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In the process of shattering their chains: The Emergence of the “New Man” in Six
Post-WWII African American and Iranian Anticolonial Novels

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Comparative Literature

by

Amy Tahani-Bidmeshki

2012

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2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

*In the process of shattering their chains: The Emergence of the “New Man” in Six
Post-WWII African American and Iranian Anticolonial Novels*

by

Amy Tahani-Bidmeshki

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Gil Hochberg, Co-Chair

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In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon suggests “Decolonization is truly the creation of new men” (2). In this project, I am interested in the representation of the emerging “new man” in the novels of Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Paule Marshall, as well as Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Sadeq Chubak, and Simin Daneshvar. My study aims to use these mid-twentieth century novels as “contrapunctal” to Fanon’s hope for the decolonizing world. In each main chapter, I show how these novels challenge and critique Fanon’s concept of the “new man” while expanding upon and complicating the idea.

The dissertation of Amy Tahani-Bidmeshki is approved.

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2012

DEDICATION

For Sophie

You renew my hope

And restore my faith

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The title of this dissertation comes from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in a hopeful overture for the decolonizing world: "The peoples of the Third World are in the process of shattering their chains, and what is extraordinary is that they succeed" (34). While Fanon's lessons reverberate in my mind, the individuals listed below are a vital part of my own process of emergence. This project is the result of personal and professional experiences which helped to foster the central concerns presented here. To simply thank my parents, Mohammad and Leyla Tahani, undermines the immense impact and influence they had and continue to have on my emotional, physical, and intellectual well-being. You were, are, and always will be my most valuable sources of encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

“Decolonization never goes unnoticed, for it focuses on and fundamentally alters being, and transforms the spectator crushed to a nonessential state into a privileged actor, captured in a virtually grandiose fashion by the spotlight of History. It infuses a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new men. But such a creation cannot be attributed to a supernatural power: The ‘thing’ colonized becomes a man through the very process of liberation” (Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 2)

In 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, the so-called Third World assembled to address their mutual concerns regarding their shared experiences as colonial subjects. Leaders from Egypt, Ghana, India, and Indonesia invited members from twenty-nine Third World nations to join their conference about non-aligned resistance to First World imperialism. Ali Sastroamidjojo, Prime Minister of Indonesia and “spiritual architect” (*The Color Curtain*, 141) of this conference, summed up the need for this gathering: “Among the main causes of the present-day tensions here is colonialism, the old scourge under which Asia and Africa have suffered for ages” (*CC*, 141). The most important issue at stake, he says, is the fact that “colonialism is still very much alive” (*CC*, 141). As historian George Kahin notes, at Bandung attendees were aware of the fact that “the existence of colonialism in many parts of Asia and Africa in whatever form it may be...suppresses the national cultures of the people” (79) and these individuals understood that they had to work through their common problems to reestablish a sense of dignity for themselves without depending on any colonial powers.

The exclusion of the central Asian Soviet nations meant the participants at Bandung rejected Soviet-infused socialism as much as First World capitalism. These details show that the “Bandung Spirit” meant that “the colonized world had now emerged to claim its space in world affairs, not just as an adjunct of the First or Second Worlds, but as a player in its own right” (Prashad, 45). This particular convergence of postcolonial and Third World representatives in a location that is neither First-World nor Soviet controlled signals the mutual experience of those people who were directly colonized by the so-called First World and those masses whose nations

became outposts for neocolonialism. The blatant rejection of First World representatives at Bandung meant that the men gathered at this conference no longer wanted the influence and interference of First World politics in the process of decolonization. Their attitude towards the First World echoes Frantz Fanon's recognition that "Decolonization is truly the creation of new men" (*WE*, 2) because even through the choice of location, the emerging "new men" relocated power relations and demonstrated a rebellion against First World domination.

These men rejected the established socioeconomic and political systems available to them as paths to creating new nations. As Richard Wright describes, "This smacked of something new, something beyond Left and Right" (*CC*, 13). Wright's assessment highlights the emerging postcolonial world's rejection of the First World political, economic, and social modes of constructing nations, which readily points to the birth of "a new generation of men" (*WE*, 2). In one conversation with a young Indonesian, Wright asks the man about the words "Left" and "Right." The young man says, "They are misused words. Left is a word that is an instrumentality in political struggles. The same is true of the word Right. In reality, there is not much difference between Left and Right today. [...] The character of the world has changed radically, but we are using an old, outmoded terminology to describe that world" (*CC*, 49-50). Such sentiments beg the question of how to define and understand the decolonizing world in search of the "new" and especially, the postcolonial population, which seems to refuse the Left/Right, Capitalist/Communist formations of the mid-twentieth century? After centuries of domination by technologically advanced and foreign oppressors, the emerging decolonized masses had to construct new forms socioeconomic, political, and psychological models of conduct. If they resorted to using the preexisting standards, then the conditions that they understood as oppressive would only propagate, only this time by their own hands. Time was also of the essence as the First World nations competed with each other to dominate these

decolonizing nations through neocolonialism, which no longer required settler or direct colonization.

Using Fanon's work and especially his observations about the formation of these "new men," my project seeks to explore the psychologies of six subaltern protagonists in the works of Wright, Ralph Ellison, Paule Marshall, Jalal Ale Ahmad, Sadeq Chubak, and Simin Daneshvar and to interrogate the actions of these characters in the process of decolonization. The authors of this study offer a "contrapuntal analysis" (Said, 66-67) to Fanon's optimism towards the process of decolonization and to a large extent, their novels challenge Fanon's theoretical observations and question the validity of his model of the "new man." While Fanon charges that a new generation of invigorated, capable, and determined people rises up out of the destruction of colonialism, these writers consider the impediments, limitations, and inabilities of colonized individuals to regain a sense of wholeness, both personally and through community and challenge Fanon's views as possibly wrong. That said, the novelists and Fanon converge on interrogating the extent to which colonialism creates a sense of alienation.

In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Fanon explains that his goal in this work is the "disalienation of the black man" (38) because he feels "the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex" (12). Fanon's works through the historical process of colonization to evince the intersections of socioeconomic, political, racial, and to some extent gender oppression and demonstrates how these concerns when coupled with alienation create new problems for emerging "new men." Fanon carefully analyzes the psychological impact of colonization and tackles the inferiority complex of the oppressed masses with astute observation and insight. Even though he paints a grim picture of the herculean task set before the decolonizing world, he writing demonstrates tremendous hope for the masses as he declares with confidence that all these alienated people need to do is acknowledge their

limitations, fight against their oppressors, and then regain a sense of lost dignity. To some extent, Fanon essentially declares that a sense of alienation can be successfully converted into rebellion that leads to an individual's, and ultimately the masses', liberation from psychological as well as material oppression. Although some of the novelists of this project also penned non-fictional works about decolonization, their fiction shows how the alienated individual of decolonization fails to overcome his or her "psychoexistential complex" (*BSWM*, 12) and therefore, neither the masses nor the nation can progress towards liberation from the oppression of colonialism. These novelists subvert the notion of the "new man" and challenge Fanon's often utopic declarations.

All six of these novelists dabbled in some form of Marxist activism in their lifetimes, but they all also abandoned strict allegiances to Marxist organizations and became quite critical of Leftist politics while remaining staunchly opposed to conservative, capitalist agendas. In their acts of resistance towards political ideologies, these writers subvert of the novel's role as a platform for the emergence of the bourgeois hero as an emblem of the nation. The protagonists of the works in this project possess some of the notable traits of a traditional hero in that they are usually male, young, and striving to improve their hardship, but they are flawed with anger and violence, selfishness, and they either end up dead or remain in their dire circumstances without recourse. Even the female protagonists fail as the bourgeois emblem of heroism because these women demonstrate inconsistent patterns of development through their inability to overcome their oppressed condition as women and mothers and their submission to the patriarchal model of gender roles and expectations.

While their protagonists directly challenge Fanon's concept of the admirable "new man" because of their various flaws and limitations in overturning their sense of alienation, these writers themselves function as Fanon's "new men" and by extension, "new women." Through their works and the very act of writing, they explore the possibility of creating new spaces and

modes of rebellion. Although these writers and by extension their protagonists work towards establishing these new forms, the looming issue is how should an individual, alienated and disconnected from a social group, create community bonds when the psychological as well as material consequences of colonization wreak havoc on the masses? If this alienated individual rejects the established choices for bonding with others such as familial associations or political and socioeconomic affiliations, then how does the decolonized world progress and thrive? When these “new men” and women fail to bond with other people, how can their rebellion effect progressive changes that not only propel the masses into better living conditions, but also pose as a viable threat to neocolonialism? Further, if existing forms of political, economic, and social ideologies fail the emerging decolonized world, what other alternatives need to forge hope for the subaltern and are there possibly other multifaceted choices? Finally, while strong improvements have been made in class and racial terms, how do these strides continue to hinder gender concerns?

Fanon mentions the concept of the “new man” in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), but he describes and identifies the various traits of this person through his emerging consciousness about colonialism and power throughout most of his writings including *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952). In this book, Fanon characterizes the consciousness of the “new man” and says, “[he] finds [himself] in a world in which things do evil; a world in which [he is] summoned into battles; a world in which it is always a question of annihilation or triumph” (228). This “new man’s” particular recognition that he is, or rather, he must choose to be “actional” (*BSWM*, 222) functions in the six novels of this study as a key element in the psyche of the protagonists. Fanon uses Sartre’s existentialism and injects race and class into the schema. Sartre’s theories build upon many precursors including Kierkegaard who was “deeply committed to the idea of a Christian God” and Nietzsche who was “just as deeply divorced from it” (Caruth, vii). In the

twentieth-century, Sartre presents the individual “at his crisis of despair” (Caruth, xi) and explores the way modernization impacts the individual’s “experience of loneliness, anguish, and doubt” while faced with the fact of Nothingness (Caruth, vii). As an active participant of the decolonization process and keen observer of the unfolding psychological states of colonial subjects, Fanon notices that while the person of color experiences Sartreian existentialism, a different kind of material and psychological reality accompanies the rapid socioeconomic and political changes that take place in former colonial states. In existential terms, freedom means “the potentiality of self-creation involved in this process of [self-realization, of self-projection] that constitutes human liberation” (Donovan, 134). Attaining this freedom requires the presence of the Other, but socioeconomic, political, race, and gender issues complicate the struggle for recognition especially in the colonial context.

This process of recognition by the Other for the emerging “new man” of decolonization often alienates him from his world not only because he faces the “universe grounded in Nothingness” (Caruth, viii) but also because he does not know about life without colonial imposition. First and foremost, he must learn to shatter the colonial labels of his identity and quickly find replacements for a lost sense of self. Fanon suggests that this major shift in consciousness can be paralyzing if the colonial subject fails to adjust to notions of self-determination. He says, “When the Negro makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an actional person” (*BSWM*, 154). Fanon’s reference to “action” relates to the existentialist dilemma of making attempts at forming meaning through thoughts and actions within the realm of Nothingness or remaining passive in the midst of “the detestability of existence” (Caruth, xi). Second, this “new man” must join forces with other postcolonial subjects so that a new society and social order can replace the corruption of the past.

This means that the “new man” must reject the established beliefs and practices of the imperialist-colonial system and work towards creating a new world. The colonial subject must decide whether to adopt new attitudes and new approaches to the changing socioeconomic and political milieu through bonds with other people or submit to the existing forms of living in the decolonization process. Fanon offers hope and possibility for the decolonizing world, but the novelists suggest the choice between speedily finding new paths versus clinging to the past offer little hope for the alienated, colonial subject and result in his or her inability to push towards freedom.

This dilemma of forging alliances with other colonized subjects through new modes haunted the delegations at the Bandung Conference. While representatives from North Africa, East Asia, and South America at Bandung were readily identified as postcolonial with all of its implications, African Americans and Iranians occupied a different space. What was clear in the mid-twentieth century and at this conference was that neither African Americans nor Iranians held positions as members of a colonial society which won its independence from colonial rulers. Nonetheless, they shared similar socioeconomic, political, and historical experiences as their formally colonized comrades. The suggestion that African Americans and Iranians fit in the category of the postcolonial remains open for debate. Neither group conforms to the strict definition of being postcolonial because first and foremost, a postcolonial group must be recognized as colonial subjects who overthrew their colonial oppressors, and this characteristic simply fails to describe African American or Iranian history. That said, intellectuals such as Harold Cruse, Stokely Carmichael (also known as Kwame Ture), as well as Mohammad Mossadegh relate the socioeconomic and political realities of African Americans and Iranians to the conditions of the colonial world.

In 1962 Cruse says, “The Negro has a relationship to the dominant culture of the United States similar to that of colonies and semi-dependents to their particular foreign overseers” (74). He continues, “What is true of the colonial world is also true of the Negro in the United States” (75). The situation of African Americans is complicated by the fact that the form of American colonialism differs from European colonialism. Cruse explains, “From the beginning, the American Negro has existed as a colonial being. His enslavement coincided with the colonial expansion of European powers and was nothing more or less than a condition of domestic colonialism. Instead of the United States establishing a colonial empire in Africa, it brought the colonial system home and installed it in the Southern states” (76). He points out that “the only factor which differentiates the Negro’s status from that of a pure colonial status is that his position is maintained in the ‘home’ country in close proximity to the dominant racial group” (77). Europeans created settler colonies in the colonized territories they conquered, which meant they lived among their colonial subjects far from the imperial center and these distinctions created different forms of alienation and experiences of repression.

After returning from one of his trips abroad in 1964, Malcolm X also recognized the colonial condition in the United States. He says, “The same conditions that prevailed in Algeria...those same conditions prevail today in America in every Negro community” (83). In one of his last interviews in 1965, Malcolm X connects the African American struggle to the international battle against colonialism. He says, “It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter” (239).

The Iranian conflict with European powers in the mid-twentieth century connects to this vein of a “global rebellion.” Mohammad Mossadegh explains, “The British government was

anxious to avoid defeat in the Iranian scene so that other countries would not use the example of Iran and try to bring the imperialist countries to their knees” (322). Ania Loomba suggests that since there are groups of people in the world whose experiences relate to imperialist aims of so-called First World nations, we should include these subalterns in the category of postcolonial.

She says,

It has been suggested that it is more helpful to think of postcolonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism. Such a position would allow us to include people geographically displaced by colonialism such as African-Americans [...] as “postcolonial” subjects although they live within metropolitan centers. (12)

Further, Loomba’s discussion points to the need to collectivize and express a new definition of self and nation; to this extent, the shared experience of postcolonial peoples can be construed as subaltern.

This idea of the subaltern, very loosely defined here as marginalized groups rendered limited agency in relation to political and socioeconomic power, connects African Americans and Iranians to the larger struggles of postcolonial people. Even if these two groups of people are not usually considered as postcolonial due to the nature of their proximity to the colonial powers or their historic experiences with colonialism, they are nonetheless caught up in the web of imperialism and suffer from the racist, sexist, and class-biased hierarchy of colonial ambitions. More pointedly, Ronald Judy’s explanation of the subaltern helps describe the central concern of the current project: the emergence of the “new man” is a continuing process as opposed to Fanon’s hope that “new men” arise quickly out of decolonization. As Judy describes, “the subaltern is a condition in process. It is not an ontological status. Nor is it a structurally determined position” (142). Judy’s observation that the subaltern person functions as a form of

resistance in his movement towards a different situation applies to my project, which seeks to trace the formation of the new man and woman in the process of decolonization.

Indeed in the initial stages of decolonizing the former colony, the emergent nation and its inhabitants undergo various destabilizing events including shifting political powers and economic turmoil. The texts in this study address some of the socioeconomic and political upheavals of decolonization, but their focus and consequently that of my project are on the psychological repercussions of these tumultuous changes upon the individuals caught up in the process of decolonization. As Fanon says, “the problem of colonialism includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes toward these conditions” (*BSWM*, 84). After years, if not centuries, of colonial domination, the colonial subject suffers from multiple injuries to his or her sense of self and community, which I will demonstrate can result in a troubling condition of existentialist angst. Particularly in the mid-twentieth century, the world’s political milieu shifted from direct colonial relations to more socioeconomic by-products of imperialism and caused a significant rupture in building and maintaining communities. The so-called First World thus maintained its grip on the rest of the globe via relationships of economic dependence by the so-called Third World; through the paternalistic and forceful nature of colonialism, colonized subjects learned to loathe themselves and each other in their efforts to emulate the power structure of colonial rule. As a result, most former colonial nations created societies based on colonial models, which then wreaked havoc on the citizens of these newly formed nations. In the case of African Americans, a similar process occurred as the African American shifted positions from being property to becoming citizens. The ensuing struggle against hegemony to demand equality as a citizen in the U.S. readily lends itself to parallels with the battle against colonialism in the international scene. Similar to other small nations caught between the First World nations’ colonial ambitions, Iran dealt with internal

collaboration with imperialist goals as well as external forces infringing on its most vital resources.

While notions of colonial superiority infused with believing in subaltern inferiority stew in the colonized subjects' minds, these individuals must also deal with the double-edged condition of rejecting imposed identities and adopting new forms of self-identification. On the one hand, if the colonial subject exclusively attaches notions of the self to pre-colonial history, the individual risks adopting a fascistic imagination that can lead to further destruction of the self and emerging nation. On the other hand, not recounting the past and considering former ways of identification—which rely on pre-colonial language, customs, and traditions—leaves the colonial subject without a starting point to self-discovery. These are issues that the six texts in this study acknowledge, but these authors search for another way different from allegiances to nationalism, cultural nationalism, or existing economic ideologies such as capitalism or communism to handle the disasters wrought by colonialism. For them, it is not through romantic notions of national identity or capitalist-imperialism or Marxist-communism that a colonial subject finds redemption from the abuses of colonialism; in fact, these writers suggest that those accepting these ideologies may foster a repetition of the same problematic encounters of colonial rule.

These six novelists explore other forms of resistance for the evolving “new man” in the midst of decolonization. What is clear and pronounced in these other spaces is a disappointment with and disapproval of the available options for resistance. As Judy explains, “It is even more crucial to recognize the subaltern as the immediately manifested expression of what Gramsci elsewhere calls general dissatisfaction—meaning an effect ubiquitous with all systems and not a general malaise or unhappiness with any given system” (143). This overall discontent with the order of the world leads the colonized individual to existentialist viewpoints and indeed in these six novels, the protagonists constantly negotiate how they will deal with their wretched

conditions when they no longer find anything of value. Even though these six “new men” and women acknowledge the new possibilities and opportunities that decolonization presents, their dilemma centers on how to build community when they no longer believe in the systems, people, or emerging order of their societies.

In the mid-twentieth century, this emerging “new man” confronted the available options for pursuing the path to freedom and as these novels demonstrate, the “new man” and “new woman” embraced and rejected these avenues. Badiou says, “Since its very beginning, the century has presented itself as a figure of advent or commencement—above all the advent or recommencement of man: the new man” (15). Essentially, as Badiou describes the “new man” had a choice between two ideologies: specifically “fascist thought” and the “Marxist Commun[ist]” plan (16). In the first sense, Badiou says, “the new man is rooted in mythic totalizations such as race, nation, blood, and soil”; in the second case, “the new man resists all categorization and characterization. In particular he resists the family, private property, and the nation-state” (16). These problematic conditions, which lead to alienation, haunt the ongoing process of decolonization, and as the novels in my study suggest, can become a severe impediment in achieving the goal of freedom.

In the decolonization of many nations in the mid-twentieth century, the socioeconomic and political structures underwent immediate and often progressive changes, but the colonial subjects had to practice an ongoing process of deconstructing their former selves and developing new forms of identity removed from the preconceived ideas of self shaped by capitalism or communism. Coupled with these issues of class and racial identities, the formerly colonized subjects needed new modes of thinking through and liberating gender expectations, which ultimately remained locked in traditional, heteronormative standards. Simone de Beauvoir offers that “the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human

creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other” (xxvii). As these novelists demonstrate since many individuals felt affected by alienation, the materialization of liberation remains at best incomplete and at its worst, impossible.

Fanon thinks that these “new men” feel encouraged by a new sense of identity mainly infused with a return to pre-colonial notions of culture, language, and custom, which were suppressed by colonial rule and which can in turn support the establishment of new nations. However, this “new man” struggles with a growing sense of alienation and the realization that he must join forces with other “new men” to battle against colonial oppression and assert himself in the midst of decolonization. Fanon’s analyses focus on Francophone colonials, but colonized people the world over befriended and found an ally in Fanon, including intellectuals from the African American community and Iran where this “new man” emerged in the midst of harsh socioeconomic and political realities. With particular albeit problematic emphasis on men, Fanon ascribes a debilitating condition to these newly free colonial people. He says, “The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man” (*BSWM*, 17). This notion of double-consciousness extends to the observations of W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) in which Du Bois traces the legacy of viewing oneself through the lens of another as a condition of hierarchical power structures. He says, “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro” (17).

Fanon applies this notion of “twoness” to the colonizer/colonized relationship and argues that in order for a colonial subject to live in the midst of his colonizers, a detrimental process of rejecting the self and embracing the culture, language, customs, and expectations of the colonial

master takes place often through forceful measures by the colonizer. In this study, the novels demonstrate that in order to rid the nation of the colonial power, the colonized must revert to former notions of the self and use different strategies to socially, politically, and economically instate self-determination. These writers disrupt the reader's expectations for a traditional bildungsroman because the male protagonists cast-off bourgeois values and reject notions of self and community and seem more inclined to destruction than unity and the female protagonists portray the limits of their positions as wives and mothers.

The alienation of the individual in the mid-twentieth century as depicted in these six novels mirrors the conflict of emerging nations who had to resist totalitarian and imperialistic methodologies for self-rule while establishing a new sense of identity. The threat of domination coupled with remaining marginalized in the scheme of power relates to the problematic political and economic conditions of the mid-twentieth century in the United States and Iran. After the Constitutional Revolution of 1906, Iran engaged in two major battles: the internal power struggle between the monarchal ambitions of Reza Shah and external pressure from the colonial Western nations to secure Iran for their militaristic plans in the region while taking control of Iran's resources. The British, French, and Germans had a history of socioeconomic and political contact with Iran from as early as the seventeenth century. As the intended goal of this European interaction in the region was actually India, Iranians did not engage with Europeans more directly until the late 1700s. By this time in history, the aristocracy of the Qajar dynasty was frequenting the major European capitals and as a result, they were quite open to the presence of Western Europeans in Iran. In fact, Mohammad Mirza and Nasser-al-Din Shah invited European diplomats to organize and establish Iran's economic activities and resources. Their openness towards European involvement amazed even the staunchest economic and political imperialists of their time. In a sense, the colonial relationship began in Iran as a consequence of aristocratic

curiosity; the Qajars were fascinated by the technology of Western Europe and hoped to propel Iran into this world of so-called advancement. In addition to desiring to modernize Iran through Western assistance, Qajar Iran wanted to show the world that their defeat in three significant battles (1813, 1824, and 1888) with the West, Russia in particular, did not mean Iranians were backward. They hoped to show that regardless of weakened militaristic prowess, Iran was ready to forge ahead into modernity.

The Pandora's Box that the Qajars opened in the 1700s would remain a problem until Mohammad Mossadegh's interference in these operations in 1951. Although Mossadegh's politics remain controversial, nearly all Iranians supported his resistance to Western, specifically American and British, imperialistic efforts. The Allies' occupation of Iran during WWII ousted Reza Shah in 1941 and heralded a new, chaotic era under his son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, whose obsequious attitude towards the Europeans and Americans allowed the establishment of a puppet regime. The only government resistance to Mohammad Shah's subservience to the West came in the person of Mossadegh and his election to become Iran's prime minister in 1951 paved the way for limiting the power grip of the West on Iran. On May 1, 1951, Mossadegh nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), thereby canceling Iran's concessions to the West; indeed, if not for Mossadegh's efforts, the West would reap incredible rewards from Iran's most lucrative and important resource until 1993 without much benefit to the nation itself. This one defiant act by Mossadegh earned him respect and admiration throughout Iran and much of the anticolonial world; his resistance to Western pressures and expectations resounded loudly and he became a hero of sorts in the Third World rebellion against imperialism.

In Iran, Marxists, liberals, nationalists, conservatives, and the religious all claimed Mossadegh as a figurehead for their own agendas. As Niki Keddie says, "These groups and Mossadegh were united in their continued desire to lessen foreign control and influence and

increase Iran's independence" (131). The Iranian collective sentiment based on resistance towards colonial-imperialist ambitions from the Americans and Europeans reflects the broader sense of solidarity among the two-thirds of the world whose colonial encounters mirrored this moment in Iranian history. In 1953, the Americans and Europeans orchestrated a quick and fatal coup to Mossadegh's government with the help of elements within Iran who feared becoming the next Soviet state. Nonetheless, Mossadegh's nationalization of oil simultaneously reflected and set the tone for resistance in mid-twentieth century Iran. The dictatorship of the Shah as an extension of American and European influence and control, conflated with the overthrow of Iran's one hope for liberation from colonial oppression, drew the Iranian people into the decolonization struggle of the postcolonial world. Indeed, Mossadegh's block of Western economic and political abuse marks a pivotal moment in Iran's anticolonial stand and more importantly, positions Mossadegh himself as a "new man." His rejection of both capitalism and communism in the establishment of a different Iran highlights his attempt at finding a new mode of conduct for the masses and the nation, but because he never endorsed a particular political agenda beyond his staunch nationalism, his government remained vulnerable and ultimately he was easily ousted by more forceful ideologies.

African Americans engaged colonialism in a more complex fashion than did Iranians at the mid-twentieth century, but these marginalized people within the colonial center shared multiple unifying factors with the broader Third World. The notion that African Americans belong to a diasporic community extends to discussions as early as 1829, when David Walker wrote *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the Unites States of America*. The title alone demonstrates how Walker announces his strong sense of solidarity with the global oppressed well before terminology described the dire situation. In 1955 U.S. Congressman

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. affirmed this awareness of a global movement for emancipation when he attended the Bandung Conference in protest to the United States government's admonishments against his participation. Since Powell was African American, the United States found itself in a quandary. If, on the one hand, Powell attended the conference as a member of the government, the United States would seem to be conceding power to its enemies; on the other hand, if he was banned from participating, the leaders at Bandung could accuse the United States of racism. In order to allay the U.S. government's worst fears, Powell boldly stated at a news conference, "[The Bandung conference] is not anti-white...but it was anti-American foreign policy and it could become an anti-white movement unless a narrow-minded and unskilled American foreign policy is revised" (Prashad, 47-8). Wright surmises Powell's attendance at Bandung as an act which showed the congressman "*felt the call, felt its meaning*" (CC, 178). Wright continues, "If a man as sophisticated as Congressman Powell felt this, then one can safely assume that in less schooled and more naïve hearts it went profoundly deep" (CC, 179).

Wright's observation mirrors Fanon's awareness as well and is particularly applicable to those masses that were once under the direct rule of the French, British, German, and other western European nations. Fanon says that although his study relates to "the French Antilles; at the same time, I am not unaware that the same behavior patterns obtain in every race that has been subjected to colonization" (BSWM, 25). In fact, Fanon's insights even apply to African Americans and Iranians who suffered from many of the same structures that subjugated colonial societies. Fanon cites "black radicals in the U.S. have formed armed militia groups" (WE, 39) and he recognizes that imperialists work diligently so that "Mossadegh is liquidated" (WE, 27). The difference between African Americans and Iranians involves the way colonialism shifted form and became institutionalized through laws and policies. African Americans and Iranians

had to contend with the psychological trauma of domination much like the colonial subjects of other nations as African Americans had to struggle to claim their citizenship and civil rights and Iranians contested which members of their society belonged within the nation as citizens based on the individual's status as an urban or rural dweller.

In particular, African Americans and Iranians of the mid-twentieth century were confronted by the dilemma that Fanon describes as “turn[ing] white or disappear[ing]” (*BSWM*, 100). In this context, whiteness is not necessarily related to the condition of the epidermis. He says, “the black man should no longer be confronted by the dilemma, turn white or disappear; but he should be able to take cognizance of a possibility of existence...once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, [he will be able to] choose action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict—that is, toward the social structures” (*BSWM*, 100). Fanon's use of the term “white” is not simply a racial marker; the socioeconomic, political, and gender implications of this term extend beyond the epidermal realm and I will explore the material and psychological effects of “turning white or disappearing” through the complications raised by the novels of this study. In part, the existential struggle of these six “new men” and women signals that they understand the tension between being active in the decolonization process and disappearing from the resistance towards continued oppression. As Sartre explains in the Introduction of *The Wretched of the Earth*, the alienated individual Sartre considers “life as a man begin[ning] with death; he considers himself a potential candidate for death” (*WE*, lvi). Whether the “new man” chooses to act or remain passive, the possibility of death hovers in every decision.

Observing that the colonial subject must “choose action (or passivity),” Fanon suggests that the colonized are caught in an existential state, wherein these individuals must decide what to do in order to ensure living meaningfully in the world. In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Fanon

says, “I believe that the fact of the juxtaposition of the white and black races has created a massive psychoexistential complex. I hope by analyzing it to destroy it” (12). The writers in this project directly engage this “psychoexistential complex” and show that for their protagonists, there is a crisis of consciousness in the midst of decolonization because ultimately, existing forms of ideology and methodology prove ineffective in dealing with their alienation. These novels suggest that although capitalism and Marxist-communism have a plethora of differences, their applied theories prove to have the same adverse effects on colonized subjects. In some important ways, both ideologies and systems oppress and dehumanize their subjects. For this reason, more than any other issue, the emerging “new man”—or by extension, “new human”—rejects these two so-called polar opposites of socioeconomic and political action and while they remain keenly aware of the impending possibility of death.

Another problematic matter under capitalist or communist society is the ways in which capitalism and communism address race. Capitalist societies use race to demarcate and separate the nation through notions of superiority and inferiority while communists attempt to eradicate race thereby ignoring profound historical and social implications of the ways in which race complicates human psychology. Fanon addresses the particular role of race within colonial practices and considers the complexities of racial notions in the process of decolonization. In the African American community, constructions of race are based on false notions of superiority and power. Fanon says, “It is the colonist who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject” (*WE*, 2). These constructed identities appear in social, economic, and political limitations imposed by a corrupt system of power that thrives on oppressing one or several groups in order to establish authority within that society. As Paul Gilroy says, “‘race’ cannot be adequately understood if it is falsely divorced or abstracted from other social relations” (14).

This suggestion is particularly useful in the Iranian milieu where regional affiliations throughout Iran operate on a similar level as race does in the United States.

Within this landscape of multiple ethnic, but not racial, groups, a person's proximity to the nation's center demarcates him or her from the hegemonic power structures; this is to say, in the mid-twentieth century, Iranians outside of the vicinity of Tehran were essentially second-class citizens whose socioeconomic and political abilities were impeded by their geographical location within Iran. I will argue that all three of the Iranian novelists purposely locate their narratives outside of Tehran and even use local dialects and colloquial Persian to emphasize the class discrepancy within the nation between its citizens based on an Iranian's proximity to the nation's center. Their blatant concentration outside of Tehran signals their effort to demonstrate the importance of the provincial and proletarian segments of mid-twentieth century Iran in the struggle against colonization. Therefore, these Iranian novelists disrupt the "binary system in which black is bad and white is good" by focusing on the neglected abilities of the marginalized masses in defeating the First World.

I am careful not to conflate race with class because marginalized Iranians experienced harsh class differences based on their labor positions such that the rural Iranians from outside of Tehran were thought of as lower class and therefore negligible because they were mostly agrarian. The case is different in the African American context because as Gilroy observes, "the processes of 'race' and class formation are not identical. The former is not reducible to the latter even where they become mutually entangled" (40). This is to say, where race is constructed through notions of superiority and inferiority, class formations occur as a result of labor inequities. Gilroy's suggestion complicates notions of "superiority and inferiority" (40) because racial signifiers consistently shift as they depend on political and social practices and ideologies. If, for instance, the tribal people outside of Tehran were needed for battle, they were suddenly

catered to and embraced as the fabric of the nation. However, if dire circumstances did not require the masses to unite, the class hierarchies based on regional affiliations associated with labor positions divided the Iranians. Needless to say, race and regional ethnicities play an important role in the struggle for liberation and self-determination in the midst of decolonization and in the six novels of this study.

The African American consciousness regarding subjugation by powerful oppressive practices stemmed from daily confrontations within the United States with social, economic, and political structures that limited their freedom. In the mid-twentieth century, unlike the Caribbean or Africa, black people in the United States lived within the confines of their oppressors. While Martinicians and Algerians were fighting against French colonialism whereby the rule of domination came from Europe, African Americans shared the same nationality and geographical location as their oppressors. This unique form of colonialism in the United States resulted from Africans being transplanted from an original homeland to a new territory, which became a permanent base for those colonized people. After centuries of subjecthood in the U.S., the denial of civil rights emerged as a contentious issue for African Americans because although they were nationals of the United States, they were denied many of the liberties that were guaranteed under the Constitution. This important distinguishing factor unifies the African American struggle for liberation with the global postcolonial battle for emancipation because the colonial powers in colonial nations also limited and oppressed the natives by stripping them of their most basic human rights.

A thorough analysis of the early years of the twentieth century well through the 1970s shows participation in the global anticolonial movement gained prominence in the African American community, which suggests a clear recognition by many African Americans of solidarity with oppressed peoples of the world. For instance, Penny Von Eschen suggests that

African Americans who fought in the Spanish Civil War in the mid-1930s believed that by fighting fascism they were sending a clear message to Benito Mussolini to end his campaign of colonialism in Ethiopia. Similarly, the effort in the mid-twentieth century by the African American community to end apartheid in South Africa shows solidarity with the oppressed people of that nation. As Robin D.G. Kelley notes, people such as Paul Robeson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alphaeus Hunton, Shirley Graham, William L. Patterson and Louise Thompson Patterson “began actively backing anticolonial movements in Africa and the Caribbean” (*Race Rebels*, 58). Among civil rights leaders in the U.S., Martin Luther King, Jr.’s controversial sentiments against the Vietnam War or Malcolm X’s clear stance against domestic abuses of African American civil liberties and turn towards models of resistance such as the Mau Mau movement mark a distinct awareness of the African American struggle for freedom as similar to decolonization elsewhere. These moments also demonstrate consciousness in the African American community that resistance towards Jim Crow in Mississippi extended to fighting colonial ambitions in Africa because bigoted laws and colonial practices stem from the same imperialist drive of the First World.

The colonial situation of the mid-twentieth century in Iran can be described as an extension of the neocolonial aims of the European powers, particularly Britain and the USSR, as they intended to usurp Iran’s resources and economy, but through various pacts and agreements with the Pahlavi regime as opposed to direct or settler colonial presence. Mohammad Mossadegh, Iran’s Prime Minister from 1951 to 1953, rejected the European infringement on Iran’s economy and vigorously fought against the presence of foreign influence in Iran. In his memoir, he asks “how [can] the Iranian people be happy to let a foreign company produce its oil, and to protect the illicit benefit it takes from it [thus depriving] a country of its freedom and independence?” (271). Mossadegh blames the Shah of Iran as much as the British because Reza

Pahlavi accepted British transgressions in Iran. Mossadegh laments, “How can a people, however intelligent they may be, fight on two fronts, one domestic, the other external?” (271). Mossadegh’s recognition of fighting against domestic as well as external factors of oppression mirrors the observations of African Americans in this era. While the Iranian politician points to Iranian collaborators in the First World’s imperialist schemes, the African American novelists in this project condemn the racist, sexist, class-biased social structure of the U.S. as well as the complacency of some community members with these obstructions to freedom. In fact, the need to confront internal and external conflicts informs the novels of my project. These six writers demonstrate the problems within the worlds of their characters and interrogate the psychological issues that challenge these new men and women.

In this project, I am interested in the intersections between the novels of six African American and Iranian writers as part of the global anticolonial movement, especially as these thinkers nuance and complicate the ideas of Fanon. My project aims to interrogate the ways in which Fanon’s concept of the “new man” appears in these texts and how these writers expand upon and depict the formation of the “new man.” The selected women writers engage the absent discussion of women’s issues by the male writers of this project. While Marshall and Daneshvar highlight the ways in which women experience decolonization, their narratives hardly produce an effective “new woman” as they condone problematic patriarchal structures related to gender and the role of women in rebellion. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues, “Decolonization...infuses a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new men” (2). Even though neither African Americans nor Iranians can be easily labeled as postcolonial peoples, the narrative visions of these authors solidly place them within the methodological and theoretical paradigms that drive the field of postcolonialism and especially in the realm of anticolonial

activism. In both African American Studies and Iranian Studies, the post-WWII anticolonial movement in the U.S. and Iran is oft-neglected; more specifically, it is uncommon to read these authors' texts as demonstrative of the emergence of the "new man." My research focuses on Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Paule Marshall, as well as Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Sadeq Chubak, and Simin Daneshvar as anticolonial novelists: the goal of my project is to examine these protest novels through a focus on their anticolonial sentiment and thereby expand the literary possibilities of these texts. In addition, my project addresses the role of existentialism in the process of decolonization and the ways in which colonialism causes alienation among individuals and thereby creates difficulties in forming communal bonds which can affectively challenge colonial rule.

Further, the aesthetic form of these works subverts the traditional notions about the function of the novel. As Jonathan Arac describes, "it is a recurrent claim of the novel as a form that it is the mode by which subaltern history may be written more effectively than by those means that power certifies as fact" (214). Arac suggests that fiction allows a more fluid and flexible approach for subaltern writers to discuss and analyze the historical process; here, decolonization. Whereas these writers could have chosen to examine the formation of the "new man" through poetry, drama, or short stories, all six writers use the novel form to trace the emergence of the "new man," thereby shifting the role of the novel as a platform to introduce the bourgeoisie and promote this class's values. Instead, these writers use the novel form to present the "new man" who defies the stereotype of the upper-class, white, male protagonist by depicting other types of heroes, which in turn refutes the social, economic, and political use of the novel as a tool to encourage upward mobility towards a bourgeois lifestyle. The flat representation of women and the blatant promotion of traditional gender roles and expectations limit the

revolutionary possibilities of the novels, but even with these flaws, the novels defy white, upper-class hegemonic traditions.

Many African American and Iranian intellectuals and writers of this era penned literary works that address the imbalanced world order. Social, racial, political, economic, and gender inequities were central to their analyses and often, they explore these issues in more detailed and nuanced manners in novels and short stories. While Fanon's explosive declarations in *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) shook the First World to its core and invigorated the Third World, these novelists gave fictional form to the emerging postcolonial person; Fanon's "new man" (*WE*, 2) was Wright's Cross Damon, Marshall's Merle Kinbona, Chubak's Zar Mohammad, and Daneshvar's Zari. Similar to their real-life counterparts, these characters struggle on the margins of history; they are not a part of the center. Their dialectical engagement with hegemonic power structures places them at the heart of the catastrophic battle of all anticolonial peoples and subalterns involved with the process of decolonization.

