, as a postcolonial individual and a postcolonial theorist, psychiatrist and activist has accomplished is undeniable. Not only is he “a towering figure in Africana philosophy and twentieth-century revolutionary thought” (Gordon 1), but a towering figure whose “persona has become synonymous with decolonization and Third Worldism” (Cherki ix). And it is because of his influence in postcolonial thinking that his European humanism must be addressed because only through addressing Fanon’s humanism, and the limits it imposes on his call to humanity, can his theory be pushed to its ultimate goal of “liberating the man of color from himself” (*Black Skin* 8)—a statement that reaches beyond the skin color, touching, instead, anyone who finds “himself” with a lack of recognition and place.

CHAPTER 3

POSTHUMANISM & POSTCOLONIALISM

By trying to uncover a human ontology, humanism underscores the necessity and value of "knowing" origins. Origins, to date, have been used as principles by which things, objects, and people can be grouped and segregated. Questions such as "where are your people from?" or "where are you from?" seek origins so that the speaker can be lumped into a group, which is usually pre-established as either "acceptable" (Western European) or "unacceptable" (all others). While this is a gross oversimplification of categories, it does serve to show how determining ontological roots affects human society. Not only did Descartes' *cogito* renew a desire to find the origins of human existence, but it set the origins of the human within the confines of its own mind—in the human's ability (or lack thereof) to reason. This practice both set the stage for understanding existence through a reliance on reason and provided a "reasonable" justification for an exclusion of all those beings who, according to the Enlightenment model of the human, could not demonstrate reason. Since colonized individuals did not effectively demonstrate "Enlightenment" reason, they were effectively considered outside of European humanity. Apart from this, setting up this "foundation" for human existence proves troubling because the very concept of a foundation—structurally speaking—seeks to dislocate bodies from the rest of the world. Foundations set apart, and isolate, all that is built on their perimeter. It limits what can and cannot be established, killing off all roots--or histories--and establishing itself as the origin of the order. Ironically, as they convey a desire to unite multiple elements into one single structure (just as the foundation of a house attempts to bring together all of the parts of the house, from the wood used to construct spaces, to the spaces themselves), foundations are based on a system of "is/is not." Because they are finite regions,

they always exclude. Seeking a "foundational" humanity, then, sets up an understanding of the human that requires exclusions and boundaries. So far, this desire for a foundational humanity is what has limited much expansion of the concept of what it means to be "human." In order for humanity to progress beyond the point of a binarized logic of either/or this concept of a "foundation" of human existence must be eradicated.

Since its inception, the Cartesian division (of mind and body, or reason and form) has become the cornerstone for definitions of humanity. However, if, as Bart Simon argues, "the revolutionary Enlightenment narratives" of the human reestablished the foundations of the human and "challenged an oppressive feudal order and reenvisioned [sic] 'man' as rational, autonomous, unique, and free" (4), it only did so for a small sector of humanity. As focusing on the "feudal order" left many other sectors of humanity untouched and without vision, it served to both turn the human into a product of politics and economics by expanding the population of humanity based on ownership rights. And, as Susan Bordo argues, the Cartesian model presents problems for humanity because it "is nothing if not a passion for separation, purification, and demarcation," where the body is separated from the mind (17). Acting as the scalpel, Descartes' reliance--or, perhaps more appropriately, his insistence—on reason further complicates the question of "what is human" since, in an attempt to form "a unified system of absolute knowledge" (4), the model further divided human existence within the world, and placed humanity further at odds with the rest of the world (4). Instead of uniting humanity, the Cartesian "Man" was now limited to white males who could reason and who could, with this reason, properly make use of the environment; or, in other words, at this point, another classification of the human was established based on "his" ability to subjugate "his" environment and all that existed (without Enlightenment approved reason) within it.[6] Origins became tied to European reason, and, in doing this, denied all non-Europeans access to ontology.

[6] At this point, "Man" became one who could show strength, cunning. The more one could reason and exploit his environment—so that he, in turn, elevated his own intellect and person—the more of a man he became.

It is from this point—from an attempt to enter the "body" of humanity—that Fanon's humanism seems to stem Fanon's cries for seeing the "equality of all men in the world" (*Black Skin* 110) based on their ability to rationalize it (123) show him continually trying to climb onto, and establish residency on this "revolutionary" foundation of humanity. By clinging to the already troubled concept of a "foundational" humanness, Fanon seems to ignore the fact that this "all-inclusive" humanity is established on principles of exclusion and can never be entered as long as the system remains intact. Fanon troubles a potentially fruitful argument on postcolonial existence because he, as many of his predecessors, attempts to focus on the origins of postcolonial individuals—looking to the ideologies of the colonizer as the point of this origin—and, all the while further grounding a postcolonial future within the colonial situation. If postcoloniality is forever a "descendent" of colonization, it can never move beyond exclusion because it is always defined as exclusion. For postcolonialism alone, this is an arduous—and perhaps impossible—task. However, by "reading" postcoloniality as part of what Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari call a rhizome (6), it is possible to break Fanon's postcolonial search for reclaiming an origin, and allow for an understanding of "self" that does not predicate itself upon the rationalization of existence, but on the understanding and appreciation of interconnections of existence. In order to move beyond the effects of colonization, postcoloniality can no longer afford to be seen as a "product of" colonization—or white European actions. It must be understood on different terms.

While it must be noted that posthumanism— much like postcolonialism—is an academic endeavor, the field's importance comes in its insistence that, as Myra Seaman phrases it, "there has never been one unified, cohesive 'human'" (246-47). The "human" derived from European humanism have been nothing more than, to quote N. Katherine Hayles, a labels knighted upon a "fraction of humanity who had the wealth, power, and leisure to conceptualize themselves as autonomous beings exercising their will through individual agency and choice" (286). It is in this attempt to rethink human relationships not only with the environment but with

other human bodies, and ultimately redefine what it means to be human from a more “global” perspective that possible strategies for rethinking postcoloniality arise. Because it emphasizes “deterritorializations” and “reterritorializations” (Deleuze and Guattari 10) the rhizome offers a break from an understanding of the human as a “point” to be entered. As “there are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root” (8) the idea that the human has a point of origin, and that, in postcoloniality, European culture is the postcolonial’s point of origin can be discarded. What, instead, the rhizome makes available are a multiplicity of lines (8) which can be understood as continuous forms. This is important because, “reading” postcoloniality as part a rhizome means understanding that there was existence before, through, and after the events of colonization, therefore separating the origins of postcolonial individuals from those of the colonizer. A separation in this way restores “validity” to the existence of the postcolonial, removes the concept of victimhood—or victimization—and sets the understanding that not all contact is—although there may at times be horrific incidents, or periods—negative.

In addition to this, since rhizomes are multiplicities (of lines, no less) and seek—unlike Fanon—to do away with the concept of “unity,” since unity “always operates in an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered (overcoding)” (8), there no longer exists a need for postcolonial individuals to desire to ascend the hierarchy established by colonization. Postcoloniality, as a rhizome, no longer needs to enter into the humanity of the colonizer because, as a rhizome, it is allowed—no, it is necessary—to be apart from the other. As a rhizome they remain connected. Moreover, redefining the human in terms of a posthuman-postcoloniality allows for the possibility of opening all sectors of humanity so that the human is understood as a nexus rather than a solid form. Still, much work is needed in order to more fully understand postcoloniality as rhizomatic. As established, postcoloniality includes not only the physical, political, economic, and social modes of postcolonized individuals, but at the heart of these modes rests a linguistic model that establishes the “presence” of individuals. This

presence works in two parts: first it establishes a vacuum in which it can place its subject, and it then institutes them as European-style individuals.

Beginning with the linguistic prison constructed by the language of colonization (the language of dominance/subjection and superiority/inferiority), the rhizome proves an effective tool in liberating postcoloniality because it seeks an understanding that, first and foremost, "there is no language in itself, nor are there any language universals" (Deleuze and Guattari 7). This breaks from the reasoning that one language is superior because it more closely moves towards the language of the "human," opening the door for non-European languages to have validity as rational languages—and not just exotic Other-languages. There is no singular universal language, "only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages" with "no ideal speaker-listener" (7) so there is no ground on which the language of the colonized should be subjected and held as inferior. When Fanon claims that at every attempt to discover a "valid historic place" the colonized's "reason" is met "with real reason" and, "on the level of ideas and intellectual activity, . . . [p]roof was presented that [his] effort was only a term in the dialectic" (*Black Skin* 132). The colonized is made to feel inferior and as the colonizer says to them "we will turn to you as we do to our children—to the innocent, the ingenious, the spontaneous. We will turn to you as to the childhood of the world" (132). Just as with children, the colonizer uses his/her "construction" of the colonized to create an understanding of him/herself through representation. By forcing the colonized into certain categories of representation (black, ignorant, savage, etc.) the colonizer can be everything that the colonized is not. As Penelope Ingram explains of the place of "woman," the colonized is "thrust [into the unknowable place] through a mechanics of discourse and representation" (13). Through these language games, the ability of postcolonial individuals to signify on their own is diminished, turning them into "passive inert screen[s] upon which representations c[an] be grafted from the outside" (19). Searching for a history within the space of the colonizer's world only yields more subjugation and claims of the postcolonial individual's supposed inferiority.

By forcing postcolonial individuals into a specific type of representation, the colonizer is able to limit the interpretation and movement of postcolonial individuals. Even after official colonization has ended, the colonizer maintains certain fixed images of the postcolonial—images that spring to mind any time the postcolonial is mentioned. Postcolonial individuals become understood as representative through Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic—among other discourses on power relations—as the very utterance of "colonized," or "postcolonial," brings to mind a mental image. Although this image/utterance relationship is abstract, it is limited in that only a certain number of relationships can "logically" validate the binary connection between the two (between the utterance and its image). As Deleuze and Guattari argue, the problem with semiotic chains (signs and signifiers) is "that they are not abstract enough," in that they ultimately fail to connect "to a whole micropolitics of the social field" (7). Colonial linguistics "plot" points and "fix an order" (7). Making the rhizome available, at this instance, "establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances" (7) by leveling the colonizer and the postcolonial onto "a *plane of multiplicities*" (9) which then work to reject "subjugation by anything signifying (10). Since, as a rhizome, there is no longer a need to understand postcoloniality as needing to move from the shadows of colonization, and therefore from the shadows of the colonizer, there is no longer a need to understand one's postcolonial existence in relation to the other.