Among the African American novels in this study, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* received the least acclaim when it first appeared on the literary scene; however, contemporary literary critics appreciate Marshall's text for its diasporic dimensions and postcolonial awareness. As critics Laura Gillman and Stacy M. Floyd-Thomas, Joyce Pettis, and James Skerrett illustrate in their readings of Marshall's novel, this work interrogates transnational and gendered perspectives of the postcolonial experience. Through sensitive portrayals of the characters, Marshall dissects the socioeconomic, political, and personal battles of the fictional world of Merle Kinbona and her acquaintances. Although scholars such as Timothy Chin object to Marshall's silence on queer issues, Marshall nonetheless delves into

poignant issues that affect this postcolonial woman's attempts to make sense out of the decolonization process.

In contrast, Wright and Ellison's novels gained much attention in the immediate aftermath of their publications even though amidst the praise there were accusations against these novels for failing to uphold popular ideologies of their time. Neither novel celebrates notions of nationalism, Black Nationalism, nor more marginally, proletarian values as pathways to the colonized subject's liberation. Wright's *The Outsider* was not and still is not considered as one of his more powerful works; in fact, critics consider Cross Damon's story less interesting and compelling than Bigger Thomas's mainly because Wright moves away from examining Cross's life through the lens of race and complicates this young man's experiences by showing the reader that Cross is at odds with himself. While the young man recognizes his society's oppressive structures, he struggles more with his sense of alienation than his socioeconomic or racial identity. He must face various hurdles that stem from socioeconomic, race, and gender inequities, but the real crisis for Cross Damon is whether or not he should remain an individual or join forces with others.

At the time of its first appearance, *Invisible Man* gained attention and notoriety among white audiences, but progressive intellectuals dismissed the novel for its seemingly acquiescent gesture towards hegemonic expectations. Irving Howe's scathing remarks summarize the general attitude that permeated the American Left: "Though the unqualified assertion of individuality is at the moment a favorite notion of literary people, it is also a vapid one, for the unfortunate fact remains that to define one's individuality is to stumble over social fences that do not allow one 'infinite possibilities.'" It is hardly an accident that Ellison's hero does not even attempt to specify those possibilities," (published in *The Nation*, May 10, 1952). Nearly sixty years later, Ellison's novel posits important issues for the reader that cannot simply be dismissed as the novel's failure

to address the ideological weakness of individuality. When read alongside Fanon's psychoanalytic observations of postcolonial peoples, Ellison's novel illuminates the difficulties that the postcolonial person faced in the midst of decolonization.

The protagonist of this novel makes many attempts at building community, but his options inhibit his individuality and as a result, he refuses to join ranks with others. Ellison's novel avoids wrapping up as an optimistic coming-of-age for this young man. Instead, the reader is left asking questions that challenge romantic notions of solidarity and collective action. Unlike *Invisible Man*, Marshall's novel esteems collectivity and even offers hope for the possibility of unified action in the process of decolonization. Her work makes daring inquiries into the make-up of the postcolonial world and posits that once the alienated individual redeems her lost sense of self, union with others is inevitable. It helps to note that her novel was published well after *Invisible Man* and *The Outsider*. This chronology suggests that Marshall's viewpoint reflected a different world and therefore she could more readily address postcolonial concerns of this later era because more African Americans voiced solidarity with the global anticolonial movement. *The Chosen Place, Timeless People* is often read through the methodology of diaspora studies, but I want to suggest that the important concept this novel develops is the way in which the alienated Merle attempts to build connections with others. This protagonist's struggle with her sense of detachment coupled with her awareness that collectivity is essential to survival offers important hope in the future of the anticolonial movement. In addition, I hope to suggest that Wright's and Ellison's novels, which are hardly ever read as emblematic of a postcolonial worldview have much to teach us about the ways in which decolonization affected the lives and writing of these African Americans.

By the same token, the Iranian novels are not read as participating in the anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, although these three texts are well-known and

were at one time the main fame of their authors, today they are not easily accessible, with the exception of *Savushun*, and none of them are read with the same level of interest as post-Revolutionary novels. In part, the decline in popularity of these three novels relates to the political milieu of modern Iran and the fact that these three writers were heavily affiliated with the radical Left of their generation and consequently banned from readership for many years. Another problem is that few scholars, especially Iranian historians such as Ali Gheissari, Maziar Behrooz, and Asef Bayat, attempt to view these novels outside of the broad category of Committed literature (understood as protest in a socialist-realist sense). Even literary scholars such as Kamran Talattof and Abbas Milani consider these three particular novels as emblems of “the Committed literary community” (85) without drawing connections to these novels’ global perspectives and anticolonial stance. As mentioned, since these three intellectuals all participated in some form of Marxist ideology in the early part of the twentieth century, their literary works became boxed into the strict category of socialist-realism without much nuancing by scholars.

In this project, I propose that we read these six novels through the lens of how these authors demonstrate the process of decolonization as part of the anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, the critical perspectives of these novels depict sensitivity towards postcolonial issues. By examining these novels’ representations of the emergence of the “new men” of decolonization, we notice significant challenges and opposition to Fanon’s hopeful outlook for the “new generation.” Further, imperialism can be better understood because it becomes clear through an analysis of the writings of African Americans and Iranians that these people were also engaged in struggle against Empire and more broadly, one can make important connections among seemingly disparate groups of people who nonetheless suffered from many of the same oppressive structures. Thus, the capitalist-imperialist goals of powerful nations become apparent as one understands the global implications colonialism.

Studying the novels of the mid-twentieth century brings to light the struggles of other Third World nations and regions and we see their intense engagement in modes of resistance similar to and often informed by the more recognizable postcolonial nations. I will show by interrogating this literature that African Americans and Iranians were drawing lines of solidarity with the global assault on capitalism and imperialism as well as Soviet-infused Marxism by dissecting the psychological and material conditions of the men and women of these communities. The novels in my study share several important themes related to the emergence of the “new man,” including the role of violence, socioeconomic, racial, and gender oppression in forming resistance, and rejection of either capitalism or Marxism as a means of salvation from a strong sense of alienation. The rebellion of the protagonists in these novels cannot be pinned down to any one issue and the authors do not suggest specific solutions for their characters’ sense of detachment. This defiance in the works against neat and clear possibilities for decolonization’s “new man” relates to our present times as well. The challenges posed by these authors to our preconceived notions about decolonization, existentialism, and forms of protest work to broaden these categories and enable us to think about the mechanisms of imperialism in broader terms and even offer the fact that the consequences of colonialism make building alliances a near impossibility. Thus, decolonization continues today as a tenuous effort, which must progress with alienated individuals who cannot form bonds of affinity which lead to stable, progressive, and meaningful change.

In the first chapter, I juxtapose Richard Wright with Jalal Ale Ahmad to demonstrate the internationalist position of these two geographically different authors. Richard Wright has long been recognized as one of the most important and influential American writers of the twentieth-century. The work of his Iranian counterpart, Jalal Ale Ahmad, resonates with Wright’s main fictional and philosophical writings. For this project, I have selected Wright’s, *The Outsider*

(1953) and Ale Ahmad's *The School Principal* (1958) because these works highlight many of the anticolonial movement's most central themes through astute characterization. Oppression, exploitation, corruption, and a strong sense of alienation pulse throughout the stories of Cross Damon, a young, intellectual African American man who must learn to compromise between a sense of estrangement from other people and the pressing need to create a sense of belonging, and a young, unnamed, middle class school principal in rural Iran. I argue that these protagonists reflect the Fanonian concept of the "new man," but never quite come to terms with their condition. While Cross is intellectually aware of his sense of alienation, he cannot convince himself that he needs to connect to others to survive, Ale Ahmad's school principal indicts himself as well as his society for the demise of the nation and chooses to disappear, which leaves the reader to decide whether this act of disappearance is rebellious or submissive to the power structures that oppress him. Exploring and problematizing Fanon's concept of the "new man," both novels ultimately suggest that individuals, and especially intellectuals, fail to compromise between a sense of social estrangement and the pressing necessity to create a new world based on unity and sympathy for one another because colonization shatters important notions of self and community and can lead to the death, voluntary or not, of these individuals.

In the second chapter, my focus is on two controversial novelists whose political positions were questioned at the time of their novels' publications because they rejected strict adherence to any one line of thought and instead their writing celebrates individuality over community in these works. To some degree, my choice of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) seems out of place alongside these other novels because of its strong touting of individuality over collectivity; the other novels in this study avoid posturing so blatantly in regard to any particular mode of conduct. Also, Ellison upholds what Hortense Spillers identifies as a "staunch conviction of American 'exceptionalism'" (6). Ellison believed in integration and said, "the good

of self-identity as a citizen [is better than] the bad of group identity as a minority” (Arac 199) and this controversial notion angered many progressive readers and scholars. Nonetheless, I think of this novel as an emblem of the decolonizing world and Ellison’s narrative demonstrates the difficulties and struggles which faced this young, African American man with astute acumen. Sadegh Chubak’s *Tangsir* (1964) mirrors Ellison’s novel, especially in the themes of violence, labor exploitation, foreign influence as impediment to progress, and alienation as a key concern for the protagonist. Chubak follows closely upon the ideological and stylistic heels of Ellison while infusing the story with the emergence of the “new man.” This novel is also a coming-of-age story in which a young family man seeks to redeem his dignity, which he feels the upper-class members of his society have stripped from him. This protagonist also chooses to act alone and cares more about his own well-being than that of others. These two characters, more than any other in this survey, teach the reader that the process of decolonization becomes even more complicated when some members of the postcolonial world refuse to join forces with others and yet continue to live among other subalterns.

My third and final chapter joins Paule Marshall’s *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1969) with Simin Daneshvar’s *Savushun* (1969). The reason I want to include these novels in my study is because I think of Merle Kinbona and Zari, the female protagonists, as Fanon’s “new woman.” These characters take up issues of gender and resistance in ways that their male counterparts ignore. Questions of nationalism as related to gender, race, class, and sexual orientation underscore these narratives and lend themselves to postcolonial readings of the texts. Marshall’s and Daneshvar’s novels do not align themselves with any particular ideologies of resistance; the narratives draw upon Marxism, nationalism, and feminism but none of these theoretical viewpoints are celebrated in and of themselves or as markedly more effective than any other. I demonstrate that the novels investigate a third way that is suggestive of a resurgence

of culture and tradition as expressed by and through women. With often troubling adherence to chauvinistic interpretations of resistance, the female protagonists attempt leadership roles in their societies, but since these women experience existentialist alienation they fail as leaders and revert to submissive positions as wives and mothers. We are left to think that in the mid-twentieth century, women became highly aware and active in rebelling against socioeconomic and racial causes, but they relinquished their desires as women to the socioeconomic and national concerns of men.

As Fanon suggests, the mental shackles of colonization are the most detrimental and difficult to abandon as the colonized individual functions as both a collaborator with the dominant power structure in his mastery of the oppressor's ways and as an alienated figure since the colonizer fails to recognize the prowess and humanity of the individual. The novel form allows these six authors to work out some of the complex issues related to decolonization and the process of radicalization while challenging traditional notions of heroism. Their particular focus on the impact of the decolonization process on individuals makes room for a multi-layered analysis that challenges traditional paradigms of resistance and opens space for new viewpoints and objectives. For instance, in *The Chosen Place*, *The Timeless People* and *Savushun*, Marshall and Daneshvar complicate the decolonization process for women, an issue that deserves attention and yet received little criticism in 1969. Merle Kinbona and Zari are Fanonian subjects and Daneshvar and Marshall investigate the inferiority complex that colonialism created through poignant analyses of coming to terms with forced identities. Wright, Ellison, Al-e Ahmad, and Chubak also explore the Fanonian concept of inferiority and try to show how the struggle against neocolonialism requires even more diligence and commitment as Empire grows stronger and wiser and the force with which control and power subdue Third World masses squashes hope for a different world; these novelists also demonstrate the ways in which colonialism shattered

notions of the self and community. Through astute depictions of the lives of these protagonists, these writers show the reader that the very process of joining forces with other subalterns proves to be a moment of crisis and one in which these protagonists ultimately fail to bring into realization.

These novels have much to teach us. The process of decolonization is ongoing and today we are witnesses to the potentially catastrophic implications of not having concrete and effective methodologies that deal with the psychological, socioeconomic, and political complexities of this process. For instance, the battle drums of the U.S.-Israeli platform indicating an impending war with Iran leads many political experts and historians to link present-day U.S.-Iran tensions back to the 1953 coup of Mossadegh's government and subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic. The issues and observations within this project also resonate with today's forms of neocolonialism and allow us to think about the connections between the early years of decolonization and present-day circumstances. As I suggest in this project, the "new man" and "new woman" continue to emerge on the world scene; this figure is not static, but constantly shifting to adjust and respond to the changing forms of colonialism. In addition, my hope is that we can consider the texts in this study as participating in other ways of understanding colonialism through their immense value as introspections into the emergence of the "new man" as part of the anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century. I propose that we read and analyze the writers and their works as functioning in a third-space, opposed to First World capitalist-imperialism as well as Marxist-communism, but conscious of these paradigms. Possibly as their authors intended, these novels cannot be boxed into specific categories, reflecting in part the need to read and teach literature differently.

CHAPTER 1

“Truly, there are stains that are beyond the power of man to wipe out and that can never be fully expiated”¹: Negotiating Alienation with Community in *The Outsider* and *The School Principal*

In 1953 and 1958 respectively, Richard Wright and Jalal Ale Ahmad wrote two of their best known works of fiction: *The Outsider* and *The School Principal*. Written during an era of major global upheavals in response to colonial rule, these novels address some important issues related to the ways in which individuals deal with the possibility of freedom during an era of global decolonization. Both writers investigate the consequences and forms of decolonization in their non-fiction writing as well, specifically in *Black Power* and *Occidentosis* written within the same decade as their novels. In these four works, Wright and Ale Ahmad challenge the hopeful notions for the postcolonial world expressed by many of their contemporaries including Frantz Fanon because they question if freedom is ever possible when the effects and repercussions of colonialism exceed beyond the absence of direct colonial rule. These writers agree with Fanon’s notion that “Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is clearly an agenda for total disorder [...] Decolonization, we know, is an historical process” (*WE*, 2). In particular, Fanon’s description that decolonization is “an historical process” resonates in Wright’s and Ale Ahmad’s writings as a brutal and arduous course heavily cloaked in various forms of violence. All three men recognize the onerous and lengthy ordeal of facing centuries of an imbalance of power. Even more specifically, Wright and Ale Ahmad uphold and interrogate one of Fanon’s most crucial observations, which considers that decolonization “can only be challenged by out and out violence” (*WE*, 3).

In the 1950s, the world witnessed the various decolonization processes occurring in the so-called Third World including the struggles of minority groups in United States. Many of these

¹ From Aime Cesaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), page 20.

nations were successfully ousting colonial rule and tenuously setting up forms of self-rule. Fanon describes this process as decolonization, which “infuses a new rhythm, specific to a new generation of men, with a new language and new humanity. Decolonization is truly the creation of new men” (*WE*, 2). This “new rhythm” evokes a sense of disruption of the former patterns and standards of colonial existence. The people involved in this experience must therefore learn “a new language” and in essence, become “new men.” In line with Fanon, Wright and Ale Ahmad recognize the emergence of these “new men” and discuss the socioeconomic, psychological, and intellectual conditions of this new generation in their non-fiction writing and introduce the “new man” upon the world stage in the aforementioned novels. For Wright, this “new man” is Cross Damon who stands out as a Fanonian emblem in that he exhibits many of the traits that Fanon identifies as qualities of the “new man” including a growing awareness of the connections between socioeconomic conditions and a need to come to terms with the repressive world that resulted from centuries of an imbalance of power.

In fact, *The Outsider* interrogates the more subtle and hidden forms of oppression, which affect this young man’s ability to reconcile a growing sense of alienation with a wish to build community and intimate relationships. Cross Damon shares similar responses to this consciousness with Ale Ahmad’s school principal who also rejects the limitations placed upon him through acts of violence to resist further inequities. In *The School Prinical*, Ale Ahmad confronts the behemoth educational system, which he pinpoints as the first area in need of change in Iran. In this chapter, I will show how Wright and Ale Ahmad envision the process of decolonization for an African American and Iranian intellectual on a microcosmic scale as opposed to Fanon’s macrocosmic analysis. In both their non-fiction works as well as these two novels, Wright and Ale Ahmad challenge the idealism of the 1950s’ postcolonial world. Wright suggests that individuals consider the impossibility of freedom due to psychological damages

while Ale Ahmad echoes Wright's sentiments and further investigates the lack of bureaucratic and administrative sophistication in emerging societies as additional hindrances to freedom. These issues shape the core of Wright's *Black Power* and Al-e Ahmad's *Occidentosis* and appear in fictional form in *The Outsider* and *The School Principal*. These authors' intellectual and personal familiarities with colonialism as a system of oppression and violence fosters a poignant consideration of the impact of colonialism on the emerging "new man" including how an inability to forge relationships with other people counters the hopeful outlook of this era.

As the Foreword to Ale Ahmad's work of nonfiction says, "*Occidentosis* is the best known and most influential work of [this] Iranian intellectual and writer. In a sense, it is the record of a personal journey to a new understanding of Iranian society and history, but [...] it may also be regarded as a document of the ideological ferment that ultimately led to revolution." Although written in an informal style and chock full of colloquial expressions rather than academic terminology and without concrete empirical data to support some its claims, *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West* stands out as a bold analysis of the wretched conditions of colonialism. Written in 1958, nearly five years after the successful ouster of Mohammad Mossadegh by American and British forces, Ale Ahmad's work condemns the ideological and socioeconomic legacy of Western colonial rule. Historically, Iran was never a colonial state in the sense that for example Algeria was for France; but nonetheless, the United States and other First World nations including England and the USSR implemented colonial rule over Iran's through socioeconomic influences. One of Iran's most vigilantly anticolonial groups, the Tudeh Party, stood against Western infringement upon Iran and Ale Ahmad, who was a member of the Tudeh Party, left their ranks when Mossadegh took power in 1951 (Prashad, 78). Similar to many of his intellectual contemporaries, Ale Ahmad placed his hopes in Mossadegh's politics and staunch stance against corruption of Iran's natural resources by the Western powers. In 1953, the

overthrow of Mossadegh's rule in government disheartened Ale Ahmad who like many of his compatriots thought Mossadegh's leadership was the answer to Iran's need for democracy. The end of Mossadegh's rule triggered a concentrated rebellion to foreign control by the Iranian intelligentsia, including and maybe even heralded to some extent by Ale Ahmad and *Occidentosis*.

Ale Ahmad's pivotal anti-imperial text stemmed out of his intense anger towards colonialism. Iran's strategic location and the Pahlavi regime's alliance with Western powers encouraged the United States and several European nations to compete for control and influence in Iran. While the relationships between these First World nations and Iran benefited the upper-classes, the majority of Iranians felt the brunt of rapid industrialization. In *The School Principal*, Ale Ahmad focuses on the material and psychological effects of this Western and upper-class aggression on the Iranian masses. Ale Ahmad was a member of the upper-class, but as a humanistic intellectual, his sentiments and political allegiance were to the lower and working-classes. In fact, Ale Ahmad suggests that the socioeconomic and political upheaval of Western control in Iran affected the psychological and emotional well-being of the Iranian masses. He says, "I speak of 'occidentosis' as of tuberculosis. But perhaps it more closely resembles an infestation of weevils. Have you seen how they attack? From the inside" (27). As many scholars have noted, the language and tone of the work is colloquial and informal and from this opening sentence, the reader notes that Ale Ahmad appeals to the peasant, farmer, and working-class mass of Iranians by addressing a contentious issue through the metaphor of agriculture. Indeed, by doing so, he speaks to the neglected segment of the Iranian polity.

Similar to Fanon's observation that colonialism infects and causes irreparable physical and emotional disorders among the colonized masses, Ale Ahmad traces the disease of "occidentosis" to its bare roots. He says,

Occidentosis has two poles or extremes—two ends of one continuum. One pole is the Occident, by which I mean all of Europe, Soviet Russia, and North America, the developed and industrialized nations that can use machines to turn raw materials into more complex forms that can be marketed as goods. These raw materials are not only iron ore and oil, or gut, cotton, and gum tragacanth; they are also myths, dogmas, music, and the higher worlds. The other pole is Asia and Africa, or the backward, developing or nonindustrial nations that have been made into consumers of Western goods. However, the raw materials for these goods come from the developing nations...Everything in the developing nations comes from somewhere else. And we—Iranians—fall into the category of the backward and developing nations: we have more points in common with them than points of difference. (27)

Ale Ahmad's emphasis that Iranians "fall into the category of the backward and developing nations" is particularly poignant as this statement completely counters the national and international message the Pahlavi regime wanted to display to the world. The ideological and socio-political milieu of 1950s Iran leaned heavily towards a romanticized and nostalgic form of nationalism, which turned a blind eye to the reality of Iran's impoverished and illiterate masses. The Pahlavi regime's occidentotic worldview and practices essentially continued the imbalance of powers imposed by Western interests in Iran. Indeed, Ale Ahmad's observations and analysis regarding "occidentosis" have resonances with the critical writings of Frantz Fanon. Although there are no known records of Ale Ahmad's familiarity with the work of Fanon, there is a strong likelihood that they were aware of one another as they were contemporaries and may have even known the same group of intellectuals gathered in Paris in the mid-twentieth century. This is to suggest that the so-called Third World intellectuals recognized and identified the incredibly devastating abuse of power in their nations and the result was not only several wars for

independence (such as Cuba's in 1953, Algeria's from 1954 to 1962, and Ghana's in 1957), but a literary and ideological battle, which took place alongside the physical confrontations between colonized and colonizer. As Hamid Algar says, "Much of what Ale Ahmad describes and analyzes is not, of course, unique to Iran and might be encountered almost anywhere imperialism has imposed itself in Asia or Africa" (15). However, in light of the events of 1979 in Iran, Ale Ahmad's criticism of Western Empire specifically highlights the undercurrents that may have fueled the fires of the Islamic Revolution.

Indeed, one of the most blatant themes throughout *Occidentosis* centers on the importance of Islam as a guiding social force. Ale Ahmad pivots the problem of occidentotics (that is, those who suffer from Occidentosis) between imitating the West and moving away from Islam. He says, "The occidentotic is a man totally without belief or conviction, to such an extent that he not only believes in nothing, but also does not actively disbelieve in anything" (94). Further, he opines, "every schoolchild, in learning the 'Imperial Anthem' as the national anthem, forgets the prayers. In setting foot in sixth grade, he departs the mosque. In going to the movies, he consigns religion to oblivion. Thus 90 percent of those of us with a secondary school education are irreligious, or rather, indifferent toward religion. They are suspended in a void" (72). Of course, Ale Ahmad's brand of Islam aligns itself with much of one of Iran's most esteemed religious intellectuals and freedom fighters, Ali Shariati. Known and respected for his moderate views, Shariati condoned the ways in which Islam could help eradicate the socio-economic ills of Iran. Shariati and Ale Ahmad contend that the stance of their Islamic contemporaries against Western influence and imperialist aims is justified and useful. Ale Ahmad says, "At the beginning of the Constitutional Era, the leading figures were basically motivated by a belief that 'Islam = rule in accordance with Islamic law = religion,' whether they were for it or against it. It was seen as standing in its totality as a defense against or barrier to the

penetration of the machine, the West” (58). In fact, he even laments that during the era of the Constitutional Revolution (early 1900s), the Islamic clergy backed away from seizing power and control of the government. He says, “The clergy was the last citadel of resistance to the Europeans, but in the Constitutional Era, with the onslaught of the first wave of the machine, the clergy drew into their shell and so shut out the outside world, wove such a cocoon about themselves that it might not be rent until the Resurrection” (56). With such fervent advocacy of Islam as a guiding force for politics, some scholars are led to believe Ale Ahmad would have praised the Islamic Revolution, although as Algar suggests, this notion remains a highly contested issue among scholars (20).

Since the upper-classes and Iranian government had a strong desire to modernize Iran through Western forms and models in the early 1900s, they wanted to move away from Islam as a form of governmental rule. Ale Ahmad seems unconvinced of the efficacy of this decision in a country where the masses were quite religious. He emphasizes this point by suggesting that the industrialization and modernization efforts of early 1900s Iran were often weak or undermined because “no one has paid attention [to the fact that] 90 percent of the people of this country still live according to religious criteria [...] The poorer these people are, the more they must rely on religious beliefs as the sole means of making life bearable” (71). In passages such as these, the reader senses the mindset of the intelligentsia such as Ale Ahmad and Shariati who recognized the ways in which revolutionary change could and ultimately would take place well before the 1979 revolution.

Ale Ahmad’s drive for a return to Islam as the law of the land stems largely from his awareness that the West used industrial modernization and technology as a way to make Iran dependent and in essence, a colonial extension of Western empire. The fact that the Iranian upper classes welcomed the presence of Western technological advancements further complicated the

growing rift between the classes. Many Iranian intellectuals, including Ale Ahmad recognized the detrimental consequences of Western and upper-class infringement on the Iranian masses, but regardless of their protests “the elite (led by the aristocracy) imported meaningless commodities, including weaponry” (Prashad, 80). Ale Ahmad correctly diagnoses Iran’s pre-1979 problems by focusing on the increasing rift between the upper and lower classes. As was the case in Iran as in other developing nations, the upper classes had the power and the authority to exert their rule and control over the masses; further, those in leadership secured their upper-class status at a high cost to the lower classes.

This awareness appears in *The School Principal* as the protagonist criticizes the nation’s educational system for its central role as a tool of submission used by the upper-classes to dominate the lower-classes and maintain class hierarchies. Ale Ahmad pinpoints the Iranian drive for industry and technology squarely within this paradigm of imbalance of power and although he is not entirely against progressive measures for the country, he completely rejects the advancement of the economy at the price of a loss of culture and suffering for the working masses. He says,

The important point is that we the people of the developing nations are not fabricating the machines. But, owing to economic and political determinants and to the global confrontation of rich and poor, we have had to be gentle and tractable consumers for the West’s industrial goods or at best contented assemblers at low wages of what comes from the West. And this has necessitated our conforming ourselves, our governments, our cultures, and our daily lives to the machine. (*Occidentosis*, 30)

Ale Ahmad’s observation shows that he understands how Western imperialism can colonize a nation, in this case Iran, without taking direct control over the government, economy, and social conditions. Iranian colonization by western European powers and the United States involved the

acquiescence of the Iranian upper classes and resulted in the oppression and submission of the lower-classes.

This upper-class and often foreign-influenced control spread to the masses mainly through the educational system. Prashad further explains, “Educational systems and the media as well as cultural purveyors did not teach the population about its own customs and traditions. Imperialism had sundered the organic relationship with these dynamics. The disruption of the links between the various classes resulted in the creation of an aesthetic and socioeconomic gulf” (80). In *Occidentosis*, Ale Ahmad delicately traces the destructive imbalance of power in mid-twentieth century Iran and the nation’s weak preparation in regard to industrialization, and he even goes as far as to uncover the control that corporations exert upon culture, history, and archaeology. He says, “Although in launching its career of imperialism, the West, like a leech, only drank the blood of the East (ivory, oil, silk, spices, and other material goods), it gradually perceived that the East also has abundant spiritual goods, what universities and laboratories run on. Their anthropology, mythology, dialectology, and a thousand other ‘ologies’ were founded on material gathered from this side of the world” (127). He recounts a trip he made with a friend to Shapur-i Kazarun, a historic site near Shiraz. He says, “tents were set up on the ruins, and the logo and name of the oil consortium were on all the tents, machinery, and goods. The archaeological excavations at Shapur-i Kazarun were an outgrowth of the oil industry! [...] This is how the oil goes and the machine, with all its concomitants, comes in return—everything from orientalists and specialists to films, manners, and books” (86). According to Ale Ahmad, the cultural repercussions and political implications of Western encroachment and colonial aims are heightened by the capitalist desire to conquer the so-called Third World. He says,

Who profits from this exchange? First the corporations profit... Then the middlemen profit. I have identified some of the middlemen [...] (Thus we have ministers, members

of parliament, governments, and states that undergo shakeups in the wake of these exchanges, and cabinets come and go. The West guides our politicians, or flatters and applauds them. So it is natural that our politicians should pay more attention to Reuters, UPI, and Time than to the Tehran Chamber of Commerce, the Commission on the Aim of Education, or the Birjand Municipal Association (86-7).

Without saying the term, Ale Ahmad essentially discusses the impact of globalization regarding the exploitive and abusive practices of the First World upon the Third World. His vision into the development and interaction of the haves and have-nots places Ale Ahmad's *Occidentosis* among the most important and influential works of protest literature.

Ale Ahmad even discusses the Diasporic community and finds that the split in identity which this geopolitical condition causes stems from occidentosis well before the person leaves his or her home nation. He says, "Contrary to the widespread view, the greater the army of returnees from Europe, the less their power to act and the greater the distress of the institutions that absorb their impact. Because there has never been a plan for where to send these youths and what specialty, what trade, what technology they should study, they have gone each to some part of the world to study or experience something completely different from others' experiences" (118). He characterizes this phenomenon in *The School Principal* through sarcastic overtones about one of the students' parents. The principal says, "This fellow was a tiny man, ostentatiously westernized, carefully groomed and smelling of after-shave lotion. He hadn't even sat down before he was describing his own educational background and his many trips abroad," (111). Their conversation ends with the principal arranging private tutorial lessons for the man's scholastically weak son. This scene echoes Ale Ahmad's assertion that the upper class seems to hold firmly to the belief that simply receiving an education outside of Iran will help move the country toward progress and change. Instead of producing socio-economic conditions conducive

to better living and working conditions within Iran and its own resources, the Western leaning upper classes falsely assume that the changes the nation needs will happen with the sole efforts of foreign-trained Iranians. Ale Ahmad says,

Notwithstanding all the propaganda cranked out to lure back students from abroad in Europe, I do not believe that their return promises to be a service to the country so long as no environment suited to their future work is provided [...] Most of these youths, while living in Europe or America, acquire the idea of freedom to various degrees [...] but when they return [...] our government's disinclination to hear of such talk, the lack of an outlet for such freedoms, conduces to such a reversion. (119)

Although Ale Ahmad remains critical and weary of Western infringement on Iran, he openly admits that the Iranian political, social, and economic milieu lacks fundamental conditions for the creation of a democratic society in which everyone, and not solely the upper classes, benefits from the nation's progressive measures.

Occidentosis ends on a note of warning and advice for setting up a society which can annihilate the ills of Western imperialism and the stagnation of Iranian nationhood. More than anything, Ale Ahmad suggests that the cure for occidentosis rests on the youth and their willingness to overcome the problems of oppressive and exploitive industrialization and modernization. He says,

Our educational system and our politics must use the young, ardent, rousing energies as a crowbar to uproot all the outmoded institutions. They must use them as materials to construct a new world. In this age of transformation, we need people of character, expert, ardent, principled people—not occidentotic people, not people who are sacks full of human knowledge, jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none, or who are merely decent,

good natured, pliant, and earnest, or adaptable and placid, or meek and angelic. It is such people who have written our history up to now and we've had enough. (132)

Ale Ahmad suggests there is hope for Iran to break the shackles of Western dominance if the Iranian polity uses faith, most pointedly in religion, to lead and guide themselves spiritually and socio-politically. Indeed, he ends *Occidentosis* with a Quranic quote, which reads as a warning: "The hour draws nigh and the moon is split in two" (137). Ultimately, Ale Ahmad gives his readers hope and courage to revel in their abilities and potential as human beings. He says, "This is the ugliest symptom of occidentosis: to regard yourself as nothing, not to think at all, to give up all reliance on your own self, your own eyes and ears, to give over the authority of your own senses to any pen held by any wretch who has said or written a word as an orientalist" (98-9). If nothing else, *Occidentosis* survives as a literary piece which captures the mindset and emotional investment of an intense and influential thinker who saw the detriment of colonial relations and subservient attitudes and ultimately would have encouraged the downtrodden to return to their cultural heritage for salvation from the exploitive desires of the capitalist-machine.

Ale Ahmad explores many of the themes in *Occidentosis* in his best-known novel, *The School Principal*. Similar to *The Outsider*, Jalal Ale Ahmad's *The School Principal* is underrated as a protest novel against the global social milieu of the mid-twentieth century. Set in a remote village in Iran, the story traces the life of a nameless school principal struggling with his own sense of justice amidst federal and local government corruption, which he sees reflected in the social and cultural practices of the villagers. His conscience wracked between choosing to do what he deems ethical and moral versus the expectations of his society, the school principal becomes more and more disengaged from his community and resorts to violence in response to the injustices around him. In *The School Principal*, the protagonist negotiates a growing sense of alienation with an understanding that he must build relations with other people in order to

produce a more humane society. However, the indifference and selfishness of those people around him influence the principal to abandon his good-will efforts and instead to perpetrate brutal and cruel expressions of violence. Ale Ahmad's school principal shares Cross Damon's crisis of consciousness as a "new man," but he is caught in the web of complexities of being a member of the class perpetrating the injustices and rebelling against this same class in a nation immersed in the colonial transgressions of the First World.

Ale Ahmad's protagonist is an educated, middle-class school administrator placed in a remote rural area where class divisions are as visible as the mountains that surround the elementary school. The school principal's target throughout the story is the education system of Iran; but as Kamran Talattof describes, "Ale Ahmad sets the school up as a representation of society with all its problems" (82). That is, the microcosm of the school speaks to the macrocosm of the relations between Iran and the First World, the United States in particular. For instance, after an American driver nearly kills the school's fourth-grade teacher in a hit-and-run accident, the school principal tells his colleague that he should have been more careful around the Americans because they have no regard for the Iranians. He says, "Didn't you know that streets and traffic lights and civilization and pavement all belong to those who, in cars built in their own country, trample the rest of the world?" (88). Through a mixture of external and internal dialogue with the injured teacher, the principal simultaneously chastises the man and the pathetic situation. Symbolically, the fact that the American driver flees the accident while the school children, janitor, and local police tend to the victim points to American policies within Iran. The school principal uses this episode to highlight the United States' attitude towards the so-called Third World as a relationship of Western entitlement. Essentially, the metaphor suggests that the United States (represented as the American driver) can "hit-and-run" so-called developing

nations (represented as the Iranian teacher) and leave the chaos behind for the natives to put back in order.

Fanon also discusses the aftermath of colonialism and the work that needs to be done by the colonized once they are liberated from colonial rule. He says, “The country finds itself under new management, but in actual fact everything has to be started over from scratch, everything has to be rethought” (*WE*, 56). In Ale Ahmad’s view, the inferiority complex of the colonized allows the continuation of the cycle of colonial abuse as this psychological condition fosters the injustices committed by the upper classes. Vijay Prashad explains, “What Ale Ahmad rehearses is the conceptual problem, where people of the ‘East’ continue to see themselves as lesser than the ‘West’,” (81). Ale Ahmad suggests that this self-identification as inferior to the superiority of the West locks the so-called developing world in a disastrous pattern of imitation. Instead of looking to their own traditions, history, and ideologies as building blocks for the nation, the colonized problematically re-enact Western colonial behaviors and systems believing that any other way is backward.

The school principal identifies the problem of re-thinking the nation, but cannot find other people with whom to rebuild the nation. For instance, after speaking to the Iranian accident victim, the school principal thinks to himself, “You idiot, curses be upon you. I was so disgusted and fed up with myself I wanted to cuss somebody out, to strike out against someone” (88). The lack of understanding among the masses frustrates and brews violent desires for the school principal; the type of violence which Fanon identifies as a starting point to bring about change. In this scene with the injured teacher however, the school principal simply fumes silently and leaves the hospital. His repeated reaction of silence indicates that this nameless school principal often represses himself in the presence of other people possibly as a result of a problematic inability to connect to those around him. The reader immediately notices his disdain of his

colleagues and cohort as he vehemently laments to the reader about his reasons for not getting along with others; further, throughout the story the school principal never alludes to any intimate or romantic relations with a partner, although he is married (133). Near the end of the novel, he briefly recaps a discussion he has with his wife when he informs her that he will resign from his job. He says, “She was stunned. I mean she didn’t say a word” (133). The language of the narrative and the principal himself silence the principal’s wife; the protagonist tells the reader that the wife remained silent as she listened to her husband and the text never shares her thoughts directly with the reader. This characterization and narrative style highlight the secondary status of this woman in the story and in her husband’s life. The principal’s and his wife’s silences allude to the characters’ impotence to effect change in their private and public lives. The reader never learns of the wife’s attempts to deal with her husband’s choices, but the reader witnesses the principal’s moral demise as a result of lacking an avenue through which his protests are recognized and addressed.

The lack of discussion of women’s lives and roles in *Occidentosis* and the weak characterization of women in the novel point to a serious problem in Ale Ahmad’s work. Akin to many of the male writers of this era, Ale Ahmad ignores the socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions of women and in his writing, this absence of attention to women and the intricacies of their lives limits Ale Ahmad’s often progressive thinking. In *The School Principal*, the brief description of the principal’s marital relationship and his troubling reactions to women echo the principal’s behavior towards a female job applicant. The principal’s initial meeting with the young woman starts with silence. The principal explains, “I welcomed her, ordered tea, which she didn’t touch and, since we didn’t really have anything more to say, took her to visit the third and fourth graders” (100). After these perfunctory formalities, the principal’s sexism dominates the narrative. When the woman asks if there are other female teachers, he replies

“Unfortunately, the road to our school wasn’t built for ladies’ high-heeled shoes,” (100). He tops off his sexist remarks by warning the woman that “only two of our teachers are married” (101), which seems like an allusion to the difficulties she will face as a young, attractive woman in the midst of mostly single men. At this point, the female teacher grabs her papers and leaves and the reader learns that she rejected the job offer (103).

The school principal’s male chauvinism shows the limits of this “new man’s” vision for the future of his postcolonial world. Although he can readily identify and attack the power structures which affect the well-being of the nation, he fails to recognize the gender inequalities which he essentially promotes and practices in his own circle. The narrative demonstrates the school principal’s complete ignorance of his own compliance within the hierarchical system of power, which places individuals in a caste order. Again, although he debases his compatriots for their subservience to the rule of foreign entities and the national upper-class, the school principal promotes gender inequalities and is the only character in the novel to directly exhibit his prejudices against women.

His strange relations with women extend to the difficulty he has making friendships with his colleagues and other community members. For instance, he feels a sense of responsibility and compassion for the children at the school, but often with resentment and this feeling inhibits his ability to befriend them or their parents. To some extent, the principal’s feelings reflect a superiority complex towards women and the poor; he exhibits sympathetic sentiments for women and the lower classes, but since his comments and actions are often belittling and offensive, the reader senses the school principal places himself on a high pedestal next to these segments of his society. Although Ale Ahmad never clearly suggests that this sort of hierarchical psychology can negatively affect any chances for progressive change, the reader senses this “new man’s” limitations in regard to establishing a new social order. For instance, he loves and hates the

students at his school as they are evidence of the corruption of both the educational system and the nation as a whole. He cares deeply about the well-being of the young boys at his school, but he also curses them to himself and becomes angry when he acknowledges his feelings of care towards them.

Even when he arranges to have all the students dressed in warm, protective clothing by purchasing shoes for all the children, he chastises himself and says, “the children were without shoes and hats? What’s that to me? You’d think I were to blame for their shoelessness and their hatlessness. How did I get mixed up with these beggars?” (72). In part, his anger stems from a disgust with himself for appearing to take sides with the administration whose sole concern was to make the school and students exude the physical characteristics of being well-dressed and groomed and therefore worthy of attending a school with the children of the upper-class. As the school principal sarcastically thinks to himself, “it isn’t proper for gentlemen’s children to have classmates with neither hats nor shoes” (71). On the other hand, the principal’s latent class-biases show in his emphasis of his disdain for the students as they are “beggars.” In the lower-class community, the principal wins the hearts of the parents, but his only feeling towards their appreciation is that now “The beggar’s bread had bedecked education in a new suit of clothes” (74). Neither the upper-classes nor the lower-classes appeal to the school principal; he despises the corruption of the upper-class as much as he loathes the obsequiousness of the lower-class towards the upper-classes so ultimately, he remains alone and despondent. Without a like-minded acquaintance, he often shares his tirades against his surroundings with only himself. His upper-middle class status, which disconnects him from the upper-class and affords him distance from the lower-classes coupled with the austerity and authority of his job complicate his lack of relationships with the people around him. Ale Ahmad’s astute attention to the problematic class-

system in post-WWII Iran highlights the psychological trauma for an intellectual individual who tries, but fails to make broader connections to other people.

In addition to these personal limitations for the school principal, he feels a disconnect to the nation as a whole. The atrocious class-differences in this village immediately strike the school principal and ignite his tirade against the upper-class as he describes his workplace:

It was a two-story school, newly built, standing alone at the foot of the mountain, facing the sun. Some filthy rich philanthropist had put up the building in the middle of his own property and placed it at the disposal of the Office of Education for twenty-five years in hopes that they'd make a school out of it, that the area might be frequented, that roads might be pounded out, and the whole scheme would grow and grow and continue to develop. (37)

The school principal is well-acquainted with the bureaucratic elements of his society. In fact, the school principal is a member of the dominant class socioeconomically; nonetheless, he recognizes the corruption and hopelessness of his society and this creates a strong sense of alienation and dejection in him. He increasingly fails to maintain balance between his own class position and a desire to resist against the hegemonic structures which oppress him and his society as a whole. The mounting pressure of his awareness about the injustices of his society cause him to react through ineffective violent outbursts, which only further marginalize him.

As a civil servant, the principal feels particularly angry at the bureaucracy of the education system, which in his opinion only produced “men of tomorrow [who] were going to be so frightened by these classes and these examinations and their brains and their nerves so frayed by terror that by the time they had their diplomas and their degrees, they really would be a new breed of men. Men full of fear” (120-1). Ale Ahmad’s description of “a new breed of men” mirrors Fanon’s discussion of this idea of a “new generation of men” (*WE*, 2). To some extent,

Fanon focuses on the fear and violence that centuries of colonization have caused, but he suggests that these “new men” will create a new world and ultimately become human again. In fact, he says that these new men “can only succeed by resorting to every means, including, of course, violence” (*WE*, 3). The principal displays some of the violence that Fanon discusses in his work. He curses and threatens those he deems vile and corrupt (90); he physically beats one of the students who raped another boy (130-1); and he abuses himself constantly by belittling himself for being involved with the corruption as a school administrator. He is constantly writing up and then destroying a resignation letter; in his view, the tearing up of his letter, which displays his anger at the entire system suggests that “This is how they take the first step against a man” (65), by inciting fear in him if he rebels against the status quo.

While Fanon embraces the unfolding possibilities for a newly independent nation wherein “factions recognize each other and the future nation is already indivisible” (*WE*, 50), Ale Ahmad challenges this utopic outlook and suggests that the lack of political awareness coupled with the strong hand of continued colonialism by the native upper-classes stifle the progress of the nation. For the school principal, this awareness of the corruption and chaos of colonialism becomes heightened as he realizes he cannot find another Iranian with whom he can share his concerns and plans for action against the injustices. The men he works with at the school are actively participating in the exploitative practices of the colonial powers. He is particularly angry at his right-hand man, the “nazem” or vice principal as they are worlds apart in their philosophies and behaviors.

The principal feels sympathy and kindness towards the boys at this school and treats with them with care and compassion, even though it would be acceptable for him to be a strict, tough, and even violent administrator who beats the children into submission. In one instance, as the principal approaches the school he hears the cries of several boys. He says, “I hadn’t yet turned

the corner in back of the wall when the anguished cries of the children greeted me. I speeded up. Five of the kids were huddled on the porch while the nazem, stick in hand, whacked them one by one on their palms. Very official and very proper” (54). The principal watches this scene of punishment and restrains himself from attacking and beating the nazem for his cruelty. In fact, the principal confides that “I’d come within an inch of smashing the nazem in the mouth and breaking his switch into little pieces over his head” (55). In order not to embarrass and humiliate the nazem in front of the students, the principal keeps himself calm and the nazem says to him, “When [I’m] in that kind of mood [I’m] liable to break one of their necks... If just one day [I] neglect to keep them in line, they’ll climb all over [one], Aqa” (55). The viciousness of the nazem towards these rural, working-class children appalls the principal, especially in light of the fact that the children are taught subservience more than they are anything else. In this scene, the reader notices that the principal protects the youngest members of society and feels the need to destroy the older segments. The trouble is he cannot reconcile his own class biases with his growing awareness of nurturing the youth into a more just society, which does not require their subservience to foreign or upper-class powers.

In addition to this emphasis of obsequiousness among the poorer classes, one of the principal’s main frustrations is his peers’ acceptance and promotion of the failure of the whole system of education. He says, “God bless the father of this educational system, with its handicraft program so successful in increasing the number of sidewalk spice sellers, its grades in department, its left face-right face march, and all the borders and lakes of the world; and the exports of Ethiopia to be memorized...How unfortunate the children of this generation...All you need to know is how to bow and obey” (118). The fact that the lower-classes are the pawns of the upper-classes further angers the principal, but he is the only person who seems to care about this unfortunate fact. The narrative tells the reader about some nameless communists and a third-

grade teacher who were also concerned about the class inequities and abuses; but the narrative explains that the communists were ousted by the community for “selling newspapers, spreading propaganda, and drawing the hammer and sickle” (53) and the conscientious third-grade teacher ended up in prison for his critiques of the system.

The principal’s anger towards the annihilation of social, economic, and cultural values due to Western colonial aims incites his resignation from his position. He attacks and criticizes his cohorts, but he understands that they are participants in the neo-colonialism of the Western powers trying to protect their own interests and socio-economic positions. The novel ends with his handing in a resignation letter and disappearing from the story, essentially killing the self he portrays in his community. The resignation not only shows this man’s response to a corrupt job, but indicates a sense of hopelessness towards any effective measures for progressive changes. The school principal is the “new man” of the postcolonial world who recognizes the problems of his society. He is not only familiar with the tactics and mechanisms that the upper classes use in order to maintain the colonial status quo, but to some extent, he participates within these systems and even upholds the class hierarchies without entirely realizing his own culpability in condoning the injustices.

Wright’s *The Outsider*, complicates some of Ale Ahmad’s critiques even further and introduces Cross Damon, who is also a “new man” of the decolonizing world. Both the school principal and Cross Damon are educated, young, rebellious men who at one point in their lives try to live among the masses and carry on lives that depict the successful heteronormative, middle-class lifestyles of the mid-twentieth century. However, unlike the school principal who summarily disappears from the narrative at the point in which he completely rejects his society, Cross Damon gives the reader a view into the mental and emotional workings of his rebellion. In essence, *The Outsider* picks up where *The School Principal* leaves off.

Similar to Ale Ahmad, Richard Wright published a poignant and critical work of nonfiction in the same decade he wrote his novel, *The Outsider*, which presents his contentions with the idealistic outlook of his contemporaries in regard to the possibility of freedom in the postcolonial landscape. This book, *Black Power* (1954), chronicles the political conditions of the newly forming Ghana (then known as Gold Coast) and shows that he is highly concerned with the question of freedom and the conditions that affect a postcolonial society. Themes that Wright explores in *Black Power* mirror his concerns in *The Outsider*; he is especially interested in how an individual can negotiate a sense of group belonging with a need for personal freedom. His observations of the masses in Gold Coast remind the reader that Wright was simultaneously supportive and excited about the emergence of a new nation and skeptical and worried about the possibility of establishing independence. He says, “I was assuming that these people had to be pulled out of this life, out of these conditions of poverty, had to become literate and eventually industrialized. But why? Was not the desire for that mostly on *my* part rather than *theirs*? I was literate, Western, disinherited, and industrialized and I felt each day the pain and anxiety of it. Why then must I advocate the dragging of these people into my trap?” (*BP*, 184). Wright sympathizes in this work with the desire for and necessity of freedom from British rule, but he also shares in his writing that even if the Gold Coast masses gain political independence from their colonial rulers, the more crippling and long-term psychological damages of colonialism remain as a crutch for these people. He says, “In a certain sense, even if the Gold Coast actually won its fight for freedom (and it seems that it can!), it could never really win....The real war was over and lost forever!” (190-191). The “real war” seems to be the never-ending battle to reconcile a lost sense of self after centuries of colonial dislocations, both physical and psychological.

Wright attributes much of the psychological imperialism of colonized people to missionaries and shares a particular disgust and ethical outrage at the ways in which missionaries corrupted the masses and conditioned them for colonial rule. Unlike Ale Ahmad, it is well known that Wright held strong disdain for religion as early as his childhood. Michel Fabre notes, “the way religion was imposed at home made him hate anything connected with it” (33). In this work, the reader gains a strong sense of Wright’s belief that the psychological damage caused by religion and the missionaries far outweighs the vilest political, economic, and social abuses of the colonial powers. Although not as apparent in his earlier works, in *Black Power* Wright vehemently and explicitly bashes the work of missionaries whose efforts he attributes to the loss of self. Wright says, “The gold can be replaced; the timber can grow again, but there is no power on earth that can rebuild the mental habits and restore that former vision that once gave significance to the lives of these people” (190).

His familial experiences coupled with his Marxist outlook towards religion heighten Wright’s critique and disdain for religion. Indeed, he continues, “the ruins of their former culture, no matter how cruel and barbarous it may seem to us, are reflected in timidity, hesitancy, and bewilderment. Eroded personalities loom here for those who have psychological eyes to see” (190). Wright attacks the missionaries pointblank: “though businessmen exploited the Africans, I believe that their impact, in the final analysis, was far less detrimental to the personalities of the Africans than that of the religious teachings of the missionaries” (195). Wright fictionalizes this sentiment of scorn for religion in *The Outsider* through Cross Damon’s lack of faith and connection to religion and a monotheistic god. In one scene, Cross chides his friend Joe about the ways in which God plays a role in one’s life. After teasing Joe about his weight and appearance, Cross jokes with Joe and says, “And God made man in His own image...” (11). Joe, who appears to be a stronger believer in God than the other men as he continuously rejects their comedy

regarding God, defends his beliefs and Cross gives up trying to make him understand that his faith is useless. As Cross's story develops, the reader learns that Cross rejects blind faith as monotheistic religions require and in part this is due to his unwillingness to be subservient.

In *Black Power*, Wright develops his critique of religion and underscores that one of the main problems with religion is in fact the necessity to submit oneself wholly to the tenets and values of these belief systems without any doubt. He attributes what he calls African subservience to the work of Christian missionaries and questions whether the emerging nation of Gold Coast can overcome the challenges wrought by religious dogma. In a conversation with an educated Nigerian, Wright is asked: "don't you think that the African has been improved by accepting Christianity?" Wright replies, "He's certainly more docile" (37). Wright even jokingly acknowledges the so-called benefits of Christian missionary work in *White Man, Listen!* He says, "in part, I agree that some of the work of the missionary was good: I agree that his boiling down four hundred gods and six hundred devils into *one* God and *one* Devil was an advance" (676). More seriously, Wright suggests that the missionaries laid the groundwork for colonialism. He says,

However synchronized or not were the motives of the missionaries with those of the imperial financial interests, their actions could not have been more efficient in inflicting lasting psychological damage upon the personalities of the Africans who, though outwardly submissive, were never really deeply converted to a Christianity which rendered them numb to their own dearly bought vision of life, to the values for which they had made untold sacrifices. (191)

Wright draws parallels between the continuation of colonialism in Africa and the United States and connects the continental African dance movements to physical expressions of devotion in the U.S. He says, "I'd seen these same snakelike, veering dances before... Where? Oh, God, yes; in

America, in storefront churches, in Holy Roller Tabernacles, in God's Temples, in unpainted wooden prayer-meeting houses on the plantations of the Deep South" (78). For Wright, these ecstatic dances on both sides of the Atlantic imply "acquiescence...surrender...approval" (78) of colonial domination heralded by Christian missionaries.

Wright makes keen observations and connections between the impact of Christian missionary work and socioeconomic colonial goals. His concern about the possibility of freedom in the minds of the masses centers on the fact that the colonized masses must fight fierce battles on a personal and psychological level, and he fears this is a battle that cannot be won because of the fear of and subservience to an unknowable, but powerful force that religion instilled in the minds of the masses. Wright's worries mirror Fanon's observation that, "The colonialist bourgeoisie is aided and abetted in the pacification of the colonized by the inescapable powers of religion" (*WE*, 28). In Fanon's view, the missionaries conditioned the colonized to react to injustices against them as the "saints who turned the other cheek, who forgave those who trespassed against them, who, without flinching, were spat upon and insulted" (28) and of course, similar to Wright, Fanon rejects these responses to dealing with injustice in the process of decolonization. However, unlike Fanon who condones organized mass movements as a means to establishing anticolonial societies, Wright demonstrates in *The Outsider* that the path to true freedom depends upon abandoning stolid faith in organized belief systems including political and theoretical ideologies. This is to suggest, Wright problematizes the ability of individuals to form communal bonds when they have been adversely affected by centuries of unjustified capitalist and class-biased domination.

In *Black Power*, the reader notes that Wright's preoccupation with the struggle for freedom relates to his role as a witness of the struggles of the emerging new population as ideas of nationalism trump colonial dictatorship; while he easily identifies the social, political, and

economic problems associated with colonialism, Wright also warns the masses of clinging to cultural nationalism as a means of establishing a new, postcolonial identity. He is sympathetic yet critical of nationalism and the reader notices that the makings of *The Outsider* stem heavily from Wright's contentious relationship with nationalism and idealistic notions of culture and tradition for identity. In *Black Power*, Wright clearly expresses that he feels no particular racial affiliations with other black people. For instance, he poignantly questions whether a visit to Africa will incite feelings of unity and belonging in him as an African American. He says, "Being of African descent, would I be able to feel and know something about Africa on the basis of a common 'racial' heritage? My emotions seemed to be touching a dark and dank wall...*But, am I African?*" (18). One recurrent and troubling theme in this work is this sentiment: "I'm of African descent and I'm in the midst of Africans, yet I cannot tell what they are thinking and feeling" (172). Without explicitly stating the idea, Wright seems to suggest here that the call for unity among different nations with masses of colonized people cannot work to unify the oppressed in any significant way. His demonstration of his own feelings of displacement and alienation shows that colonialism severed the necessary ties and links between the colonized and therefore building unified forces of resistance seems not only problematic, but impossible.

Wright's own sense of being an outsider, especially during his travels and conversations in Africa, sheds light on an important theme in his fiction and in *The Outsider* in particular. Wright openly shares that he feels the pangs of alienation and being foreign in his travels. He says, "My protest was not against Africa or its people; it was directed against the unsettled feeling engendered by the strangeness of a completely different order of life. I was gazing upon a world whose laws I did not know, upon faces whose reactions were riddles to me. There was nothing here that I could predict, anticipate, or rely upon and, in spite of myself, a mild sense of anxiety began to fill me" (56). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon easily connects the anxiety

of the continental African colonized masses with the conditions of African Americans among other colonial subjects. However, Wright's descriptions and poignant exploration of the strong sense of disconnect between himself and the Africans he meets on his trips, suggests that Fanon's idealized views remain open to Wright's criticisms, even though Wright also makes bold assertions about the social, political, and economic forms of domination against African Americans.

Wright investigates the anxiety which he describes in *Black Power* in his novel as well. Wright's fiction seems to direct the reader to think about Cross Damon's alcoholism coupled with his unstable relationships with others as a strong sense of anxiety and consequent disassociation from the world around him. Cross's only connection to others becomes one of violence and abuse and largely stems from his lack of belonging and affiliation with people in his life. Wright further probes into this anxiety by showing that Cross's feelings are compounded by a sense of nothingness. In his own travel writings, Wright consistently expresses a lack of understanding and connection to the people he interacts with throughout Africa. In *Black Power*, he shares with the reader that on the occasions when "white men" (20) tell him there is a "racial expression of the Negro" (20), he wonders "what were these 'racial' qualities that I was supposed to possess? ... my mind would revert to my habitual kind of thinking that had no 'race' in it, a kind of thinking that was conditioned by the reaction of human beings to a concrete social environment" (21). Such beliefs and crises of consciousness inform and complicate *The Outsider*; Cross Damon clearly has difficulty staying connected to his loved ones, but also to the larger community of African Americans. In fact, Cross Damon's drive for total and absolute individual freedom prevents him from building meaningful and long-term relationships with all people and leads him to personal and social devastation. For Cross Damon, as an existentialist, bonds of familial or racial affiliation are useless and meaningless in the face of a greater void of

existence. Before he can build unity with others through socioeconomic or personal relationships, Cross must contend with his feelings of alienation and find a way to endure living when he believes nothing is of much value in the world.

As the back cover of *The Outsider* describes, this story is about “a man at odds with society and with himself—a man of superior intellect who hungers for peace but who brings terror and destruction wherever he goes.” Indeed, Cross Damon is undeniably an intellectual whose keen mind rejects the socioeconomic and cultural milieu of the 1950s United States and yet his sense of alienation and lack of hope cause him to respond to the injustices he recognizes through heinous crimes and acts of violence. The reader never witnesses Cross’s attempts to resolve his familial, socioeconomic and political alienation through bureaucratic or conciliatory means such as seeking other forms of employment or marital counseling or assistance from labor unions. Cross’s heightened sense of intellectualism coupled with his feelings of nothingness lead him to violent physical confrontations with his family, coworkers, and the law. Though Wright condones Fanon’s observation that the colonized will inevitably respond to the centuries of colonial injustice through violence, this novel explores and interrogates Fanon’s idea ultimately suggesting that intellectuals must compromise between a sense of estrangement from one another and the pressing necessity to create a new world based on unity and sympathy. Otherwise, as is the case with Cross Damon, this impassioned intellectual may end up on a path of unilateral destruction, which is ineffective against those injustices.

Fanon echoes Wright’s call for individual and communal unity in *The Wretched of the Earth*. In fact, Fanon finds communal unity embodied through acts of violence not only as necessary, but also as inevitable. He says, “Violence alone, perpetrated by the people, violence organized and guided by the leadership, provides the key for the masses to decipher social reality” (*WE*, 96). Wright condones this sentiment in *The Outsider*, but he challenges Fanon’s

idealism by focusing on the psychological roadblocks in the colonized individual's mind including an often insurmountable sense of alienation from others. Fanon considers the psychological detriment of colonialism in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and discusses what he calls "an inferiority complex" (11). He says this inferiority complex "is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization—or, better, the epidermalization—of this inferiority" (11). In this work, Fanon studies the behaviors and thought-processes of black men and suggests the colonized black man is "haunted by the problems of love and understanding" (8). On this point, Wright and Fanon converge in their observations and investigations as both writers agree that before there can be freedom on a national or communal scale, there must be freedom from the personal psychological shackles of colonial domination.

For Cross Damon, the cure for this sense of alienation appears in violent acts and other forms of detachment from other people rather than attempts at reconciliation and unity with others. One may view his sexual liaisons with women as an effort to connect to another person nonviolently, but since he is selfish, unfaithful, and unreliable towards these women, his sexual relationships only demonstrate a physical rather than emotional or psychological connection. His brutality and cruelty simultaneously reflect the repetition cycle of centuries of colonial practices and allow Cross to assert a sense of power and authority towards others thereby giving him a more fulfilling sense of his identity. Although Cross's reactions and responses to the legacy of colonialism do not necessarily reflect the attitudes and behaviors of the masses of postcolonial people, he nonetheless represents the impossibility of creating a new world order built on unity since he refuses to act selflessly. He forges relationships, especially with women; but through acts of self-sabotage and a lack of loyalty, Cross fails to maintain healthy bonds with any of these people.

Cross's violent behavior suggests a desire to affirm his power towards others, which distances everyone from him. Throughout the novel, he searches for validation of his existence, but he cannot find solace in his relationships with other people or in his society at large. His approach to dealing with other people through shallow unions and subsequent abandonment coupled with his existentialist belief that all humans are ultimately alone open the avenues for inflicting violence upon himself and others; in a sense, Cross feels he has nothing to lose, even if he gives in to his most vile actions such as murder. Race, gender, and class further complicate the life of this post-WWII young, intellectual African American man. On a personal level, Cross must deal with his position as a son, husband, and father. The narrative shows the reader that he fails to maintain loving and healthy relationships with his mother, wife, children, and lovers; although he chastises himself for his inadequacies in these roles, he also quickly forgives himself and returns to his selfish practices such as his excessive drinking and infidelity because he recognizes that if he places importance on the needs of his close relations, he then sacrifices his desire for individual freedom. Cross Damon's awareness of this troubling dichotomy taps into the horrific and brutal possibilities of his ingenious mind and due to his family ties, sexual needs, and high sense of intellectualism, freedom is impossible unless he commits violence.

By perpetrating acts of violence, Cross shatters all bonds, affiliations, and expectations and thus seems to close in on a sense of true freedom. Although Cross's violence differs from Fanon's recognition of a need for violence against the injustices of colonialism, Cross's behavior connects to Fanon's observation that violence is met with counter-violence because this is the only way that an individual comes close to experiencing a sense of redemption. Fanon says, "Violence can thus be understood to be the perfect mediation. The colonized man liberates himself in and through violence" (*WE*, 44). In a sense, Cross redeems his identity as a man by enforcing his power and exerting control against others. Of course, in Cross's world, the

oppressor or oppressive forces are not as readily identifiable as is the colonial power in the postcolonial sense. Many different people including his blood relations and the racist, class-based economic system of the U.S. trouble Cross's life and he tries to engage with these elements in a superficial attempt at living in his world, but his unabashed and uncensored form of violence points to Cross's weaknesses in achieving freedom. As intellectual as Cross appears to be, he fails to recognize that his unorganized violent outbursts only endanger his efforts for freedom because he needs to rely on others to fully understand and accept himself a man. Fanon states the situation thus: "What I want to do is help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment" (*BSWM*, 30) and although Cross recognizes these same social, political, psychological, and economic complexes which Fanon describes, he is too self-absorbed to find productive means of achieving his aim of freedom. In order to attain his goal of freedom, Cross must come to terms with his inferiority complex. The fact that he responds to people or situations that interfere with his efforts to secure his freedom through brutality suggests that he is actually incapable of handling the world around him and it is only through annihilation that he finds validation.

By presenting the reader with Cross Damon, Wright challenges the utopic and idealistic outlook of Fanon's thinking. This is to say, Fanon believes that colonized subjects can find a sense of self through collective actions of resistance and a return to dignity through racial or national identification with other colonial subjects. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon writes specifically about the Algerian liberation movement, but he acknowledges the similarities between "the blacks who lived in the United States, Central, and Latin America" and "the Africans" (*WE*, 153). He says, "The problem they were faced with was not basically any different from that of the Africans. The whites in America had not behaved any differently to them than the white colonizers had to the Africans" (153). By extension, the suggestion is that

the relationships of colonized people are distorted such that the possibility of unity becomes more and more difficult. Indeed, Fanon recognizes that there are significant historical and political differences between African Americans and people of African descent in other parts of the colonial world; however, “the common denominator between blacks from Chicago and the Nigerians or Tanganyikans was that they all defined themselves in relation to the whites” (153).

In *The Outsider*, Wright complicates Fanon’s comparison because Wright’s novel considers how an individual suffers from the effects of colonialism without concentrating on race and white power structures, in particular. Wright seems to suggest in this novel that reducing Cross Damon’s psychological issues to problems associated with white racism ignores the fact that this young man suffers from a deeper form of alienation. Cross’s strong inclinations towards violence and his sense of dissociation may stem from the troubling imbalance of power created through the slave system and legacy of racism in the United States, but his behavior and thinking do not solely result from the racial inequities of the novel’s era. To elaborate further, Wright clearly expresses the socioeconomic and political disparities for this African American man, but the novel explores how Cross Damon attempts to solitarily rectify his lost sense of manhood. Fanon posits that this phenomenon of the colonized person’s loss of identity occurs because of the very nature of colonialism, which functions on the erasure of the colonized person’s culture and heritage and implementation of the colonizer’s identity as the ideal. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon says, “When the Negro makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego. The black man stops behaving as an *actional* person. The goal of his behavior will be The Other (in the guise of the white man), for The Other alone can give him worth” (154). In *The Outsider*, Wright challenges Fanon’s observation through Cross Damon who rejects the white Other, but the young man remains tangled in his efforts to become “an actional person.”

Cross Damon's world is infused with the inequities and repressive social, political, and economic structures of 1950s United States. Beyond the constant threat of physical violence, a young African American man had to deal with the perhaps more deadly and destructively violent psychological mechanisms of the post-WWII era, which placed heavy limitations on his socioeconomic and political progress. As Maryemma Graham notes, "Cross's world is characterized by what may be called symbolic violence, or various ways in which authority and power over his life become the domain of others" (Introduction, xxix). This symbolic domination or rather, Cross's various psychological impediments push him to commit atrocious acts of violence. Although Fanon condones violence as a means for a colonized individual to redeem a sense of liberty, freedom, and respect, Cross's impulsive behavior and lack of discretion towards his victims demonstrate that individual acts of violence not only result in self-destruction, but also remain ineffective in changing unjust situations.

Cross Damon's psychological problems affect his life in multiple ways and the reader quickly learns about his emotional and mental instabilities. The novel opens upon a February day in Chicago with four African American men stumbling home from their jobs at the Post Office. Amidst their gaiety and laughter, Booker, one of Cross's friends and coworkers, asks him pointblank, "how come you're drinking so much these days?" (3). This simple but poignant question indicates that there may be something amiss with Cross Damon, especially when he responds that drinking "makes [him] feel *less*" (3). In fact, the reader learns that Cross is an alcoholic; his need for intoxication responds to a condition that Fanon considers related to the colonized/colonizer relationship. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon identifies the colonial relationship as a disease that affects the colonized subjects not only through socioeconomic and political forces, but even biologically, specifically through "leisure activities" including "detective stories, slot machines, hard-core photos, pornographic literature, R-rated films, and

above all *alcohol*” (emphasis mine, *WE*, 136). These seemingly petty pastimes actually sedate and pacify the justifiable outrage that Cross feels towards his society. Cross Damon finds much of his leisure time spent in the activities Fanon describes and therefore keeps himself literally and figuratively intoxicated possibly in an effort to become disconnected from the harsh realities that surround him. In fact, when Cross is drinking, he refrains from violence. The narrator says, “Again he drank from the bottle and was grateful for the sense of depression caused by the alcohol which made him feel less of pleasure, pain, anxiety, and hope” (16). However, the only way in which he can truly attempt to cleanse himself of the feelings of emasculation, degradation, and dejection is through violence and when he is sober, he attempts to rectify his alienation.

In some ways, the violence Cross perpetrates against others also connects him to these people; that said, the connections are not bonds of friendship, but rather means of self-preservation. This is to say, Cross redeems a sense of lost masculinity through his sexual encounters and especially by murdering other people. Fanon explains this phenomenon: “At the individual level, violence is a cleansing force. It rids the colonized subject of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them, and restores their self-confidence” (*WE*, 51). In fact, restoring a sense of respect is requisite to Cross’s need for liberty and freedom. In one instance, Cross is discovered by one of his co-workers, Joe, while hiding from the law and his family at a hotel. Joe chides Cross that he has to tell their other friends that “they made a mistake in that damned church today” by burying the wrong man (136). In Cross’s mind, the encounter with Joe means only one thing: “this clown was tearing down his dream” (135). In order to continue with his goal of freeing himself from his former identity and establishing a new life, Cross attacks and kills Joe with a whiskey bottle and then tosses his limp body out of an open window on the top floor of the hotel (136). Cross feels a bit of remorse, but

he also reasons with himself that at that moment, “He had had no choice; it had been either he or Joe” (139). Fanon discusses this phenomenon and explains that “the colonized subject will first train this aggressiveness sedimented in his muscles against his own people. This is the period when black turns on black [...] it is not uncommon to see the colonized subject draw his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive look from another colonized subject” (*WE*, 15; 17). Cross’s inclination towards violence affirms his need to resurrect a sense of self by destroying anyone who impedes in his plans of asserting his sense of identity as a man. This complicated process of self-discovery begins with those closest to him and, therefore, they are the first victims of his destruction.

Other than his casual conversations and mingling with friends and family, Cross’s interaction with others shows through his violent acts and brutality. In part, this violence stems from colonialism. Cross, as the progeny of the brutal slave system, exhibits characteristics of the repetition cycle of trauma, as he tries to survive the violence of the colonial establishment of the United States. In Cross’s case, his violent behaviors exhibit Freud’s concept of the repetition compulsion. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud says, “Those instincts are therefore bound to give a deceptive appearance of being forces tending towards change and progress, whilst in fact they are seeking to reach an ancient goal by paths alike old and new” (45). In essence, Cross attempts to change his feelings of emasculation and degradation caused by the limitations of the racist and class based society of the U.S., but since he resorts to individual acts of violence, he merely causes his own demise while ultimately only harming other colonial subjects. In Freudian terms, he fails to work through the trauma of colonialism and instead remains confined in the bonds of the repetition cycle.

Most of Cross’s behavior is shrugged off by his acquaintances; in the opening scene, the friends ignore Cross’s reply and they continue their banter as they enter a local bar. The reader

soon learns that this 26-year-old man has a rocky relationship with his wife and two children as well as with his aging mother whom he simultaneously loves and abhors. On the surface, Cross is a working-class husband and father with an alcohol problem, but he is also a complicated intellectual suffering from a strong sense of disillusionment and alienation, which isolate him from his family and society. Cross pinpoints his condition as a “problem...of a relationship of himself to himself” (10). In various instances, he tells his friends, family, and lovers that he cannot find what he is searching for (8, 532); “he was conscious of himself as a frail object which had to protect itself against a pending threat of annihilation” (21-2). Cross’s anxiety about a threat which he cannot identify alludes to his deep immersion in an existential state. Although not as explicit, some of Cross’s unnamable fears connect to the mechanisms and practices of the U.S.’s colonial establishment, which left a legacy of fear upon its racial, gender, and class minorities. For many of the people in the minority groups during the time of the novel, collectivity and solidarity as American minorities helped to bring a sense of respect and restored dignity through their efforts to change unjust laws, which affected the livelihood of the minorities. Cross Damon’s actions, which reject collective action, epitomize the problems that can arise for the colonized individual who remains self-absorbed and delusional about effecting actual change and progress.

In part, Cross’s behavior and psychological make-up reflect the ways in which the U.S. conditions its subjects to believe in individuality and to fear collective action as a hindrance to freedom. As an intellectual, he understands and discusses the inhumane and oppressive conditions of the U.S., especially with Ely Houston, but his insistence to work alone and selfishly epitomizes the U.S. narrative of relying on oneself. In his discussion with Houston, who identifies himself as an “outsider” (169) due to his physical deformity, the two men talk about the ways in which U.S. society marginalizes them. Houston says, “Some men are so placed in

life by accident of race or birth or chance that what they see is terrifying...In America the Negro is outside. Our laws and practices see to it that he stays outside..." (170). Houston refers to the restrictive and oppressive laws, which extended throughout the United States in various socioeconomic and political structures and created immense difficulties for African Americans to secure a life of social and economic comfort in the 1950s. Therefore, within this framework of marginality, Cross Damon's circumstances reflect Fanon's concern that a colonized individual must struggle against both psychological and physical barriers to regain a sense of self. However, Fanon, much like Civil Rights leaders of the era, idealizes the birth of the "new man" with tremendous hope that once the colonizer concedes power to the colonized, the life of the colonized will improve. *The Outsider* challenges the idealism of its era and Wright suggests that in fact, the detriment caused by colonialism is insurmountable and that the legacy of colonialism remains with the colonized for life.

Cross's strong impulse towards violence can be viewed as a reaction to a form of internal colonialism stemming from the early foundation of the United States. As Harold Cruse suggests, "From the beginning, the American Negro has existed as a colonial being. His enslavement coincided with the colonial expansion of European powers and was nothing more or less than a condition of domestic colonialism" (76). The fact that the United States' form of colonial control meant the dislocation of colonized people from their own territories adds further injury to Cruse's observation of "psychological reactions to being ruled over by others not of [one's] kind" (76). Cruse further posits that the colonial conditions in the United States create "dependent being[s], a sub-man" (76). Cross Damon's personal and work life depict some of Cruse's observations in that he abandons his home and job as a way to rid himself of the demands and expectations of others around him. His decision to leave his life-world implies his desire to reassert himself as a man who can do as he wishes without concern for other people.

His actions superficially reveal a rejection of mental and physical colonial control, but ultimately he fails in his attempt to resurrect a sense of lost self.

Unlike his decolonized contemporaries in other nations in which the birth of a nation of “new men” comes with unity through socioeconomic and racial solidarity, Cross cannot reconcile himself to these methods as he does not find solace in connecting to others individually or even through grand narratives of culture, race, or class. As an existentialist, Cross rejects notions of unity in these popular ways because he believes all these attempts at forming meaning out of life are false and useless; however, the problem for Cross in pursuing a new life is that the next phase of his independence requires re-acquainting himself with a more wholesome sense of identity, which can lead back to a need to join with others. Fanon, and even Marx, suggest that self-discovery may come through appealing to one’s past. As Pithouse explains, “Terry Eagleton points out Marx himself argued that since we are constituted by our past we must reimagine it and dream it, in order to wake from its nightmare” (13). The complication in Cross’s situation is that he has essentially killed off his former self when he takes on the new name and identity of Lionel Lane. He abandons his former life and identity and within this framework of death, he tries to live. In his existentialist mind, the death of Cross Damon as a character works well and allows him some freedom to pursue a new path, but he cannot escape his material conditions as an African American man living in the 1950s and so his violent acts continue.

Even as Lionel Lane, the young man must still contend with the socioeconomic factors which limit his livelihood and freedom. Cross’s so-called death might suggest that this is indeed the re-birth and re-creation of a “new man,” but the discomfort with which Cross/Lionel lives on a daily basis bars him from embracing the possibilities of his new life. As Fanon observes, an important element of finding freedom, which Cross neglects, is returning to a sense of the past which can help launch the future. This return requires recognizing one’s affiliation with others

whether these connections are through race, class, gender, or nationalism. Cross's existentialist notions reject these forms of collectivism, which suggests that not all decolonized individuals follow the same path. Nonetheless, his lack of solidarity with others contributes to his difficult life.

The combination of Cross's personal battle with feelings of alienation and his crime ridden path push the young man into the realm of being an outsider. On the national scene, he is an outsider as a disenfranchised African American man and his disregard for racial or class solidarity further marginalize him. In his personal life, he chooses to abandon his wife, lovers, children, and mother; and psychologically, he teeters on the brink of collapse as he fails to reconcile his double-consciousness with his material reality. Ely Houston, the hunchback investigator who becomes a confidant of sorts to Cross, explains the situation thus: "Negroes, as they enter our culture, are going to inherit the problems we have, but with a difference. They are outsiders and they are going to *know* that they have these problems. They are going to be self-conscious; they are going to be gifted with a double vision, for, being Negroes, they are going to be both *inside* and *outside* of our culture at the same time" (163). Houston's assessment echoes W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*: "The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost" (45). Both Houston and Du Bois point to an important fact that Cross rejects. Namely, as an African American, Cross holds a privileged position because as Houston says he is "both inside and outside" of the culture he detests and further, as Du Bois suggests, he can "merge his double self into a better and truer self." These men specifically identify Cross's racial and gender identities as points of strength for colonial subjects, but Cross's existentialism refuses to consider these markers as means to salvation or paths to freedom. His postcolonial stance as an existentialist rejects

attempts at making sense out of the meaninglessness of life, especially through material conditions which are not in his control such as his race or gender.

Ely Houston and Cross both understand that the political, social, and economic milieu of disenfranchisement was clear-cut for a large segment of the U.S. population in this era. For many African Americans, this sociopolitical apartheid could only be confronted through active participation in collective protests against the power establishment. Various civil rights organizations attempted to overturn biased laws and practices and they succeeded in securing more rights and freedoms for marginalized peoples. However, for colonized intellectuals such as Cross, these efforts seem temporarily useful. His fear is the realization that life is entirely meaningless and void of hope. Fanon diagnoses this condition in *The Wretched of the Earth* as the colonized intellectual's crisis of consciousness. He says, "Since perhaps in their unconscious the colonized intellectuals have been unable to come to loving terms with the present history of their oppressed people, since there is little to marvel at in its current state of barbarity, they have decided to go further, to delve deeper" (148). For someone such as Cross Damon with a particularly keen and sensitive mind belonging to any form of group seems useless. Although Cross could have joined the efforts of civil rights groups which condoned the use of violence, Cross reacts to his doomed conditions alone and therefore remains particularly vulnerable to destruction. His violent acts resolve his immediate problems and are a necessary part of the process to redeem his lost sense of self. In fact, Fanon claims that the first sign of recognizing one's humanity is the desire for violence: "at the very moment when [the colonized] discover their humanity, they begin to sharpen their weapons to secure its victory" (8). However, Fanon and other civil rights thinkers promoted the use of violence only when performed in groups precisely because individual acts could be easily quashed and ultimately become ineffective against colonial oppression.

Wright's novel challenges utopic notions of solidarity or understanding individual frustrations as emblematic of larger groups. To a large extent, this novel interrogates Fanon's observation that, "Since the individual experience is national, since it is a link in the national chain, it ceases to be individual, narrow and limited in scope, and can lead to the truth of the nation and the world," (*WE*, 140-1). If Fanon's idea is applied to the situation of Cross Damon, then the implication is that Cross's philosophy and acts of violence should be understood as symbolic of the African American struggle for liberation and freedom from second-class status. However, Cross stands out as the antithesis to most of the civil rights organizations' philosophies and actions of this time. Since we know that it was the non-violent arm of the Civil Rights Movement that was the harbinger of equal rights for all U.S. citizens and that the call was for unity and solidarity among the oppressed, Cross Damon's experiences cannot be viewed as "national" or collective. Fanon might say that Cross's efforts are indicative of a "new man" leading a nation of "new men" but true freedom was not achieved for Cross and is still a work in progress. Wright seems to suggest that the individual such as Cross Damon remains as the most insurmountable challenge to decolonization because someone like Cross cannot settle his desire to make meaning out of hopelessness through sociopolitical actions that are ultimately weak in the face of the abyss of life.