Despite saying all of this, it may seem that this investigation has proposed a utopian approach to moving through postcoloniality, ignoring the "productness" of the situation. The discussion, up to this point may also be, as historian Peter Burke mentions of "the concept of hybridity," "criticized for offering 'a harmonious image of what is obviously disjointed and confrontational' and for ignoring cultural and social discrimination[s]" (7). This is untrue. Seeking to "read" postcoloniality as a part of a rhizome—in fact, the notion of the rhizome itself works in this way—neither ignores, nor denies the "production" that occurs when two lines come into contact. As mentioned, a rhizome is to be understood as a nexus, a web of lines that intersect

and bounce off of one another so that each point of contact produces a "new" line. Postcoloniality was born through the events of colonization, meaning it is because of the contact that occurred between the colonizer and the colonized that postcoloniality exists. While this must seem obvious, and perhaps elementary, restatement, this repetition is necessary because what must be drawn from this is the "lineness"[7] of both the colonizer and the colonized's existences. These two entities do not end in the events of colonization because they did not begin here; instead, their contact has "deterritorialized" and "reterritorialized" each so that new rhizomes can be made, just as the previous lines of the two (the colonizer and the colonized) continue on the "plane of multiplicities." The problem experienced here is not the change that occurs from the contact. Change will happen with or without the contact of the two cultures. What appear to be most troubling in this instance of contact is how this change comes about and who the cause of it is. Once postcolonial individuals understand that what appears to be a loss of agency is not so much a loss, but a misunderstanding of place and existence—as the rhizome offers such an understanding—new understandings of postcolonial existence can be uncovered.

Throughout his work as a psychiatrist, Fanon's attempts to delineate the path(s) of colonial oppression and find a way to help colonized individuals move beyond the problems of colonization always returned to the idea that "the last shall be first" (*Wretched* 2). Although presented in various forms, Fanon's desire to replace the first with the last only creates a loop because, instead of opening new pathways, it seeks to "substitute" one "thing" for another (*Wretched* 1). Even though, for Fanon, it seemed that ontology did "not [to] permit us to understand the being of the black man" (*Black Skin* 110) it seemed so because the ontology of the colonized was viewed as starting in, and around colonization. Since the rhizome refuses points, instead preferring continuous connections and fluid motions, understanding ontology as effect serves no purpose. This reliance on a point-based experience, if Cartesian humanism

[7] The term "linear" has been rejected here because it connotes a straightness and, to a degree, a form of determinedness that is both harmful and incorrect in the context of the rhizome; therefore, understanding either the colonizer or the colonized as "linear" would do more harm than good.

holds that existence is to be understood as a series disconnected instances of "I's," becomes most clearly evidenced in the language of colonization each time the colonizer, or even Fanon himself, articulates that it is the colonizer who "*fabricated* and *continues to fabricate* the colonized subject" (*Wretched* 2). Fanon seems to look at Sartre's existentialism as a way to connect the dots. However, as discussed in chapter 1, in joining the "I's" into one system, Sartre presents Fanon with a new set of challenges. Fanon's insistence on the colonizer being the "point" of the colonized, and postcolonial, existence fixes postcoloniality. The rhizome, in its "lineness," soothes the tensions between these points. While it must be acknowledged that it was the colonizer who created circumstances that brought the "colonized" into a state of colonization, the existence of colonized individuals should not be understood as fixed at the point of interaction. Instead, the existence of the colonized extends beyond—both before and after—this "moment" of interaction. An understanding of this extension is precisely what the rhizome promotes.

In soothing the series of disjointed points into multiple lines, Fanon's attempt to escape the fixity of his colonized body can be more easily realized because there can be an understanding that the stereotype (which becomes the linguistic model to signify the colonized) does not, and cannot exist. Fixity blocks the history—and futures—of bodies by turning them into singular sites that begin at the present moment(s) of "recognition," or, as Homi Bhabha so aptly states it, fixity "*facilitates* colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised" (112; emphasis in original). Through colonial linguistics, the body becomes expressly felt, "overdetermin[ing the colonized] from without" (*Black Skin* 116). At each interaction with the white world, the colonized are "assailed at various points" while "the[ir] corporeal schema crumble[s], its place taken by a racial epidermal schema" (112) so that the only understanding of their body is that which is handed to them by the colonizer. The body no longer becomes just the experiences of the individual, it becomes layered with the images that the colonizer has of the black man's experience. If Fanon

is interested in having "those who have kept [the colonized] in slavery" so that they can "help rehabilitate *man*, and ensure his triumph everywhere, *once and for all*" (*Wretched* 61; my emphasis) there can be no freedom from this fixed body because the signifying colonized will always carry "traces" (as Derrida would put it) of its previous image/utterance relationship. Fanon's insistence that postcolonials can finally be "elevated" and given recognition as "humans" seems contradictory because, within the colonizer's mind, the separation of "Us" and "Them" is needed in order to assure the colonizer of his/her place. Therefore, Fanon's desire to "take [the] place" of the colonizer (*Wretched* 23) belies the truth that the postcolonial individual will never have a place within the colonist's system of power. By demanding a substitution of roles, Fanon seems to have ignored—either intentionally or unintentionally—his own recognition that "in the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of bodily schema" and any "consciousness of the body" comes as "a third-person consciousness" (*Black Skin* 110-11). In other words, within the "white world" of colonization, there is no room for "man of color" to be anything other than what the white man sees him as. The fixed categories of "the Other" always remain because the without them, the colonizer's own identity becomes jeporadized since there would no longer be an understanding of "me" based on what "I am not."

By introducing Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome into this understanding of experience as reality, the reading of the body expands so that the body, instead of remaining fixed, becomes a state of constant motion. Through an understanding of the rhizome, the postcolonial body no longer becomes a single unit (a monolith), instead, it becomes lifted from its binary relationship as a signifier (it is lifted from its status as a monolithic corporeal schema) and is able to be "read" as fluid and as a system of possibilities. As the language of colonization turned *the* existence of colonized individuals into one of fixed categories (i.e. savage, cannibalistic, uncivilized, etc.), the rhizome's multiplicities offer a chance to, as Ingram argues, move beyond a state of representation—where the body has its meaning(s) inscribed on it from outside sources, such as the perceptions of others—and towards a state of signification—where the

body is no longer tied to fixed categories of meaning (3). By moving beyond the reliance on representation—which can never fully grasp the entirety of the thing it attempts to represent—and moving towards signification, postcolonial individuals gain the perspective that they have "meaning, but not one that is fixed or predetermined" (18). The European humanism, from which Fanon draws his claims, depends on these representations. It is because of this dependence that there can never be a new understanding of the postcolonial individual within the system of European humanism. The rhizome seeks to "think outside of the form/matter binary" (9) and allow all of its lines to create their own meanings—meanings that are not created by the Other, but created with an understanding of the Other as part of, not apart from, each line. This may seem problematic since it seems to corrode any knowledge of the "Self," but, in fact, the body is freed from an understanding of the "Self" that relies on a point-based system of "mirroring" (Lacan) which holds the system of oppression in place. This psychology is based on a single fixed point: the "dictatorial conception of the unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari 17). The unconscious, in the system of mirroring, becomes the point of origin for the Self. This once again brings about the searching for an origin, for the *point* of beginning for the individual. And, since much—if not all—of psychoanalysis grounds itself in Western concepts/ideals, any attempt to excavate the postcolonial individual's origin from a psychological (or more appropriately psychoanalytical) means only leads back to a troubled system of power. Instead of looking to "uncover" or "reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or to make it signify according to a tree model," a rhizome "is precisely th[e] production of the unconscious" because it disengages itself from the "leader/follower" framework (17-18). It is not safe to say that the rhizome is a social body, since it does not require agreements the way that language does (rhizomes do not require the approval of its member to validate its existence). It simply is. Each line in the rhizome exists with or without recognition. Saying that existence relies upon mutual recognition insinuates that neither party exists prior to their mutual interaction. Insinuations such as these once again seek to fix the location of individuals, turning them into subjects in a game

of power. Lacan is correct when he discusses the mirror's role in the construction of the self, showing how it creates new movements and new recognitions within the individual (2); however, this admission is near-sighted because he fails to note the effects that the individual has upon the mirror. On their own, the two bodies exist independently of one another. When they meet, not only is the individual altered by the mirror's reflection, but the mirror is altered by the individual. Each wave of the individual's arm deterritorializes the mirror and reterritorializes it, giving it new properties and new motions. Each new reflection creates a new mirror, just as it creates a new understanding in the mirrored. And each understanding shifts in accordance with different mirrors. There no longer remains a singular "source," a singular "point" from which the individual can take its recognition. It is by understanding these multilateral effects and assemblages (the ways in which each line of interaction) cast effects on one another that the rhizome comes to "produce" the unconscious. Instead, rhizomes should be seen as natural connections of bodies based, with a large emphasis, on motion.

In addition to this, rhizomes require reconstitutions of all "bodies" involved, removing the unilateral shifts that are typically assumed to occur in colonization. In other words, as explained by Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, among others, postcoloniality can no longer be seen as the sole existence of the once colonized "Others." As a rhizome, then, the postcolonial body (not only how it physically connects with the microbes, viruses, and other life forms in its environment, but the psychological understanding of it as well) exists in a constant state of flux and as a constant source of deterritorializations and reterritorializations. In the postcolonial context, this is a powerful shift in focus because it allows Fanon's theory of the body to free itself from the single-sided transmissions of colonial knowledge(s). While Bhabha's discussion on mimicry makes a similar move of shifting colonial knowledge from a monologue to a dialogue (as he argues that mimicry highlights the "performance" of the colonist's existence), it too rests on performance which is problematic because the system of ascension remains intact since "colonial mimicry is

the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other"[8] (122). And, it is this upward movement that threatens to impede the progress of postcoloniality. Even as colonized individuals disrupt the security (or the certainty) of the colonists' knowledge of their (the colonists') own place, the postcolonial's desire to "prove" themselves only serves to validate the colonizer's superiority. Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, however, moves beyond mimicry, as "[mimicry] relies on binary logic to describe phenomena" (11), insisting on understanding reality as a something like a giant ocean where each instance of contact sends forth ripples, and as each ripple moves outward, which alter the dynamic of the surrounding waters. As the rhizome highlights the interconnectivity of beings (of bodies), the hierarchical structure of mimicry is laid horizontal, placing all subjects equal to one another. Rhizomes "are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions" existing on a single plane (9). Rhizomes can never contain "a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the form of the good and the bad" because there is no end. Every seeming "rupture" always "tie back to one another" (9), and this ability to self-heal and avoid dualisms or dichotomies speaks directly to the systems through which postcolonial individuals must work. An understanding of the postcolonial Self can be, then, understood as a line in a multiplicity of lines which can never be separated because they *are* one another.