The issue of freedom from social, familial, and sexual relations becomes acutely significant as none of the material conditions surrounding Cross produces a sense of fulfillment for the young man. On the surface, Cross has the traditional lifestyle of a man of his time: he married a woman he loves; he has children from his marriage; he has a steady job, a home, and time for leisure activities. However, he becomes increasingly despondent with his life and begins to commit acts of sabotage and betrayal against himself and his loved ones. His growing sense of alienation disturbs his own mind because he recognizes that his life is relatively peaceful;

however, he cannot explain even to himself why it is that he feels such detachments and frustrations. After his brief affair with the widow, Hattie, Cross feels “relieved that he was free, free to wrestle again with the tyranny of himself [...] He felt that his fleeing was best for her, not the best that could be for her, but *his* best” (194). The dichotomy in Cross’s feelings and actions in which he sympathizes for the people he meets, particularly the women in his life, but then abandons and avoids relations with them points to an important element of his sense of identity. The narrator says, “What really obsessed him was his nonidentity which negated his ability to relate himself to others. [He had] a certain coldness in judging even those closest to him, in a manner of forgetting too quickly what had been a long time in or with him, all because none of it really interested him” (195).

Unlike in the physical sense, Cross suffers in part from what Freud terms “psychical impotence” (394). In Freud’s diagnosis, a man who suffers from this condition has difficulty performing sexual acts due to certain psychological impediments that relate to his childhood or relations with his mother or sister. The implication of this analysis for Cross Damon suggests that although he seems to effortlessly make love to various women, his inability to stay connected to them exposes his troubling psychological state. Freud describes a man such as Cross as “psychanaesthetic: men who never fail in the act but who carry it out without getting any particular pleasure from it” (398). Cross’s efforts to connect to his world through other people, whether through sexual acts or violence indicates that he understands that he needs other people for existence, but his hopelessness and frustration against the world cause him to choose a solitary life. Cross desires connection to other people as a human being, but in order to make the world tolerable for himself he also must pursue a radical form of freedom, which requires destroying others. Cross’s actions, although often cruel due to their selfish nature, indicate his efforts to make meaning out of his life in his own terms.

In the existentialist sense, Cross's rejection of the acceptable forms of living with others indicates his effort to find significance in an otherwise meaningless world. The reader learns through his thoughts that when he abandons the women he encounters, he firmly believes he is acting on their behalf as well as his own. After all, he cannot conform to the demands these women have of him as a man and he refuses to condition his need for freedom around their expectations, thereby disappointing them if he stays with them. As for his acts of violence, he explains his behavior to his lover, Eva, as a condition of his torment. He says, "when you can't believe in anything, when you're just here on this earth and there's nothing, *nothing* else... Oh, Christ, I can't explain it! You have to *feel* it! You have to *live* it! It has to be in your blood before it can become real to you" (532).

His sentiments loudly echo the tenets of existentialism, which touts coming to terms with the meaninglessness of life through lived experiences regardless of what actions are necessary to make life tolerable. Cross's strong desire for visceral actions, which connect him to his surrounding world also invokes Fanon's observation that, "The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation" (21). This is not to say that Cross commits violent acts without remorse. In fact, he often reprimands himself for even thinking about hurting others. For instance, in a conversation with his elderly mother whom he simultaneously loves and abhors, he "imagine[s] himself rising and with a single sweep of his palm slapping her to the floor. And in the same instant a poignant pity for her seized him. Poor, lost, lonely woman clinging for salvation to a son who she knew was as lost as she was" (26). Cross consoles his guilty conscience towards his mother by reminding himself that she has religious convictions, which alleviate her need to make sense out of her suffering. As for himself, "he could only get out of this world or stay in it and bear it"

(27). The pivotal action for Cross is to avoid suicide and attempt to find value in life, but his inability to forge meaningful relationships with others leads to his destruction.

Although the novel minimally depicts the psychological and emotional make-up of the female characters, the reader notes that Cross's tortured relationship with his religious mother transfers to his complicated dealings with all women. He simultaneously loves and rejects women to the extent that he repeatedly refers to women as "woman as body of woman" (31). This phrase signals the way in which he dehumanizes the women in his life to physical objects usually meant only for his sexual pleasure. Sylvia H. Keady observes that the women's function in *The Outsider* "is to enhance Cross's entrapment. This function is particularly evident in the first part of the novel, which leads to Cross's desire to leave his old life for a new one" (127). Indeed, Keady's analysis of Cross's relationships with the female characters in the novel points to Cross's lack of maturity and respect for the women he encounters, but Cross's relationships with all people, including his children, are tortured and demeaning. He abuses, abandons, and even murders men and women of all socioeconomic and racial backgrounds without any distinction.

His behavior towards all life is problematic, which seems to suggest that he suffers from a tremendous sense of detachment as an extension of his existentialist views. His derision is not simply aimed at women, but all other beings as he rejects forming relationships since dealing with other people only limits his need for freedom. Keady finds that "Wright gives his female characters neither the attributes nor the opportunities within the narrative context to think, act, and feel freely. Although he depicts clearly the oppression of Blacks, he appears unconscious of creating female characters who, regardless of race, are exploited and suppressed" (128). Keady's concern rings loudly in feminist readings of *The Outsider* as well as Wright's other works; but in

this novel, perhaps some of the essentialized characterizations of women reflect Cross's inability to connect with women in a world in which human relations have been corrupted.

Feminist readings of this novel readily point out that Wright, once again, neglects to give a more nuanced and complex representation of women; but in comparison to some of his earlier works, the female characters in this novel complicate the story and even challenge the protagonist to reevaluate his actions. In fact, Keady, who is one such feminist reader, observes that "The women characters in *The Outsider* are slightly more articulate, especially Gladys and Eva" (127); and Sarah, the southern African American woman in the Communist Party who befriends Cross, stands out among all the characters as intelligent, assertive, and determined. Cross learns about the internal problems of the Party through Sarah. At one point, she connects the paternalist and racist vein of the communists to a painful childhood memory in which a white man abused her mother. She says, "I was a child in the South. And nothing hurt me so much as when I saw a white man kick [my mother] one day" (257). This violent scene of abuse towards her mother haunts Sarah who further explains that "everywhere I've looked since I've seen nothing but white folks kicking niggers who are kneeling down [...] Now, we're in the revolution and the *same* goddamn white man comes along. But he's in the Party now" (257). Far from being a subservient, silent, and powerless woman, Sarah demands that her husband, Bob, "Read [his] Marx and organize... *That* scares you, don't it? They done put the fear of God in your soul!... Listen, I'm working and helping to support you to *organize!* I'm feeding you to organize! Now, you either *organize* or *go!*" (258).

Although most of the female characters in *The Outsider* tend to be objectified sexually, Sarah stands out as an exceptional character regardless of gender. She is bold, smart, and emphatic, and although described in more stereotypical terms as a wife and caretaker, her courage and outspokenness challenge the stereotypes. The emphasis on Sarah's unique role and

personality are not meant to detract from the problematic sexism and chauvinism of the novel; indeed, Cross's relationships center on his need to dominate and control women. Sarah's determination evokes respect in Cross and in their interactions, the reader senses his strong respect for her. At one point, Sarah becomes wary of the Party's so-called kindness towards Eva after the death of her husband and she says, "They don't give a good goddamn about what happens to you. They're trying to buy your loyalty for some reason" (462). When asked if he agrees, Cross replies, "I don't know, Sarah" and the narrator notes that he "agreed with Sarah, but he could not tell her so, at least not yet" (462), possibly as a fear of discovery. Nonetheless, Wright seems to include Sarah in Cross's story possibly to acknowledge the existence and influence of powerful women whom he does not desire sexually.

Cross briefly quells his sense of being an outsider by joining this group of Leftists, which Sarah and Bob introduced him to after meeting him on a train. These communists are made up of men and women of various social and cultural backgrounds and the reader learns that his decision to stay in this circle seems to be mostly an issue of falling in love with Eva, the wife of one of the group's leaders, rather than a staunch belief in the tenets of the Left. Cross cannot find a sense of himself through racial consciousness nor through unity with the progressive individuals of the American Communist Party. The narrator explains thus: "What really obsessed [Cross] was his nonidentity which negated his ability to relate himself to others" (195). On the one hand, "militating against racial consciousness in him were the general circumstances of his upbringing which had somewhat shielded him from the more barbaric forms of white racism; also the insistent claims of his own inner life had made him too concerned with himself to cast his lot wholeheartedly with Negroes in terms of racial struggle" (195). On the other hand, Cross recognizes the inherent fallibilities of the Leftist group including a strong patriarchal and often racist arm of control on its non-white members. Cross's awareness of the Party's limitations as a

path to freedom echoes in Sarah's contempt for the Party. Sarah wants her husband to take a stand against the Party as an African American organizer, but he fears this responsibility. In one of their conversations, Bob concedes that since he is tired of the white power structure of the Party, "[he is] gonna stick to [his] own people" (259). Cross's reaction to Bob's decision is that "he had run from one master to another: his race" (259). As Michael F. Lynch suggests, "Wright finally devalu[es] collectivism and naturalism and develop[s] a more complex, dialectical approach to individual freedom as both an absolute necessity and an oppressive burden" (257). Indeed, for Cross Damon, racial affiliations seem just as constrictive as familial bonds and therefore, his conviction that he is an outsider in his world continues to haunt his efforts to become a constructive member of his society.

Cross's rejection of forging unity with others through political, cultural, and other socioeconomic markers suggests that he searches for other ways to make sense out of life. The narrator says, "Toward the ideology of Communism his attitude was ambivalent; he found as much in it to hate as to admire [and] what revulsed him in the fascist doctrine was its boast that it needed no ideological justification for its desire to rule" (196-7). In part, Cross's refusal to form bonds with others reflects Wright's own belief that every person's ultimate "natural if dangerous element" (Lynch, 264) in life is individual freedom. The costs and risks associated with this quest are many and often deadly, as is the case with Cross Damon; nonetheless, in the socioeconomic and political atmosphere of the 1950s, Wright's observation that freedom from all bonds and associations is the only salvation from the repressive social order of the world seems premonitory.

Although the school principal and Cross Damon are from different classes and educational backgrounds, they share a common understanding of the oppressive structures of their world, which limit and marginalize them and their people. Intellectually, these men are

equals and their frustrations simultaneously reflect a strong sense of alienation combined with an awareness that they ought to act on their own behalf rather than remain idle in response to their detachments. Their desire for violence as a means to combat the systematic abuses against them epitomizes their position as a “new man” of this era; in the face of decolonization, their battle is two-fold: an internal conflict in which they must reconcile their tendency to stand alone with a need to forge bonds while as intellectuals they must confront the forces that want to control and dominate their sense of individuality. Ultimately, the various factions set up against Cross Damon crush him and cause his early death; as for the school principal, many of these same forces kill him spiritually and banish him from society. These two novels complicate and nuance Fanon’s notions of the “new man” and essentially deflate the hopeful overtures of *The Wretched of the Earth*. Ale Ahmad and Wright highlight the challenges facing the emerging “new man” to show that there may not be a middle ground when a colonized intellectual attempts to merge existentialist sentiments with a need for community. These writers also beckon the reader to consider if there is a third space for individuals who cannot readily conform to the strictures that surround them or if death is the only inevitable consequence of a lack of unity.

CHAPTER 2

“Violence! The violence of the weak. A significant thing”²: Redemption through Violence in
Invisible Man and *Tangsir*

In *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon quotes an Algerian National Army of Liberation leader who surmises that ““having a gun...is the only chance the Algerian still has of giving a meaning to his death. Life under the domination has long been devoid of meaning” (27). This man’s conclusion that direct confrontation with the oppressors is the “only” way a colonized individual restores dignity and make sense out of the dehumanizing conditions of colonialism suggests that even if the colonized person dies while ousting the oppressors, that death reinstates justice and a feeling of honor. The implication of this sentiment reminds us of Fanon’s observation that “The colonized person [has] a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death. This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, a high mortality rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future” (*ADC*, 12). Fanon notes that the antidote to this meaningless existence involves rejecting a silent or passive acceptance of the horrors wrought by colonialism; instead, the colonized individual struggles to the death, armed and willing, to die for a sense of dignity.

Fanon’s notion of dignity, which both Ralph Ellison and Sadeq Chubak fictionalize in their works, is heavily coded in masculinity. In his observations of the Algerian resistance movement, Fanon focuses on the modes of violence used by Algerian men in an effort to restore their sense of control and manhood in the landscape of colonialism, which robbed them of their positions as patriarchs in the familial, socioeconomic and political spheres. He acknowledges the participation and involvement of women in the resistance movement and he offers keen insights into the havoc wreaked upon men and women and their relationships as a result of colonialism,

² From, Aime Cesaire. *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), 48.

but Fanon remains silent about female subjectivity and desire. He describes how the Algerian woman sacrificed her life and livelihood for the resistance, but Fanon neglects the psychological reasons behind her motives, which may also relate to the woman's need to restore a sense of dignity among other things. Ellison and Chubak also illustrate bleak representations of female agency and desire in their works. Their male protagonists encounter women, but these women serve specific physical, emotional, or political purposes in the male protagonists' quest to redeem their sense of masculinity. As a result, these "new men" essentially fail as members of a new world order since they uphold and promote chauvinistic, patriarchal, and traditional notions of masculinity and femininity.

More than the other novels in this study, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1947) and Sadeq Chubak's *Tangsir* (also known as *One Man and His Gun*) (1963), challenge any reader's sense of equality and justice because the reader witnesses the various attempts made by these characters to live meaningfully and with dignity within their respective communities and yet, the protagonists' efforts are rendered useless as their societies stifle their humanity. The protagonists of these stories are young, working-class men who are keenly aware of the inequities of the class-based societies they live in, but they choose to resist the oppressive standards by first participating in their communities and then lashing back at the same structures they once considered as a form of salvation from their misery. These novels present the reader with the possibility of a different space for resistance, as even the form of the narrative challenges the established order and bourgeois notions of individuality as these men abandon the options of upward mobility in their societies. While at first these protagonists embrace the socioeconomic and political choices available to them, they quickly recognize the inequities that pose risks to their livelihood and they end their efforts within the established social order of their worlds. Further, Ellison and Chubak subvert the novel form in that although they produce coming-of-age

narratives, the stories challenge the expectations of the reader because although the protagonists are male, they are not the bourgeois hero in class or racial terms.

Both of these coming-of-age novels develop the protagonists' burgeoning class consciousness via the men's efforts to assert their sense of individuality within bourgeois elements of their societies that celebrate economic upward mobility. Both *Invisible Man* and *Zar Muhammad* emerge as "new men" who must combat external forces of oppression while maintaining a sense of dignity for themselves. Fanon describes this phenomenon in *The Wretched of the Earth* as "The colonized subject discover[ing] reality and transform[ing] it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation" (21). While Fanon describes the challenges and possibilities of liberation for the colonized subject, he fails to consider gender issues in the schema. As Loomba suggests, "his subject is resolutely male, and [Fanon] reinforces existing gender hierarchies even as [he] challenges racial ones" (148). Fanon's observations relate to the use of physical violence by men against other men and mark a particular form of resistance which seems only viable for male subjects. The male colonized subject desires liberation from a sense of effeminization wrought by colonialism, which stripped the male of his role and position in his native society. In order to restore his lost self, the colonized male represses his female counterpart as well as other marginal members of the nation and asserts his manhood through violence with the use of phallic emblems of masculinity such as guns.

The liberation ties into the male colonial subject's tangential need to redeem his sense of dignity, but these mutual necessities of liberty and dignity come at the cost of marginalizing women and other members of the masses such as the LGBT community who do not fit into the mold of traditional structures. In addition to this problematic issue in the resistance against colonialism, the difficult balancing act of communal participation coupled with upholding

personal interests fuels the divide among the masses. Unlike Cross Damon and the school principal, Invisible Man and Zar Mohammad attempt to deal with their problems through existing ideologies and methodologies, which often include taking up arms to demonstrate the severity of their demand for recognition as human beings. By turning to community organizations which posed resistance to the corrupt social structure of their respective nations, Invisible Man and Zar Mohammad at first appear to uphold Fanon's description of a "new generation of men" willing to work together to affect change in their societies; however, these protagonists abandon their collective activities and choose to live as individuals thereby undermining the optimistic goal of a new collective consciousness, which eventually forms a new world order absent of capitalist and communist ideologies. In addition to this twist in expectations about their positions as "new men," Invisible Man and Zar Mohammad also subvert notions of the traditional hero as they are selfish, violent, and marginalized, both voluntarily and as a result of their societies' inequities, and therefore they are hardly the bourgeois hero of the traditional novel form.

In the Introduction to his best known work of fiction, Ralph Ellison describes the process and events that informed his novel, especially the idea of invisibility in a so-called democratic society. He recounts the episodes of disrespect, disappointment, and struggle for recognition among African Americans of the mid-century when faced with racism and socioeconomic challenges in a country that touts itself on a platform of alleged equality for all. He says, "if the ideal of achieving a true political equality eludes us in reality...there is still available that fictional *vision* of an ideal democracy in which the actual combines with the ideal" (xx). In *Invisible Man*, Ellison confronts the American attitude of the mid-century that "most African American difficulties sprang from our 'high visibility'; a phrase as double-dealing and insidious as its more recent oxymoronic cousins, 'benign neglect' and 'reverse discrimination,'

both of which translate ‘Keep those Negroes running—but in their same old place’” (xv). While Ellison demonstrates his keen awareness and sensitivity to the social and civic hurdles in place for the African American community, he ultimately suggests in this novel that individuals rather than collectives must assert a sense of self in order to establish a position of respect for themselves in society. Ellison’s insistence on the power of the individual earned him much criticism and disapproval, especially from Left readers. Nonetheless, the nuanced portrayal of the life of a young African American man in mid-twentieth century United States depicts the importance of Ellison’s message as the novel demonstrates the failure of groups and political collectives to help the young man live a life of dignity and comfort. The glaring problem with Ellison’s interrogation into the mechanisms which limit the young man’s progress towards freedom from racial and class boundaries remains connected to the young man’s misogynistic worldviews and the novel’s silence about the intersections of gender with class and race.

In his non-fiction work, Ellison explains his insistence upon celebrating individuality by citing the need to exert the self as a protest against the racism of the Jim Crow South. Donald Pease describes that “In the Jim Crow South, a Southern black male did not exist in his own right” (82) and this condition lead to Ellison’s observation in *Shadow and Act* that African Americans in the South felt obliged to choose group affiliation rather than individuality because the racist majority viewed the African American “not as a person but as the specimen of an ostracized group” (*SA*, 84). Fanon also recognizes that colonized people need to confront their positions as individuals instead of fearing their individuality as a response to their sense of alienation. He says, “In the man of color there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence. Whenever a man of color protests, there is alienation. Whenever a man of color rebukes, there is alienation” (*BSWM*, 60). Through bold gestures by means of touting individuality, both Wright and Ellison epitomize resistance against

the racist structures that bind African Americans as human beings while also protesting against the cultural and social stasis presented by most Southern African American communities, which preferred relative safety in numbers as opposed to virtual death in solitary resistance. Their overt attention to the injustices wrought against colonized men demonstrates their participation in the colonial project, which functions most effectively by dividing the masses and then forming a hierarchy which places men at the top and the rest of the oppressed collective beneath him. Not surprisingly, the ensuing sense of alienation that accompanies asserting individualism in colonized populations and in particular, male subjectivity with all of its chauvinistic and patriarchal dimensions suggests that acting as an individual becomes a pitfall of the resistance against colonialism. While Wright and Ellison converge on the depictions of the injustices of mid-twentieth century United States in terms of class and race and their intersections with male subjectivity, Ellison distances himself from Wright by embracing the American narrative of integration, which then complicates his novel and position as a mid-century writer and thinker who traces the emergence of “the new man” because the novel essentially upholds misogynistic ideas about resistance and subjecthood.

Ellison’s novel begins with a powerful statement by the protagonist: “I am an invisible man” (3), a condition which results from the atrocious inequities in mid-twentieth century American society complicated by the tone of a person’s epidermis. He clearly states for the reader that his condition arises from the fact that “people refuse to see me” (3). Invisible Man confounds this statement by saying that his “invisibility...occurs because of a peculiar disposition of the eyes of those with whom I come in contact. A matter of the construction of their *inner* eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality” (3). This sentiment echoes DuBois’ idea of “double consciousness” as Invisible Man alludes to the psychological issues involved in dealing with one another as a result of colonial circumstances

and false notions of superiority and inferiority. Fanon also explains this condition through the voice of a colonized person: “I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all worth, all individuality, tells me ‘I am a brute beast...that I have no use in the world’,” (*BSWM*, 98). While their emphasis is on men, both *Invisible Man* and Fanon suggest that being made to feel worthless or inferior to another person results in a need to assert a sense of self, which can take the form of violence. *Invisible Man* says, “You ache with the need to convince yourself that you do exist in the real world, that you’re a part of all the sound and anguish, and you strike out with your fists, you curse and you swear to make them recognize you” (4). Fanon confirms *Invisible Man*’s feelings and says, “He who is reluctant to recognize me opposes me. In a savage struggle I am willing to accept convulsions of death, invincible dissolution, but also the possibility of the impossible” (*BSWM*, 218). These men’s feelings and observations take for granted that they arrive at this moment of confrontation with the colonizing male after they have oppressed and dejected women and other members of their societies who fall outside of the privileged place of male subjectivity. The main target for the colonized man, both overtly and implicitly, is the white colonizing man and this struggle is a battle between men, only.

The problem in this struggle for recognition is that “it’s seldom successful” (*IM*, 4) and Fanon suggests this failure is a result of the fact that the colonized “did not fight for [their] freedom” (*BSWM*, 219). Fanon acknowledges, “From time to time [the colonized] has fought for Liberty and Justice, but these were always white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by his masters” (*BSWM*, 221). The remedy to this degrading situation relies upon the colonized man reversing the system whereby “He went from one way of life to another, but not from one life to another” (*BSWM*, 220). In Ellison’s novel, the protagonist starts out as an eager and motivated young man who believes he can change his circumstances by following the tracks laid

out by a racist, sexist, and economically restrictive system. In essence, he trusts this established, corrupt system, which evolved from a slavery-practicing society; or, as Fanon says, he depends on this “one way of life” and desires inclusion in within the overtly racist, sexist, and class biased system. While he eventually understands and resists against the racism and socioeconomic limitations against him, he remains unaware and unwilling to challenge the gender constructions and constrictions of the existing conditions. He even says, “About eighty-five years ago [my grandparents] were told that they were free, united with others of our country in everything pertaining to the common good, and, in everything social, separate like the fingers of the hand” (15) and he accepts this disposition with the awareness that the end of the formal system of slavery beckoned new so-called opportunities for the progeny of slaves. He follows the ideology of integration with full faith and acceptance of the second-class position he holds in U.S. society as an African American man. The novel suggests that Invisible Man’s early tolerance and even agreement with the biased socioeconomic and political system of the U.S. results from his youth and inexperience in the world, but he learns rather quickly that there are institutionalized forces which act to keep him and his community members in a subservient position, indefinitely. Although, Invisible Man lays out the workings of U.S. colonial conditions which promoted the racial and class caste systems that continue to affect the life of the protagonist, his conscience awakens after physically, intellectually, and emotionally experiencing the practice of racism, sexism, and class biases through his interactions with his society.

As an African American, working class male the “inner eyes” of his community, particularly the non-African American segment, judge him as a menace and therefore cast him aside, rendering him invisible. The protagonist explains that precisely because of this invisibility in his society, the African American man feels “resentment” (4). In the opening pages of his

narrative, Invisible Man reflects back upon his teen years and early adulthood experiences and he comes to the conclusion that he failed to realize it then, but now he knows that he must fight, oftentimes by literally using his fists or weapons, in order to maintain his sense of dignity and humanity. Ellison recognizes violence as a means to liberation and demonstrates his belief in forcefully demanding respect in one of the most gruesome episodes of his narrative. Invisible Man tells the reader that one night he “accidentally bumped into a man” and this “tall blond man” called him “an insulting name” (4). Without a moment’s hesitation, Invisible Man pounces on the man and orders him to apologize for his behavior. The white man refuses to comply and Invisible Man proceeds to beat him up such that the man’s “flesh [tore] and blood gush[ed] out” (4). Invisible Man continues to accost the man and pulls out a knife, but stops short of slitting the white man’s throat. He admits to the reader that he simultaneously felt “disgusted and ashamed” (5), but he also laughs at this scene. He says, “I ran away into the dark, laughing so hard I feared I might rupture myself” (5).

As Adam Gussow suggests, “violent laughter... psychologically liberates Ellison’s Invisible Man more than once during his odyssey” (138). In this scene, and especially in Invisible Man’s reflection on the events, four kinds of violence occur simultaneously: the beating of the man, Invisible Man’s laughter, the possibility of harm towards Invisible Man himself due to the “hard” laughing, and the impending violence of the law if he is caught for his actions. The unifying factor in this moment of asserting the self is violence; Invisible Man cannot confirm his dignity and individuality without the threat of violence and experience of violence. The psychological path to freedom undoubtedly relies on the visceral experience of violence, whether perpetrated against another or against the self. By acting out in a violent manner, Invisible Man connects to another by physically assaulting the person and simultaneously disconnects from others because he uses force in order to position his own individuality. The constant reminder,

both mentally and physically, of alienation haunts his thoughts and actions and renders freedom itself a constant battle between choosing action or stasis. If he chooses action, this means he must challenge the existing oppression directly and if he chooses to avoid action, then he faces inevitable dehumanization because the restrictive structures set against him continue their brutalization of his physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Invisible Man remains silent as to why he feels disgust and shame about his acts towards the racist, but the reader can assume these feelings stem from both an ingrained sense of humanity as well as the fear of being caught for harming a white man in particular. The troubling aspect of his sentiments is that he tells the reader that “most of the time...I am not so overtly violent” (6). His conscious effort to subdue his violent reactions in the face of violence only stifles what could possibly be the remedy to his feelings of alienation and dejection. As Fanon posits, “freedom requires an effort at disalienation” (*BSWM*, 231), which means facing the violence directed at him with full force and although Fanon encourages both the colonized and the colonizer to abandon the “inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors” (*BSWM*, 231), he also embraces the fact that “there is only one solution: to fight” (*BSWM*, 224). If Invisible Man would engage his oppressors such as this white racist through violence, there could be more effective progress towards freedom, especially if that freedom translates into expressions of self-respect, than his choice to run away and avoid confrontation and subsequently, hide underground. Needless to say, social laws and rules would reprimand a perpetrator of violent acts, but as this scene demonstrates, even the slightest act of physical rebellion helps to restore a sense of the lost self and may even make the consequences worth the effort. For this young man, the novel demonstrates that he makes innumerable efforts at connecting with other people, groups, community organizations and political ideologies to combat his alienation, but these choices render useless in his quest for freedom from the

restrictions around him. Therefore, responding through violence towards the racism, sexism, and socioeconomic and political conditions which hinder his comfort not only makes logical sense, but as Fanon observes, violence and the will to fight back become the main sources of salvation from his degradation and hopeless circumstances.

Even as a young boy, family legacies and upholding dignity haunt Ellison's *Invisible Man*. The young African American man constantly hears his grandfather's admonishment to never acquiesce to the demands of an oppressive, racist, and inhumane power structure. While he rejects this warning as a teenager and young adult, throughout the narrative *Invisible Man* remembers that, "[his grandfather] called [his] father to him and said, 'Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep up the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country ever since I give up my gun back in the Reconstruction,'" (16). The grandfather's most important advice to his progeny is to never conform to the white power-structure's expectations, and he particularly regrets surrendering his weapon, a gun. This man's lament over the essentially non-voluntary handing over of his tool of defense suggests that the struggle for freedom continues, even if slavery ended in official terms. The so-called free people must continue to defend themselves in this battle at whatever cost necessary. Further, as Fanon observes, it is in and through violent confrontations that the oppressed, again implicitly suggested as a male colonized person, redeems a sense of dignity and approaches freedom. He says, "The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation" (*WE*, 21). Although his grandfather's admonishment echoes in *Invisible Man*'s mind, he fails to fully grasp the import of this concept and ends up accepting the oppressive means of the establishment such as standard forms of education and job opportunities as his salvation and access to socioeconomic prosperity.

The young man retains a strong sense of hope that even though the odds stand against him, his resilience should result in positive circumstances.

Hopeful yet naïve about the mechanisms that function to keep him in a state of mediocrity, Invisible Man initially embraces the so-called opportunities that his oppressors provide for him. In the most infamous scene of this novel, the battle royal, the reader witnesses Invisible Man's attempts to mold himself into the model of acceptance by the white upper-class. He says, "I was praised by the most lily-white men of the town. I was considered an example of desirable conduct" (17). However, in spite of this recognition that he lives in a racist world, he says, "everyone loved me for [my desirable conduct]...And what puzzled me was that the old man had defined it as treachery" (16-17). The young man's confusion stems from his inability to understand that his grandfather warned his progeny to abstain from behavior that pleases the dominant power structure. Invisible Man misplaces his emotional responses to the praise of the dominant culture and his memories of his grandfather. His sense of pride that his achievements were not only personal, but "a triumph for our whole community" (17) suggest that this young man "does not always see the overall picture" (*WE*, 13) and therefore, he "assimilate[s] the way the colonialist bourgeoisie thinks" (*WE*, 13). Invisible Man's actions in his youth stand entirely against his grandfather's warning. In addition, this older man experienced a sense of guilt towards his oppressed community because he knew that his failure to resist the inhumanity of the dominant culture by giving up his gun and remaining docile to the inequities of his time fed the continued practice of racial, socioeconomic, and political subjugation. Therefore, the old man advises his descendants to fight against the establishment, which simply changes the forms of subjugation but never wholly eradicates the social, political, and economic inequities. Neither Invisible Man, the grandfather, nor the novel address the intersections of these issues with gender oppression. While the patriarchal structures become the focus of struggle through race, class, and

politics, gender remains neglected and therefore, the oppression continues whether racial, class, or political advancements are made by men of color.

The “battle royal” (17) scene affirms the grandfather’s worst fears. When “the town’s leading white citizens” (17) invite the young man to give a speech at their upcoming gathering, Invisible Man feels immensely proud and says, “In those pre-invisible days I visualized myself as a potential Booker T. Washington” (18), but he soon admits “I suspected that fighting a battle royal might detract from the dignity of my speech [about the importance of humility]” (18). He and a group of other young African American men file into a boxing ring and watch as a presumably white woman seduces the men with a dance. Some of the drunken white spectators begin to assault the woman and Invisible Man notices “the terror and disgust in her eyes, almost like [his] own terror and that which [he] saw in some of the other boys” (20). The fact that Invisible Man recognizes a similarity between his own fear and the woman’s fear signals his awareness of the intersections between racial and gender oppression, especially under the dominant force of male, white, upper-class patriarchy. Ellison’s inclusion of this moment gives promise to the idea of a “new man” emerging in the process of decolonization, but surprisingly, the potential of this scene falls flat as other less intoxicated men help the woman escape from the ring and then they order the African Americans to get back in the boxing ring. The literary removal of the woman and her condition as an oppressed, subjugated, and objectified person demonstrates the failure of the notion of the “new man” in this novel. The narrative and the author choose to ignore the plight of this woman and gender issues more largely and therefore, the novel upholds problematic gender hierarchies.

Once the woman is gone, the narrative shifts focus back to the oppressed African American boys. Quite literally, racial issues outweigh the gender problems of the mid-twentieth century and remain overtly neglected throughout the novel. Ellison carefully and insightfully

nuances the racial and class oppression of the era, and ends up participating in the repression of women and other minority groups. With the stripper's exit, the young boys are blindfolded and taunted until they begin to fight each other in a frenzy with shouts coming from the white men as orders to "Slug him, black boy! Knock his guts out!" (23). Following the fight, the young boys struggle to collect money that the audience throws into the ring. Even amidst all of this humiliation with feelings of arousal for the woman and disgust at all of the circumstances, Invisible Man looks forward to delivering his school speech for the white men, who continue to ridicule and degrade him. Although these boys engage in physical violence, the potential for change through violence is thwarted because the target of their battle is themselves and in forced circumstances. They should be attacking the white men in their audience, but they are bound by white, male desire to witness African American male prowess in a controlled setting. The combination of the boys' youth, fear of the power structure, and inability to literally move as they need to function as a form of subjugation towards the white power structure. Invisible Man's desire to please the white men accounts for Fanon's diagnosis of an inferiority complex.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon identifies the kind of mentality and behavior exhibited by Invisible Man as a necessary tool of survival. He says, "for [the black man] there is only one way out, and it leads into the white world. Whence his constant preoccupation with attracting the attention of the white man, his concern with being powerful like the white man, his determined effort to acquire protective qualities" (51). Later, Fanon interrogates that in part this "concern with being powerful like the white man" exhibits itself in desiring and attaining sexual relations with the white woman. In the early part of the narrative, Invisible Man acts according to the standards set up by the white American bourgeoisie in order to progress in this nation and simply realizes that he feels aroused while watching the white woman perform a seductive dance for all of the men. Fanon explains the situation thus: "Every colonized people... finds itself face to

face...with the culture of the mother country. The colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (*BSWM*, 18). While the young man feels a mixture of shock, disgust, and excitement during the "battle royal," he still clings to the possibility that these same brutal and inhumane white men can become his patrons and assist him in achieving the American Dream. He wants to rise "above his jungle status," a circumstance which the colonial, white, upper-class describes in these terms and needs the recognition of the white, male, upper-class in order to attain his goals, both in a physical sense as well as a mental feeling of accomplishment.

The reader notes the figurative significance of the boxing match, but Invisible Man remains ignorant of the messages. The white men control the young African American men's destinies; they contain their ambitions and abilities in the ring; offer them the possibility of relations with a white woman, and then remove her; they instruct them on how to behave and perform; and they reward them with money and gifts that are nothing more than tokens rather than meaningful opportunities. The novel demonstrates the macrocosm of these boys' lives in the microcosm of a boxing ring. They toil, struggle, and fight only to find themselves degraded and rejected by a system that wants to keep racial, gender, and class divisions intact. In addition to the external factors separating these young African American men is their own inability and seeming unwillingness to form a collective and resist their conditions. The potential of changing their circumstances through the violence they perpetrate against each other diminishes and the entire power of their collective experience flatlines as the boys accept their meager and demeaning so-called rewards and leave, while the protagonist excitedly prepares to deliver his speech amidst his debilitating physical condition. Ellison simultaneously positions individuality as a hindrance and a necessity to progress because this collective of young men demonstrate their lack of awareness about working together toward the betterment for them all as they separate

after the battle royal and yet, since Invisible Man remains and accomplishes his goal of giving his speech, he receives a scholarship to college and assumes that asserting his individuality will serve him well throughout his life.

The descriptions of the school by various people in the narrative allude to the similarities of this college and Tuskegee Institute (*IM*, 39, 42, 43). This insinuation becomes more evident when Invisible Man tells one of the school's benefactors "that's what the president tells us. You have yours, and you got it yourself, and we have to lift ourselves up the same way" (45). One of the main criticisms against Booker T. Washington's philosophy and work centered on his acquiescence with Jim Crow society and indeed, his willingness to accommodate the problematic racial and class standards of his time delayed the struggle against the national oppression of African Americans. Invisible Man's comment that "all of us at the college hated the black-belt people, the 'peasants,' during those days! We were trying to lift them up and they... did everything it seemed to pull us down" (45) echoes the upwardly mobile, capitalist minded, and obsequious tone of accommodationist politics. Fanon explains this phenomenon of hierarchies amidst the oppressed as violence against themselves. He says, "Whereas the colonist or police officer can beat the colonized subject... it is not uncommon to see the colonized subject draw his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive look from another colonized subject. For the colonized subject's last resort is to defend his personality against his fellow countrymen" (*WE*, 17). Although Invisible Man's outrage at the lifestyles and conditions of the lower classes stems from his desire to distance himself from these groups and this remains a weakness in his progress as a "new man," Invisible Man really would not have had many other avenues for securing a modest life for himself if he chose to reject this acceptable path to moderate capitalist success. He confides, "despite my anguish and anger, I knew of no other way of living, nor other forms of success available to such as me" (147).

The crucial dilemma in this statement centers on his insistence that his main concern is “me.” While the dominant power structure functions to keep Invisible Man separate from his fellow community members through race, class, and gender inequities, the young man accepts this form of living within his society and embraces the concept of individuality with its tenets such as relying on the self for improving one’s socioeconomic conditions in particular and thus which propagate exclusion, alienation, and a sense of dejection. Ellison demonstrates Invisible Man’s attempts at forming collectives and failing to find salvation through these groups to emphasize the impossibility of collectivity in the decolonization process; his point reflects upon the problematic circumstances created through the capitalist-imperialist system as well as the equally troubling options from the socialist platform. While his critique of the Left/Right divide is astute and useful, the novel’s insistence on individuality and individual acts of rebellion also fail to address the alienation, disenchantment, and general malaise of decolonization.

Ellison begins the coming-of-age of this young man with his allegiance to status quo expectations to show the reader that Invisible Man attempts to fit in with his society by pursuing traditional forms of mainstream success. Although the protagonist is male and demonstrates ambitions to achieve the material emblems that his society deems as marks of desirable accomplishments such as pursuing secondary education to ensure a white-collar occupation, Ellison subverts the traditional form of a bildungsroman through showing how the existing system repeatedly fails to assist the young man on his path to adulthood and Invisible Man realizes he must reject rather than embrace his society’s values. In particular, contrary to the traditional coming-of-age novel of white, bourgeois writers, the intersection of race with class impedes in Invisible Man’s quest for betterment and his own sexist and misogynistic viewpoints further limit his position as a “new man” of the mid-twentieth century. The young man learns quickly that regardless of his effort to adapt to social, economic, and political mores of his

community he cannot participate fully in the upwardly mobile middle-class because of his race and unwillingness to conform to the expectations placed upon him as a young African American man. Although Invisible Man initially pursues the route of formal education to secure a comfortable and acceptable life for himself in society, his refusal to submit to the authority of corrupt white patrons and obsequious African American leaders forces him into self-exile from his community. This pattern continues as Invisible Man's conscience awakens to the complex web of power, race, and class, and the bitter reality that his choices are limited to accepting the degrading treatment of those in positions of authority and power regardless of race.

This novel confronts the issue of abusing power and the subtleties of these indiscretions to show the reader that an individual with even the best intentions, such as Invisible Man and his quest to secure a life of dignity and respect for himself, falls victim to greed and selfishness even when those with power seem to want to help the young man. In the first half of the novel, Invisible Man relies on the benevolence of men, and specifically men, with power and authority to assist him to achieve the successes that they enjoy. In high school, the white elite abused his sense of trust and hope and as a college student, he encountered the cruelties of African American leadership. After he flees his university with "seven" (184) so-called recommendation letters and finds himself in the heart of Harlem, Invisible Man learns that his fate is absolutely bound up in the will of men in power as Dr. Bledsoe condemns him from his school and casts him away to fend for himself without any security. This seemingly hopeless condition of loneliness and hardship in fact allows Invisible Man to bolster his political awareness through his socioeconomic position. Harlem proves to be a hotbed of political theories and action and while living off of the kindness of strangers, a friendly older African American woman in particular, Invisible Man crosses paths with members of the American Communist Party, black nationalists, and other groups whose aims include dismantling the power structure which chokes the

socioeconomic and political well-being of African Americans, but Invisible Man finds himself trapped by these ideological choices as much as by the power abuses of the white and African American elite.

Ellison's and Chubak's novels are sympathetic to the masses of working-class people, especially in the sense that they carefully display the difficulties of participating in mainstream capitalist societies as marginalized members of the nation. Their sympathies extend to showing how although Leftist organizations, and the Communist Party in particular, appear to have the underclasses' best intentions at heart with the most viable tactics for changing unjust conditions, the institutional racist and sexist tendencies of capitalist societies plague the Communist Party as well, ultimately leaving individuals such as Invisible Man and Zar Mohammad as outcasts yet again. For Invisible Man, the Communist Party initially seems to be a form of salvation from the dejection of mainstream society. His first encounter with the Party occurs as he notices several white men helping an evicted elderly couple move back into their home. Invisible Man asks who they are and one of them responds, "We're friends of the people" (282). Soon, Invisible Man finds himself in a position as the leader of this community of African Americans under the flagship of the Communist Party. Invisible Man begins to organize and work with this group, but he remains weary of their policies and tactics especially as they demonstrate some of their own racist beliefs in conversations with him. For instance, in a brief discussion about the power and effectiveness of Invisible Man's speeches to the masses, one of the white Party members asks him, "where did you learn to speak?" Invisible Man replies "Nowhere" to which the white man says, "you're very talented. You are a natural. *It's hard to believe*" (emphasis added, 289). The white man's racist sentiments imply that he does not expect a young African American man to be as "eloquent" (290) as Invisible Man. He is simultaneously shocked and enthusiastic to use this young man's abilities for the Party's agenda; the key issue in this relationship is how the

Party will benefit from Invisible Man as a representative of African Americans. Fanon discusses this phenomenon in the context of the European and the colonized person. He says, “the European has a fixed concept of the Negro” (*BSWM*, 35) just as this American white man has of Invisible Man, even though arguably the Communists put forth some of the most staunch efforts in the civil rights struggle of African Americans and other American minorities.

Further, as the white man attempts to convince Invisible Man to work with the Party as an organizer, he becomes angry at the young African American who chides him about linking all African Americans together. The communist says, “Why do fellows always talk in terms of race!” (292). This profoundly faulty line of thinking in the Party, wherein a desire to erase race from the platform for change, turned many U.S. non-whites away from Marxist politics. Invisible Man accepts the position offered by the Party, mainly on grounds of his need to bring money into the household of the old African American woman who takes care of him, but his lack of trust and faith in the Party’s politics keep him aware of the members’ overt racism. When Brother Jack introduces Invisible Man to his friends, one of the women blurts out, “But don’t you think he should be a little blacker?” (303). Invisible Man cringes at Emma’s statement, but the reality of his economic situation and his allegiance to Mary force him to accept the job for a salary of \$60 per week. Emma’s comment also indicates the Party’s lack of humanity in that she regards the young man simply as a representation of the Party’s inclusionary practices of African Americans at a time in U.S. history where segregation was in practice as well as the Party’s disregard for an individual’s dignity aside from his/her political potential. The paramount sentiment of distrust beleaguers Invisible Man’s relationship with the Party as the members repeatedly use race or revert to racist notions in communicating with him.

Coupled with this white racist attitude are the class-biases within the African American community, which distance Invisible Man from many of the members of the community he

supposedly represents and leads for the Communist Party. One day, while on a mission to get rid of a package of money, Invisible Man decides to throw the bag into a trashcan in front of a row of “old private houses” (327). Almost instantly, an older African American woman yells at him: “We keep our place clean and respectable and we don’t want you field niggers coming up from the South and ruining things” (328). Her criticism of his action speaks to a two-fold issue in the African American community of the mid-twentieth century. First, she alludes to the geographical divide which produced certain cultural differences by virtue of the industrialization in the North and the more rural and agricultural societies of the South. Second, she distances herself from the social implications of Southern culture by citing class differences between her own middle-class position indicated by her ownership of an “old private house” and her accusation of Invisible Man’s status as a “field nigger” which she presumably bases solely on his appearance.

Invisible Man retrieves his package from the woman’s garbage and leaves the area feeling “strangely lonely. Even the people who stood around me at the intersection seemed isolated, each lost in his own thoughts” (329). Fanon suggests that this form of “aggressiveness...against [the colonized’s] own people” (*WE*, 15) stems from the proximity of the colonized masses to the colonial center. As a member of the urban African American community, this woman exhibits allegiance to the capitalist hierarchical categorizations and their ensuing violent applications than Invisible Man. Her belief system, which is aligned with the dominant structure, also becomes Invisible Man’s impediment just as much as the racist, class-biased socioeconomic and political system, which he must struggle against in order to establish a comfortable life for himself. These scenes also indicate the fragmented condition of the African American community and demonstrate the difficulty of building alliances within the community around common concerns when the racist, sexist, and class biased belief system of the larger United States infiltrates the thoughts and actions of the nation’s minority groups. A two-fold

alienation process takes place as the members of minority groups become ostracized from the white, upper-classes as well as from each other.

In the mid-twentieth century, the American Communist Party became a source of hope for many U.S. minorities, but the same vein of racist and sexist beliefs of the capitalist agenda tainted the Party's class struggle. For quite some time, Invisible Man feels passionately and fervently for his new life but he becomes dismayed when he realizes that the Party places him in a second-class status among themselves based yet again, on race. The Party makes various decisions for and about Invisible Man without any input on his part and he soon feels disillusioned and abandoned by the Party as well. When one of the Party members says to him, "you have a duty to work in [the interest of African Americans]" (293), he realizes that he must break ties with the Communists because the Party fails to offer him a sense of community and solidarity. This member's statement shows Invisible Man that he is separate from the general Party because his role is to organize the African American community simply for the fact that he is an African American. The Party's slogan of solidarity proves false and Invisible Man not only finds the communists racist and patriarchal, he also becomes an emblem of stereotyped and degrading African American male sexuality such that he feels alienated from and degraded by the communist women.

In one scene, a wealthy, white, Leftist woman invites Invisible Man to her apartment to discuss some of her issues with the Party's ideologies. She particularly applauds Invisible Man's work towards women's rights within the movement, but soon she seduces him into her bedroom. At this point, Invisible Man confides to the reader that he "wanted to both smash her and to stay with her and knew that [he] should do neither" (415). Invisible Man compounds sexuality with violence and condemns both feelings as mutual wrongdoing. His disdain for acts of intimacy reveal his inability to form alliances with other people; this characteristic paints a troubling

depiction of the “new man” of decolonization because building community and bonds with other members of society is a vital component of the postcolonial world. Invisible Man encounters many people in his narrative, but the reader rarely witnesses his sexual encounters, especially with women of color. His own disgust and shame over his sexual relations with this woman indicate an unconscious allegiance to the capitalist “bourgeois order” which encourages physical activity that culminates in material production and requires sexual repression (Foucault 294). When the woman moves to answer the telephone, Invisible Man tells the reader, “my mind whirled with forgotten stories of male servants summoned to wash the mistress’s back; chauffeurs sharing the masters’ wives; Pullman porters invited into the drawing room of rich wives headed for Reno” (416). His reflections on historical sexual relations between wealthy, white women and working-class, African American men points to his awareness about the intersection of sexuality and power, but he seems more angry at her emasculation of his male prowess than at the racial and class undertones of this liaison.

While Foucault posits that sexuality and power connect through various forms of “repression” (296), Fanon specifically links sexual intercourse between men of color and white women as the man’s “form of recognition” (*BSWM*, 63) or, “Above all, he wants to prove to others that he is a man, their [white men’s] equal” (*BSWM*, 66). Invisible Man’s reflection on his act with this white woman through class positions indicates his disappointment with intimacy that stems from feeling he is being used to please a woman in a higher socioeconomic position and especially as a fetishized object for her pleasure. He attributes their lovemaking to her goal of repressing him as a man of color. Further, he desires her precisely because of her socioeconomic and racial identity since through their physical union, he participates in these arenas that are otherwise denied him as an African American, working-class man; he feels by engaging in sexual intercourse with this white woman, he achieves an equal status to white men.

That said, Invisible Man is intensely bothered by his sexual relations with this woman as he battles internally with his emotional and intellectual needs. Invisible Man confesses that he wants “to linger [with the woman], experiencing the sensation of something precious perilously attained too late” (417), but he fears the consequences of his sexual relations including the woman’s negative reactions to their intercourse. This strong sense of alienation and by extension his problematic fear of female sexuality seriously limit his status as a “new man” because he cannot connect to other people, even for the most basic human needs of physical and emotional comfort, and his constant self-censorship of desire constricts his progress towards freedom.

Invisible Man reveals to the reader that he and this wealthy woman engaged in intercourse, but he slams himself and says, “What a fool! Why had I gotten myself into such a situation?” (417). The “situation” seems to be his involvement with this woman, a white woman, and a wealthy white woman. Up until this moment, the only other scene between Invisible Man and a seductive woman was the Battle Royal fiasco in which he felt both desire for the stripper and repulsion at the conditions. In this later episode, he compounds his initial sense of guilt and shame by saying, “Between us and everything we wanted to change in the world they placed a woman: socially, politically, economically. Why, goddamit, why did they insist upon confusing the class struggle with the ass struggle, debasing both us and them—all human motives?” (418). Invisible Man’s reactions to women, at least these two white women, reflect the inherent problems with Leftist politics of the mid-twentieth century in which men, regardless of race and class, reduced women to sexual objects because they believed as Invisible Man declares “the biological and ideological [had to be kept] carefully apart” (419). While class concerns were at the forefront of the Left’s platforms for change in the mid-twentieth century, race and gender issues, especially women’s concerns were tertiary to the struggle for equality and progress. As Angela Gilliam points out, “This becomes a classic problem of some Marxists, repeated over and

over again, as though the issues of race and class did not need to be addressed concretely and simultaneously, especially as they intersect the issue of gender (which includes sexuality)” (225). In this novel, Ellison approaches investigating the dilemma of gender equality in progressive movements, but ultimately the protagonist upholds strict patriarchal and sexist notions leaving little hope for improved conditions in the decolonizing world. After his encounter with the wealthy, white woman, he quietly leaves her as she sleeps in her bed and in a later scene in which another white woman attempts to engage him in sex, he deliberately resists her and finally lures her away and completely abstains from this repetition (532).

Further, his fear-filled desire for women when coupled with his statement that he wants to “smash her and stay with her” suggests Invisible Man’s “exaggerated sexual craving and excessive aversion to sexuality” (Freud, 255). The young man’s inability to negotiate his physical needs and desires with his intellectual beliefs reflects a psychological disorder because he cannot participate in this sexual realm, which has an important “domain of knowledge” (Foucault 33). Invisible Man’s existential angst plays a central role in sexuality because similar to other facets of his life, he cannot form bonds with others to experience sexuality. This lack of knowledge and experience functions as a key hindrance in Invisible Man’s progress towards becoming a “new man.” Foucault points out that sexuality “is the basis for accepting and refusing rules, and constitutes human beings as social and juridical subjects; it is what establishes the relation with oneself and with others, and constitutes the human being as ethical subject” (334). Invisible Man’s dilemma of engaging in physical contact with women rests upon whether he should embrace them lovingly or destroy them. He debates with himself about using his body as a tool of production or as a weapon of destruction. The narrative shows his tendency to choose paths of destruction, but Foucault suggests that when an individual, especially an existentialist, forms thoughts about his conditions the result is the ability to question “in what way do

individual or collective experiences arise from singular forms of thought” which in turn breaks with the “double tradition of phenomenology and Marxism” (336) and allows new modes of experience. If the process of decolonization moves along a continuum, then Invisible Man’s position as a conflicted sexual being may shift if he thinks through his dilemma of forming bonds rather than escaping from human relationships. Although misogyny limits his emergence as a “new man,” his intellectual perceptions open up new spaces of rebellion through a rupture of tradition and staunch dogma as Foucault points out.

Since Invisible Man cannot participate in mainstream capitalist society without feeling oppressed and frustrated and he finds a similar vein of degradation in the Black Nationalist movements, he chooses to live in solitude and rejects the communists whose efforts also fail to bring him hope and even cause him more dismay. Amidst his alienation and frustration, he begins to live underground. He says, “I couldn’t return to Mary’s, or to the campus, or to the Brotherhood, or home. I could only move ahead or stay here, underground. Here, at least, I could try to think things out in peace, or, if not in peace, in quiet. I would take up residence underground. The end was in the beginning” (571). Invisible Man lays out his choices and declares that none of the attempts he made to integrate into the existing communities around him serve as paths to progress and freedom. His reference to the “beginning” suggests a clearer understanding of his grandfather’s admonishment: to essentially use society’s available strategies against the system itself. Unlike Wright’s and Ale-Ahmad’s protagonists, Ellison’s Invisible Man ends his narrative on a spark of hope. He says, “In order to get some of it down I have to love...I’m a desperate man—but too much of your life will be lost, its meaning lost, unless you approach it as much through love as through hate. So I denounce and I defend and I hate and I love” (580). His sense of love and hope however, reflect his strong vein of individualism and essentially, he boasts a love for himself. This protagonist, similar to the characters in Wright’s

and Ale Ahmad's novels, places higher value upon himself than others and even more than the earlier characters as he struggles to improve his personal well-being while the other two destroyed themselves. Invisible Man's attitude of "me before we" therefore hinders the possibility of forging community bonds and challenges notions of solidarity and acts of affinity in the decolonizing world.

Mohammad also chooses self-imposed exile from his society upon realizing that he does not quite fit in to most segments of his community, popular or alternative. Through a break with literary tradition and a departure from the bildungsroman similar to Ellison, Chubak presents an imaginative way to challenge the status quo; although wrought with various trials and tribulations, he seems to suggest that the persevering person can be successful with the right combination of will, determination, and community support. *Tangsir* values violence and armed resistance as valid means of resistance, especially when yielded by the noble and respectable individual; here, Lion Mohammad. One could read this novel as an allegory for Iran in the guise of Mohammad against the nation's oppressors, especially the Western nations, represented by the four corrupt Bushehri officials, whose chief involvement in Iran in 1949 related to their own accumulation of wealth, power and influence in a strategic location. As M.R. Ghanoonparvar suggests, "Unlike most of his contemporaries of this period who used literature as a vehicle for extra-literary purposes...Chubak concerned himself primarily with the art of fiction writing itself...although Chubak's characters are palpably Iranian, in an Iranian social milieu, his stories constitute a microcosmic reflection of the universe" (3). Both Ellison and Chubak demonstrate the anticolonial sentiment of commitment to asserting a sense of self beyond and above strict national lines and racial affiliations and devoid of ideological paradigms of resistance while as Ghanoonparvar suggests Chubak specifically upheld that his writing pays allegiance to "art for art's sake."

Chubak holds rank in Iranian literature as a writer whose main concerns include artistic expression coupled with a keen depiction of the lives and circumstances of the down-trodden and marginalized masses. As critic F.R.C. Bagley observes, “Chubak, like other writers, is concerned with social situations, moral problems, religious attitudes, and also basic instincts; but he combines psychological portraiture with dramatic tension in the recital of deeds which human motives induce” (6). Based on real events from Chubak’s childhood in Bushehr, Iran *Tangsir* traces a day in the life of Mohammad, a former factory worker and small-time businessman. The people of Tangsir, a small region lying south-east of Bushehr in southwestern Iran, admire and respect Mohammad for his honesty, work ethic, and camaraderie and affectionately call him “Zar,” which means “comrade” or “chum” in the local dialect. As the story opens, the reader learns that Zar Mohammad plans to avenge the Bushehri businessmen and leaders who swindled him out of his hard-earned savings. Zar Mohammad’s plan of action demonstrates the level of hopelessness and frustration the young father and husband feels towards pursuing more peaceful means of justice as he decides to kill each of his four oppressors in succession using a gun. Through interior dialogue and the narrator’s observations, the reader joins Zar Mohammad in his quest for justice, which occurs as a result of a combination of individual will and community participation.

The unfolding events of this day in Zar Mohammad’s life stem from his desire to correct the psychological and material violence committed against him through more violence, even at the cost of his own life. In this narrative, Chubak upholds some of Fanon’s key notions about resistance among the masses. For instance, Fanon observes that in a colonial situation, “‘Brother,’ ‘sister,’ ‘comrade’ are words outlawed by the colonialist bourgeoisie because in their thinking my brother is my wallet and my comrade, my scheming” (*WE*, 11). In *Tangsir*, the local community refers to the protagonist as brother, “Zar” until he begins to act independently of the

masses and then becomes, “Shir” or lion. In this change of vocabulary, the reader notices that colonial pressures by the foreign regimes causes the divide in the masses; whereas they speak and practice forms of solidarity and community before the arrival of the colonizers, the villagers begin to separate, as most emblematic in Zar Mohammad’s actions, once they face the oppression of the new rulers.

Chubak tackles mid-twentieth century Iran’s larger socio-economic troubles by tracing the choices and actions of this one marginalized individual. Although Chubak wanted his writing to demonstrate his artistic abilities, he nonetheless held sympathies with the Iranian Left and traces of leftist ideology read through his literature. That said, he broke ties with the Tudeh Party and decidedly avoided using his novel as a platform that promoted the liberation of the Iranian masses through commitment to communist ideology. As Kamran Talattof observes, “during this period the dominant Marxist ideology extends to novels. Literary activists cherished the idea of writing a novel dealing with the theory of dialectical materialism, a work requiring a combination of realism and revolutionary romanticism, if an ideal guideline for actual life is to be created” (76). Talattof describes *Tangsir* as “an example of militant literature” (77) because although Zar Mohammad acts alone he has the support and solidarity of the masses through every step he takes on this fateful summer’s day in Bushehr; however, he takes his liberation into his own hands rather than joining forces with any ideologically inclined groups. This work remains a protest novel because *Tangsir* endorses violence as a possible means of redemption, which echoes the ideologies behind various national liberation movements around the world at the time of this novel and the novel critiques the colonial-imperialist tendencies of the so-called First World. In this capacity, *Tangsir* functions as one of Iran’s most eloquent protest novels and shows Chubak’s commitment to change in Iranian society through art and literature as weapons.

Chubak's *Tangsir* breaks with many other novels of its time, especially in the Iranian literary milieu. First and foremost, Chubak's choice of setting in a more marginalized region of Iran highlights his awareness of the nuances within the Iranian polity. Although in 1949, the time of the narrative, southwestern Iran was one of the most lucrative and attractive regions in the world for its immense wealth in oil, the people were relatively neglected and considered as mostly marginal ethnic communities, especially in national discourse. In 1949, Bushehr and the other surrounding areas were made up various groups including, but not limited to, Qashqai and Khamsa tribes, Indians, Arabs, Russians, East Africans, a myriad of native populations including the Tangsirs, and there were of course the ever-present British forces.

Compared to Tehran, Bushehr and the southwestern region, more generally, are more cosmopolitan and multicultural as historically there has been a coexistence of a multitude of different racial, ethnic, and class groups. In 1949, the Tangsirs in particular earned their livelihood from farming, fishing, and work in factories and the oil industry, much like their neighbors in the villages of Davas, Sangi, Bahmani, Zolmabad, Jabri, Bone-e Mana, Ba Saydun, Jafra, and Bakhtiar. All of this said, Chubak's focus on an area which was economically appealing but otherwise neglected, marks *Tangsir* as an important novel because Chubak centers on the lives and experiences of the most common members of the population to highlight the various kinds of injustices taking place amidst the race for wealth and power by external as well as internal forces.

Further, although not as explicitly Marxist or Tudeh-affiliated as Bozorg Alavi, Chubak yields his writing as a weapon against the Pahlavi regime's tyrannical system of oppression especially towards the marginalized and economically weak communities in Iran. This story, written in first-person, transposes the reader into the hot and torrid conditions of living in southern Iran. The novel opens with intense descriptions of desolation, scalding heat, and

infertile land and the lonely figure of Zar Mohammad resting under a barren tree. This emphasis on the brutal geographical and geological conditions heightens the abuses of the upper-classes towards the lower classes. In a sense, not only do the lower classes have to struggle against the oppressive forces of the upper classes, but they must also contend with the brutal realities of nature. As Maziar Behrooz notes, “According to Nikkie Keddie [a renowned Iranian Studies scholar]...an arid climate produces a poor and scattered peasant population very much under the control of landlords” (139). The geological conditions of Tangsir compel the villagers to succumb to the demands of the colonizers and Iranian upper-classes so that they can provide some socioeconomic relief for themselves and their communities; however, Chubak demonstrates that the abuses that can result from these imbalanced exchanges were often met with resistance.

The main emblem of Iranian resistance in Tangsir is the unforgettable protagonist. The narrator describes him as, “tall and hefty in stature, like a giant. Nobody else was on the road. Only this strong, swarthy man was there—solitary, hot, thirsty, and dead-tired” (22). As the story begins, Mohammad sits idly watching a battle between two ants over the dead body of a beetle, while taking a break in the sparse shade of a tree on his usual seven mile trek from his small shop to his home. This time however, the villagers summon him to help capture a runaway bull, who once before escaped and killed a teenage boy that tried to return the bull to its owner, the widow Sakineh. The widow’s only source of livelihood, an angry runaway bull becomes Mohammad’s responsibility when the other village men are unable to control and subdue the animal. This scene foreshadows Mohammad’s more serious impending battle with local businessmen who swindle him of his earnings. The villagers of this rural community including Mohammad experience various forms of injustice at the hands of Davas’ upper-class. Symbolically, they are being devoured by the demands of the upper-class as the beetle is by the ants.

On his way to capture the bull, Mohammad reflects on how the local moneylenders abused him and he appeals to both mythological powers as well as his Islamic beliefs for strength and help to combat the men. He says to the fairies, “You fairies, if you’ll do something to make the crooks who’ve stolen my money pay it back, I’ll bring a whole set of candles and dedicate them to your tree” (27), while earlier he refuses to drink water during this dreadful trek home as he is fasting for Ramadan and does not want to bring bad luck upon himself (25). Chubak’s astute depictions of the melding of superstition and religiosity in the Iranian practice of faith highlights the importance of their belief systems in their daily lives and actions. This specific characteristic of the Iranian polity impeded in allowing strong political organization of the masses wherein the people had to relinquish their religiosity in order to establish socioeconomic and political solidarity. Behrooz suggests that the Marxists failed in comparison to the Islamists for the simple fact that the Marxists misrecognized the high-level of religiosity in the masses whereas the Islamist leadership nurtured and catered to the religious beliefs of the masses (137). Chubak’s omission of Marxists in this narrative indicates his awareness that this ideological path fell short of the reality and importance of religion among the Iranian masses. That said, both Marxists and Islamists fervently called for the use of violence to combat socioeconomic, political, and national oppression.

Tangsir (also known as “One Man and His Gun”) depicts this explicit demand for taking the law into one’s own hands and using any means necessary to find redemption for acts of injustice towards one. Throughout the story, the narrator describes Mohammad as “angry” (35) and desirous of “quarrel[s] and fight[s]” (35). The moneylenders’ swindle makes Mohammad seethe with rage and he quells his discomfort with detailed plans of avenging them with a gun. On his way to capture the bull, Mohammad experiences headaches and “a wave of pain surged up from his insides” (30) as he thinks to himself that the way to correct the injustices committed

against him by four Bushehri moneylenders is to “fix them with Martini bullets” (30). The reference to Martini bullets indicates the colonial presence of the British in Iran, especially in this southwestern region. Mohammad relies on the tools of the larger oppressors to commit violence against his compatriots who are compliant with the ideology of British oppression. Although these Buseri businessmen are his fellow countrymen, they are participants in the degradation of the lower-class polity and therefore, their actions are equivalent to the foreign oppression of the masses. This novel stands out among the six works in this study as Chubak’s astute descriptions of the internal conditions that foster the imperial presence in Iran make his narrative unique. The references to the material tools of the foreign oppressors such as the guns and bullets suggest Chubak’s awareness about colonialism, but the insistence of the novel to position the Iranian collaborators within the scheme of colonial activity echoes the concerns of anticolonial activists who urged the colonized masses to resist participating with their oppressors in their own oppression.

Similar to *Invisible Man*, a loss of a sense of dignity fuels Mohammad’s rage against the men who harmed him. This particular need to restore a sense of power, which he connects to his position as a physically robust male who is the sole provider for his wife and children reflects the masculine discourse of honor and dignity of the mid-twentieth century. African American progressives and women in particular understood this dilemma in the struggle for equality and in the Iranian milieu gender issues were just as contentious as in other civil rights causes around the world. The central battle in this novel revolves around the restoration of Mohammad’s status as a man; these upper-class swindlers abuse his prowess and essentially effeminize him and he must redeem his lost sense of manhood. The novel fails to critique this pattern of thought and behavior and even celebrates his efforts to reinstate his position as a dominant male who cherishes his role as a physical, economic, and social powerhouse. He confesses his plan to his father-in-law, who

sympathizes with the young man's sense of shame and humiliation, but also encourages him to leave the justice in God's hands. Mohammad responds, "Didn't God say in the Qur'an that a thief's hand should be cut off?" (57). Clearly, Zar Mohammad recognizes the religious path, which also suggests his allegiance to tradition and heteronormative expectations; his rebellious senses, which social mores acknowledge as positive attributes of a powerful man in particular, urge him to take God's work into his own hands. In this way, Chubak sets up the possibility of correcting injustices through traditional male efforts, while allowing religious fidelity to remain intact. He neither upholds religion nor political ideologies as the impetus to Mohammad's actions, but Chubak encourages specific stereotyped qualities of manhood. Mohammad's declaration that "I'll have to kill all four. Karim Hajj Hamzeh and Shaykh Abu Torab and Aqa Ali Kachal and Mohammad Gondeh Rajab. That's all, that's the long and short of it" (56) highlights Chubak's assertion that violence is a means of redemption on earth and a tool that powerful men use to rectify their lost sense of manhood. Essentially, Chubak suggests that Mohammad has to redeem his manhood by stripping other men of their power and positions.

Chubak relies on Persian mythology and alludes to Mohammad's similarity to Iran's national literary hero, Rostam, throughout the story. By doing so, Chubak acknowledges Iran's literary legacy and history and bolsters Mohammad's appeal by comparing his physical prowess and ethical value system to this popular icon. For instance, once he captures Sakineh's bull, he makes an obvious reference to Rostam's horse and he tells her, "He'll be all right tomorrow, and then you can put him to work again at your well. You'll find he'll sprint as fast as Rakhsh" (54). Mohammad's humility in this scene and his apologetic tone towards the bull position him as a noble sort of man who is even kind to enraged animals. Indeed, the detailed scenes of the bull's capture highlight Mohammad's physical agility and humane sense of justice; this is further enforced in his kind treatment of a stray dog (39). Chubak balances Mohammad's overly

masculine identity with emotional kindness to animals, who receive more of the protagonist's attention than women. While the emphasis on Mohammad as an ethical and powerful man challenges the Iranian leftist aims of the time because the focus is on an individual as opposed to the masses, Chubak nonetheless participates in leftist sexism. Chubak uses the character of Mohammad to suggest the possibilities of resistance against oppression and tyranny although through an overly romanticized idealization of the working class and strictly as this oppression relates to the degradation of masculinity.

Once Mohammad sets out on his quest to avenge the men who hurt him, the reader learns that he in fact does not work entirely alone. One of the most heart-wrenching scenes in the story centers on the night before he leaves his wife Shahru and their children. Unable to sleep and anxious about the outcome of his plans, Mohammad and Shahru lie awake in the dark and discuss the consequences of the mission. Earlier in the day, Mohammad says, "You don't know what things they've done to me. Nobody in Bushehr has any respect for me now" (58) and even claims that "there's [no] other way but bullets to win respect again" (62). Shahru initially prays for her husband to regain his senses and his response to her shows that he wants her solidarity with him, not as his wife, but as a compatriot. He says to her, "You never used to be a timid nanny goat, so what's come over you now... Anyway, you're a Tangsir too, aren't you?" (71). With these statements, Mohammad ignores Shahru's position as his wife and mother to his children and expects her allegiance to the cause of the masses and by extension, to the nation.

Shahru begrudgingly accepts Mohammad's decision and assists him by arranging their family's escape and the narrative omits Shahru's internal thoughts about the situation. Mohammad's final words to Shahru point to his conscious effort to help the masses; in these words, Chubak didactically suggests that any so-called ordinary person can stand up and stand out as a force of resistance against injustice and repression. Mohammad says, "We Tangsirs are

unlucky folk... We always come in for oppression and abuse. Isn't it time for one of us to step out and sweep away this injustice?" (75). When Mohammad discusses the masses, he includes his wife as part of the "we," but his choice of pronouns implies his group affiliation is with the men of their community. Just before he leaves their home, Mohammad emphasizes this sentiment and says, "the scoundrels mustn't be left free to trap some other poor wretch and ruin him as they've ruined me. A man who's really a man shouldn't fold his hands and sit back and expect other men to fight for his rights and give them back to him on a plate" (77). Shahru remains silent and Zar Mohammad's declaration shows that his plan of action to correct the wrongs committed against him and by extension against his community excludes her and women more generally because the infringement is against masculinity, which implies women's concerns in the novel and in their community are negligible in the struggle for justice.

At this point, his demand for justice echoes Fanon's sentiments about restoring a particular sense of male dignity in *Black Skins, White Masks*. Fanon says, "I was committed to myself and to my neighbor to fight for all my life and with all my strength so that never again would a people on earth be subjugated" (227). This commitment to resist against oppression requires the utmost sacrifice, death. While Fanon uses the collective term "people," he clarifies the segment of this mass which concerns him the most in the struggle. He says, "As a man, I undertake to face the possibility of annihilation in order that two or three truths may cast their eternal brilliance over the world" (*BSWM*, 228), which echoes Zar Mohammad's opinion that, "There's nothing in life that matters so much as honor and dignity. Not even staying alive and keeping a wife and children alive" (63). The combined import of these statements suggests that while progressive and rebellious men of the anti-colonial movement touted resistance to oppression, they also sought immortality through their actions. Heidi Hartmann summarizes Azizah Al-Hibri's "Capitalism is an Advanced Stage of Patriarchy: But Marxism is not

Feminism” and suggests that patriarchy intersects with capitalism through the “male drive for immortality” (366). As Hartmann describes, Al-Hibri’s idea is that “both production and reproduction can be instruments to provide men a sense of immortality” (366) and by dominating or repressing female agency, men secure their manhood and attain power through their actions including bearing children.

Zar Mohammad believes he will redeem his sense of manhood either by literally eliminating those responsible for stripping him of this identity or through death resulting from his actions of restoring his masculinity. While Zar Mohammad does not speak for the larger global community of colonial subjects as does Fanon, the belief and motivation behind their words mirror each other. As Talattof posits, “[Mohammad’s] rebellion against the establishment makes him the leader of the oppressed people of his community” (77), and his use of force juxtaposed with his anger and demand to resurrect his masculinity function to suggest that violent rebellion requires men. Since the community follows and supports his efforts, especially making sure that he achieves his goal of murdering the corrupt members of the oppressive ruling class, the message becomes clear that women and other minority groups cannot be leaders as they cannot perform the tasks of a particular masculine orientation. Although this radical feminist interpretation of Mohammad’s actions accounts for the interplay between patriarchy and capitalism, since he wants to restore his masculinity through economic justice, as Hartmann suggests the “question of the origins of male power urges” (367) remain unanswered and may indicate a problematic assumption that there are biological reasons for this psychological actions.

Mohammad’s role as leader and initiator of correcting the wrongs committed against him and other villagers becomes more and more apparent as he moves towards his targets. While receiving a shave in a barber’s shop, he talks to the barber about their community’s problems and the dire economic situation for most of the villagers. They both agree that there are few lucrative

sources of income in Bushehr, which forces many of the men to leave town and find sustenance elsewhere. When the barber asks about Mohammad's case, he says that he still has not received his rightful dues from the swindlers and tells the barber that the "bare blade of the blessed 'Abbas'" (84) must do the work for him. At this point, the barber ignores Mohammad's reference to using violence as a means of justice and instead suggests that the young father resort to the king for help. Mohammad scoffs, "Believe me, Abbas Shah wouldn't know whether Bushehr's in Iran or Arabia" (85). He reiterates his plan with the ideology behind it and tells the barber, "nobody here bothers about anybody else's troubles. People have made such complaints by the score, and no one's ever taken any notice" (85). This discussion between the men demonstrates Mohammad's traditional, heteronormative, and aggressive attitudes as he rejects the more docile suggestions of the barber to seek help from recognized powerful men such as the government officials. The barber asks Mohammad how much money the lenders owe him and fails to realize that his customer "gripped the gun tightly" and "long[ed] more than ever to go" (85) kill his enemies. The barber's nonviolent ideas stir Mohammad's sense of being emasculated and his first reaction is to remind himself of his manhood by holding onto a phallic emblem, the gun. Soon after this episode, Mohammad kills the first of his four enemies. Within close range, "the gun pressed Karim's shirt and ribs. Karim only just felt the hardness of the barrel...He dropped onto the brick platform, and frothy blood gushed from his mouth. A crowd gathered by the shop" (87). Mohammad consummates his desires against his enemy in a homoerotic act: the gun presses with force against the body of the victim and results in Karim's bodily fluids to come forth. Once satisfied, Mohammad runs off, but in this single act of violence, he sets the wheels in motion for a mass revolt against the oppression of Tangsir.

Several issues become crucial in this rampage; first and foremost, the hero, Mohammad, talks with his targets. There is a clear exchange between the men and although Mohammad does

not warn the offender that he will shoot him, he allows the corrupt man to say something that reinforces his anger and hatred, thereby justifying the killing. Second, he uses a gun. Earlier in the story, the reader learns that Mohammad carries an axe and a knife with him as well (66), but he kills these men with the gun. This tool of violence entered Iran through colonial presence and can be understood as a means of control and submission. Mohammad's choice to use his gun as opposed to his more native weapons, the knife and axe, suggest that he uses the colonizer's tools in order to more efficiently attack him. Further, he imitates the colonizer, which Fanon describes as a necessary step in establishing a new order. Fanon says, "What [the masses] demand is not the status of the colonist, but his place... There is no question for them of competing with the colonist. They want to take his place" (*WE*, 23). Replacing the colonizer by assuming his role means that the patriarchal legacy of colonialism coupled with pre-colonial patriarchal practices, simply continues the process of domination against women and other minorities. According to Fanon, this is a brief stage in the process of colonization. He cites Friedrich Engels in describing the situation: "Just as Crusoe could procure a sword for himself, we are equally entitled to assume that one fine morning Friday might appear with a loaded revolver in his hand, and then the whole "force" relationship is inverted" (*WE*, 25). While the colonized may attain a position of power by usurping the colonizer's tools and his seat, the system of oppression remains intact because the intersection of gender within this paradigm of class and race continues to be neglected by the men in power.

In a brief reflection, Mohammad's wife, Shahru, remembers, "Mohammad had sometimes told her about his gun and about the war, when he fought under Ra'is Ali Devari against the British. He had described how he shot down several Englishmen and Indians with this same Martini rifle" (67). This moment shows the reader the genealogy of this instrument of liberation in the hands of the oppressed; although brought in by the Russians, Mohammad used it

previously to resist British colonialism, and won, which also connects to Engel's reference to Friday overcoming Crusoe's oppression by asserting his power through using the colonizer's own tools. Although the positions of oppressed and oppressor shift in the above scheme, the larger mass of oppressed people, including women and other minorities, stays the same. Shahru simply rehearses her husband's so-called victories against other men, which makes him more powerful and satisfied, but her omission of freedom for women and other members of the masses reflects the absence of these groups' concerns from the struggle for liberation.

Also, this particular gun ousted foreign oppression in the past, but Mohammad uses it in the present scenes to avenge himself against corrupt fellow Iranians whose positions in the villages mirror the colonial rule of the foreign powers. Fanon identifies this group as the colonized individuals whose "behavior and ways of thinking, picked up from their rubbing shoulders with the colonial bourgeoisie, have remained intact" (*WE*, 12). By making use of the tools of the bourgeoisie, Mohammad implicates himself in their circle. He uses a gun to murder several members of this group, but he also becomes a member of this group which creates distance and space between him and the masses. While allowing him to somewhat disassociate himself from the act of murder and stay relatively clean because he does not have to engage the other men through bodily contact, the gun also removes him from the native and lower classes because it is an instrument of force used by the foreign and upper Iranian classes to control the masses. Finally, the gun makes the violent act quick and efficient; if fired into vital parts of the body, the result is unmistakably deadly and Mohammad can run to his next target. It is important to also consider that in 1949, various parts of the world were gaining independence and liberation from colonial rule and oppression via resistance movements that incorporated the use of weapons, particularly guns, to ensure their desired consequences, especially freedom. As a

Leftist, Chubak certainly alludes to these possibilities as a means of resistance and relies on the affable and admirable character of Mohammad to make the message clear to the Iranian polity.

Chubak presents the tactics and consequences of attaining freedom for his readers by focusing on the reactions of the masses to Mohammad's actions. The crowd that gathers around the dead body of Mohammad's first victim praises the young man. In fact, they become protective and supportive of him and silence those among the group who want to capture and turn Mohammad over to the authorities. From the crowd, someone says, "It's Mohammad Tangsir. At last he's done what he had to" and another says, "A good thing too! He got his money. Shot it out of the guy's stomach" (88). The scene ends with "Hurray for the Tangsirs! [...] Three cheers for them!" (88). This first murder transitions Mohammad from being a lone avenger to being part of the collective. Even in the syntax of the dialogue of the villagers, the pronouns shift from "he" to "us." Again, although the upper-class moneylenders and in this case, Karim, are Iranians and even Bushehris, they are separated from the collective of Tangsirs and viewed as foreign and oppressive. Mohammad remains silent and leaves the murders quickly and quietly. He is mindful of the fact that he must redeem his sense of dignity, especially his sense of manhood, which requires that he perform these violent acts without the help of others. The villagers follow him and support his efforts, but he never asks for their assistance and remains independent until he reunites with his family.

Mohammad's self-identity as a man conflicts with his actions, especially when people such as women confront him in his rampage. He upholds a strict standard of conduct for himself, not so much because he feels compassion or sympathy for people he deems weaker than himself, but more because harming women detracts from rather than bolsters his sense of masculinity. As he approaches the Shaykh's house, he seems more confident and virulent after achieving his first goal. The narrator describes him as "standing with his legs apart and trailing his gun horizontally

below his shoulder” (90). In this highly phallic stance, Mohammad taunts the other man with rhetorical questions and musters up immense fear in the Shaykh as “the gun barrel...pressed against the Shaykh’s ribs over his flowing white robe, and the shot had plunged straight into his flesh” (91). Again, he kills him using the Martini rifle with a single shot, but he is surprised by the physical confrontation of the Shaykh’s mother and sister. He thinks to himself, “[The sister] was strong...they were country folk like himself” (92), but in this fight to the death, he ends up killing both women in order to live. He struggles with the women and ultimately chops off the hand of the younger woman while axing the older woman to death. He uses his native tools of violence to attack these women, whom he identifies “like himself.” On the one hand, although he describes the women as “strong,” he must feel that he can physically take on these people versus the men in closer proximity, but on the other hand, this act of annihilation speaks to his contempt for the corruption in their village; the use of more traditional tools of violence also alludes to their agrarian roots.