Still, the rhizomatic body must be understood to emphasize more than the physical body; it not just about physical alterations. Any attempt to tie this discussion to a single corporeal structure threatens to deny it its power. The power of the rhizomatic Self comes from the understanding of the Self as a "non-Self." By this, it is not meant that the postcolonial individual is once again relegated to being denied an existence. What this new "non-Self" calls for is a deconstruction of the idea of individualism that humanism has constructed. Here, Fanon's concept of the "communal" helps to understand this desire for deterritorialization. For Fanon, "individualism," because it forces the one to feel that they must establish, or "assert," themselves, harms the colonized more than any other value of the colonizer (*Wretched* 11).

[8] While it is understood that, at this point, Bhabha refers to the colonizer's desire for "reforming" the Other, those colonized engaged in mimicry also share this desire to "rise" above the point of their bodies and show the colonizer that there is, in fact, "humanity" underneath the surface.

Since colonial subjugation seeks a generalization of colonized individuals so that they form a monolithic body, and the value of individualism works to support this desire in that it forces the colonized to create a fixed point against which individualism can be claimed. One can say they are because they are *not*, returning—once again—to the binary logic of the Cartesian reason. The rhizome, as a multiplicity, illuminates the power structure on which the individual is based because a system of dominance no longer remains. In lieu of individualism, Fanon offers the communal, insisting that "colonized peoples are not alone" (30). Colonialism extends beyond a single set of borders; therefore the understanding of the individual should be understood as existing beyond a single location in space or time.

In an understanding of postcoloniality as rhizomatic, it becomes necessary to take in account the concept of "becoming" because it adds another dimension to a postcolonial existence; it illustrates what happens when lines of rhizomes bounce of, and intersect with one another. Becoming means to understand not only the mindset of the other, but also the implications of how that mindset affects every fiber of a being, internally. As with the rhizome, becoming "is not defined by points that it connects, or by point that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points" (Deleuze and Guattari 293; emphasis in original). Here, the emphasis is not the direct connection between two known bodies. The rhizome seeks to break the "fixed" nature of hybridity, which oscillates between two distinct points (for example, the colonizer and the colonized) and is limited in its ability to change. As Bhabha explains, hybridity depends on a system of power, as it is the "reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority)" ("Signs" 159). In other words, hybridity is located in the instances and events of colonization. In similar ways, Edouard Glissant's creolization, as advocated by Lorna Burns, is problematic because it too "is

rooted in the New World experience" ("Becoming-postcolonial"). [9] Becoming refuses the fixity associated with hybridity because, it first eliminates the dependence on power relationships, and then it resists being tied to a single location, as "border-proximity is indifferent to both contiguity and to distance" (293) so that the bodies are present, absent and everywhere. Instead of remaining in tension with one another—as they do within the system of hybridity—becomings allow for each reconstitution to have significance, no matter the amount of change. Lines of each form continue beyond the moment of intersection, change constantly occurs. Becomings de-emphasize the visible, by focusing not on "imitat[ions] or identif[ications] with something or someone" (272) but on the extraction of "particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are *closest* to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes" (272; emphasis in original). They call multilateral shifts in the way that life experiences are understood. There is no longer a reliance on experiencing life as an isolated event; instead, becoming calls forth new beings since becoming "does not reduce to, or lead back to, 'appearing,' 'being,' 'equaling,' or 'production'" (239). They call forth the need to "become," as becoming requires the individual to understand that there is no individuality because all forms of life are connected.

However, as always, there is a danger in "understanding" because it is very easy to under-stand an animal by representing it as one assumes it exists. In other words, there is the danger of simply "acting" out the becoming. Acting, serves to distance the two beings, it does not join them since the performance keeps the other at bay by allowing mimicry. Mimicry, then, becomes problematic because it represents the exterior of the other. Language, education, history, and status all are "observable" forms that can be copied and performed. Where this stops is that the understanding that comes with mimicry is an understanding of "observable"

[9] While Burns points out that creolization is the "generation of something wholly new" from its participating components (100), making creolization a cultural phenomenon locates it in a single place, and therefore works against the motion of the rhizome. Within a rhizome, paths can extend beyond the immediate location and still institute change. A current example of this deterritorialization is the World Wide Web, where individuals are no longer restricted to the nation or the city, but can travel—and effect—with greater reach.

aspects, not a deep understanding of composition. The reproduction that transpires in mimicry often times, seeks to further highlight the value of the "original."[10] There are no "molecular" alterations made; instead, what is desired is a performance that can be slipped into and out of. This is illustrated in Fanon's discussion of the "choice of two possibilities" given to colonized individuals in the presence of the colonizer (*Black Skin* 37). They may "either stand with the white world (that is to say, the real world), and . . . speak French" or they may "reject Europe . . . and cling together in their dialect" (36). What happens here, as Fanon understands the choices, is that they can either mimic the colonizer, using the language (and therefore culture and customs) of the colonizer, or they can don their "other self" and feel, to borrow from Fanon, "quite comfortable" (37). No true deterritorialization or reterritorialization occurs, only the donning of masks (which make the title of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* that much more revealing and troubling). This is also a danger that this thesis desires to circumvent by linking this to Bhabha's concept of mimicry, showing that mimicry--especially in relation to colonization--creates a barrier between the two bodies because it is bound in a system of dis-ease and hostility. The colonized mimic not only from desire, but because they have no other recourse for being ("fully") accepted; the colonizer, however, is made uncomfortable by the smoothness with which the colonized can take on colonizing traits. The system of mimicry (the system of "acting"), then, destroys the ability to understand the mutual effects of the interpersonal connections.

Mimicry, especially through speech, seeks to bring the real into existence. However, it does so in a fixed instance, forcing the origin to begin in the moment colonizing language is

[10] This discussion picks up on Walter Benjamin's discussion of the aura of a thing. Where Benjamin is focused on works of art, the discussion is applicable in this instance because mimicry, like the reproduction, seeks to duplicate qualities of an object, but is always "lacking in one area: its presence in time and space" ("The Work of Art" 214). In the colonial situation the colonized remain distanced, no matter how good the quality of reproduction is, from the colonizer. Although the reproduction, through mimicry, may create tensions in the colonizer, there remains a gulf (the language of colonization) securing the colonizer's place. However, one distinction that may arise—and should be addressed—is that mimicry attempts to raise the value of the mimic in hopes of acquiring an equal standing with the original. Mimicry wants, on some level, to show the original that it is not so original after all. Reproduction, however, predominantly works for economic means to make more profitable samples of the original.

spoken. Therefore, telling postcolonial individuals, through the system of colonization, that their language is without worth—or at least less valuable than the language of the colonizer—negates their existence, locating them within language, but outside of the "existence" of the "reasonable human being." Therefore, throughout the duration of colonization—and into the state of postcoloniality—colonized individuals are left understanding their reality in terms set by the colonizer. The physical bodies become less their own and more the properties of the colonizer. This is the power, and problem of language in the existence of postcolonial individuals: language is reason and reason is reality. With reason (as language), then, existing solely in the mind of the individual, the postcolonial individual is still denied a reality because there is still only the language of the colonizer to use. This threatens the stability of the postcolonial reality since reason forces the individual to understand the world in relation to the human experience and the only understanding left for the postcolonial individual is an understanding tainted by the language of the colonizer. Rather than allowing for a complete view of the world that integrates, instead of separates, the human, reason seeks to invert the authority of the human and reality. In other words, reality becomes subject to the human. Through the process of colonization, many colonized individuals attempt to mimic the language (and therefore the culture) of the colonizer.

Understanding the body through language, as Judith Butler argues in *Bodies that Matter*, means understanding that "the discursive practice by which matter is rendered irreducible simultaneously ontologizes and fixes" the body "in its place" (29). Where the "rhizome is an antigenealogy" (11)—severing the "discursive practice" from its system of power, from a reliance on difference as domination—it allows matter an opportunity to stop searching for an origin since there is no longer the requirement to "prove" existence. While Butler's concept of matter bears importance in a discussion of the postcolonial individual in that, as Butler later puts it, "the feminine [matter] is said to be anywhere or anything, it is that which is produced through displacement and which returns as the possibility of a reverse-displacement"

(45). Matter's displacement comes in that it, alone, has no representation—it is formless, or without form—therefore loses signification. In other words, Butler brings about questions of existence and signification, yet her outside—matter's formlessness, or lack of signification—seems to fall short of grasping the power of the outside (a position with which postcolonial individuals are familiar). Ingram pushes the potential significatory potential of the outside and sees it as that which can "open us to the authentic Being-in-the-world through an ethical relation with the Other" (5). By giving the formless—the outside—the ability to signify on its own accord, Ingram and Deleuze and Guattari offer postcolonial individuals an existence equal to—yet potentially different from—that of the colonizer. When each body is capable of creating its own meaning, independent from other bodies, then the power structure that governs postcolonial existence(s) becomes moot. Until then, simple reversals of systems—or inclusions into systems—maintain and reinforce those power structures. Until then, postcolonial individuals reflect language's game of mimicry and representation.

This pattern of linguistic mimicry becomes normalized (and even encouraged by) colonization, happening to the point where the language of the colonizer becomes the language of the colonized. This can most clearly be seen in Fanon as he calls for decolonization not in the language of the colonized—or some creolization—but in the language of the colonizer (French). This form of mimicry retains the idea that there can be a space for the individual in the colonizer's world, if they speak the right words. With this, there remains an assumption of a unifying humanity that can be accessed through continual mimicry—even in the process of denying the power/superiority of the colonizer. Here, the rhizome is helpful because it allows the understanding that both the language of the colonizer and the language of the colonized have worth since, as lines in the rhizome, "the rhizome is reducible to neither One [sic] nor the multiple" (Deleuze and Guattari 21). Languages of the colonized, then, can be recognized as valuable and viable languages in the reality of the postcolonial individual. This is much of the work that many postcolonial individuals, such as Ngugi, have begun doing as they have

"returned" to the languages of their homelands. However, this threatens even further—and more problematic—divisions of peoples in that maintaining separate languages isolates individuals rather than unites them.