Although distraught and ridden by guilt for his violent acts against the women, he tells the crowd outside, “We’ve no more accounts to settle with Shaykh Abu Torab. He’s had his due. If any people here try to chase me, they’ll be their own worst enemies” (93). At this point, Mohammad seems to think that the masses may turn against him because he murdered the women, but he holds fast to his ideological drive, which propels his violent scheme. Indeed, once the crowd discovers the mutilated bodies of the women, some amidst them remark, “it was wrong to kill the Shaykh’s mother and sister. He shouldn’t have done that...men shouldn’t strike women” (95). However, it is precisely among this group of people that Mohammad gains a new title; someone says, “Don’t call him Zar Mohammad! Call him Lion Mohammad!” (95). Once the crowd agrees to the new title, they further acknowledge that “there won’t be such injustice and oppression here anymore!” (95). The affinity for Mohammad crescendos as people yell out,

“Everybody’s on his side!” and “May God protect him!” Several people even claim that “God [will] ruin the oppressors [...] by the hand of men like Mohammad!” (96). The new title, Lion, demarcates Mohammad from the masses in language and in position; he declares that he will and wants to work alone in this scheme, and the crowd encourages his individuality by changing the word for brother and comrade into a more singular and aggressive name, Lion. The masses bolster Mohammad’s desire to assert his individuality by succumbing to the notion of singular leadership and helping him to stand out among them as exceptional and unique. This characterization of the group suggests Chubak’s awareness that the Iranian masses want a strong leader and possibly are not ready for an egalitarian society or a Marxist revolution, which history records as well.

Through Mohammad’s encounter with the third victim, the reader learns that Mohammad’s agenda excludes so-called innocent victims. Mohammad Gondeh Rajab is not alone when Lion Mohammad enters his house. Upon seeing the visitor, Mohammad tells him, “Sir! You’ve done nothing wrong. People speak well of you. Don’t force me to shed your blood! I ask you to leave...I’ve nothing against you” (97). After this admission, Mohammad proceeds to kill his enemy, but when he meets with the crowd outside, someone challenges Mohammad and tells him that “God won’t be pleased with this...You’ve been taking His creatures’ lives with the gun you’re carrying. Throw it away and curse Satan!” (98). The critic’s specific complaint about the gun alludes to a displeasure with Mohammad’s tactics possibly because he relies on the enemy’s tools to subdue the natives. This person in the crowd chastises Mohammad for killing “God’s creatures” with a foreign object of oppression; the critic does not condemn Mohammad’s reasons for the murders, but rather the method he uses in his plans. Mohammad’s reaction culminates in chastising this critic and warning him that he too will come to his blows if he interferes with Mohammad’s plans. Mohammad says to the invisible voice, “if you’re a man,

you'll step out, and I'll teach you a few things!" (100). Another person from the crowd attacks the critic and he is utterly silenced. Chubak suggests in this scene that Mohammad's inclination towards individuality is necessary because there are differences and contradictions within the supposed solidarity of the masses, but self-reliance is certain.

Realizing that he has a following of sorts, Mohammad addresses the masses and says, "People! I have no quarrel with you. We're all brothers in the faith, and a good many of you are friends of mine and people I've done business with. I want to tell you that my job's not finished yet...So go back to your work now, and let me get on with mine!" (100). Again, although at this time in Iranian history the Tudeh Party was gaining power and popularity and indeed their focus was on the masses and the collective, Chubak's story praises the individual and in such a scene as this one, the implication seems to be that one must act alone. However, Mohammad gains the solidarity of the masses in their faithful following and supportive response to his actions. If it were not for their help and care about him, he would easily be caught by the police and his mission would end. This is to say, there is a kind of tension between praising individual acts of resistance and calling for mass resistance in *Tangsir*. One could reasonably argue that Chubak wants to make an example out of Mohammad's quest, but if one reads this novel within an orthodox Marxist paradigm, it fails as a protest novel for the simple fact that salvation and redemption of injustice rely on the acts and ideology of an individual, not a collective. On the other hand, again, it is only because the masses support Lion Mohammad, especially by protecting him from the authorities that he can accomplish his goals and Chubak is careful to repeat this scenario to emphasize the significance of community.

Mohammad successfully murders the last moneylender and tries to make his way back to Shahru and their children. In the meantime, the government sent soldiers to stake out Mohammad's home, but the southern Iranian soldiers join in solidarity with Shahru and the

villagers for Mohammad's safe return. A couple of the non-Tangsir soldiers uphold their orders, but they are ultimately distracted and led away to allow Mohammad's return. Again, while escaping towards home and his family, Mohammad receives the support and care of his acquaintances and it is because of their willingness to help him that he makes it back to Shahru. The narrator says that "Mohammad had always helped people" (174) and it seems in his time of need, the people helped him as well. Once he reaches Shahru and their children, they carry out their plan of escape using a boat. Even though all along various people assisted in and encouraged Mohammad's escape, he still harbors a sense of mistrust as he moves away from the crowd of Tangsir villagers and gendarmes "walking backwards" (181). His fears are put to rest when no one attempts to interrupt the family's escape; indeed, they are sent off with a blessing and a shout of "Farewell!" (181).

In the Iranian intellectual circles of 1949, the fate of the masses was a central concern and issue to be grappled with socioeconomically and artistically. In *Tangsir*, Chubak envisions the ways in which a wronged individual can rectify his circumstances through his own efforts. There are clear criticisms of the Pahlavi regime and the presence of foreign interests throughout the novel and Chubak uses literature as a platform to launch strategies of resistance to the violence and oppression of the corrupt system. Through a break with literary tradition, genre, and discourse, Chubak presents an imaginative way to challenge the status quo and although wrought with various trials and tribulations, he seems to suggest that the persevering person can be successful with the right combination of will, determination, and community support. *Tangsir* values violence and armed resistance as valid means of resistance, especially when yielded by the noble and respectable individual; here, Lion Mohammad. One could read this novel as an allegory for Iran in the guise of Mohammad against the nation's oppressors, especially the Western nations in the form of the four corrupt Bushehri officials, whose chief involvement in

Iran in 1949 related to their own accumulation of wealth, power and influence in a strategic location.

Although neither Chubak nor Ellison affiliate their novels with a particular political ideology, they both depict the importance of community and communal bonds as sources of security and livelihood, but demonstrate the difficulty and near impossibility of forming relationships with other people. Ellison, like Chubak, balanced his Leftist politics with his desire to produce a work of art. Indeed, his depiction of the inherent problems within nationalist, Marxist, capitalist, and communist ideologies partners him with Chubak; both writers refuse to uphold any theoretical paradigms of liberation as the source and platform for freedom for the oppressed individual and in their discussions about their best-known novels, they openly admit that they value producing works of art more than building alliances with particular political groups. Needless to say, this stance drew much criticism from various circles, especially progressive groups and continues to plague the literary and philosophical possibilities of these texts.

These critics often ignore the impact of the scenes in which the community comes together to both demand justice and rectification of wrongdoing by the political and power structures of their environs or assist an individual who decides to aggressively redeem a sense of dignity for himself and others. Neither Ellison nor Chubak elucidate upon these moments in their novels beyond precise descriptions of the masses and their actions, but the fact that they include these scenes in their novels, which celebrate individuality, suggests that they are aware of the potential in mass revolutions. Specifically, in *Invisible Man*, near the end of the novel, the protagonist inadvertently falls into a mob riot scene. After becoming injured and rescued by a man named Dupre, Invisible Man watches as various crowds loot and destroy their neighborhoods. The people make sure to avoid “colored stores” (542) and they assist the elderly,

women and children so that these members of the mass remain unharmed in the mayhem. The narrative suggests after the failed attempts by the Brotherhood, Ras the Exhorter, Rinehart the preacher and gambler, to bring justice and equity to the lower class masses, the people take matters into their own hands and use violence to effect change in their neighborhoods.

As Invisible Man looks on with horror as the crowd begins to collect kerosene to set a tenement building on fire, he says, “Where will you live?” and one of the men, Scofield replies, “You call *this* living? It’s the only way to git rid of it, man” (545). After securing the building and making sure that all the tenants have left, the men begin to set the building on fire. Dupre’s wife attempts to stop him, but he tells her, “you know I ain’t go’n change” (547). He orders her to leave with a resounding, “let us mens git going” (547) and she obliges him in tears. Invisible Man assists these men and once they flee in haste to avoid injury, he thinks to himself, “They’ve done it. They organized it and carried it through alone; the decision their own and their own action. Capable of their own action...” (548). Invisible Man confesses that the death of his friend and fellow Brotherhood member, Tod Clifton, makes him feel hopeless and angry and justifies his decision to leave the Brotherhood and other ideologies behind. He simultaneously feels guilty for abandoning the fight for justice in the Harlem neighborhoods, but this scene of spontaneous and politically unaffiliated action spawns hope for Invisible Man.

He leaves the ensuing gun battle between the mob and the police and finds himself confronted by Ras and his men. Ras orders that they “Hang him!” (558), but Invisible Man attacks Ras and races towards Mary’s apartment. He tells the reader that he wanted to “turn around and drop [his] arms and say, ‘Look, men, give me a break, we’re all black folks together...Nobody cares.’ Though now I knew *we* cared, they at last cared enough to act—so I thought” (560). Invisible Man’s mixed feelings of hope and alienation as he “plunged in a sense of painful isolation” (555) lead him back into his underground life, unable to come to terms with

his strong belief in his invisibility. In the Epilogue, he tells the reader that “over and over again I’ve gone up above to seek [out the next phase]. For, like almost everyone else in our country, I started out with my share of optimism. I believed in hard work and progress and action, but now, after first being ‘for’ society and then ‘against’ it, I assign myself no rank or any limit...my world has become one of infinite possibilities” (576). In part, Invisible Man declares he tried to participate in the structures, ideologies, and communities that collectives of people arrange and conduct their lives by; however for him, these agencies and masses proved to fulfill little, if any, sense of justice and dignity. On the other hand, he assures the reader that he continues to live in this world because “the mind that has conceived a plan of living must never lose sight of the chaos against which that pattern was conceived. That goes for societies as well as individuals” (580) and further, “even an invisible man has a socially responsible role to play” (581).

Lion Mohammad also continues to live after his decision to murder those who wronged him, but he leaves his home and settles in an unidentified location with his wife and children. As mentioned, Mohammad’s success in accomplishing his plan relied heavily on the voluntary actions of the masses in his village. Their spontaneous arrangements to protect Mohammad and provide a safeguard for him to continue in his efforts show that Chubak, like Ellison, understands the importance of collectivity, but nonetheless, he upholds individuality as a central requirement for acquiring a sense of freedom. Fanon writes that “The villages witness a permanent display of spectacular generosity and disarming kindness, and an unquestioned determination to die for the ‘cause’,” (*WE*, 84) suggesting that the masses, desperate for liberation from colonial bonds, knowingly and proudly choose death in the struggle for freedom. Fanon’s observation connects to the Tangsir collective in that they form in “brotherly solidarity” (*WE*, 84), but in their case, they are not fighting and more so, they are not fighting the colonizers directly. In fact, they cheer on and support the efforts of an individual to essentially battle against the oppressors instead of

taking up arms and actively killing alongside Mohammad. As noted above, these masses even attack and accuse each other in their bonds of protection towards Mohammad; the point Chubak urges relates to the inability of the collective to form a unified front with clear goals and tactics to ensure liberty.

In this depiction, the individual, Mohammad, knows that he must assert his demands and he relies on weapons, not people, to assist him in his plans. This is all to suggest that Chubak and Ellison remain loyal to the notion of individual acts of liberty because the collective and established ideologies fail the individual who wants to reassert a sense of justice and dignity. This belief, therefore, challenges broad expectations and generalizations about colonized people and their awareness and preparedness to act on their own behalf. These writers remain skeptical about group formations as they find the problems of race or ethnic affiliations, class, and gender relations critical issues that negatively affect the desire for freedom. Unlike Wright and Ale Ahmad, Ellison and Chubak are more hopeful for the individual as they present somewhat positive possibilities for their protagonists: *Invisible Man* continues to live within his society and there remains the potential for him to readmit himself into the world above ground, permanently, and Mohammad returns to his family unit and escapes with them intact, which signals the possibility of continuing their life together, albeit in new circumstances.

CHAPTER 3

“The setting is changed, but it is the same world”³: The Appearance of the “New Woman” in *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* and *Savushun*

As Karl Marx suggests in *The German Ideology* freedom from the imbalance of power relations relies heavily upon the incorporation and use of technological advancements. He says, it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world by employing real means [...] slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and the spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. ‘Liberation’ is a historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions, the development of industry, commerce, agriculture, the conditions of intercourse. (169)

While Marx emphasizes that labor conditions and freedom are intricately intertwined and that “liberation” requires the acceptance and implementation of industrial advancements, he also binds these conditions to history alone and insists that the material improvement of life allows for more progressive living. Marx clearly states that “liberation is...not a mental act” and this point becomes the crucial issue wherein Fanon expands upon Marx’s analyses and in fact stresses the connection between mental enslavement and physical conditions. In much of his work, Fanon specifically focuses on the various psychological cruelties enforced upon less industrialized nations and peoples by the imperialist-capitalists. While Marx hopes for a world in which the worker benefits and is not alienated from his production by being enslaved through his work conditions (Dahrendorf, 29), Fanon adds to this notion of liberation by suggesting that the psychological chains of enslavement must be broken alongside and possibly before the material

³ From Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1950), 66.

restrictions upon the masses. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he says, “This is why a Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue...in the colonies the foreigner imposed himself *using* his cannons and machines” (emphasis added, 5) and in addition to the disastrous consequences of technological advancements, the colonizers implemented psychological tactics of inferiority and superiority complexes based on racial differences.

While Marx and Fanon differ on some of these central issues related to material historical conditions and psychological traumas which result from the use of technology, both thinkers converge on their lack of discussion about women and the effects of labor abuses and colonization on women, and women’s efforts in liberation movements. Many readers observe that in Marx’s and Fanon’s writings there is a substantial absence of discussion about the ways in which women experience labor injustices or how they play an important role in resistance movements. There are a few instances in Fanon’s works in which he attempts to discuss and draw conclusions about the lives and psychologies of women, especially in his observations of the Algerian liberation struggle, but these interrogations remain flat and not nearly reflective enough about the complexities involved in decolonization and its effects on women. In addition, while Marx considers the implementation of technological and industrial advancements as requisite to the dismantling of inhumane labor conditions and thus leading to the liberation of the masses from their dehumanizing positions in production, his writing reflects mostly on the situation of men and he rarely discusses capitalism’s abuses upon people of color.

In *Black Skins, White Masks*, Fanon painstakingly attempts to psychoanalyze the sexual and other intimate relationships between men and women of color and white men and women. In the opening paragraph of the Chapter 2: “The Woman of Color and the White Man,” Fanon says, “The person I love will strengthen me by endorsing my assumption of my manhood, while the

need to earn the admiration or the love of others will erect a value-making superstructure on my whole vision of the world” (*BSWM*, 41). In this sentence, Fanon assumes a heteronormative relationship and one that complements a man’s own notions of his masculinity presumably grounded in heterosexuality, which then allow him to more effectively “value-make” upon his “world.” This reciprocal relationship between a man and woman allows Fanon to “believe in the possibility of love” (*BSWM*, 42), except when the man is white and the woman, a person of color. In this chapter, the reader notes Fanon’s reductionist analyses of a female’s and specifically, a woman of color’s sexuality and desire. He focuses on a story written by Mayotte Capecia, a fellow Martinican and summarizes her narrative about a black woman’s love and sexual desire for a white man as “ridiculous” (*BSWM*, 42). Fanon confirms his blatant assault on black female desire by generalizing that Martinican women reject black men because of their affinity for whiteness (*BSWM*, 47). Aside from his personal choices in marrying a white, French woman, Fanon fails to use his own psychoanalytic theories to understand this supposed “nauseating phenomena” (*BSWM*, 47). He remains silent about the intersections of gender and race in the colonial context and unwilling to puncture the prevalent sexism of colonialism with his own astute critiques. He finally and openly admits that when observing the woman of color, “I know nothing about her” (*BSWM*, 180).

Ania Loomba aptly summarizes Fanon’s underdeveloped analysis of women and says, “[Fanon’s] colonized subject is exclusively male [...and] women remain as much of a ‘dark continent’ for Fanon as they were for Freud” (162). In *A Dying Colonialism* (1959), specifically in “Algeria Unveiled,” Fanon’s attempts to describe the role of the Algerian woman in the struggle for liberation reveal more careful analyses about women, but not about female sexuality and desire. He suggests the cultural and social conditions of Algeria limit his access to women and therefore leave many questions remaining in his investigations. In this context, his admission

that he “know[s] nothing about [the woman of color]” becomes a significant matter in his omissions about female psychology; Fanon’s refusal to push against his own limits and the glaring problems of representation and lack of female character development in the four novels of this study written by men beckon the need for a nuanced analysis of women’s roles and lives in the process of decolonization. While the model of the “new man” remains shaky at best, Paule Marshall and Simin Daneshvar leave the reader questioning the emergence of the “new woman.” Although the female protagonists of these novels demonstrate a sensitive awareness about the intersections of race and class as does her male counterpart, the “new man,” their conformity to heteronormative and traditional expectations of women merely condone the sexist vein of the anticolonial movement.

Through omniscient narrators, detailed dialogues and keen descriptions of physical circumstances, as well as references to ancestral legacies, Paule Marshall and Simin Daneshvar explore the emergence of the new woman within the sociopolitical, economic, racial, and gender conditions of decolonization and demonstrate that women such as their protagonists experience decolonization in markedly different ways than their male counterparts, especially when they are wives and mothers. Their novels complicate issues of agency as their female protagonists must find a balance between resisting colonialism, building community bonds, and caring for their families while remaining mindful of their own individual needs and limitations. Contrary to the novels by men in this study, these works celebrate bonds with others, starting with the family unit. As critics note, both novels complicate the stability of communal bonds, but both narratives also celebrate and problematically uphold traditional notions of heteronormativity and the idea that a woman’s “primary commitment must be to men” (Kubitschek, 52).

Marshall’s critics and admirers alike share one view of her work as a novelist most succinctly summarized by Gary Storhoff: “Her...main concern is social life, the communal

knowledge of the collective, of the accumulated experience of a social group” (50). Her longest novel, *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People* (1969), epitomizes this description through its complex interweaving of social, political, and psychological themes. Through the fictional nation of Bourne Island, Marshall focuses on the material and psychological repercussions of decolonization on the nation’s inhabitants. The narrative clearly outlines the racial and economic caste system, but Marshall complicates the overt injustices by concentrating her analysis on the psychological state of the people who can affect change in this Caribbean nation, but constantly evade the possibility of revolution. Instead of building collectives with clear goals and plans of action, the Bourne Island masses experience “*communitas* [which] is more a collective *condition* of a people, one that advances but also subsides, arising sometimes at need, or in a ritualistic moment, or by unpredicted and spontaneous opportunity” (Storhoff, 50). Storhoff suggests that Marshall embraces this practice and that there is even an element of hope and a sense of connection to a larger group of people through *communitas* as this “collective condition” “resists the sense of the constricted uniqueness of personal identity” (50). I disagree with Storhoff’s interpretation because the masses’ and Merle’s experiences of trauma directly relate to the lack of a sense of community, which in Victor Turner’s explanation of community arises from a “core group of people who know each other and coordinate their actions in a planned, rationalized manner” (Storhoff, 50). The masses’ inability to retain a sense of continuity in the community points to the problematic interruptions related to colonial impositions and while the need to form bonds occurs “spontaneously” as Storhoff suggests, this intermittent or occasional sense of connection promotes alienation as opposed to healing a sense of disconnection.

In part, this inability to forge a strong community extends to the dehumanizing practices of colonialism. Marshall traces the history of colonialism in the Caribbean with connections to the United States and depicts the trauma of slavery through the life and psychological

experiences of the Bourne Island inhabitants. While the narrative exposes the process of resistance and rebellion at one of its most crucial stages, the affirmation of a collective identity in the face of social, economic, and political oppression, the protagonist of the novel, Merle Kinbona, represents the difficulties and herculean task of forming bonds in the midst of decolonization. Marshall's introspection into the island residents' identity formation as an oppressed group highlights a poignant reality which points to the inability of the masses' to resist the oppressive dominant structures. In conjunction with the mechanisms of power and control of the masses, Marshall analyzes one of the most troubling consequences of colonialism through what Fanon identifies as an "inferiority complex" (*BSWM*, 11), which inhibits the island-nation's inhabitants from progressing towards independence. This inferiority complex coupled with a strong sense of alienation plagues the novel's female protagonist, Merle Kinbona, who represents the new woman of the mid-twentieth century.

Merle Kinbona quite literally stands out in Marshall's novel as a complex character whose interactions or more often lack of communication mark her alienation, which result from her life experiences as a woman, wife, mother, and Caribbean colonial subject. When the reader first encounters Merle, the daughter of a servant and the last sugar cane plantation owner, she drives along a road that "had washed away as usual" (3) simultaneously placing her in danger and giving her agency to control her environment to ensure her well-being. This opening scene immediately depicts the power and ability of this woman to handle her dire circumstances without any assistance, while introducing the reader to the environmental, social, and political atmosphere of Merle's world. Marshall embraces Marx's declarations about the need for technology to assist the masses in their liberation and demonstrates through this reference to the washed out road "as usual" that the geological conditions of the island-nation whose stormy weather often affects the well-being of the people. Environmental factors coupled with the lack

of industrialization on the island frustrate Merle who understands the necessity of technological advancement for progress toward freedom from colonial imposition.

Merle's "old but ageless Bentley, which from all evidence must have once served as the state car of a colonial governor" (4) adds to the hardship of maneuvering these environmental conditions because the car "appeared to have been deliberately abused, willfully desecrated" (4). The insinuations related to this car extend to the island-nation's relationship to a colonial power, both in the latent emblems of colonization as demonstrated by the car itself as well as the damages made to the car as signs of anger about the colonization. The car represents power, especially in gendered and class terms; the fact that this emblem of upper-class masculinity shows signs of abuse and damage suggests that the power relations on the island may be in flux and indeed, Merle, a woman is the driver of this car, which demonstrates the possibility of women wielding power. Merle's role as an authority figure connects directly to her upper-class status, but she is also female, black and native to the island suggesting a weaker influence on the nation than her white, male counterparts.

Further, although she holds a secondary position of power among the elite of the nation, as the driver, the novel suggests that Merle poses a threat to the native population because she embraces technology and understands that using the car allows her particular forms of freedom from labor, social, and economic oppression. The combination of power and weakness in the emblem of mobility, but in dilapidated form, summarizes the conditions of the masses and introduces the reader to the various psychological as well as material conditions of the inhabitants. Marshall's choice of setting also alludes to the connections between Bourne Island, in the Caribbean, and the larger African Diaspora. The descriptions of the geological terrain and the rural working and living circumstances of the masses remind the reader of the United States' southern conditions for African Americans in particular and also relate to the ancestral lineage of

the narrative's characters as they continue the legacy of their forbearers through non-industrial labor. In the opening scene, Merle comes across Mr. Douglin "dressed in patched and faded denims and wearing a frayed, wide-brimmed straw hat...wielding his cutlass in slow and loving strokes over the grass on the shoulder [of the road]" (6). The narrative's juxtaposition of the old, colonial world with the modern, industrial condition of decolonization adds to the complexities which face Merle in her quest to lead the masses to progress and change.

The characterization of Merle alludes to the complications of her status as a woman in this decolonized space and demonstrates the impact of technology on female subjectivity. Through two lengthy and detailed pages of descriptions about Merle's body, clothing, and her penchant for combining jewelry to exhibit her worldliness, the narrator finally says, "She had donned this somewhat bizarre outfit, each item of which stood opposed to, at war even, with the other, to express rather a diversity and disunity within herself, and her attempt, unconscious probably, to reconcile these opposing parts, to make them whole" (5). Merle's physical demonstrations through dress allude to her efforts to "recover something in herself that had been lost: the sense and certainty of herself as a woman perhaps" (5). This reference to losing a sense of her womanhood alerts the reader to Merle's internal conflicts with her gender positions and the detail about losing a sense of "certainty" in relation to gender signals Merle's psychological fractures. Fanon dissects the colonized intellectual's psyche by often referring to Aime Cesaire's important observations about the institution of colonialism. In *Discourse on Colonialism*, Cesaire says "I am talking about millions of men in whom fear has been cunningly instilled, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex, to tremble, kneel, despair, and behave like flunkeys" (22). Fanon expounds upon Cesaire's suggestion and says that this sense of inferiority created by the colonizer stems from a "double process: primarily, economic; subsequently, the internalization—or, better, the epidermalization—of this inferiority" (*BSWM*, 11). According to

Cesaire's and Fanon's observations, the physical and material conditions of domination present themselves and are felt by the colonized through socio-economic realities and in Merle's case, exhibited through outward appearances suggestive of internal complexities.

Cesaire and Fanon point out how the capitalist class-system fuels the colonial machine and essentially affects men by creating divisions along racial and economic lines and therefore supports the dominant position of the colonizer while producing superiority/inferiority dichotomies. Neither of these thinkers refers to the effects of colonialism and decolonization on women and Fanon in particular, stresses the subtle but crippling psychological and emotional effects of the colonial relationship upon the colonized male. He says, "not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (*BSWM*, 110). Although Fanon purposely refers to colonized men, Marshall explores his observation in the life of a woman of color. She demonstrates in her novel that this awareness of race is complicated by gender roles and expectations for women and therefore, the psychological impact of double-consciousness manifests through the social and political dealings of the colonized people such that there exists a split in their desires and actions. Both Cesaire and Fanon discuss this condition in regard to the colonized male, but in *The Chosen Place, The Timeless People*, Marshall expands their analyses and focuses her attention on the colonized female, Merle Kinbona.

In both her physical appearance and her mannerisms, Merle embodies the various cultural and economic characteristics of her life experiences. As Joseph T. Skerrett observes, "Her manner of dress is the sum of her personal history—the sophistication of her English education, the brilliance of her African heritage, the 'noisy' bracelets, so obsessively repeated, the symbol of her obsessive connection to her West Indian homeland" (69). Although Skerrett's comment edges towards reductionism, his suggestion points to how Merle negotiates her cosmopolitanism with her value-system based on a local experience of colonialism. This is to say, "Merle is a

picture of contradiction and conflict” (Skerrett, 69). She can at once exhibit her upper-class background through her cultural capital and possessions while simultaneously displaying herself as “an object in the midst of other objects” (*BSWM*, 109). Although Fanon concentrates his analysis on the colonized male, his observations on the psychological state of the colonized intellectual transcend gender in the sense that objectification affects men and women, albeit in different ways. As he describes in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the colonized person’s “customs and the sources on which they were based, were wiped out because they were in conflict with a civilization that he did not know and that imposed itself on him” (110). In Marshall’s novel, the juxtaposition of descriptions about Merle’s choice of dress and car with her status as an upper-class member of the island suggest that various colonial impositions affect her life. Her interactions with the local population and the foreigners demonstrate the traumatic psychological issues this woman deals with in the decolonizing world of Bourne Island including her sense of shame and guilt in having intimate relations with a white woman. Marshall’s depictions of Merle’s reactions to her affair with this woman echo Fanon’s disgust at intimate relationships between women of color and white men. Their mutual disdain for interracial sexuality demonstrates the anticolonial sentiment that erases desire in the face of race and class struggles. As Missy Dehn Kubitschek suggests, it is “white women rather than white men [who] wield power” (53) in this novel, but Marshall condones Fanon’s problematic opinion that racial concerns should trump female sexuality and desire.

Marshall combines Fanon’s racial and class analyses with astute explorations of Merle’s conflicts as a divorced woman with an estranged child who tries to reconcile her desires as a woman with her awareness of her position as a colonized person. The reader learns that Merle was married and has a daughter. The divorce, painful and unfriendly, resulted in her ex-husband taking their child back to Africa thus causing a total disconnect between mother and child. The

narrator explains that Merle's ex-husband decided to leave her with their child in tow because of Merle's sexual past and especially because he disapproved of her lesbian relationship. As Joyce Pettis describes, "Merle's personal history as a young adult includes irreconcilable loss: her husband's desertion and the consequent usurpation of their baby girl because of Merle's history with the European woman" (111). Pettis draws strong connections between Merle's sense of guilt and shame about the lesbian affair and her inability to reconcile her family status and suggests that this particular relationship of loss becomes the "immediate source of her psychological fragmentation" (111).

Merle's awareness of her "two dimensions" (*BSWM*, 19) is most clearly expressed when she tells Saul about her relationship with the wealthy British woman in London. Merle says, "She was much older than the rest of us and the one with the money...She mostly used the money to buy foolish people like me. She collected people the way someone else might paintings or books" (328). Although Merle befriends the wealthy white woman as a result of her alternative lifestyle in London, she finds the experience belittling and embarrassing because the British woman refused to recognize Merle as an equal; the West Indian intellectual functioned as the rich woman's entertainment through her objectification of Merle's humanity. Merle even ties her personal relations with the upper-class whites to the colonial paradigm by suggesting that the "little empire [the wealthy, British woman] had going on in her drawing room" (328) reflects the larger global British Empire, which also controls the so-called Third World through "supposed generosity and kindness [with] all those delightful little presents [it] was always giving [which were] meant to do one thing: keep you dependent—and grateful" (329). Merle's emotional anger connects to her sense of dignity as she describes feeling belittled and degraded as an object among this wealthy woman's other objects. The reader remains ignorant of Merle's sexual encounters with other women, if there were any, therefore these sentiments of guilt, shame, and

disgust at her liaison with this woman relate to the colonized male's desire to restore a sense of heteronormative masculinity just as she seems to want to reestablish her position as a heterosexual woman. The novel implies Merle's lesbian affair resulted from the colonial imposition of homosexuality, not a genuine desire for another woman, and that her inability to redeem a sense of dignity connects to her sexual meandering.

The reader learns that Merle harbors painful secrets from her past, which negatively affect her present life. Although she tries to function within her society so that none of the members of her community notice her personal guilt and shame from her past experiences, she nonetheless suffers physically and emotionally due to her choices and actions from her youth. Specifically, when Merle lived in England, her choices in romantic relationships would eventually cause some of her most painful experiences. While in London, the reader learns Merle had many intimate relationships including a marriage to a man from Uganda and a lesbian affair with a wealthy white woman. She is equally haunted by these two relationships; her marriage ends in divorce and her ex-husband leaves her with their daughter in tow; her involvement with the British woman plagues her and indicates her awareness of her precarious position as a colonized person. The narrator explains that Merle feels immense shame about her liaison with the white woman, especially since her sexual interaction with and economic dependence on the woman make her glaringly conscious of her role as a colonial subject. At one point in the novel, she bursts to Saul: "Blast all of you! You and Sir John and Hinds and the Queen and that smooth high-toned bitch of a wife you've got and that other bitch who tried to turn me into a monkey for her amusement" (390). Even though her comment broadly implicates white people in colonial oppression, Merle recognizes that she must negotiate her sense of identity in at least two ways: one as a black, West Indian, intellectual woman and the other as a second-class citizen amidst white men and women. Merle's sentiments reflect Fanon's observation that "The colonized is

elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (*BSWM*, 18). The most apparent elements of Merle's double-consciousness reveal themselves in her style of dress and behavior, but more importantly, Merle's upbringing in British schools and her young adulthood in a bohemian circle in London caused a disconnect for her as an oppressed colonized person because of her physical location away from her home-country, but also since she failed to recognize her second-class status in London until many years later.

Timothy Chin argues that the "particular conjunction of the sexual and the colonial in Marshall's 1969 novel reflects the terms within which anti-colonial arguments were often constructed in certain 'Afrocentric' or black nationalist discourses that characterized the period" (132). This is a useful suggestion to examine Marshall's troubling depiction of homosexuality in the text, which arguably hinders Merle's progressive actions and hardly demonstrate her position as decolonization's "new woman." As Chin notes, some black nationalists viewed homosexuality as a result of the decadence of the bourgeois value-system and even more importantly, their views show that "they rely on notions of family or 'race' as family [as] always already gendered, always already, in Stuart Hall's words, 'underpinned by a particular sexual economy, a particular figured masculinity [or femininity], a particular class identity', and so on" (132). In this context, Merle's shame over her relationship with the wealthy British woman stems from both her guilt about giving in to the colonial power-structure and from her inability to formulate a heteronormative bond so as to protect her racial and gender position.

To further complicate Merle's failure to have a heteronormative family unit since the homosexual relationship does not produce biological offspring through the partners' physical intimacies, Merle's involvement with the British woman endangers her racial lineage and therefore condones colonialism. Hortense Spillers suggests that Merle's lesbian affair points to

the “particular dynamics of colonial politics and its involvement on the intimate ground of feeling” (172-73), but Spillers essentially disregards the problematic depiction of homosexuality in Marshall’s novel. Although Spillers’ analysis of the colonial relationship through the homosexual encounters is insightful, she does not address the recurrent theme of homophobia in the text, which indicates a limited outlook on the process of decolonization. It is difficult to distinguish whether the homophobia reflects a limit in Marshall’s viewpoints or the island-nation’s stance on the issue and to some extent, it is not necessary to examine a source for blame. After all, Marshall is at least willing to address this controversial aspect of the progressive movements of her time and more importantly, in analyzing the process towards revolution, Marshall’s depiction of homophobia in the colonies shows that it transcends class distinctions. That said, since the reader remains unaware about Merle’s other relationships, a question arises about how Merle would feel and react if her lesbian partner was also a black mother living on Bourne Island? The fact that Marshall excludes such a possibility in Merle’s narrative suggests that Marshall believes, as did many progressives of the mid-twentieth century, that homosexuality was a bourgeois as well as imported colonial matter. These progressives held the notion that once the class system was dismantled by ousting oppressive colonial rule, then homosexuality would also disappear; this problematic supposition also points to the dire lack of consideration for the place of sexuality in the struggle for freedom.

Further, Marshall condones the homophobic vein of thinking in Black Nationalist discourse by promoting heteronormativity in her narrative. As Jacqui Alexander notes, the narrative descriptions of homosexuality as “unnatural” essentially function to “naturalize” heterosexuality (5-6; see Chin). Merle tells Saul that she finally ended her relationship with the wealthy British woman because “most of all...I was curious to see if a man would maybe look at me twice” (329). As Chin points out, “Merle’s recuperation of a stable black female identity

seems to hinge on her ability to attract the sexual attentions of a (heterosexual) male. [Merle is essentially saved from colonial destruction] through marriage and motherhood” (134).

Nonetheless, in regard to Merle’s awakening to her role as a leader in the movement towards progress, her own discomfort with her sexual past and homosexuality in general suggests how this specific psychological block related to her feelings of shame and guilt over her lesbian relationship with the wealthy, white woman hinders her progress and the island-nation as a whole.

The first time the reader witnesses Merle’s homophobia is at Sugar’s, the island’s most popular nightclub. As she describes the various people in the club to Saul, she points to a group of men and says: “As for that bunch out on the balcony...not a boy child over the age of three is safe since they arrived on the island” (87). The narrator notes that her smile “tightened” (87) as she looked upon this group of club-goers and the reader glimpses the narrator’s own homophobia as the gay men are reduced to exhibiting “the overstated gestures of their kind, as well as the unnaturally high voices that called attention to themselves and the laugh that was as shrill and sexless as a eunuch’s, and which never ceased. It issued from the balcony in a steady, terrifying, utterly mirthless obligato” (88). Merle’s initial summation of the men as foreigners because they “arrived” on the island also alludes to the colonial presence on Bourne Island. The combination of being foreign and homosexual echoes the Black Nationalist and other leftist perceptions that “homosexuality is an abhorrent sexual practice introduced by Europeans” (Sharpe, 38). More importantly, black nationalists viewed homosexuality as particularly threatening to male masculinity, which was already under attack socioeconomically and politically. Female sexuality and desire remained neglected topics in the Black Nationalist discourse mainly because heteronormativity was presumed for women. In this novel, the depiction of gay men and the absence of gay women except for Merle who struggles with her

desire, endorses the homophobia of Black Nationalism and therefore advocates heteronormativity especially as a weapon against colonialism to emphasize the importance of abandoning homoerotic desire in the struggle for freedom.

Merle's most troubling response to homosexuality and the most striking feature of the homophobia of the text shows in her direct suggestion to Allen that he repress his homoerotic desires and form a heteronormative lifestyle for himself. Allen tells Merle: "I'm not much with the ladies...They don't take to me or I don't to them—something. Anyway, I've generally had a bad time with them...Maybe I can't love them'," (377). Merle's reaction to his revelation points to a dilemma in her position as a "new woman" because she chooses to repress her own feelings and desires and encourages Allen to follow her example and uphold traditional and patriarchal notions of gender and sexuality. She says, "Maybe the best thing would be for you to do like most of us—just go ahead and make a start at life. Find yourself a nice girl someplace for instance—and you shouldn't have any difficulty because as I said any woman could love you—and get married, have some chil—'," (380). Her use of the word "us" indicates the connection between Allen and herself as marginalized people, especially in the context of their homoerotic desires, but Merle rejects their bond over their homosexuality, a fact that "disappoints" Allen (380) and instead urges him to follow her example and form a family with someone of the opposite sex so that they can produce a child. As Chin suggests, "Merle's inability to imagine anything other than a conventional heterosexual (and reproductive) solution to Allen's 'problem' not only defines the limits of the novel's discourse on questions of homosexuality, it also exposes one of the consequences—inherent in certain black nationalist discourses—of uncritically conflating 'race' with notions (especially 'naturalized' ones) of family" (135). Merle essentially warns Allen not to make her mistake of fulfilling desires which stand in contradiction to social expectations. She urges him to reject his sexual desires and instead embrace

relationships that complement the status quo and propagate the values and standards of their time. Merle cannot move beyond the limitations of her society's gender expectations and she forces the inhumane and repressive psychological and physical limits upon herself and Allen.

Further, as Loomba points out, "black women suffer from racial and gendered forms of oppression simultaneously" (163) and Marshall only tangentially examines this structure of oppression particular to women of color. Merle's resistance to the economic and political pressures of colonialism position her as an exceptional leader because she understands the machinations of colonial rule, but her complacency with the homophobic and traditional notions of gender performance discredit her prowess and in fact, stand out as reasons which ultimately hinder progress for herself as well as the masses of Bourne Island because she also condones exclusionary practices. By demarcating who belongs in acceptable bonds of community and who does not, in this case homosexuals, Merle participates in the repressive structures that oppress the masses. In addition, her suggestion to Allen to form heteronormative bonds in order to produce children solidifies her complacency with conservative and regressive standards. Loomba points to Angela Davis' discussion of family life to describe the ways in which "family as an institution carries different meanings—American blacks, and other immigrants of color, have historically been denied the privilege of forming family units and the family for them has been forged in the crucible of racial oppression" (165). This suggests that Merle fails to recognize the differences between her and Allen on gendered, racial, and class terms and seems to only reiterate and condone the expectations of the patriarchal system of power. This characteristic of Merle's detracts from her leadership role and shows the reader one main vein of her weakness in helping the oppressed collective and one of her major faults as a "new woman."