If language calls one to represent something, and thus "become" that which is represented by mimicking the understood qualities of that thing, Cary Wolfe's description of language as "prosthetic" (Wolfe 35) bears interesting readings in the context of an examination of the postcolonial individual. In the discussion of language and the (post)colonized, it becomes important to note the ways in which language becomes reality. As Fanon articulates, what was spoken *about* his body became his understanding *of* his body (Black Skin 115). However, this is not to say that language physically became his body. Language becomes the psychology of the body. As the body is spoken of, the mental images that these words create become layered onto that which is spoken about. Heidegger highlights the nature of reflection and problematizes its results, arguing that "no representation of what is present, in the sense of what stands forth and of what stands over against as an object, ever reaches to the thing *qua* [sic] thing" (Heidegger 166). What is found in this is the failure of language to fully grasp that which it must call into being. In the case of the colonization, the language used to describe the colonized at once interpellates the colonized, just as it seeks to keep them from coming into existence. Here again are echoes of Butler and Irigaray's "outside" which allows the continuation of the colonized to "occur . . . as an ungrounded figure, worrisomely speculative and catachrestic" signaling "the possible linguistic site of a critical mime" (47). This, then, is where the power of understanding the rhizome and becoming arises: in the "virtual" reality of the body. If language is outside of the human, and is not a "natural" characteristic of the colonizer, then the representations to which it calls the colonized are without intrinsic merit. Therefore, they can be altered by allowing each body to create its own meaning, not through representation, but through signification (Ingram 8). In colonization, language becomes a tool—distinct from the

human—that creates a void where “reality” can be placed. It is not the physical that is erased, but the understanding of the physical.

This tension is expressly felt in the postcolonial situation. Because it is built around a system of denial and hierarchies based on providing access to “humanity,” the postcolonial situation finds its strongest opponent in the nebulous concept of “human.” It is this concept of “human” that allows colonizing bodies a vantage point from which they can claim, as Aimé Césaire puts it, that colonization is “*a posteriori* by the obvious material progress that has been achieved in certain fields under the colonial regime” (45). Focusing on the progress that occurs during colonization is deceiving “since *sudden* change is always possible” and “since no one knows at what stage of material development these same countries would have been if [colonization] had not intervened” (45; emphasis in original). As colonization seeks to bring the “inhumane” into “humanity,” it can only do this by first denying them access and then establishing a make-shift glass cage in which to house them. The glass cage works to keep the colonized out but to give a false sense of hope that one day they may be able to become “human.” It is this hope of “becoming ‘human’” that begins to infect the existence of the colonized, causing them to desire a “return” to the very (“human”) body that they have been denied. And so, even after the overt structure of colonialism has ended, and a shift into a postcolonial situation begins, the effects of this separation continues. Certain postcolonial factions have especially struggled with this concept of “human.” Where postcolonialism is, in large, about finding a voice with which to “reclaim” one’s lost--or stolen, depending on the perspective one takes--identity, the issue of what it means to be “human” is highly important. Often times, there is a constant pull between finding a space within the world and creating a space within the world. This struggle, this constant pull is most noticeably seen in the work of theorist Frantz Fanon.

Danger, still, exists in Deleuzo-Guattarian system of becoming as it walks a fine line between the full confusion of boundaries and bodies, and imitation, which does not stem from

the becoming itself, but rather from the lack of understanding of the becoming. Deleuze and Guattari hold steadfast in their adherence to the idea that becoming is *not* "'playing' the animal," where "nothing remains but imaginary resemblances between terms, or symbolic analogies between relations" (Deleuze 260). As Dyane Fowler notes of the rhizome, there are no terms, which can be negotiated since there are "no destinations" to which a the rhizome seeks to arrive, and therefore present the possibility for an unlimited number of directions. In accordance with the rhizome, objects are never capable of holding separate existences, isolated away from other objects within their world. Instead, objects merge, collide like the tide against the shore—never simply surface level, but always affecting deep below the visible—into one another, creating a new being that is simultaneously itself and Other. Importantly, this meta-change is not simply a visible alteration of appearance. While the physicality is altered, due to a deeper psychological understanding of how the interaction between the two bodies has left each body not its own, it is rarely—if ever—a solely visible alteration. The imaginary and the real border one another on a fine line; it is this fine line that tempts and haunts the possibilities of becoming because, really, neither reality nor the imaginary can be concretely defined. This inability to strictly hold the bubbles of reality and the imaginary has proved problematic for many periods throughout human existence. Within recent years, with the rise of clinical psychology, the term "delusion" has cropped up in an attempt to separate those (uncontrolled) moments of slippage.

Becoming may prove difficult because there is a misunderstanding of both the process and the concept of what it means to become-(animal). The Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of becomings seems to stem from a mentality, or a mental state of becoming. Not from a physical becoming, the state on which everyone focuses. When one becomes, they begin to understand not only the mindset of an animal, but also the implications of how that mindset affects their being. Rather than assume the "role" of a dog or wolf, the becoming person begins to understand that which is dog or wolf. From this understanding of wolf, the person begins to take not of how this new knowledge affects the ways in which they perceive of themselves, the ways

in which they carry themselves, the ways in which they relate to themselves and the world around them. However, as always, there is a danger in "understanding" because it is very easy to under-stand an animal by representing it as one assumes it exists. In other words, the individual becoming-wolf begins to "act" wolf-like, taking on wolf acts such as howling and "sniffing." Instead of becoming-wolf, this behavior risks performing wolf much by assuming the concept of wolf as the man understands wolf to be. In this exchange, wolf is an observed object, separate(d) from the man's being. Because of the performance, the individual remains at a distance, while, at the same time, keeping the *wolf* at bay. Here, wolf is italicized because this instance of "wolf" is to be understood as the true being of the wolf, the true mentality of the wolf, not the under-stood observed object of the wolf. Because the man seems to lack an understanding of what it means to *be* wolf, the individual is left treading the slippery boundary of becoming-wolf and performing-wolf. In accordance with Butler's argument on gender, by assuming instances of the wolf, the individual risks halting their becoming and thus transforms their becoming-wolf into a transforming-wolf. Transforming is counterproductive to the Deleuzo-Guattarian argument because it offers a one sided motion that, whereas becomings work in a circular pattern, where all things are altered in the intra-action of becoming, not just one single entity.

What transforming threatens is a narrowing of the line between beings, instead of widening the line. Becoming-animal presents the possibility to expand the individual's understanding of how they are situated in their environment. Man, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is as much a rhizome as any other being. This rhizomatic state is meant to help situate the individual in accordance to Life. The individual is simultaneously affecting his surrounds as they are being infected. Part of this rhizomatic mentality has been picked up in much of the thinking on urban landscapes. Michel de Certeau contends that walking within the urban context allows an individual to influence the concrete landscape in which he is held because walking, an act of exploration, allows the individual the opportunity to build new paths within the landscape that

may not have originally been there (de Certeau 94). However, at the same time, the landscape influences the individual in that its construction, de Certeau continues, becomes a haunting presence within the individual's mind as its immobile, impermeable, concrete buildings restrict certain movements, creating a sense of being observed within the individual—even if no one is actually observing (97). And the act of walking itself initiates a becoming as each step causes a transformation within the muscles of the individual as the concrete transfers its energies through the muscle tissue of the legs, affecting each cell of the tissue; all while the walking individual effects changes within the concrete with each step.

There are few, if any, actions that do not constitute a becoming. Becomings are always (more than) a creation. Just as walking within the city allows the individual to create a new path within his environment, becomings "grant" the individual the opportunity to construct a new path for his existence; only, the act of creating this new path is not as deliberate as the act of walking. The socially constructed body naturally envelopes language, since language is the most frequent vehicle for human social construction. Judith Butler's socially constructed gender finds its base in the language of gender: the feminine is understood to be female because she acts as female. Action, for social man, is tethered to signs, tethered to an interpretation of these signs through language.

Once the need for posthumanism to liberate the individual from grip of humanism is recognized, questions of how this transformation is to come about arise. An investigation of Fanon illustrates that the colonized individual holds the perfect position to offer a potential model for liberating posthumanism from a humanistic mentality, because, upon liberation, he would be able to create a new space for the human body that avoids the same traps of the old humanistic ways of viewing existence. He would rise above the old system with an awareness of the perils of hierarchies, having just escaped the burdens of the system himself.

CHAPTER 4

OCTAVIA BUTLER AND THE RHIZOMATIC POSTCOLONIAL

As Fanon's humanism restricts the full potential of his theory, his observation that decolonization—and, therefore, the colonial situation in its entirety—is a battle between "one "species" of mankind [and] another" (*Wretched* 1) bears weight. With an understanding of the rhizome, it becomes possible to view both the colonizer and the colonized as different species, yet not have "specie" imbued with negative connotations. Where Fanon's humanism forced him to see these "species" as "two congenitally antagonistic forces" (2), the rhizome removes the antagonism, and struggle for power, and allows them to be lines of existence that have simply come into contact with one another. Granted, this (perhaps, over) simplification ignores neither the violence of the colonial situation, nor the violence of intersecting lines within a rhizome. However, what becomes necessary to see within this simplification is the reduction of fault and blame associated with power and the lack thereof. Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis* series[11] speaks directly to Fanon's troubled humanism, offering a challenge to "the human long presumed by traditional Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment humanism" (Seaman 246) by crafting a novel that forces the species of humanity to coexist with an alien species, and illustrates the potential harmony that can result from the coexistence of the two separate lines—even in the event of their immediate contact.

Xenogenesis begins with the book *Dawn* and Lilith Iyapo, the novel's main protagonist, "Awakened" (20) some two hundred and fifty years (21) after the human race, "in its attempt to destroy itself," has "made the world unlivable" (18). Holding Lilith—as well as the other "collected" (18) surviving humans—on their living spaceship (33), the Oankali, a species who

[11] In 2000, Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* series was redistributed under as the trilogy *Lilith's Brood*.

travel the universe in search of other lifeforms with which they can "trade"[12] themselves (26), inform her that she has been chosen and awakened to lead a new Oankali-human colony (35). Though they are somewhat respectful towards Lilith, they view her—and the human species in its entirety—to be corrupted by their "mismatched pair of genetic characteristics" (40): they are "intelligent" and "hierarchical" (41). Eventually, Lilith is charged with the responsibility of selecting and training the humans who will establish the first colony with her. The subsequent books, *Adulthood Rites* and *Imago* in the series chart the life in these colonies. In *Xenogenesis* one finds humanity no longer "defined by his supreme, utterly rational intelligence" who acts as "a historically independent agent whose thought and action produce history" (Seaman 246); rather what is left is a humanity does not simple "recreat[e] the sacred image of the same" (*Primate Visions* 378).

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Oankali is their inability, their unwillingness, to return to the past. This is Instead of returning to the past they always bring their experience of it with them to the present. Return, as Jdahya[13] explains to Lilith, is "the one direction that's closed" to the Oankali (39), a trait that Lilith and the remaining humans now share. Even when they resettle the Earth, they will not be "returning" to it because the Earth that they once knew has been destroyed. While the place may be familiar, it presents new challenges, new experiences. As Jdahya explains, it is still the humans' Earth, as the Oankali have no desire to "own" or "possess" it; however, "between the efforts of [the humans] to destroy it and [the Oankali's] to restore it, it has changed" (*Dawn* 37). This concept bears an important lesson for Fanonian postcolonialism, which seeks to recuperate a dormant, or denied humanity. History is not to be looked at longingly. Instead, the necessary parts should be carried forward into the

[12] Trade for the Oankali means to trade genes, or cellular structures, with another organism. In certain cases—as with the humans—the Oankali "mate" with the species, creating "construct" (or half-Oankali, half-other specie offspring). The offspring are called "constructs" because they are genetically constructed in the wombs of the parents by the family's ooloi mate. Families—consisting of two males (one human and one Oankali), two females (one human and one Oankali), and a genderless ooloi—have babies in twos (one coming from each set of parents). It is the ooloi's job to "form" the baby within the wombs of the mothers, ensuring that no "defects" are in the children.

[13] Jdahya is the Oankali who has been sent to prepare Lilith to leave her isolation room. From him she learns about the ship, the Oankali, and the remaining humans.

present. Butler has separated her characters from this need for a history. Instead of being tied to a "homeworld" the Oankali must constantly move forward, traveling the universe, but always with the biological memory of the past (*Dawn* 39). Being "planetbound . . . would eventually mean death" (38), as it would mean being fixed in a single location where the potential to learn and grow has its limits. The past is nothing more than "a womb" or a stage of transition for the present. Just as they have done with the humans, with each new "trade" that the Oankali make, they expand not only themselves, but the species with which they trade. This existence most clearly comes close to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome in that it emphasizes existence as a constant line without beginning or end and unconcerned with single points.

Two things have occurred, here: Butler has connected two species and forced them to interact with one another; and she has removed humanity's position as the "superior" being. These are important moves because, in doing these two things, Butler has presented a situation that resembles colonization, yet is not dependent on colonialism's system of dominance. Ultimately, Butler has presented the type of rhizomatic existence which is lacking in Fanon's humanism. While Fanon struggles with trying to replace one species with the other, Butler has created a situation where neither species wants to be in the place of the other. As Cathy Peppers states, Butler has crafted "a story about the origins of human identity" (47), yet made it a story about understanding, and excepting difference. Lilith not only "become[s] the progenitrix of the new race of 'constructs' (children born of Oankali and human parents)," birthing alien-human progeny, but she also ends up "give[ing] birth to herself as other" (47). Still, her otherness is not an otherness of subjugation, as the series avoids constructing a "reification of humanist, essentialist notions of identity" (47), it is the otherness of existing in difference—the otherness of existing in a multitude of directions and intersections. Although Butler's main protagonist is African-American, the difference in "skin [color] . . . may be rendered insignificant (made to look like differences in, say, height and weight) when the humans are juxtaposed with" the Oankali, who look like "talking, tentacle sea slugs" (Michaels). Experiencing and living with

difference, then, is not just about the body, but about finding ways for the Being to "[express] itself through relations with other beings" in a system that "requires proximity and openness, and . . . [which] cannot be thought in advance" (Ingram xx). Instead of presenting a story about finding origins, or reclaiming humanity's place as the "superior" species, Butler literally decimates those origins and allows her characters to start "anew." Butler's interest in colonization is not the negative conflict, which (understandably) dominates Fanon's colonialism, but the contact and proximity which comes from it.

Where Lilith's "abduction" could be seen as a captivity, and her forced resettlement of Earth could be seen as a forced colonization, Butler emphasizes the humane qualities of the Oankali and teases out the reasons why they "interfered" (19). There is no domination, no sense of hierarchy, no superiority. What is left is a mutual relationship—albeit, one that does not begin on consensual terms. "Confinement" is salvation, "testing" is "perceiving;" and, "the price" (19) for this relationship is not reflection, but change—mutual, coexisting, and yet dependent difference. In the end, Butler does not present the event as either positive or negative; it simply is an event through which each species must pass.[14] In addition, as Walter Benn Michaels contends, the field of science fiction itself can be seen "to be almost generically committed to noncultural, in other words, physical difference"[15] (649-50). Through a mix of "human"[16] and

[14] Stating this is in no way saying that colonized, or postcolonial, individuals must simply "accept" colonization with a nonchalant attitude. In order to avoid this accusation, Butler has included the struggle of the "Resisters"—individuals who refuse Oankali mates and desire to form all-human colonies "hidden away from" the human-Oankali settlements. The tension between these two colonies stems more from the freedom to procreate without the Oankali—or the freedom to reestablish humanity's place on Earth, independent of the Oankali—than it does on the situation of "colonization." It is for this reason that much of the discussion regarding the "Resisters" has been omitted. Still, their presence is important here to illustrate that Butler does not paint her world into a utopic view of colonization.

[15] It is acknowledged that much of science fiction can be considered to be "white-washed," containing white hero(ine)s, aliens who—when they display human traits—display white versions of humanity, and typically disregarding the presence and, or, existence of physically raced non-white humans. Butler herself, in an interview with author Randall Kenan, makes not of the "bigotry" that she sometimes receives from people whose "manners fail, or something slips out" when inquiring about "why [she] write[s] about black people" (501). However, the presence of the aliens themselves can be read as contact between two—physically and culturally—dissimilar bodies that in ways parallel race relations; hence the reading of films/novels, such as *iRobot*, *Avatar*, *Men in Black*, and *Aliens* (to name a few) can all be read through postcolonial and race identity lenses. Not only is there a need, in these films for humans to adjust, or deal with difference, there is typically a violent reaction towards and against this difference that parallels many race relations.

non-human beings, Butler challenges the static concept of the human—incorporating new "humanistic" elements, such as the role of gender, as progeny, offering an example of an existence that does not define itself by those origins.

In order to get a more complete understanding of what Butler has done, it is necessary to more clearly map the ways in which each protagonist in the series—Lilith, Akin and Jodahs—functions as a (post)colonial subject. As the initial character, and the character that ties the three novels of the series together, Lilith functions as the colonial point of origin. "Awakening, she had decided that reality was whatever happened, whatever she perceived," cut off from her past she begins to realize that "[n]one of that mattered. It could not matter while she was confined this way, kept helpless, alone, and ignorant" (*Dawn* 3) in an empty room where she "shouted, then cried, then cursed until her voice was gone," and "pounded the walls until her hands bled and became grotesquely swollen" (5). The Oankali choose to give Lilith fragmented pieces of information as they see fit. They "know" her, but they are only willing, "within reason," to allow her to "know" them (48). Although part of the reason Lilith cannot fully "know" the Oankali is because much of their history, much of their being is "untranslatable" into Lilith's human terms, a situation that is expressly stated when explaining the existence of the "ship" (34). Lilith's colonization occurs, not through physical domination, but through intellectual understanding. As there are limits to her ability to know, she loses sovereignty and becomes somewhat dependent on the Oankali's knowledge and guidance. Diminished in her sovereignty, Lilith only receives the information that her captors *decide* to give her. Denied access to writing materials (70) and any human contact, she is severed from her past existence on Earth. Its only existence now lies in the recesses of her mind, trapped—until she is altered by Nikanj (78)—in a faulty memory; without writing, without humanity, without memory she is separated from her history. She is now truly a colonized subject.

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[16] "Human" has been placed in quotation marks here since, Lilith as a black female fails to register in both Fanonian postcolonialism as well as the traditional, Cartesian, model of humanity to which Fanon clings—even as he desires to break from its imprisonment. (A more thorough discussion of both of these states has occurred in the previous two chapters.)

What is interesting about Lilith's colonization is the way in which Butler illustrates a fundamental problem with humanism: humanity's limited ability to understand the world. It is not the reality that is the problem, the problem is Lilith's language and its inability to represent, or make known, that reality. As Ingram states, representative language is faulty because it can only represent the "impossibility of representation," since "a representation cannot contain the thing represented" (10). Lilith's inability to understand the many the verbal recounting of the ship, and allowing touch to transmit knowledge and conversations, Butler begins removing the need for—or the ability to use—language as the only form for expressing the world. In addition to a lack of complete understanding regarding facts about the Oankali, the status of "her world," or the function of the Oankali in the universe, Lilith's intellectual colonization also transpires in the disruption of her history. History is no longer a point of reference, or a point of origin in or through language. It has happened, but the main emphasis is placed on the now and the future. Although connecting history to the body may seem to fix an image onto the body, just as Bhabha's stereotype, Butler has given her history motion and growth. For the Oankali, history is not a long-term memory; it is a multiplicity of short term memories. History is never really a distant past, but rather a "just-past" because it is within the biological fibers of the Oankali themselves. In Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, Butler keeps history short-term by dislocating it from "a law of contiguity or immediacy," allowing it to "act at a distance, rupture . . . merg[ing] not with the instant but instead with the nervous, temporal, and collective rhizome" of the universe (16). Even the discussion of the "mismatched genes" presents a discussion that rhizomatically connects the past, the present, and the future into one ongoing span. Humanity destroyed itself because of genes that it still possesses. Incorporating a genetic defect into the discussion of humanity elaborates on the rhizomatic nature of human history because it removes the particular points of history and creates an ongoing discussion that extends past points in either the past, the present, or the future. Genes are "current" rather than present.

Lilith becomes a symbolic mother of Earth's new population. As mother, she becomes the embodiment of the point of departure from the old concept of the human. And, as the symbolic "Earth Mother," she illustrates Judith Butler's formless material womb, "surviv[ing] as the *inscriptional space* of" a world that has left her on the outside ("Bodies that Matter" 39). However, Lilith has not been forgotten, nor can she be forgotten, as Judith Butler's "womb" suggests. By giving Lilith's construct offspring narrative authority, Butler has ensured that Lilith continues on. Butler has not forgotten the line of memory that exists for Oankali. Where human memory is point based (recalled by events, or circumstances), Oankali memory is biologically based (intertwined into their very beings) (*Dawn* 36). By attaching memory to the biological structure, the biologic fabric of the Oankali, and then allowing Lilith's human-Oankali offspring narrative authority, Butler has altered the way that language "represents" the world. Where language for Lilith is transferred through speech and writing, Butler, as she has isolated Lilith from these tools, has given a new quality to Oankali language: it is directly tied to the body. If Judith Butler and Irigary see language as standing outside of the body, excluding certain qualities of the body (37), Octavia Butler has returned it to the body by turning the body into a rhizomatic structure, and connecting it to all life forms with which it comes into contact. The Oankali don't speak *of* thing, they speak *with* them.