Even though the homophobia that pervades the text hinders collective action to some extent because of the advancement of traditional notions of gender, family, and therefore

community membership, Marshall's novel remains committed to examining the possibility of the proletariat revolution through the identity formation of the island-nation's masses as a socioeconomically and politically oppressed group. Gary Storhoff suggests that although there is no significant material realization of resistance and rebellion at the end of Marshall's text, we witness the process at one of its most crucial stages. He argues that this text celebrates "communitas" which is "a release from predictability and structure; as a liberation into 'anti-structure' that resists the sense of the constricted uniqueness of personal identity; and as a mystical experience of oneness with people, living and dead, unbounded by time and space" (50-51). Marshall imbues this novel with repeated images of the Bournehills masses as "static forms of men and women working in the fields under the overseeing eye of the sun" (103). Their gestures allude to the collective characteristic of the people as they "slowly raise their right arm...the hand held stiff, the fingers straight. It was a strange, solemn greeting encompassing both hail and farewell, time past and present" (103). These images endorse collectivity through race, class, and political disenfranchisement while gender is yet again erased by these concerns.

These descriptions capture the essence of Marshall's novel as these people dwell in a geographically, historically, and politically charged area while displaying the timelessness of Storhoff's "communitas". Specifically, Storhoff suggests that these two particular recurring images uphold "communitas"; he says, "The first, linked to patterns of Caribbean image of the Zombie...inscribes the spiritual deprivation and exhaustion provoked by neocolonialism; the second, linked to the novel's profusion of nature imagery, points to a possibility of rebirth of the human spirit in communitas" (51). At various points in the novel, Marshall inserts ghosts such as the "familial shadows" (27) in Leesy's house, or the "duppies" (111) who lurk in the rooms of Merle's hotel and the purpose of this reminder of people from the past is to suggest the presence of memory, which in the colonial context is coupled with the trauma of slavery and diaspora.

This juxtaposition of the living with the dead suggests Marshall's awareness that there is a need for "communitas" as a "fundamental human need that frequently is repressed by the operations of social 'structure' into the unconscious" (Storhoff, 50) and possibly, the conjuring of memories of past rebellions in which the Bournehills masses created "communitas" can lead to progressive results. Storhoff refers to Marshall's sentiments in a 1992 interview about her novel in which the author says that "Connection and reconciliation are major themes in my work" (50) and he uses Marshall's ideas to suggest that the repetition of "communitas" reflects a desire to have hope in the actions of a social group or collective. Although the images he refers to are indeed indicative of collective action, the narrative remains highly suggestive of the fact that there is no center or group that can affect progressive changes that would ensure better living conditions for the oppressed masses. In fact, these descriptions of the island's native population stem more from the reality that "this culture, once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression...the cultural mummification leads to a mummification of individual thinking" (*TAR*, 34). Therefore, although the gestures of the masses and their dramatization of rebellion mark the possibilities of actual resistance through collective actions, once again, Fanon posits that the colonized people remain transfixed in an immobile, but commemorative, condition because their bodies as well as their minds are devastatingly colonized into submission.

One of the most critically important and intense scenes in the novel occurs during Carnival in which the Bournehills masses embody "communitas" most notably as they unite to commemorate historical incidents in which their predecessors rose up against their oppressors. As Storhoff observes, "this ritual of Cuffee's capture of the hated owner Bryam...encodes for the people a possible vision of the future, an alternative to the relentless servitude they suffer" (60). Even though the people of Bourne Island at first chastise the Bournehills residents for their

repetitive display of this event, “here and there amid the packed spectators, voices could be heard singing along with the band, and some of the onlookers were actually dancing where they stood pressed up against the buildings. Even those who had cursed the marchers...found themselves swaying as the Bournehills steelband passed” (288). The island-nation’s population unites across class boundaries as the performance and display jostle their memories of the heroism and humanity of their ancestors. They are reminded once again that there exists another way of dealing with their oppressive conditions and through “*communitas*” it becomes evident that “They had been a People!” (287). This slogan and Marshall’s depiction of the masses joining together in nationalistic terms reflects the politics of the author’s time in which racial unity problematically trumped class and gender differences as race discourse erased other important issues. Marshall even admits that “I don’t make any distinction between African-American and West Indian. All o’ we is one as far as I’m concerned...I need the sense of being connected to the women and men, real and imaginary, who make up my being” (Dance, 7). Her sentiment becomes a part of the narrative in this scene of collective unity, but simply embracing a romantic and nostalgic past does not effectively change the harsh conditions of the present. Marshall’s novel depicts the emotional bonds between the masses, but remains aware that these feelings are not enough in and of themselves to produce progressive results for the masses.

On the other hand, also in accord with African American intellectuals who recognized the similarities between the African American struggle for liberation in the process of decolonization and the rest of the world, Marshall depicts the Bournehills masses’ cry as “a People!” in a sense that “it didn’t seem they were singing only of themselves and Bournehills, but of people like them everywhere” (286). The narrator continues, “their insistent voices seemed to be saying...the experience through which any people who find themselves ill-used, dispossessed, at the mercy of the powerful, must pass” (287). This charged display of recollecting past,

progressive and successful rebellion ultimately remains a performance and never comes to fruition by the current Bournehills masses. Marshall, in the same vein as the other authors of this study, nuances the idealistic possibilities of revolution by showing the reader that the socioeconomic, political, and historical impediments that restrict the realization of a successful revolution are compounded by the limits of a protagonist who is crippled by her own struggles with existentialist angst and yet, she too is a part of this collective and more importantly, the leader of the rebellion.

Through the depictions of the Bournehills population, Marshall gives the reader a glimpse into their outlook on their oppressive conditions; the collective opinion seems to be imbedded in the need for change, although they refuse to accept imperialist or capitalist solutions for their circumstances including Saul's so-called humanitarian project to revitalize their agriculture-based economy. The land itself on this island-nation rejects the efforts of the so-called First World to improve the living and working conditions of the masses as it gives way to erosion and refuses to meld itself to the man-made materials meant for construction of roads and pavement (104-5). It becomes apparent then that the nation and its people are historically, politically, and culturally aware of the injustices committed against them by the imperialist-capitalist system, but they lack leadership and a sense of group belonging to move them towards independence and resistance. In part, this fact is attributable to the quickly shifting practices and methods of the capitalist system; here, the colonial feudal system evolves into the capitalist-industrial complex and yet, the Bournehills masses still labor and produce goods in the same fashion that their slave ancestors did many centuries before them, "transporting their crops the long distance by donkey cart" (404). The narrative's insistence upon the incorporation of technology to alleviate these harsh conditions is a critical issue in the novel. In fact, Merle's efforts to help these masses are fueled by the frustration and agony which she feels as a result of

the masses' refusal to advance technologically. This is a crucial dilemma; as Amiri Baraka says technology means advancement for the colonizer, but technology for the colonized equates with oppression. He says, after colonialism ends, the colonized may be "Freed of an oppressor, but also as Touré has reminded we must be 'free from the oppressor's spirit,' as well. It is this spirit as emotional construct that can manifest as expression as art or technology or any form" (156).

Marshall thinks through the position and implications of technology in this novel and demonstrates that while Merle and other upper-class members of this society understand the beneficial uses of industry, the masses remain wary of so-called technological advancements. For instance, through Saul's suggestion and guidance, the people establish a committee to address their dire situation, but this cooperative remains shaky and fragile at best (404) and ultimately, the rural class and working class people retain their most rudimentary labor practices, which indicates both a resistance to the dominant culture and a form of attachment to the past.

Marshall's novel suggests that it may be useful to address the injustices of the capitalist system through unions and labor committees, but she also points to the necessity of an informed and influential leader, someone who can simultaneously handle the bureaucracy of the class-system while addressing the concerns of the working class; in this novel, it is Merle Kinbona, but as Storhoff observes, Merle suffers from her own doubts as to her ability to lead the oppressed population. He says, "Marshall's implication is that [Merle's] emotional instability is not a personal anomaly but is politically and culturally induced. She is Marshall's representation of Frantz Fanon's theory that mental disorders are concomitant with neocolonial oppression" (58). In this sense, the revolution is still in progress because the people, those who must act in unison and solidarity to affect change in their lives, must first address their respective limits and anxieties. Merle's decision to travel to Africa to find her child suggests hope for the realization of Bourne Island's liberation, albeit her choice is heavily imbued with her homophobia and

submissive acceptance of patriarchy. As a stand-in for the nation, Merle's confrontation with her personal trauma mirrors the necessity that Bourne Island's masses need to also address their collective trauma, especially as it relates to the African diaspora and the horrors of the slave system.

While Pettis provides a compelling observation about Merle's fragile mental state as a result of the demise of her marriage and family sphere, the narrative also suggests her awareness of the class, racial, and gender imbalances of her life-world that compound her most intimate sense of loss. Although never explicitly stated, Merle seems to substitute her motherly care and nurturing for her child towards the island's masses; in particular, Merle's behavior towards others is a combination of kindness and joviality with condescending and impassioned anger. While she acquires many friendships as a result of her seemingly carefree and open-hearted camaraderie, Merle also exhibits moments of immense resentment, edging towards feelings of shame. One of the opening descriptions of Merle proclaims that she appeared "visibly annoyed, close to anger" (3) and when she speaks to Mr. Douglin about an impending closure of the local factory in the midst of her car troubles, Merle's passions rise up "in her renewed anger" (7). It is precisely the emotion of anger that effectively riles up Fanon's "new men" to action and Merle's outbursts, which stem from "anger" suggest she is a "new woman" whose life-world is complicated by her role as someone's mother. While the anger of the "new man" seems to connect directly and more explicitly to colonial abuses, in Merle's case, anger relates to the decolonization of the island and more so to her inability to confront her husband about his taking her child away from her.

Her anger and upper-class position on this island when juxtaposed to the silent and calm responses of her audience, specifically Mr. Douglin and an elderly woman named Leesy, suggest that she fulfills a position of leadership as she defends the rights of these peasants in the face of

threats from the factory owners. She tells Leesy, “I’m not going to let them upset me this year with that old business” (7-8). The narrator describes Leesy as “inaccessible behind the high wall of her silence, her gaze distant and incurious throughout” (8). After this long silence, which only Merle’s incessant chatter about the labor abuses and lack of care from the authorities interrupts, Leesy finally says, ““everything’s going down down to grass. We’re seeing the last days now”” (9) and the old woman’s defeated tone riles Merle into calling her friend and town mayor, Lyle, to put more action into assisting the island-nation’s peasantry. Her phone call combines talk about the personal, the political, and local concerns and Merle reminds Lyle that she “had to pay with [her] sanity for the right to speak [her] mind” (11). Although Merle shows strong agency in these moments, the narrative remains problematic as the masses including Leesy remain at Merle’s and the upper-class’s mercy. This is to say, the masses rarely express agency in affecting progressive changes on their own behalf. While Merle becomes a leader and hero of sorts, she remains complicit in the repression of the masses as she takes control of the well-being of the collective through solitary actions.

In addition to her bold actions, Merle’s incessant and aggressive talking stand out as one of her most powerful traits and her companions recognize this quality about her with a mixture of surprise and annoyance. As Saul says about her, once she is “out of earshot” (67), ““does she go on like that all the time?”” (67). Fanon complicates the issue of language and speaking by suggesting that while “it is implicit that to speak is to exist absolutely for the other” (*BSWM*, 17), in the context of the colonial experience, “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (*BSWM*, 17-18). In this process of using the colonial power’s language, the colonized individual abandons or represses the native language and subsequent culture and most problematically, invests in recognizing the so-called superiority

of the colonizer over him or herself. The excess of talking also suggests that psychological trauma causes Merle to speak to the point of disturbance. Pettis posits that Merle's "fragile mental equilibrium is sustained through the extravagance of her talk" (109), but rather than helping her maintain control of herself and her environment, Merle's excessive talking implicates trauma, which results from her need for but lack of a sense of community, family, or other solid forms of connectedness to others. Therefore, while the person "who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language" (*BSWM*, 19), he or she experiences the loss or at least, negative mutation of other elements of his or her identity. Fanon diagnoses this process of gaining and losing culture through language as a result of the "psychological-economic system" (*BSWM*, 35). As Fanon says, "there is a retaining-wall relation between language and group" (*BSWM*, 38) and Merle balances this complex network of language, culture, and power even though at times her alleged excessive talking seems to deflect attention from her personal psychological limits related to "the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment" (*BSWM*, 30).

Merle's participation in the patriarchal model of assimilation shows in her adoption of Western modes of living such as her lifestyle choices and material belongings, but the reader also notices that she struggles with her racial and class positions as both an insider with the masses and as an outsider in the midst of the white members of her community. This simultaneous belonging to seemingly opposed groups creates the "arsenal of complexes" which Fanon observes in decolonization's "new man" and here, "new woman." In a conversation with Lyle, Merle "almost angrily withdrawing her arm from his" (67) tells the local politician that he cannot be of much help to the impoverished population of Bourne Island because he is "in league with Kingsley and Sons [the factory owners]" and yet, she sympathizes with Lyle because she thinks he "can't help it. They put you so. Those English were the biggest obeah men out when you

considered what they did to our minds” (67). Fanon’s suggestions about the ways in which colonial domination functions on the creation of superiority and inferiority complexes imply that Merle’s anger towards Lyle and his negligence of the lower-classes stems from her recognition that he suffers from a sense of inferiority in relation to the wealthy and white factory owners. She criticizes the actions and subservience of her fellow upper-class members by literally dragging them into awareness of their self-abasing behaviors. After chastising Lyle for his lack of action on behalf of the cane farmers, she pulls him along to help her find another negligent official named Deanes, whom she calls a “rascal” (67). The narrative consistently displays Merle’s power and her particular sense of authority when dealing with male counterparts. She addresses the men in the narrative with confidence and even directs them to behave and act as she desires. Her abilities and prowess to affect change give her a leadership position, but her own sense of inferiority stemming from her fractured identity and sense of shame about her past coupled with the lack of strong communal bonds between the people often overwhelms her and halts progress towards revolution.

Merle’s mastery of the English language allows her to directly engage the oppressors, but she is also subject to ridicule and abasement by the very same oppressors. This is to say, Fanon points out the stereotypes about the colonized person who speaks the colonizer’s language. He says, “It is said that the Negro loves to jabber...when I think of the word *jabber* I see a gay group of children calling and shouting for the sake of calling and shouting...The Negro loves to jabber, and from this theory it is not a long road that leads to a new proposition: The Negro is just a child” (*BSWM*, 26-27). In various instances, Merle’s talking is described by her friends and acquaintances as a “barrage” of words (73) and the incessant character of her speaking often overwhelms her white audience (74, 90). The narrator explains that “it was the talk, you sensed, which alone sustained her” (95). Merle’s excessive talking suggests the uniquely crippling

effects of feeling subjugated by an oppressive force. From the opening scene of the novel to the last chapter, Merle's most identifiable feature is her talking, a characteristic that Fanon positions as the quintessential element that fosters the colonized person's dialectical engagement with his or her oppressor. More specifically, Fanon posits "Mastery of language affords remarkable power" (*BSWM*, 18). As an upper-middle class, British educated, West Indian woman Merle masters both native speech as well as the colonizer's language. This ability to speak to the natives as well as the colonizers in their own respective languages, positions Merle in the favor of the locals while showing the colonizers that she can deal with them in their own ways. Merle's knowledge and use of native and foreign language and culture gives her immense power in the various cultural and class groups on the island-nation, but she becomes a "cultural broker" (118), which the foreign and white members of her community identify as "invaluable to us" (118) because they falsely assume she will promote their goals and win the hearts and minds of the masses because she can simultaneously champion the colonizer's needs while remaining a part of the colonized group.

The important point about Merle's use of the colonizer's language, which these white, foreign men misunderstand is that as Ania Loomba suggests "anti-colonial movements and individuals often drew upon Western ideas and vocabularies to challenge colonial rule" (174). Merle indeed uses her insider knowledge with both the locals and the foreigners to affect progressive changes in the lives of the impoverished members of Bourne Island and as the narrator describes, Merle "never put on airs with [the lower classes]. They know she's on their side...She feels for us, they say" (117). This distinction becomes apparent when Merle confronts Lyle Hutson on his negligence of the conditions of the Bournehills residents; here, Merle functions as a cultural broker of sorts. Posing herself as a woman of power through her control of language, she switches back and forth through standard and dialect English and various

cultural allusions. She says, “The chains are still on. Oh, Lyle, can’t you see that? [...] Bo, you don’t know it, but Bournehills is the way it is for a reason—that you people in town are too blind to see. And it will stay so, no matter what, for a reason” (210). It is precisely at this moment of confrontation that the observer realizes Merle holds considerable power in her community because she can simultaneously address the upper-class while championing the concerns of the masses and it is through her switching between native forms and standard English that the reader notices Merle’s potential as a leader for the masses.

This “remarkable power” (*BSWM*, 18) of being able to transverse socioeconomic boundaries through language affords Merle a particularly important role in the island-nation’s social and political settings. She can communicate with the so-called masters and slaves and transmit their respective viewpoints to the other side; this ability to traverse the socioeconomic and gender barriers to power positions her in the third space of identity and another form of rebellion brews out of this status. Merle’s command of non-standard English appears through Harriet’s discomfort with her forms of linguistic expression. The quintessential upper-class, white Harriet says: “She is exhausting...she just goes on and on, and with that accent and the odd way she puts things I can’t understand half of what she’s saying” (112). While Harriet becomes frustrated by Merle’s linguistic prowess, the upper-class white woman essentially loses her power position in the very fact that she “can’t understand half of what [Merle’s] saying.” Through language, Merle cuts off Harriet’s access to power as brief as this may be in the larger scheme of power relations. Fanon warns however that Merle’s linguistic ability comes at the cost of her own psychological stability. Fanon explains this condition through an anecdote about the voyage of the colonized person to the colonizer’s mother country. He says, “In the eyes of those who have come to see him off he can read the evidence of his own mutation, his power. ‘Good-bye bandanna, good-bye straw hat’...” (*BSWM*, 23). Merle also appears as a powerful native

because she can exhibit the colonizer's or power-structure's language and hence, culture. The trauma caused by belonging to both the oppressed and oppressor's culture, as Fanon continues, is that "the newly returned Negro adopts a language different from that of the group into which he was born [and this is] evidence of a dislocation, a separation" (*BSWM*, 25). The alienation and sense of disconnect, which Merle experiences often exhibits itself in her long bouts of silence. Her role as a defender and leader for the voiceless on Bourne Island heightens the importance of her talking and when she becomes silent, her withdrawal from communication stands out as deafening for the Bournehills residents and their needs are once again neglected because no other member of the island cares about the lower-classes as much as Merle.

To some extent, Merle's long detachments from her community reflect the traumatic impact of negotiating her many identities in the decolonizing atmosphere of Bourne Island. Leesy explains to her son Vere that Merle "had a little trouble some weeks back and it kinda set out her head" (32). She recounts for Vere that Merle took a position as a history teacher in the local school to supplement her income and was ousted after the administrators learned that she stopped using their textbooks. Leesy says, "She was telling the children about Cuffee Ned...when the headmaster wanted her to teach the history that was down in the books" (32). Leesy then reminds Vere that Merle's life reflects hardship and suffering from the time her "father sent her to England to study, all things that happened to here there: the wild people they say she took up with, and how the man she married walked out flat on her one day taking her child with him...she's known what it is to suffer" (33). The pain and heartache, which her life circumstances caused her materialize in her body such that she exhibits an "empty stare and lifeless form" (399) and hands "which felt muscleless and cold" (400). Out of the six novels of this project, *The Chosen Place*, *Timeless People* and *Savushun* are the only two which deal with issues of mental health risks as a result of colonialism. In Marshall's novel, Merle hangs on to

life through her verbosity. As one of the other characters says, “That’s just Merle. She never lets you get in a word if she can help it” (68) and she uses her speaking as a way to intervene in and interrupt the impositions of colonialism because her language is her first line of protection against white, male, upper-class pressures. Further, Merle’s bouts of silence result from her fervent but ultimately futile attempts to rectify the injustices on the island. She often becomes silent following a failed effort to bring about change for the masses. The trauma of not having a political, social, economic or familial group to belong to also creates psychological tension, which results in Merle’s complete withdrawal from her world.

Joyce Pettis suggests that Merle’s “talk becomes...defensive artifice, and she is conscious of its contrivance as an intensive barrier against others’ perceptions of her loss of psychological equilibrium” (110). This observation reflects Merle’s interactions with her community through her constant light conversations and avoidance of more personal questions. When she first meets Saul and Harriet, she tells them, “Some people act, some think, some feel, but I talk, and if I was to ever stop that’d be the end of me” (65). Her confession about her need to talk alludes to her intentional neglect of her friends’ inquisitiveness about her past life, but her insistence to use her voice to speak suggests what Hannah Arendt identifies as “influence and authority” (175) because Merle talks in the public sphere where she demands and commands recognition. After her confrontation with Lyle regarding his lack of commitment to the Bournehills masses, Saul approaches her and asks if she would discuss the issue more with him. In response, Merle says, “‘You think I know what I’m saying half the time!’ and had refused to discuss it” (215). These episodes indicate Merle’s control of language as she literally turns her voice on and off according to her audience.

Although this ability to use language when and how she sees fit points to Merle’s power and authority because she consequently controls the linguistic exchange, there is simultaneously

a kind of psychological disturbance as she has to perform what Fanon identifies as a balancing act of the various cultural, economic, and political bearings embedded in the language and its culture. Arendt's observation comes with this important distinction, which helps explain the fact that Merle often ends up silencing herself through her comatose bouts. Arendt says, "the basic condition of both action and speech has the twofold character of equality and distinction. If men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them" (175). Merle is often misunderstood or dismissed as excessively talkative by the upper-class, which in this Arendtian light suggests that the upper-class fails to recognize her as their equal whereas the lower-class members of her society embrace her as one of their own. The frustration and pressure this dual position creates for Merle express themselves in her complete withdrawal from all of her community.

This fact in turn shows that at times, this "weight" (*BSWM*, 18) crushes Merle and indeed silences her. There are several episodes in which Merle falls into a comatose state, physically and mentally detached from the world around her because although she recognizes she has power to challenge the injustices around her and may even have the humanity to address the inequalities, she remains in a second-class position and therefore, incapable of speaking and acting on behalf of the masses. Her second-class status stems from her gender and race in the hierarchy of the class-system of Bourne Island regardless of her intellectual ability and community involvement. In addition, Merle's discomfort with some her life choices adds to this burden and further complicates her ability to lead the masses to revolution.

As Fanon says, "to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture" (*BSWM*, 38) and although there is power and control inherent in the ability to communicate verbally, an important transformation occurs in the mind and consequently, the actions of the person. This phenomenon

becomes especially complex in light of the colonial relationship. As Merle Kinbona demonstrates in Marshall's text, the "weight of the civilization" (*BSWM*, 18) behind the language burdens the colonized intellectual and may even immobilize his or her ability to create change in his or her society. Merle is a complicated intellectual who is at once a determined socialist who recognizes the need for change, but whose personal inner conflicts hinder her ability to incite revolution on Bourne Island. She stands as the most capable figure for leading the drive for independence and sovereignty precisely because she masters the colonizer's language and culture as well as the native vernacular and way of life. Yet, as Fanon suggests, the mental shackles of colonization pose as the most detrimental and difficult to abandon as the colonized intellectual functions as both a colonizer in his or her mastery of the colonizer's ways and an oppressed figure since the colonizer fails to recognize his or her prowess and humanity. Merle recognizes this fact when she says, "Those English were the biggest obeah men out when you considered what they did to our minds" (67), which in turn affects the choices and actions of the colonized person.

As Fanon says, the "retaining-wall relation between language and group" (*BSWM*, 38) affects Merle in her separation from the Bourne Island masses to some extent, but she maintains communication with and through them, thus affording her a particularly important position as a leader in the resistance against imperialist and capitalist exploitation. She is repeatedly the only figure regardless of race and gender to interact on a personal level with the Bournehills residents. Merle knows many of the Bourne Island working-class people by face, name, and occupation just as she does the middle and upper class members of her society. Her ability to cross the multiple barriers created by the capitalist class-system gives her a uniquely influential position as an upper-class West Indian intellectual, but her personal anxieties and problems interfere with the possibility of her leadership for the abused masses. Despite the social influence and authority

that Merle's mastery of language affords her, as Fanon observes, "to grasp the morphology of this or that language... means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (*BSWM*, 18). If Merle's choices in costume reflect the way in which she negotiates her multiple cultural experiences, then her ability to use the languages she knows indicates what Fanon references as "remarkable power" (*BSWM*, 19). However, in order for a colonized person to master the colonizer's language, a complex series of psychological ruptures take place including the aforementioned process of double consciousness, which in this novel is additionally complicated by Merle's sexuality and her submission to the patriarchal model of family.

As Marshall's novel ends on a note of a mother's quest to reunite with her distant child, Simin Daneshvar's *Savushun*, first published in 1969, begins with the story of a woman whose participation in sociopolitical and domestic circles heavily relies on her role as a wife and mother as central to her agency. Daneshvar's novel is at once a fictional narrative of the highest poetic order and a historical document that captures the psychological and socioeconomic realities of WWII-era Iran. As Brian Spooner says in the Introduction, "*Savushun* enriches a generation's understanding of itself. It encapsulates the experience of Iranians who have lived through the mid-century decades which led up to the 1979 revolution" (7). The reader witnesses the daily activities, struggles, and relationships of an upper-class southern Iranian family in the midst of the chaos imposed upon them as a result of WWII. The focus of the story is on Zari, a young wife and mother who must negotiate family ties and allegiances with the political turmoil which constantly threatens to pull her family and nation apart. The real challenge facing Zari involves the level to which she is willing to accommodate her husband Yusof's ideals. As a headstrong, influential, and powerful leader in their community, Yusof functions as a resistor to the infringement of the European powers. He refuses to give in to their personal and political

demands and expects the same ideological and political stance from his family, especially Zari. *Savushun* chronicles the coming-of-age of these two young Iranians faced with often insurmountable challenges imposed upon them and their relationship by outside forces.

It is necessary to have a review of historical events in order to better understand the political import and impact of Daneshvar's best known novel. As Spooner explains in the Introduction, "The story's main concern is the years between 1941 and 1945. Iran had been occupied by the British and the Soviets, joined later (in 1945) by the Americans, because it sat astride the supply lines from India and the Middle East to the Soviet Union" (10). Indeed, there are quite a number of British characters in the novel, one of whom named MacMahon (an Irishman), befriends Yusof and Zari. Daneshvar meticulously juxtaposes the internal factors, which add to the burden of the southern Iranians, to the global political scene of the story. Corruption, disease, famine, and tribal conflicts all contribute to the general sense of demoralization and hopelessness of the Iranians, but when dealing with Western colonial aims the Iranians form strong communal bonds to combat the unwanted presence of imperialists.

Similar to her contemporaries, but far more critical than many of them, Daneshvar expresses the hidden and underlying tensions and anxieties of the pre-1979 era. *Savushun* highlights the key factors, which ultimately led to and propelled the Islamic Revolution, even though on the surface the reader becomes engaged in the relationships and struggles of this one upper-class family. The opening scene alone sets the tone of Daneshvar's sympathy with the oppressed masses of Iranians. The story begins with the wedding of the Shirazi Governor's daughter. The lavish and decadent party shocks Zari and Yusof and in horror, Yusof says, "Stupid cows! How they kiss their butcher's hand! What a waste! And at a time like this..." (19). The young rebel refers to the way in which the Iranians with power cater to the foreign forces with the hope of securing large monetary rewards and other material gifts. As was often the case,

many Iranian farmers and landowners were willing to sell their crops to the British for their troops at the cost of starvation for their compatriots. In this case, the Governor exchanges the well-being of the community for a major fete in honor of his daughter's nuptials. In particular, the masses of Iranians were experiencing famine and agricultural hardship and this young couple's attention to the ridiculous display of wealth and power positions them as sympathetic to the suffering of the majority of people, even though they themselves could simply partake in the festivities and enjoy the privileges of their upper-class status.

Also, Yusof's disdain for the socioeconomic imbalances displayed by this lavish celebration alludes to the anger many Iranians felt when in 1971 Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi commemorated Persian history and glory for four days at the ancient Persian capitol of Persepolis by inviting foreign dignitaries to a lavish party to show Iranian opulence. Although Daneshvar's novel appeared two years prior to this particular event, her astute awareness of government corruption extends to the regime's activities during and even after the publication of her work. In this case, Mohammad Shah's display, which cost the nation millions of dollars, infuriated many Iranians as the money spent to amaze foreigners could have been better spent on the masses who suffered from harsh economic situations. In the view of his critics, the Shah's overt negligence of the nation's socioeconomic crises meant his obsequiousness to the Europeans and Americans, which ultimately lead to his lack of popularity with the general Iranian Left.

Even though the narrative paints Yusof and Zari as sympathizers with the suffering masses, the narrator's silence about the behavior and expectations of the couple as a result of their class status remains a troubling aspect of the story. This couple's household is run by an array of servants who are treated precisely as hired help and Yusof and Zari often patronize and neglect their workers. For instance, the reader notes the couple's condescending tone when the husband and wife discuss the fate of the little boy they foster after his father, one of Yusof's

shepherds, dies as a result of illness. Yusof asks Zari, ““Do you want me to take him [back to his mother]?”” and she replies, ““No, he’ll be tamed. He can’t possibly know what’s good for him”” (192). Yusof champions the rights of the peasants but when he is home, he orders his servants to tend to his and his family’s needs without a second thought to the injustices caused by the class discrepancy between them and Zari promotes the class hierarchies through some of her demeaning thoughts and actions. In the case of the shepard’s son, Zari implies that his socioeconomic conditions will be substantially better if the boy stays in their household and although she has children and is a doting mother, she completely neglects this child’s feelings of longing for his own family and the boy’s and his mother’s feelings regarding this tragic situation. These characteristics indicate Yusof’s and Zari’s limits as leaders of the resistance or as a “new man” and “new woman,” but nonetheless, they are indeed far more sympathetic towards the suffering masses than the other upper-class characters.

Further, Daneshvar steers away from the usual Leftist rhetoric that tends to glorify the lower classes especially in regard to the belief that the lower classes can lead the revolution once they are committed to Marxism in particular. Instead, in this novel Daneshvar suggests that the often neglected importance of cooperation in the upper-classes amidst Iranian Leftist thought hindered progressive change as the upper-classes are those who hold power to affect policies and social conditions. More importantly, as history notes, it was indeed some of the upper-class intellectuals in Iran, including Daneshvar and her husband Jalal Ale Ahmad, who recognized the similarities between Iran’s oppressive state and the various forms of colonial practices in other parts of the world. Contrary to some of her contemporaries, Daneshvar attempts to depict the so-called admirable qualities of the upper-class by characterizing them through Yusof and Zari as active, intellectual, effective, and humanitarian leaders. While the reader recognizes the limits of these representations, *Savushun* presents important concerns related to the global colonial crisis.

Daneshvar's own awareness about the connections between Iran's neocolonial status and the formally colonized world weaves into her meticulous presentation of Yusof and Zari as staunch anti-colonial intellectuals. Through her astute descriptions and careful choice in allusions, these protagonists stand out as members of the anti-colonialism intelligentsia of pre-1979 Iran. While the story takes place in the 1940s, Daneshvar connects the activities and belief-systems of that era to her own and shows the genealogy of protest and resistance in Iran. As wife and intellectual partner to Jalal Ale Ahmad, Daneshvar demonstrates her own allegiance to Ale Ahmad's critiques and solutions for resisting the impingement of the British, Russian, and American colonizers in this work. She opens her novel with a dedication, which reads: "*In memory of my friend Jalal, /who was the glory of my life, /and whose death I have mourned /as a Savushun mourner. /Simin*". Some scholars argue that *Savushun* is in several critical ways the fictionalized version of Jalal Ale Ahmad's *Occidentosis: A Plague from the West* (1958). For instance, Daneshvar's attention to the various forms of unrest in Shiraz and its surrounding communities alludes to Ale Ahmad's diagnosis of corruption, treachery, and turmoil as a result of Iranian catering to Western ideals and standards. Scholars such as Kamran Talattof suggest that "thematically, [Daneshvar's] representations are consistent with [Ale] Ahmad's anti-Western expose' *Westoxication (Occidentosis)*" (99). Throughout the narrative, the reader finds allusions to Ale Ahmad's *Occidentosis*, especially as Yusof declares in one scene, "I told them, To do something for the people of this country you need an enlightened heart, clear thinking, and no outside interference'," (168). To some extent, Daneshvar fictionalizes *Occidentosis*, especially in regard to the resistance of the Iranians through a return to religious and cultural practices in order to rebel against Western infringement. This novel, whose form allows more nuances of the critical points Ale Ahmad makes in his seminal work, also fills in the problematic gap in Ale Ahmad's writing, namely his near neglect of issues related to women.

In the same vein as the male writers of this project, Daneshvar leaves much wanting in the reader's imagination as far as descriptions about Zari's physical appearance. Except for *The Chosen Place, Timeless People*, the other novels of this study do not have lengthy and explicit portrayals of the protagonists. The effect of leaving the exact physical traits of the protagonists as a mystery is that the narratives about the protagonists' experiences surpass the individuality of the character. This is to say, although each novel emphasizes the importance of the individual in the process of decolonization, the fact that the main protagonists are not described with detail allows for including more people in their struggles. For instance, Daneshvar describes Zari's earrings (22) or the scars on her belly from childbirth (35), but there are no indicators as to her personal, physical features, which allows the reader to think of Zari's experiences as part of a collective rather than a solitary condition, even though the novel is about a particular family at a specific time in history, in an exact locale. Daneshvar, similar to the male writers of this project, never elaborates upon Zari's, or any other of the characters', physical appearances, but unlike the male novelists, she interrogates the effects of decolonization and the ways in which women participated in revolutionary movements.

The rebellion of the mid-twentieth century relied heavily on the activities and actions of women as well as men, but women were often left out of the leadership and agenda of these anticolonial movements. Daneshvar felt this negligence politically, personally and artistically and in this novel, her insistence on Zari's agency and active involvement in her community stand out as a response to the chauvinism of the mid-century Left. As Spooner says, "From 1941 to 1945 Iran was reduced to the most abject state of dependence of its modern history—while still nominally retaining its own independent government under the young Shah" (11). This historical summary finds fictional form in Zari's relationship to her husband and family. As a result of internal conflicts and external pressures, Iranians experienced a variety of maladies, which

Daneshvar carefully shows through the connections between the emotional and physical as well as psychological state of the characters and the socioeconomic circumstances around them. One of the clearest displays of the psychic trauma caused by the material conditions of WWII-era Iran occurs in the mental health hospitals, which Zari visits weekly as part of her charitable work for the community. She limits her interaction to women as cultural and religious expectations dictate minimal to no contact between non-related people of the opposite sex. The women in the hospital curse, attack, and shun her as each one envisions Zari as her particular nemesis. Whether the patient is a wealthy woman awaiting her family to take her back to their lavish home and gardens, or a midwife who inadvertently caused the death of a newborn, these women blame Zari for their demise (139-141). Zari caters to her wounded compatriots as well as to her domestic role as wife and mother, but she becomes critical of her treatment by these strangers as well as her family. Her awareness of the injustice towards her indicates a characteristic of Fanon's "new woman," but her submission to patriarchal expectations limits her development.

To complicate matters more for the patients, typhus breaks out at the hospital and many of the women whom Zari meets regularly, die as a result of the disease. The director of the hospital tells Zari, "It's amazing. When the fever rises, their insanity leaves them. If we could save them from this disease, perhaps God would make them recover altogether. But what's the use?" (141). His final question addresses the fact that most of the families of these patients gave up hope for their recovery and essentially abandoned them at the hospital. The narrative also suggests that the director wonders that if they do indeed recover from their mental troubles, there is the strong likelihood that the mental recovery "would just be beginning their misfortune" (141). He seems to lament the fact that Iran's dire socioeconomic and political milieu would only send them back to the mental ward. Although Zari tends to these women more out of religious conviction and social superstitions than an effort to combat the problems of colonialism,

Daneshvar possibly includes these lengthy scenes in mental wards to highlight the adverse effects of Iranian complacency in its own national demise.

Indeed, illness plays an undeniable role in Daneshvar's analysis of pre-1979 Iran; she weaves both physical ailments as well as mental disorders throughout the narrative with perspicacious awareness that their causes are attributable to the socioeconomic and political conditions of Iran. These depictions echo Ale Ahmad's discourse as well wherein he compares the encroachment of Westerners, and technology in particular, as a disease. The first chapter of *Occidentosis* is called "Diagnosing an Illness" and the first line reads, "I speak of 'occidentosis' as of tuberculosis" (27). The entire first paragraph reveals language related to illness and cures. Ale Ahmad says, "I am speaking of a disease... Let us seek a diagnosis for this complaint and its causes—and if possible, its cure" (27). This language and these allusions echo Fanon as well who wrote about the biopolitical nature of colonialism in his works. The problems and anxieties of the Iranians are instigated by both foreign involvement in the nation and their local conspirators and the characters in the mental hospital depict the extreme casualties of these internal conflicts mixed with external stresses. As Fanon posits, "Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: "Who am I in reality?" (*WE* 182).

Whether the Marxist-leaning Miss Fotuhi who once "managed a magazine in which she incited young women to action" (146), but now wiles away in a mental ward or Zari who tells Yusof that "in that same British school... the headmistress kept humiliating us in order to civilize us... I knew that we were, all of us, constantly losing something, but we didn't know what it was" (173), the novel suggests that Iranians experienced a loss of identity as a result of colonial infringement and Iranian complacency. In regard to the mental health of the colonized and the

consequences of colonialism on mental health, Fanon says the “triggering factor is principally the bloody, pitiless atmosphere, the generalization of inhuman practices, of people’s lasting impression that they are witnessing a veritable apocalypse” (*WE*, 183). The patients at these mental hospitals and their comrades outside of the gates in the guise of Yusof, Zari and their friends who resist the oppression of colonialism wrought by external as well as internal forces, recognize that the complex web of Iranian partnership with Western colonial aims costs them their physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being. The colonial circumstances force a sense of alienation among the colonized as they must abandon well-established and practiced customs, language, and traditions and replace the familiar with imposed expectations, which foster feelings of inferiority and superiority complexes.