Yet Butler is not without her complications. Even as the structure of the novel's narrative appears to reinforce Lilith's position as colonized subject, Butler continues mapping the rhizomatic qualities of her characters. Written in the third person, Lilith's narrative appears to have been stripped of her voice, allowing only a portion of her presence to exist behind the hidden third person narrator. As Gayatri C. Spivak notes, "[b]etween patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears" (306) and Butler's narrative structure seems to be taking this full force, as it speaks for Lilith. Although the voice seems to sympathize with her, it never relinquishes its control of her story. Not only does Lilith no longer have a history, she no longer has the agency to tell her own story. This structure

persists throughout the series until it is finally broken by Jodahs. Of Lilith's descendents, Jodahs is the first to be given a first-person voice (*Imago*). This is a significant move on Butler's part because Jodahs is neither sexed nor gendered. It is neither fully human nor fully non-human. Butler has disrupted the representational quality of language and speaking by giving voice to a being who not only carries its history with it (literally, through the cells and cellular memories), but who exists outside of the discourses of sex and gender. Lilith never receives her voice because in doing so, Butler would have maintained the humanist mode of representation. Lilith represents the singularness of humanity. Jodahs, on the other hand, represents a rhizomatic multiplicity.

However, as a confined subject of the Oankali, like her, her offspring will never be free individuals. They will always be influenced, and affected, by the relationship between Lilith and her captors, just as any colonized people will always be influenced, and affected, by their colonizers. The colonial relationship is so pervasive that it continues to influence the colonized, even after the departure of the colonial power, only for Lilith, the colonizing power never leaves. Instead, she is faced with her "betrayal"—becoming nothing more than one of "[their] animals" (*Imago* 558)—with every offspring she concedes to having with the Oankali. A conspirator by submission, she lays the foundation for a new human race that will forever be anything *but* human. In spite of this, Lilith's position holds a power that is necessary to progress. She is not only the gateway between the Oankali and the humans, but she is the gateway to the humans and a more rhizomatic understanding of themselves as she, as the protagonist, makes every effort—despite her body's impulse to resist—understand what it is the Oankali offer. It is a struggle for her to come to grips with the Oankali (first their physicality, then their desires), but she manages to see them not as invaders, and to understand that they "never tried to make her change her behavior" (*Dawn* 239). It is the lack of power—or the lack of desire for power—that is important here. Where the colonial situation is nothing but power systems working together, Lilith and the Oankali are about species working together in tandem. The contact between the

two species is about a growing from a point of contact (similar to colonization) and creating new lines that cannot be separated from their origin lines.

Moving past Lilith, Akin, the first construct male, becomes the voice of the colonized rebel humans—he himself offering a shift towards a post-colonized body—as he sympathizes with their plight as individuals without choice, trying to connect with his own purpose as half human, half non-human. As a mixed being, and a descendent of Lilith, Akin has the opportunity to gain a voice among the colonizing Oankali, because "[w]ho among the Oankali was speaking for the interests of resister Humans?" (*Adulthood* 396). Only he, as a partial member, can literally speak where the humans cannot. Aboard the ship, he is given permission to enter the consensus, lending his voice to the argument "that it might not be enough to let Humans choose either union with the Oankali or sterile lives free of the Oankali" (396)—regardless of the future (un)certainties. Because he is partial Oankali—partial colonizer—he is listened to because "he did not have their flaw . . . He was Oankali enough to be listened to by other Oankali and Human enough to know that resister Humans were being treated with cruelty and condescension" (396). Born half-human, he longs to understand his human side, his place in the giant mix of colonization, and become more than just a being, because as one being, both sides "concern [him] too" (395). However, although he is half human, he never seeks to *become* human. He only wants to allow humanity a say in its own destiny. This is an important distinction because Akin speaks as part of humanity, but as apart from it. Contrary to Christina Braid's assumption that his first motive is to help "create a Human colony on Mars" (52), Akin simply wants to show that it is okay for humans to continue down their chosen path. He intends to convince the Oankali that difference is okay, helping them learn their own lesson on the acceptance of difference. Braid sees Akin's role as a liberator from "their oppression" (52); however, this view is problematic because by saying that he wants to liberate the humans, Braid assumes that there is a power struggle occurring between the two species. But, Butler continues to remind the reader that "none of the resister villages are hidden from" the Oankali

(275), and yet they are allowed to exist without Oankali interference. In fact, even the humans of Lo (Lilith's village on Earth) were made to "learn to live [t]here without [the Oankali] so that if [they] did resist, [they] could survive" (277). In other words, the Oankali are not intent on keeping prisoners. The construction of family units, the settling of Lo is a choice that the humans there have made. While postcolonials may ask what choice is there really, in colonization? There is a noticeable difference in the way that Akin is heard. Where the potentate is nothing but a mere puppet, Akin is given an actual voice. The Oankali *want* him to make the decision because they are physically, and genetically incapable of doing so. Difference is not to be controlled, rather it is to be understood and accepted as its own being.

As half human, half Oankali[17], Akin bridges the colonized and the colonizing power. His ability to give a valid, intelligible, voice to the unvoiced becomes the push needed to join the two seemingly distinct existences. As Lilith's story was told through third person narration, stripping her of her agency and voice, Akin's narration shifts so that he is able to tell his own story. This shift marks his emergence as a postcolonial individual. In part, Akin represents a version of the "colonized intellectual" (*Wretched* 22). Because he can now speak (for both himself and humanity), he is able to institute a shift towards a liberated existence. Within his body, he blurs the lines between colonized and colonizer, allowing the shift towards a post-colonized status for the next generation. Akin's desire is a shift towards posthumanism because he seeks a co-habitation between all human and non-human powers—even if, for him, it must take place on different worlds. Instead of two conflicting cultures, Akin has "evolve[d] into [a being] who

[17]Although Christina Braid characterizes the Oankali, in her article "Contemplating and Contesting Violence in Dystopia: Violence in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* Triolgy," as "scientifically pragmatic" beings who "[calculate] ways to give to others by means of seduction, manipulation, and illusion" (61), the reading in this essay comes sees the Oankali as a species of being who value life above all else. Their desire to prevent humans form "destroying themselves" stems from their desire to preserve life. The choice to read the Oankali in this way is due to the lack of power relations that the series presents. Since it appears that Butler has expressly done away with having one system dominate the other—as Lilith and the other characters are constantly given choices, and these choices respected—viewing the Oankali as manipulative seemed to go against Butler's intent. Also, Butler does not seek to blame the Oankali for any of the events. Butler seems to be working from an understanding that blame only perpetuates the cycle of resentment, which she clearly illustrates in the final chapters of *Dawn,* as the other humans blame Lilith for their situation and murder her lover Joseph out of revenge. This is one of the darkest scenes in the series, and yet Butler crafts Lilith a character of understanding—if not forgiveness—as she tries to understand the other humans' motives for their actions, although she is angry and has lost feelings for them (238).

celebrate[s] and explore[s]" the differences between the humans and the Oankali, "rather than distance" them from one another (Hampton 71). For postcolonial individuals, this move is important because, as individuals currently outside of the colonial situation, they are given a similar position as Akin. There is no denying the effects that colonization has had on postcolonial individuals, yet like Akin, postcolonial individuals can use their change as a base for speaking of the need for an understanding of difference.

However, Butler does not leave Akin's position as mediator without its complications. Unlike the potentate of (de)colonization—an individual, as Albert Memmi describes, who "believes he controls his own movements" (13)—Akin is aware that his movements are not his own. While the Oankali saw Akin as "something they had helped to make" (*Adulthood* 462), they did so because they understood their own limitations regarding the species—they could not bring themselves to allow humans to die. Akin was "intended to decide the fate of the resisters. He was intended to make the decision [that] the [Oankali] could not make… and [to] convince others" that it was the correct decision (462). Still, Butler masterfully navigates this by reminding the reader of the Oankali's lack of a need to dominate, or institute a power structure. Akin is granted his position because he is unknown. His bodycontains an unknown potential and therefore his presence is given true status of Being. At each moment, Akin is given the chance to signify on his own accord, which, as Ingram argues, leads to an "ethical difference" which "*is* authentic Being-in-the-world" (108; emphasis in original). Butler has granted Akin his respect through his being's unpredictability, not through his position as Oankali.

Where Akin's construction granted him voice amongst the Oankali and served to polarize his understanding of himself, Jodahs' construction strips it of its voice amongst them—not because of its mixed heritage, but because it was feared. It, as the first ever construct ooloi was "a flawed natural genetic engineer" (*Imago* 528), whose only "flaw" was that it was "exactly right" (524) and, therefore, highly unpredictable. Where, for a postcolonial individual it is the difference of race that is frightening, for the Oankali, it is the unpredictability of change.

However, the fear of Jodahs was not simply because it was an ooloi, but because it was a construct ooloi. As construct, it was not only part Oankali, but part human—and that human part of it was the most terrifying. Jodahs' human half granted it unlimited abilities to "activate dormant genes," an action which an Oankali ooloi's body would instinctually reject, seeing "that kind of behavior as…deeply self-destructive" (535). Since it was ooloi, it could "re-start" the hierarchical gene that was corrected in the humans that were sent back to live in human-Oankali colonies. With this gene re-started, it could use its "abilities to hurt other living things," and damage everything with which it came into contact. Because of this, other Oankali—especially other ooloi—"watched [it] with a terrible mixture of suspicion and hope, fear and need" (542) because if it succeeded then they too could have ooloi construct children. Still, Jodahs' rejection fragmented its understanding of itself, resulting in a manifestation of a formless body. Each touch resulted in unintentional physical and molecular damage, and this caused a sense of doubt within it. However, this is not to say that Jodahs' change was not rhizomatic. Instead, its changes were responses to its status as an uncharted being. Until it learned how to strike a balance between its differences, Jodahs was unable to control its change. For a postcolonial individual this is an important recognition because it highlights the recognition that not all change comes without a price. However, Butler never leaves this to be a malignant threat. She always finds ways to incorporate the change into the progression of the character. Just as Jodahs eventually learns to control itself, but the control only comes as it begins to recognize both its difference within the world and its need for others. In other words, although it is different, it cannot exist independently of other beings. It must take its freedom to exist differently—just as postcolonial individuals must take their freedom to be, independent of other cultures—and yet cannot exist without being connected to the other cultures.

As the most deconstructed of the *Xenogenesis*' protagonists, Jodahs presents the most clear example of a break with European humanism. Its use does not come through the qualities of its character (its alien being, or its physically morphing body), but through its ability to change

in ways that contradict traditional methods. For Jodahs, its being contradicted the standard form of human-Oankali constructions. It wasn't an acceptable male or female construction, yet at the same time, its status as ooloi allowed it to be everything at once. As a construct ooloi, Jodahs is stripped of gender to embody society's social multiplicity. De-sexed, de-raced, de-gendered multiplicity, it was "neither subject nor object," instead existing "only as determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions," always threatening to alter its existence "in nature" ("Introduction" 8). Because it floats through the world aloof to the world's social constructs, it can offer new models for existing. Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, argues that because male and female are socially constructed categories, "acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means" (173; emphasis in original). Where Jodahs' body rejects the human need for labels, disrupting language's representational quality, as it constantly morphs into various organic forms, or morphs to become the physical manifestation of unconscious desires (*Imago* 569), it slips into a territory that is confusing and frightening. Jodahs begins to "infuse a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and a new humanity," and a new body (*Wretched* 2).

As the final construct form, it like the newly liberated postcolonial subject, must navigate uncharted territory. Jodahs is a complete break from the colonial body. It—in its non-human form—is a step in the direction of what it would look like to be a whole new "machine." Granted, Butler is not calling for a new alien humanity, but rather she is calling for a new understanding of how appearance constitutes a human. Jodahs, with its ooloi sensory arms and ability to shift and manipulate its physical appearance, adjusting to its immediate intimate environment, is more human than most of the human characters within his tale. As "pure" humans kill and steal from one another, Jodahs sympathizes and longs to touch humans. Jodahs becomes more concerned for its immediate human contacts than it becomes for itself. While it matures, Jodahs

becomes more refined, more sympathetic, more environmentally (his immediate surroundings—both people and location) reasonable.

In order to accomplish Jodahs' arrival at/as a de-sexed, de-gendered individual—into his status as a post-colonized individual—Butler invokes the Deleuzo-Guattarian theory of becomings. In "1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . .," Deleuze and Guattari argue the potential of "becomings," stating that becomings are more than a "correspondence between relations" or "a resemblance, an imitation, or at the limit, an identification" (237). What is left is a system that "has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block with the first" (238) as the first itself is never the beginning, but a continuation of another becoming. Becomings are infinite as they function on a plane of multiplicity. This plane of multiplicities, as mentioned before, is the same plane on which Butler constructs Jodahs. Becomings force an evolution of both the voiced and the unvoiced. In addition to forcing this evaluation, danger lies in becomings as they tear one from their ability to neatly compartmentalize segments of life.

What is suggested here, then, is that as a system of altered existence, ever changing, becomings present many exciting possibilities for the human "form"—a fact with which Butler seems highly attuned, bestowing on Jodahs' body the ability to physically alter its appearance, in order to reflect its surroundings and its mood, just as Jodahs and its twin sibling are able to do. As they become ooloi, their bodies begin to "destabilize," allowing them to destabilize the boundaries of humanity that rely on the appearance of the corporeal body in order to define, and control, the world. Just as it is believed that the humans bred destruction, Jodahs is feared by the Oankali because of its potential for destruction. It is this potential that threatens Jodahs' freedom and sends it, along with its family, into exile away from Lo. The Oankali's fear of the destructive potential of the violence that exists in both humanity and the construct (ooloi)—being bred from human genes—is ironic, given the nature of their violent acquisition of humans and

their genes. The Oankali, engaging in what Rob Nixon terms, “slow violence” (444) strip the humans—and in ways their construct offspring—of any chance to exist without feeling the burden of the Oankali presence. There is always the threat of a consensus being held to “decide” the fate of either a human or a construct.

As Jodahs’ body begins to instinctively adjust its appearance, selecting various elements of its environment after which it would model itself (574), Jodahs’ family (both human and Oankali) become disturbed by its morphing (574). This conflict between the knowledge of appearance and the knowledge of Self directly correlates with Bhabha’s idea of the stereotype as being “at once a substitute and a shadow” of the colonial subject (“The Other Question” 117). What Jodahs brings to light is the ways in which one’s corporeal being becomes an “ambivalent text of projection and interjection, metaphoric and metonymic strategies, displacement, over-determination” that are used to “construct the positionalities and oppositionalitites of” a colonizing discourse (117). As Jodahs destabilizes his physicality, it destabilizes the links of controlling discourse on its individual body. It is no longer bound to the singularity of a colonized subject; in fact, through the process of becoming-plant and becoming-natural, it is no longer bound to the singularity of the human form. As both postcolonial and posthuman, Jodahs’ becomings “enables a transgression of these limits [of colonialism and humanism] from the space” that it has now created: a space of complete “otherness” (96).

Jodahs is neither male nor female, but—as ooloi—the bridge joining, while simultaneously repelling, human and Oankali discourse of the body. Oankali ooloi are neither male nor female and they arrest any attempts to apply a socially constructed label; however, Jodahs as a construct ooloi begins to force a questioning of what it means to be both male and female, and what it means not to be either as he was constructed to “look very male—so that the females would be attracted to [it] and help convince [it] that [it]” was indeed “male” (*Imago* 523). Construct individuals were, then, constructed to physically conform to human stereotypes of biological sex, even as the Oankali are not so easily distinguishable between sexes.

As ooloi, Jodahs becomes the one that reaches between the two sexes, and species, when they can no longer touch each other (*Imago* 526). Ooloi function as facilitators of becoming-species since they are the beings that work on the molecular level of each species, manipulating and forming each specie until they are able to biologically accommodate the other's molecular information. It is through the ooloi that interspecies conception is possible. With the ooloi, there is an economics of touch that occurs, that forces an intense desire to connect with human mates. In the (sensory) hands of the ooloi, humans simultaneously become body and sign, where their body as sign participates in the "transformation of a textile into an uncertain textual sign, possibly a fetish" ("Signs" 149). This transformation becomes most visible in the construct Jodahs as it falls into a "deep biological attachment," a "[l]iteral, physical addiction to another person" (*Imago* 658). It is Jodahs' connection with his human mates (Tomas and Jesusa) that ultimately saves him from "drift[ing] toward a less complex form," "deeply, painfully afraid, desperately lonely and hungry for a touch it could not have" (661-62). Jodahs "need[s] them and they need" it because without the human contact, it would "become . . . very dangerous to" itself and to the humans (714). For the ooloi—and even more so for Jodahs as a construct ooloi—the human body represents a living text that Jodahs, and the other ooloi, long to read and understand. The human body, functioning as sign in the hands of the ooloi, becomes altered as they understand the negative aspects of the body as positive, as with Lilith and Tomas' cancers.

Although Jodahs receives Tomas and Jesusa in the original form of their corporeal body, it is unable to take the text of their body as it is written. It alters the corporeal text—in this case literally, as Jodahs heals their tumors—and re-interprets their bodies in its own language; just as Bhabha argues that a re-reading of a "translated" text becomes, at once, "misread" and "displaced," threatening to derail attempts to impose an the ideas within the text on its new reader ("Signs" 146). The ooloi shift into "a form of defensive warfare" (172) in order to counter humanity's hierarchical nature. As a return to the ability to touch, to contact, is what Jodahs

craves the most, the postcolonial craves the ability to touch, to contact his true, unadulterated self. Yet, this desire is impossible as long as it remains fixated on his past. It is not until Jodahs is able to embrace itself as a new being is it able to reconnect and fulfill its longing. This touch that Jodahs craves is the touch that connects it to a larger community. Jodahs' desire to connect represents its desire to leave the humanistic individualism and enter into a type of communal individualism found in Fanon. As an ooloi, Jodahs can never stand alone. It must always be the point of transcendence for other bodies, other beings. This is the space that Jodahs understands for itself.

Contrasting Fanon's desire to "touch" the place of the colonizer, Butler's touch is not one of becoming. There is no previous knowledge expressed in the touch—meaning that is no expectation that the body represent anything other than a presence—so the touch is not grounded in assumptions or a closed system of knowledge. This allows the touch to generate new experiences with each instance of contact. For Fanon, there could be no new experience because, just as the colonizer knew the colonized, Fanon already "knew" the colonizer. Therefore, contact was predetermined and limited in its ability to change. In fact, change was inhibited by the closed systems of knowledge.

In addition to their deep addiction to touch, the ooloi function on a mechanical level as they work on the molecular level—a level that is untouchable by human hands, a level that is only accessible by little machines. With a machine-like precision, the ooloi fix and build within the body (human, natural and Oankali) in order to calculate and correct any errors that they compute within their environment. As a new construct, Jodahs has never known what it means to be truly human, or what it means to be truly Oankali. Its situation here mirrors the colonized individual's situation as he has never been "human" in the traditional sense. He, always kept in the margins of society, has always had to navigate his life as "Other" ("Signs" 156). Normal ooloi must bring about this new terrain through the connection of multiple bodies: human and organic mechanical organism; however, Jodahs contains all of these principles in one body.

Common among the postcolonial and posthuman problems is the intersection where biology and language meet. As language attempts to define the biological, the definer finds that there are elements lacking within language that allow a continuous description of what occurs. At this (dis)junction the postcolonial stereotype arises as it is at base a "crucial splitting of the ego" where "the construction of the colonized subject . . . [is] primordially fixed" within the mind of the colonizer ("The Other" 115). Humans, as the Oankali understand them, are only capable of destruction. Destruction[18] is bred in their genes—this is the reasoning behind the decision to bar humans from reproducing freely—so the Oankali believe that it is in humanity's best interest to protect them from themselves. The problem for many of the humans in *Xenogenesis* arises when they attempt to express biology through language. Many of the humans saw the "hierarchical" nature of humanity, but blocked it out due to the language that encased it. Hierarchical man, because he opposed being corralled by an alien life body, was unwilling to admit his tendencies, thus falling back into the old habits of ordering life according to personal value.

As the Oankali function as agents of evolution throughout the universe, constantly finding and assimilating new species into themselves, they are never the objects of change. They initiate trade situations and these trades occur on their terms alone. Destruction of life, then, is disconcerting because it deemphasizes life, ending it before it has had a chance to reach its full potential. Even the ships and towns in which they live are constructed to conform to

[18] Destruction is encoded into the genes of humanity in a characteristic the Oankali called "hierarchical" (*Dawn* 41). According to the Oankali, humanity has two great characteristics that are incompatible with one another: the characteristic of being intelligent, and the characteristic of being hierarchical. Alone neither of the characteristics are harmful, but "the two together are lethal" (41) because they occur on a level so small that they go unnoticed., Together the genetic characteristics result in humanity's need to establish systems of power and domination—and ultimately destroy life forms for no reason other than to maintain a hierarchy of domination—which is the most troubling aspect of the human, for the Oankali. It affects the Oankali so much that, as Jdahya explains to Lilith, it made it "very hard for them to touch" humans (40). The hierarchical gene was the "older and more entrenched characteristic…It's a terrestrial characteristic" and "when human intelligence served it instead of guiding it, when human intelligence did not even acknowledge it as a problem…that was like ignoring cancer" (41). Allowing the hierarchical gene to go unchecked set humanity on a path of "mass suicide" (19). Therefore, it is not simple destruction that the Oankali fear, or avoid; rather it is the destruction of life that they fear in humanity. As Jdahya explains, "Mass suicide is one of the few things [Oankali] usually let alone," but since the humans possess so much potential, the Oankali decided it was necessary to "interfere in [the humans'] act of self-destruction" (19).

their needs and desires. They can manipulate and control it without it ever threatening to return or reject their commands. This is similar to the need for trade (or the genetic exchange between species) in which the Oankali "acquire new life—seek it, investigate it, manipulate it, sort it, [and] use it" (*Dawn* 43). However, unlike the humans who acquire things because they seek to categorize, the Onakali do it because they "*must* do it" (43; emphasis in original). Because he is a construct-ooloi (and therefore part human, with it hierarchical characteristic), and the one who does the "genetic engineering" (43) between species, Jodahs, then, is a potential force of destruction. It is triply dangerous because it has the history (knowledge) of the Oankali, the race of race of humanity (genes) and the body of nothing before. Combined with its love of the human touch, this combination threatens to topple everything that the Oankali hold dear because it ties Jodahs closer to its human genes, its human side, than it does its Oankali side. Along the process of its evolution to understand itself, Jodahs comes to realize that no matter what "the distinction between [its] human and" its Oankali halves are, they "should be of no use in drawing" a new image of its Self (Wolfe 98). Because these two terms are only representations produced through language, they can only represent partial virtual realities which must then be placed on the individual so that categorizations can be made. It is precisely this attempt to categorize and to contain that the postcolonial individual seeks to avoid since they are tools used to prescribe an image for him, disallowing him the luxury—the agency—to find his own Self.

An important aspect of the new model for postcolonial individuals is the recognition that the individual is not an individual at all, but rather, a person unified through the community[19]. If, as Fanon argues, individualism presents one of the most damaging blows to

[19]Here, a distinction between the community, or the "communal" and the society, or the "social" is being made. Where communal suggests an interconnectivity between bodies, social seems to limit the interactions and amount of interconnectivity bodies share. In social settings, there is a layer of independence where one retains their own autonomy by being able to enter and leave independently of the other members in the society. Social networks, for instance, illustrate this best. As a member of a site such as Facebook or Twitter, one exists within the space of their own page. As people visit, comment, and "poke" others, they engage in social behaviors. However, once they leave the page, the individual is neither affected nor isolated; rather, they exist in stasis, waiting on the next point of social "interaction."

postcolonial individual (*Wretched* 11) because it "lock[s] him in his subjectivity," Butler has countered by presenting a deep urge within Jodahs for a communal life. Butler accomplishes this in multiple ways, the first being its ooloi "gender," which, on its own is a neutral body. It is neither male, nor female, yet craves reproduction, functioning as mediator not only between genders, but between species as well. Jodahs' position as ooloi complicates the traditional notion of community because it expands the community so that different species intermix—not only out of choice, but out of necessity. This interconnection of lines speaks directly to the rhizome as they link—sometimes dissimilar—traits together ("Introduction" 21). Jodahs is a multiplicity of lines (literally as its tentacles reach into the world and pull pieces out, and back into itself), and as multiplicity it is "reducible to neither the One nor the multiple," nor is it "a multiple derived from the One, or to which One is added," all while remaining "directions in motion" (21).

In addition to Jodahs' being ooloi, Butler brings the individual back to the collective "I" through Jodahs' connection to its Oankali line. As Jdahya mentions in *Dawn*, Oankali are forever connected to the memory of existence through their biology (39). In this way, Butler has extended the line of the community so that it not only includes those immediately present, but so that it also includes those in the past and those in the future. Community, then, should be seen as a line that flows through the individual, as well as the larger social collective. Where Fanon attempts to establish this line of community, he stops, finding a point, black consciousness (*Black Skin* 135) from which the community is to be connected, and, in doing so, limits the "lineness" of the postcolonial individual. Fanon turns the lines of the postcolonial into "lineages . . . which are localizable linkages between points and positions" and not consistent paths of motion ("Introduction" 21). Secondly, the individual is rejoined to the communal "I"

The communal, on the other hand requires one to forfeit parts of their autonomy in lieu of the needs of others. For representing this, a marriage works best. In a marriage—a successful one, at least—individuals must work as one because actions have consequences for both members. Within a community, there is no ability to enter and leave according to one's whims, nor do the individuals exist in stasis. Therefore, to say that humans are social is not the same as saying that humans are communal, or exist in communities.

through the longing to touch and be touched. For the Oankali-mated humans, physical contact between one another becomes an act of ambivalence, so much so to the point where they can only touch one another through their ooloi mate (*Imago* 526). This is an interesting twist, by Butler, because she has sought to disconnect her humans from any independent reliance on one another, furthering her dependencies across species. Among the ooloi, Jodahs is more depended on the touch of the human than normal. They crave this touch to the point that their bodies begin morphing uncontrollably without it (656). While this dependency on human contact may appear to be an argument for humanism, it is not. Instead, what Butler subtly conveys is the underlying reasoning for the need for contact. Touching humans allows Jodahs the opportunity for creation. This creation is in direct conversation with Deleuze and Guattari because it is a creation bent on deterritorializing the boundaries between the Oankali and the humans. Jodahs is able to mold and shape not only its human mates' molecular structure, but its own body as well, as he began to take on characteristics of his mates' and their desires: "Your body has been striving to please her. . . You look like a male version of her" (569).

The town (Lo) itself also acts a way for Butler to institute a community—even after they move into self-imposed exile they still maintain the town's communal mentality. In the town, nothing acts independently, or of its own accord. Even the walls of the homes are made to act as a member of the family so that nothing is left out. Just as the "ship" was alive and in a symbiotic relationship with those living on it (*Dawn* 34), the environment of Lo feeds and nurtures its residents while the residents come to respond it, and to one another, as members of an extended family. This is more expressly put as Jodahs discusses its exile with Lilith, stating that it "would have to leave Lo anyway . . . Even without th[e] exile, [it] couldn't mate [t]here where [it was] related to almost everyone" (*Imago* 541). Lilith, as a figurative matriarch of Lo, as she is the human responsible for waking many of the town's residents and settling Lo with her Oankali mates, protects Lo not for her own wellbeing, but for the wellbeing of the community in its entirety. Although she is regarded as a sort of silently elected human chief figure, as is

evidenced when Tino comes to Lo for the first time as he tells his story and watches the way that Lilith commands the attention and respect of the other inhabitants (*Adulthood* 271-78), there are no politics within the town—no hierarchies. Her role is granted more out of respect than out of power, which arises as individuals display knowledge and strength that can be used to assist the community. While Fanon's community is located at a point, Butler's community extends and weaves beyond, and through points. People are allowed membership into the community not by relationship, but by their willingness to recognize and respect the other members of the community. Being an outsider to the community, Tino was invited to stay in Lo with one condition: "You can do as you please here. As long as you don't hurt anyone, you can stay or go as you like . . . No one has the right to demand anything from you that you don't want to give" because, unlike other areas ruled by a hierarchical system of politics, Lo was a community of people that worked together for each, as a whole (281-81).

Where Akin begins the shift towards a new human positioning by giving voice to, and mediating the multiplicities within himself, Jodahs finalizes this shift as he becomes confident of his own position, of his own position amongst the in-between of species. Neither fully human nor fully Oankali, nor fully "natural," yet fully realized, he presents an excellent example of a being fitting between worlds, yet fully existing within them. He is literally a "new" Being. As a product of interspecies construction, he is different because there is intentionality in his being, yet he is a completely untouched being because he was never meant to progress to such extents. Within Jodahs' immediate environment, there is never a question of superiority; there is never a question of who (what) is better. Better connotes a separateness, a dividing, that works its way into becoming a tool for justifying atrocities. Because something is better, it is necessary for it to survive the lesser; because it is better, it has authority over the lesser. He truly fulfills Jdahya's prophesy; he is a "different" species all together (*Dawn* 37). Difference does not necessarily mean better. If humanism seeks to secure a species' position within the world—perhaps the only species in nature—Butler has sought to displace that position and present an

example of what the world would look like if the hierarchical tendencies of humans were corrected and removed. If, as Fanon argues, “what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to” (Wretched 5), then Butler has taken a species who has been unable to cope with difference and mixed them completely so that there is no pure distinction. Once the postcolonial individual becomes aware of his potential not as a divided individual, but as an individual within, and of, multiplicities, a true separation from colonial dependencies becomes possible. If, postcolonials have never been able to claim the Cartesian label of human, there arises a potential to define the human in different terms—in terms that are not dependent on hierarchies and divisions, or languages that represent through exclusion.

Although the *Xenogenesis* series deals with alien and human encounters, it still maintains weight in the postcolonial discussion because the series “present[s] unique ways to imagine and ultimately to understand” existence in all of its forms, as “alienation exists, more profoundly, in the hearts and minds of individual characters, not just in their physical properties (Hamilton 71). This is a power understanding in a postcolonial setting because, as Fanon illustrates, much of the postcolonial’s understanding of his/her difference comes from the outside and works its way inward. Butler’s reversal of understanding allows for Deleuze and Guattari’s rhizome to be understood as an understanding of existence of “Being-in-the-world,” and not an existence of “being-made-in-the-world.” For the postcolonial individual, the lessons of how to coexist with difference and how to positively move through moments of change are more important than the interspecies exchange in which the characters of *Xenogenesis* engage. Although much of the discussion is grounded in a fictional account of contact, the potential lessons of the contact remain the same.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Robert LaRue gained an interest in postcolonial issues after meeting, noted professor, Dr. Penelope Ingram during his graduate program at the University of Texas at Arlington. From her knowledge he found a new way to (re)think person-to-person interactions and systems of power. After being introduced to Dr. Stacy Alaimo, Robert found a growing interest in the field of posthumanism. Dr. Alaimo's knowledge, and the field, inspired a new path that meshed well with his interest in postcolonialism.