One of the few responses of resistance to foreign influence and pressure in WWII-era Iran was the rise in popularity of socialist ideals. The irony in this form of resistance remains in the fact that most of the socialist ideology that Iranians used to combat Western encroachment was heavily infused with Soviet-Marxism to the extent which Iran’s leading Marxist group, the Tudeh (Masses) Party identified itself and promoted Leninist philosophy. Abbas Milani says, “It is...crucial [to account for] the relevant ease with which the Soviet version of Marxism all but eliminated other varieties of Marxism from the Iranian intellectual landscape” (28, footnote). In *Savushun*, Mr. Fotuhi, Khosrow’s teacher stands in as the communist or at least, socialist-Marxist sympathizer. Zari notices her son’s growing inclination towards this worldview when one day he asks her a series of questions related to their familial class background. Khosrow asks Zari, “Mother, you are not of aristocratic descent, are you?...Your father was a worker...of a...class...oh, I’ve forgotten the name of the class...in any case, your father was a worker, isn’t that right?” (199). He knows that his father’s class ties are to the aristocracy of Iran and in order to satisfy the Marxian expectations of his cohort, he searches for a link to the working-classes.

This tangential plotline shows Daneshvar's astute attention to the popularity of socialism in Iran, especially around the years of WWII and continuing through the early 1980s. After the first years following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, a large majority of secular Leftists were forcibly and voluntarily exiled and the remaining numbers were imprisoned or executed such that their activities within Iran became practically mute.

Daneshvar's depiction of the awakening among Iran's middle and upper classes in the early twentieth-century attests to the modern intellectual history of Iran; an era to which she herself also belonged and helped to establish. A somewhat obscure fact about pre-1979 Iran is that many intellectuals and people of the working-classes gravitated towards the possibilities afforded them through socialism. Around the time of Daneshvar's novel, the threat of socialism in Iran was so strong that the Pahlavi Regime had to continuously crush the protests and demonstrations that were arranged by the Leftists. As one of the other characters says, "even though they are allies for now, [the non-Russians] do not want to have a communist cell established in Iran" (234) because the likelihood of a strong Soviet-leaning Leftist population forming an alliance with the USSR remained a veritable threat to the Soviets' enemies. Daneshvar's realistic and sympathetic portrayal of the rising socialist consciousness in Iran places *Savushun* in a category all its own as her depictions and narrative pinpoint the internal strife of the Left in more specific and nuanced forms than her contemporary writers. Although Daneshvar gives much value and importance to the ideology of socialism both in her literary works and personal life, she and Ale Ahmad did not endorse Soviet-Marxism. In fact, the duo purposely turned away from the Tudeh Party, which meant they rejected alliances with the Soviets, but they wholeheartedly embraced socialist philosophy only if infused with Iranian religious and cultural traditions as a sign of resisting Western standards and expectations.

Daneshvar meticulously traces the internal and external factors which influenced the lives of Iranians in the mid-century, but her analysis of the colonial relationship of that era is particularly important because during these decades, many colonies gained independence from their occupiers, with the exception of Palestine, which was officially occupied by Israel in 1948. The Palestinian crisis remained a critical issue for Daneshvar and Ale Ahmad and became one of the main tenets for the need to defy the West in the Islamic Revolution. Yusof and Zari's acquaintance with MacMahon speaks directly to the Iranian collective awareness of the colonizer-colonized dichotomy and arguably, this triangular friendship alludes to the Palestinian occupation as the Irish stand in for Palestinians in the British (read Israeli) colonization of Ireland.

Although MacMahon advises Yusof to adhere to the demands of the foreign occupiers, he sympathizes with Yusof's resistance and says that he wishes Iran to be free just as he wishes Ireland to be free from British rule. In poetic fashion, MacMahon says to Yusof, "Yes, Yusof, you were right. If independence is good for me, it is good for you too" (30). In this statement, Daneshvar reveals her solidarity as well as that of the Iranian intellectual class with the global struggle for national independence from colonial power. Although she relies on romantic notions of race and nation, Daneshvar connects Iran's and Ireland's struggles against colonialism and by extension she incorporates the Palestinian conflict in the mix. MacMahon laments to Zari and Yusof, "We are kin, aren't we, Iran and Ireland? Both are the land of Arians. You are the ancestors and we the descendents!" (28-29). However, MacMahon represents the colonial rulers and even admits to Yusof that "They have sent me to ask you why you are not delicate and moderate" after explaining to the young Iranian that the British think of Iranians and their landscape as "delicate and restrained" (28). These exchanges reveal that Yusof and Zari must

struggle alone as MacMahon who seems to feel solidarity with them as a colonized person, ultimately serves the colonial powers.

In part, the novel seems to suggest that this desire for independence from foreign influence and in a sense, socioeconomic colonialism requires a return to traditional roots. The story's insistence on securing the safety and livelihood of the tribal communities emphasizes Daneshvar's and Ale Ahmad's belief that in order to expel outsiders, one must resort to existing ways of living and reject the influence of foreign invaders. In this light, Daneshvar's choice of setting in Shiraz highlights Iran's pre-Islamic and pre-industrial history, which allowed the Persians to become respected leaders of the ancient world. More than any other city in Iran, Shiraz symbolizes the cultural history and lineage of Iranians before Islam and prior to so-called modernization. As Spooner says, "[The setting] evokes images of shrines and Sufis, of the tombs of the great poets, of Persepolis and the great monuments of pre-Islamic Iran, and, in the hinterland, of the nomadic tribes," (12) all of which should remind the Iranian reader in particular that the Iran of the novel emerges out of a powerful, capable, and notable past. Daneshvar's choice of setting in this city with its charged cultural emblems both narratively and literally resists the colonial powers' attempts to demean Iranians into submission and a belief in their inferiority to Western superiority. In line with the types of nationalism and nationalist ideology of her generation which rejected Soviet-infused Marxism in particular, Daneshvar touts this view of Persian culture and history and urges in this novel that a return to cultural and religious practices serves as a veritable and formidable defense against the encroachment of the West. Indeed, for Daneshvar and Ale Ahmad, among certain other intellectuals of their vein, Soviet-Marxism served in the same capacity as other Western, colonial efforts in Iran.

The narrative weaves ideologies of nationalism with problematic displays of gender and sexuality. After the British fete at the governor's house, Yusof and Zari retire to their bedroom.

While undressing, Yusof describes his conversation with MacMahon to Zari who watches him from the bed. One of the key moments in this scene is the juxtaposition of Yusof's assertive sexual advances towards Zari and his depiction of his conversation with MacMahon. The narrative says, "[Yusof] began to undo her brassiere and said, 'I told MacMahon, "Yes, friend, the people of this city are born poets, but you have stifled their poetry.'" 'I said, "You have emasculated their heroes','" (34). As the young Iranian begins to engage in sexual contact with his wife, he thinks about and talks about politics and refers to nostalgic notions of glorious attributes of the nation's past as depicted in literature. He continues to undress his wife and starts to caress her body while continuing his thoughts on the state of the nation. The narrative's coupling of the woman's body in the midst of discourse about the nation suggests the connections between Zari's role as a submissive partner, as all of the sexual contact is initiated and performed by Yusof, and also shows how the nation's narrative as spoken by Yusof is inscribed upon the female body. The implication of narrating the nation through the female body is that the nation, as woman, must be protected by men. Fanon describes this phenomenon in the context of Algeria and says that with the participation of women in the revolution, the consequence was "every [female] body that became liberated from the traditional embrace... was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer" (*ADC*, 42). Daneshvar's and Fanon's coupling of female bodies and national concerns emphasizes the chauvinistic character of revolutionary movements of the mid-twentieth century. Their uncritical depictions admit and condone that it was masculinity and male desire that had to be respected and other nations and female compatriots had to comply with these male demands. Zari even condones this ideology when she remembers that Yusof always said, "A city must not be completely without men" (376). While Zari becomes a leader

and spokesperson for the rebellion against the occupiers, she nonetheless relinquishes her power to the men and celebrates male prowess against invasion.

As Loomba notes, “colonialism intensified patriarchal relations in colonized lands, often because native men, increasingly disenfranchised and excluded by the public sphere, became more tyrannical at home. They seized upon the home and the woman as emblems of their culture and nationality. The outside world could be Westernized but all was not lost if the domestic space retained its cultural purity” (168). In another scene, Yusof’s tyranny displays itself in his command to Zari to “Get up, wash your face... Your face is all puffed up like one of the faces they mold onto mud bricks. I swear to God you are a thousand times prettier than those puppet faces you put on. Get up, dear, I want you” (35). He demands that she stop her crying over the socioeconomic and political upheaval of their city and instead prepare herself to please him without the accoutrements of the foreigners. She acquiesces and even turns off the lights to hide her belly scars, in order to appease his possible disgust at the marks left by a midwife during child delivery and then returns to him. As his “large hand caressed her breasts, and as it reached lower, she forgot everything—” (35), which implies Zari let go of her fears and anger at the colonizers and the complicit Iranians, but she also seems to forget how Yusof plays the role of a conqueror at home. At this point in the novel, Zari physically, emotionally, and intellectually surrenders to Yusof’s will. While Yusof dominates Zari in the domestic and marital spheres, she concedes to his power in order to allow him some sense of masculinity as he struggles to maintain his power position outside of their home.

In the first half of the novel, the reader witnesses Zari’s second-class status in her relationship with Yusof. The narrator often describes her in roles which serve Yusof such as, “When they cleared away the lunch, Zari brought a hookah to her husband” (47) or after returning home late one evening, she refuses to touch her husband until she can be “nice, clean,

and perfumed” (151). The most demeaning moment between the couple results from Zari’s worrying about her missing son. The boy decides to retrieve his stolen horse from the governor’s garden, but does so without telling his parents, which causes Zari much grief. She screams out of fear and anxiety and “Yusof slap[s] his wife...he [says] ‘Shut up. In my absence, you are spineless’,” (159). He leaves towards the governor’s house and she “wipe[s] her lips and [begins] to run. She had to get to him and calm him down” (160). These scenes suggest that although Zari holds a position of power in her household as a wife and mother and authority figure, she becomes subservient when her husband is present and this diminution results from Yusof’s demands and expectations that she remain in a docile role. This imbalance in their relationship reflects problematic gender issues, which position women in lower statuses than men.

After rescuing their son from the governor’s guards, the family returns home and “the men were chatting away heartily. The boys told their fathers the whole story from the beginning. They were paying no attention to Zari” (163). The disregard for her in this moment points to Loomba’s assessment of colonial gender relations: “Although men on both sides of the colonial divide engaged in bitter strife, they also often collaborated when it came to the domination of women” (169). Yusof readily recognizes the injustices against the Iranian collective and can even distinguish class and regional inequities which must be resolved for the advancement of the nation, but he fails to acknowledge his own offenses against his female partner. He even laments, “I have come to the conclusion that I am incapable of changing anything. If a man can’t even influence his wife—“, which is bolstered by his young son’s assessment that “What cowards and liars women are!” (165) after they return home without the horse. Kamran Talattof suggests that in some of Daneshvar’s “prerevolutionary writing...she places a greater emphasis upon the effects of class and foreign oppression than upon male domination” (99). While her critiques of Western encroachment and class conflicts glaringly stand out to the reader, Daneshvar seems to

neglect the imbalances within the family structure. This narrative cites the problematic internal divisions of Iranian families as a source which allows the socioeconomic and political abuses of the nation. To some extent, Daneshvar points to the connections between gender inequities and national concerns as she couches her interrogation about gender relations and marital problems within an analysis of socioeconomic and political power struggles. While some readers may misunderstand Daneshvar's astute correlations in this context, nonetheless, the scenes which depict Yusof and Zari's intimate relations suggest Daneshvar's keen awareness about the ways in which the most private moments of individuals' lives affect their most public welfare.

Failing to recognize his own role in Zari's inability to stand up for herself, Yusof chastises Zari for her cowardice in the face of the upper-class Iranians who swindled her out of her prized jewelry. He says to her, "Woman, what use is a peace based on deception? Why shouldn't you have the courage to stand up to them and say, "These earrings were my husband's wedding gift to me"... Woman, think a little. When you give in so easily, everybody pushes you around" (172). Her son chimes in again and also belittles Zari while her sister-in-law defends her and her actions. At this point, midway through the novel, Zari finally asserts herself and says to Yusof, "If I want to stand up to anyone, I must first stand up to you and then what a war of nerves will begin. Do you want to hear more truths? Then listen. It is you who have taken my courage away. I have put up with you for so long that it has become a habit with me" (173). She continues her tirade against her husband and admits that she wants her latest pregnancy aborted (174). Yusof responds to her by laughing, and then he tells her, "Your first lesson in courage is this: First, when you are afraid to do something, if you are in the right, do it in spite of your fear, my cute kitten!" (175). Yusof completely ignores Zari's demand for respect and instead he continues to patronize her and even offers her a lesson while keeping her in her second-class status as a woman by comparing her power position to that of a young animal. No longer the

acquiescent and meek woman of the first half of the novel, Zari replies, “I am a human being...I’m not a cute kitten” (175).

The narrative then immediately shifts to the bedroom and the two protagonists are intimately lying in bed. This time, Zari’s forgetfulness relates to her preoccupation with her status as a human being during lovemaking. The narrator says, “She kept wondering whether she had always been a coward or had become one, and whether Yusof was to blame. For one instant, she even concluded that marriage is wrong in principle. It is not right for a man to be tied down all his life to a woman and a bunch of children. Or, for that matter, for a woman to be so dependent on a man and a few children that she cannot breathe in peace” (175-176). With these thoughts on the internal colonization of body, mind, and emotions, Zari then remembers her childhood and the way in which her school’s headmistress enforced her religious friend’s rejection of her beliefs. The teacher had yelled, “There is no room for superstition in this school. Leave fasting and religious sermons to your aunts!” (177). Zari had rescued the downtrodden Mehri, the religious and disgraced friend by literally lifting her up from the floor and wiping her tear-streaked face. Mehri said, “I know who the tattletale was—Taji. That stupid girl has become a Christian” (178). This flashback ends with the girls entering a “dervish friary” (178) and hearing the chant, “Ya Hu, ya Haq, ya Ali” suggesting a return to and embrace of Islam as a savior and a tool of resistance, which echoes Ale Ahmad’s calls for fighting Western colonialism with cultural and religious traditions. By placing the blame upon the converted Muslim, the girls indict Western beliefs and practices as the source of the nation’s demise as their Christian classmate functions as an informer to the emblem of imperial rule, the teacher. This critical scene of flashback and present awareness highlights Zari’s potential as a progressive leader, but she ultimately submits to patriarchy in her allegiance to traditional notions of family, religion, and nation.

Zari remembers how she rejected the British headmistress's demands for her submission to the missionary school's dictums by practicing Islamic rituals. In one instance, Zari refused to wear a white blouse without a black shirt underneath it, which symbolized her mourning for her father's death (201). The British teachers chastised her decision and ordered her to succumb to their wishes, but she staunchly refused and was reprimanded with shouts and harsh words (203). In her present life, after confronting her husband about his dominating personality, Zari finds strength and courage in remembering her childhood rebellion to assert her role and influence the situations around her. During a visit to her corrupt sister-in-law, Ezzatoddowleh, Zari refuses to deliver letters which would support the old woman's smuggling ring. Even though she upsets Ezzatoddowleh by declining her request, the narrator reflects, "Zari had once again put up resistance" (233).

Unlike the early parts of the novel in which Zari reluctantly gave her earrings to the governor's daughter or agreed to loan her son's horse to the rich family, she now takes a firm stand against people and their unjust demands. However, once Yusof returns to their village, Zari shrinks back into a docile role and again serves him in a position of subservience. As he sits with other resistance fighters planning out their scheme for attack, Yusof sends Zari out of the room and "she knew that she had been politely asked to leave, even though she very much wanted to stay" (247). This scene parallels the dismay of many leftist women of Zari's generation who felt that "the left has always been ambivalent about the women's movement, often viewing it as dangerous to the cause of socialist revolution. When left women espouse feminism, it may be personally threatening to left men... Therefore, many left analyses... are self-serving, both theoretically and politically" (Hartmann, 31). Zari leaves and "prepares the hookah for Yusof" (247) and thinks to herself, "with her kind of life and upbringing, it would be impossible for her to engage in anything that would disrupt the normal flow of life" (247).

As Leftist women of Daneshvar's generation explain, a woman could have more power and influence within the Left if she was aligned as a wife, lover, or love interest with one of the men in power (Sargent, et al). In *Savushun*, Daneshvar narrativizes this phenomenon through depictions of Zari as a caretaker and physical, emotional, and sexual provider to Yusof. In scenes in which the resistance fighters join together to discuss and strategize their actions, Zari prepares lunch "on Yusof's instructions" (250) and even condones her second-class status by thinking "she wouldn't really be able to do anything. The only brave thing that she could do was to not keep the others from being brave and let them—with their free hands and thoughts, with their tool of tools—do something" (248). Zari's problematic assessment of her situation never fully resolves in the novel because her role as a leader comes forth only after Yusof's death and even then, she champions his efforts through patriarchal standards of resistance and reverence. As Talattof explains, "After [Yusof's] death [Zari] even emulates him by taking up his cause, adopting his philosophy, and following his path" (96). While Daneshvar points to the internal conflicts between Yusof and Zari and meticulously traces the impediments in Zari's progress as a "new woman," the novel nonetheless upholds the troubling second-class status of women in their roles as provocateurs and leaders in revolutions.

Although Daneshvar held rank with the Iranian Left of her generation, in this novel she resists touting mainstream Leftist politics, namely Soviet-infused Marxism and in fact, challenges the philosophy by injecting Islamic narratives of resistance and leadership to combat the Marxists of 1960s Iran. For instance, Zari's son, Khosrow, follows the Marxist doctrine in his efforts to fight against the injustices of the Iranian upper-class and Western influences. He challenges his parents, especially his mother's religiosity, with dogmatic discussions about his parents' ancestral lineage and wants to "erase this mark" (199) of being a part of the aristocracy. Yusof sums up that "Marxism or even socialism is a difficult ideology that requires careful

education...Adapting it to our way of life, psychology, and social attitudes requires maturity, broad-mindedness, and unlimited self-sacrifice” (168). The narrative and Khosrow’s family reject the young boy’s aspirations, although Daneshvar juxtaposes these scenes in which he talks about class issues with his mother’s recollections of her own resistance towards imperialism in her childhood.

When two of Yusof’s comrades drive up to the family’s house and Yusof fails to emerge from the car, Zari “knew that her husband would not get out” (307). Her family members, servants, and Yusof’s employees behave strangely and “Zari was certain that something had happened” (307). Once she can, Zari approaches the car and sees Yusof’s lifeless body slumped in the backseat, his facial scarf covered in blood. Amidst her family and friends’ screams and horror, she remains quiet. She thinks, “How could they make these noises and why couldn’t she?” (307). Zari faints and when she regains consciousness, her family reminds her of her pregnancy and the fact that she needs to remain calm (309). At first, everyone assumes Yusof’s death was an accident possibly due to a hunting misfortune by one of his shepherds. What soon becomes clear and even more tragic is that this man of the people was most likely murdered by the British, namely Sergeant Zinger and one of his men. Pregnant, caring for three other children and a widow before the age of thirty, Zari wants to continue Yusof’s struggle. After being mildly sedated by the midwife, she says, “I wanted to raise my children with love in a peaceful environment...but now I will raise them in hatred. I will put a gun in Khosrow’s hands” (317-318). With Yusof’s death, Zari emerges as a fierce, focused and willing resistance fighter, but she hands the reins to her son. The narrative remains silent about the fact that her power and role of influence only display when Yusof no longer exists in the community, which suggests that the Iranian resistance cannot reconcile gender with rebellion; a key problem in the leftist politics of

the novel's time. Further, the gesture of encouraging her son to replace his father indicates the narrative's support of the second-class status of women in the nation and in the revolution.

The combination of Zari's fragile physical health and the emotional stress of Yusof's death requires her convalesce away from the masses. In this sense, her condition parallels Merle Kinbona's retraction from society in order to regain a sense of herself. Zari experiences a mixture of dreams and recollections all of which depict various kinds of resistance and struggle against injustice. One of the most important visions she has relates to an old Iranian tradition called Savushun, which as Spooner explains is a "folk tradition, surviving in southern Iran from an undatable pre-Islamic past that conjures hope, in spite of everything" (13). As one of the other characters says, "when religious passion plays were banned, [Savushun] was banned too" (343), but Zari uses this sacred and culturally significant event as a form of resistance. She tells her brother-in-law, "Today, I have come to the conclusion that one must be brave while alive and for the living. Unfortunately, I realized this too late. To make up for this ignorance, let us weep properly for the death of the brave" (364). She incites her family and Yusof's comrades to assist her in his funeral rites to the point that "she was ready to go to extremes and was in such a state that if she had a gun and knew how to use it, she might have fired it" (366). Zari's staunch determination to give Yusof a proper and dignified burial intimidates her friends and foes alike as she could invoke harsh responses from the British and Iranian officials. Nonetheless, she pushes forward and amasses a large crowd of followers to the cemetery, which finally indicates her agency without patriarchal constraints and submission.

Similar to the reenactment of the Cuffee Ned revolt in which the participants rely on the past to inspire their future lives, the Savushun mourners blend religion and pre-Islamic traditions to honor Yusof and show those in power that they reject domination and will not submit to the demands of the corrupt governments. When a policeman tells the crowd to leave the procession

if they are not relatives of the deceased, “a calm voice rose from the crowd [and said] ‘We are all relatives of the deceased’,” (370). The mass of people continues its march and a combination of Islamic shouts of “Ya Hoseyn” and Zari’s imagination of “mourning Siyavash” (371) highlight the scene. Eventually the police attack the crowd, hitting the people “with billy clubs and gun butts” (373). In the struggle, Yusof’s coffin was placed on the ground and Zari and her brother-in-law, Khan Kaka towards whom she felt disdain, lift the coffin and continue until the weight of the coffin proves too much for Zari. Since the violent police attacks cause the crowd to disperse, the family returns home with the coffin and Yusof’s aunt says, “I had no idea that it would turn out like this” and Zari replies, “But I don’t regret it...As Yusof would say, ‘A city must not be completely without men’,” (376). Again, the narrative shifts the focus back to the role and agency of men in revolutionary struggles and since this female protagonist emphasizes this ideology, the implication is women should maintain supportive roles as opposed to leadership positions in the struggle.

Although the reader notes Zari’s defiance and zeal, she fails to recognize or acknowledge her role in leading her people in this protest. She refers to “men” not realizing that she, a woman, led the way to this fierce rebellion. Again, there are parallels in this scene with Marshall’s novel in the sense that this scene and the Cuffee Ned revolt reenactment do not lead to revolution and an overturn of power among the oppressed masses. Although the actions are indicative of protest, they do not actually cause progressive changes. As Talattof posits, “Even when Zari is ready to engage fully in the movement, her role does not transcend that of the traditional sister or wife who publicly mourns the loss of her man” (97). Spooner suggests that the Savushun scene is “a metaphor for the flame of idealism against a backdrop of hopelessness and helplessness...It suggests the transformation of hopelessness into salvation” (13). The narrative’s traditional and cultural reminders as emblems of hope also address the alienation of the masses in that the

people are encouraged to return to the pre-colonial conditions of the nation as if those times were void of conflict, crisis, and oppression. The novel's over glorification of the past stands in as an attempt to temper the alienation wrought by colonialism and the introduction of Western technology in particular.

Yusof resists the power structure's demands that he turn over his crop to feed the occupying army, but his resistance costs him his life. It is through Yusof that we see traces of Ale Ahmad as a resistor as well as references to his idea that the West plants seeds of complacency among its conquered masses such that they praise the very conditions that oppress them. Indeed, Yusof's brother, Khan Kaka, as well as their distant relative Ezzatoddowleh Khanom and her sons represent the selfish and greedy Iranian upper-class who essentially sellout in order to maintain pretentious lifestyles and false power. The episode with Khosrow's horse, Sahar, and the so-called borrowing of Zari's emerald earrings to further the political power and prestige of Khan Kaka and Ezzatoddowleh display that Iran's internal problems were in fact propagated by the self-serving desires of a few corrupt officials and former nobility. These depictions and descriptions align mid-century Iran with the global crisis of Western colonialism and Daneshvar's novel allows the reader a glimpse into the machinations of the power politics involved in those times.

Zari stands out as a "new woman" with the desire and ability to affect change in her world, but as Talattof points out, "Zari herself values men's struggle above her own as she performs her wifely and motherly duties" (96). Another problematic feature of the novel shows at the very end as Zari feels "MacMahon's condolences particularly touched her" (378). In his message, the British agent says, "Do not weep, sister. In your home, a tree shall grow, and others in your city, and many more throughout your country. And the wind shall carry the message from tree to tree and the trees shall ask the wind, 'Did you see the dawn on your way?'" (378).

The consequence of ending this novel of Iranian resistance against colonialism with the foreign invader's voice is that once again Zari's power and ability succumb to the male, imperial conqueror. The irony lies in the message, which seems to express hope and defiance against victimization, but again, it is MacMahon and not Zari or at least another Iranian resistance fighter who speaks these words.

Both Marshall and Daneshvar choose wives and mothers as a "new woman" and show the complexities involved when a wife and mother must negotiate her role in the domestic sphere with her abilities in the public sphere. While *The Chosen Place*, *Timeless People* and *Savushun* highlight the power and influence women have in revolutionary movements, the novels remain aligned with many of the problematic features of Leftist politics of their era including choosing the nation's cause and sacrificing women's issues in the struggle. In both instances, the oppressed must reject the patriarchal model and find new ways of reconciliation with one another. Through this awareness, they must find different strategies of resistance and rebellion. Marshall's novel suggests that in part, these new methods need to embrace the industrialization of the island-nation. The often brutal and complicated process of industrialization is a requirement for the ultimate advancement of the populace. Marshall ends the novel with the hope that Merle will return to the island with less anxiety over her past. Most importantly, she affords the reader a glimpse into the process of decolonization and move towards liberation. Daneshvar's novel also promotes a return to the cultural and traditional notions of unity as a way to resist foreign invasion. Her explicit endorsement of the patriarchal model of family, gender, and class relations indicates the limits of her narrative and demonstrates the inability of the mid-twentieth century's Left to effectively challenge the aggression of capitalist-imperialism with all of its social, political, and economic oppression. These novels may end without the full realization of the concept of the "new woman," but at least Marshall and Daneshvar invite their audiences to

become more introspective and conscientious about the people involved and the necessary measures needed to bring about change.

CONCLUSION

“This event, which is commonly designated as alienation, is naturally very important. It is found in the official texts under the name of assimilation.”—Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution* (1964)

Frantz Fanon, Richard Wright, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, Ralph Ellison, Sadeq Chubak, Paule Marshall, and Simin Daneshvar not only wrote works of literature about the ways in which marginalized people live through the process of decolonization, but all of these writers also present the reader with important questions to think about in the course of establishing a new order. Fanon posits that once the dominant power succumbs to the will of the masses, freedom from colonial oppression becomes a tangible possibility. Fanon’s work suggests immense hope and opportunity for the oppressed group, albeit if the masses work together towards dismantling the psychological as well as material limitations set by the oppressors. In the opening quote of this section, Fanon’s reference to alienation and assimilation connects these phenomena as assimilation being the continuation of a feeling of alienation. In his context, assimilation means the individuals’ willingness to accept the conditions and expectations set forth by the dominating powers, which then propagates alienation. While embracing the Hegelian notion of being for an Other, Fanon expands upon the master/slave narrative and explains that oppressors use various means of controlling the masses and while for Hegel a mutual recognition of one another moves towards reconciling a sense of detachment, for Fanon the implications of inferiority and superiority complexes indicate a need for more thorough and complicated forms of recognition. The colonizer’s departure from the colonized individual’s physical space only beckons more intricate types of control; by offering the colonized masses a false sense of acceptance through assimilation, the colonizer retains power and influence because the colonizer still enforces his/her practices, beliefs, and structures of power upon the so-called decolonized masses. Thus,

the colonized remain alienated from the colonizer and the prospect of freedom remains a struggle.

The novelists of this study, through astute observations and sensitive portrayals of enduring the hardships and traumas induced by imbalanced power systems, allow the modern reader a clearer understanding of the nuances of negotiating a sense of alienation from others with a need to build bonds and connections to other people, which the new order requires of the masses. While Fanon also recognizes the continuous psychological impediments of colonized people, his work nonetheless displays a strong sense of hope for the future generations in the quest to liberate themselves from the material, emotional, psychological, and social limitations placed upon them by imbalanced power systems. He says, “Discovering the futility of his alienation, his progressive deprivation, the inferiorized individual, after this phase of deculturation, of extraneousness, comes back to his original positions” (*TAR*, 41).

This hopeful outlook towards decolonization’s “new men” finds challenges in the six novels of this study. While Fanon suggests that with the colonial status demolished, “those who were once unbudgeable, the constitutional cowards, the timid, the eternally inferiorized, stiffen and emerge bristling” (*TAR*, 44), the novelists of this project display the limitations and inabilities of the “new men and women” to progress towards liberation, especially through communal bonds and a rejection of a sense of alienation. In these novels, there is little if any hope for the masses of decolonized subjects and in fact, the authors seem to suggest that colonization simply changed forms and continues to wreak havoc upon the oppressed masses. The most common thread and most troubling issue for these six novelists rests upon the lack of a central ideology, group, or social condition that can foster community action against injustice, which as Marx offered is the only solution to balancing power (*The German Ideology*, 56).

The novels of this project demonstrate a keen understanding about Marx's point that in order to establish a just and equitable society, the individuals that form the group must work in unison towards the same objectives. However, through the authors' astute attention to the nuances of individuality, the possibility that individuals can indeed form productive and stable collectives seems unfathomable. Although these six African American and Iranian novels function as literary representations of the sentiment of the post-WWII anticolonial movement, they also pose poignant challenges to the process of decolonization and progress. The overarching concerns of the anticolonial movement extended above and beyond national borders and boundaries ; in essence, the decolonization process awakened a sense of solidarity among people who recognized shared aims and concerns as imperialism shifted forms from direct colonial rule to socioeconomic and political dependencies of the postcolonial peoples on their colonial masters, but the significant issues of individual alienation and difficulty forming solid alliances continue to haunt this process. This sense of unity connected people across continents, through language barriers, and historical differences and this solidarity gave impetus to the momentum of decolonization, however the affinities continue to be short-lived and to a great extent, this inability to form strong and effective communities stems from the sexism and homophobia of the progressive movement of the mid-twentieth century. In this project, the theorists and novelists present important shifts in racial, class, and political arenas but their own gender biases and inability to shed the sexist attitudes of the mid-twentieth century weaken their messages of resistance and establishment of a new order and their collective sense of homophobia continues to haunt radical politics even today.

Symbolic gestures of solidarity along racial, class, and political lines such as at the Bandung Conference of 1955 wherein participants from many different parts of the world celebrated the Burmese New Year by wearing traditional Burmese clothing to signal a deep level

of shared aims dissipated and new forms of colonialism evolved throughout the world. While the presence of African Americans and Iranians at such an event suggests that these communities of people also belong with those groups of nations who suffer from the consequences of imbalanced power relations, these conferences and alliances no longer exist. The issues and concerns that brought together members of twenty-nine so-called Third World nations find literary expressions on a microcosmic level in the novels of this study, but these writers envisioned the underlying problems and depicted the reasons why these political, socioeconomic, and subaltern affinities would not last. Even as the oppressed masses joined forces to combat the injustices against them, the novelists of this project saw what was left out and how those gaps and limitations would hinder the decolonization process, although their own limited representations of gender inequities follows the dictums of their times and even contributes to the lack of solidarity among the oppressed groups.

Despite their weaknesses as effective tools of resistance, these novels focus on individual men and women who experience the alienation brought about in part by the colonial experience and need to form connections with other people in the midst of decolonization. In some ways, this emphasis on individuality counters the anticolonial movement's stress on community and solidarity and one of the main tensions of this project continues to be the inherent contradiction between the historical anticolonial movement's call for global solidarity and the fact that these novelists remain weary of touting the sentiment without complicating the universalist tendencies of this mass movement. By coupling African Americans and Iranians as marginal members of the anticolonial movement, I hope to show that as a result of their very positions as outlying communities of the subaltern world, the viewpoints and ideas of these writers have much to teach us about the anticolonial movement and its limitations as a mass action against imperialist aims.

These writers explore the possibilities and problems of compromising a sense of alienation with the need to build connections to other people through literature, which by the nature of the novel form allows the examination of these issues in more nuanced and complex ways than for example through strict historical analysis. My goal is to read these six novels through new paradigms that stem from the social, historical, psychoanalytic, and political aspects of post-WWII United States and Iran and suggest that although we may posit these texts as diasporic, postcolonial, and Committed literary works, these novels express and complicate an important time in history; a moment in which the newly freed colonies and developing nations attempted self-determination and sought to find allies in others like themselves. These novels helps us explore and teach the anticolonial movement not only as history, but through artistic and intellectual veins that temper the desire to summarily shelve this era and all its participants to the past.

One of the most conscientious participants in the decolonizing world of the mid-twentieth century was Richard Wright whose most notable biographer, Michel Fabre, suggests that 1953 marked a critical shift in the author's intellectual path. With the publication and less than enthusiastic reception of *The Outsider* in 1953, Wright began a new project focused on evaluating "the humanistic and spiritual resources of the Third World [that] would induce the West to acknowledge them" (Fabre, 387). A few years earlier, Wright discusses his new vision in a letter to Pandit Nehru and describes this Third World as a "situation of oppressed people the world over [who are] universally the same and their solidarity is essential, not only in opposing oppression but also in fighting for human progress" (Fabre, 387). The years preceding 1953 indicated Wright's gravitation towards global considerations, but as Fabre notes, "1953 seems to mark his spiritual departure from Paris and Europe" (383) and his quest to "rehabilitate the entire black world by liberating its inexhaustible human resources" (383). His writing in this period

reflects much of his own sense of disenchantment with First World politics, but also a feeling of alienation from the rest of the world and particularly Africa, which Black Nationalist discourse in particular touted as the homeland for diasporic black peoples including African Americans. In *Black Power*, he admits his estrangement from the people and repeatedly says, “I was black, they were black, but my color did not help me,” which as Fabre suggests painfully pointed out that Wright was “incurably American and Western” (402) and as a man of modernity, alienated and disenchanted by the world around him. Broadly speaking, Wright’s literary works reflect his concerns with imbalanced power systems and the consequences of these inequities as reflected through racial and class dynamics.

While his earlier works demonstrate his attempts to understand the African American condition in the United States, Fabre says *The Outsider* shows “a break with [his] former attitudes as a Negro and a Communist” (366). In this novel, Wright says, “I was trying to grapple with the big problem—the problem and meaning of Western civilization as a whole and the relation of Negroes and other minority groups to it” (Fabre, 366). Wright’s commitment to examining the forces of oppression in the United States and his awareness that these same powers operate throughout the world to condemn people point to his participation in the anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century, even though during his own time authentic resistance required one to embrace particular political ideologies. Wright, similar to the other authors of this study, initially found progressive resources for overcoming socioeconomic and racial inequities through the Communist Party, but also like the other writers of this project, these men and women recognized a similar vein of racism and sexism in Leftist circles as existed in conservative agendas. Wright’s disappointment with and eventual break from the Communists left him without any particular ideological allegiance, and this lack of strict dogma allowed him a wider introspection into other forms of resistance.

Through my analysis of *The Outsider*, I want to show that Wright continues his investigation of the role of individuality and the experience of oppression upon an intellectual. His Marxism remains in contention with the fact that colonized individuals must overcome a personal sense of inferiority before gaining an ability to connect with other people. Cross Damon demonstrates this dilemma because as one critic suggests, “Cross Damon was driven by no discernible motives—racial, political or religious” (Fabre, 369). Instead, he is an intellectual of the mid-twentieth century caught up in the agony of existentialist angst and the realization that despite his sense of detachment, he must forge bonds to live meaningfully among other people. Further, Cross struggles with building attachments to women and demonstrates an inability to love another person. Typical of Wright’s novels, the female characters in *The Outsider* remain flat and underdeveloped and as Fabre suggests, in this novel, “where in contrast to the somewhat negative characters of Damon’s black wife and black mistress, Eva emerges as the portrait closest to Wright’s idealized, if not ideal, woman” (195). Cross seems to find a sense of hope and even expresses feelings of love and attachment towards the white widow Eva. Wright’s representations of women, especially as gender intersects with race and class, deserve a longer study which considers his personal experiences as well as his literary limitations. Suffice it to say, Fabre points out that his many affairs with both white and African American women as well as his often unfavorable encounters with bourgeois African American families taint his portrayals of women in his novels and these personal experiences coupled with editorial revisions prompted by various publishers affect the depictions of women in his novels (196, 368). Wright’s recognizable misogyny and often chauvinistic descriptions stand out regardless of the above facts; gender issues in his writing require a more thorough and extensive study, which I will pursue in future work because to a large extent the inability of the masses to form bonds to affect progressive changes results from the same sexism displayed in Wright’s own works.

Wright's Iranian counterpart, Jalal Ale Ahmad also recognized the socioeconomic and political inequities wrought by the capitalist-imperialist system and in *The School Principal*, he interrogates the effects of power imbalances on marginal communities. Known for his piercing analysis presented in colloquial Persian, Ale Ahmad avoids curtailing his rebellion by vowing allegiance to any particular ideological platforms. While respectful of Marxist thought, Ale Ahmad rejects Western philosophy and beliefs and instead calls for a return to cultural traditions and practices to keep foreign and corrupt bourgeois Iranian intentions at a distance from the masses. He insists in his writing that the only way for Iran to retain control of its own resources in the face of neocolonialism is to restore a sense of cultural nationalism, which relies on pre-Islamic as well as Islamic traditions and beliefs. Ale Ahmad places Iran in the complex web of global imperialism and identifies Iran's mid-twentieth century situation as "gharbzadegi" or the state of being struck by the West (Gheissari, 88). He fictionalizes his concerns in this novel and insists that the national, socioeconomic, and political disenfranchisement of the Iranian masses connects to the West's imposition of their ideologies, culture, and technology and therefore, Ale Ahmad suggests that the only cure for this disease rests upon a return to the pre-colonial conditions with an emphasis on the importance of religion in daily life.

As Hamid Algar notes, Ale Ahmad was the first Iranian intellectual whose "critical reevaluation of the Safavid dynasty...[portrays] the Safavids as traitors to Islamic solidarity" (Introduction, 16). Ale Ahmad also recognizes the importance of the unifying ability of Islam not only in Iran, but throughout the Muslim world. Ale Ahmad's call for a return to Islam as a source of hope and resistance against colonial imposition aligns him with Ali Shariati's approach to anticolonialism. Both men thought of the religion as an effective tool of opposition against Western colonialism since a turn towards Islam as a political position as well as spiritual guide rejected communist as well as capitalist imperialist aims. That said, as Algar suggests Ale

Ahmad's championing of Islam "requires careful definition; it is certainly not a straightforward return" (Introduction, 17) as Ale Ahmad completely abandoned Islam in his youth and only considered the religion's strengths after writing *Occidentosis*, which suggests a heavily Leftist orientation in viewing Islam as a tool of resistance.

Both of these intellectuals play a critically influential role in the modern history of Iran and in a more in-depth article, I will interrogate Ale Ahmad's and Shariati's philosophies and tactics related to anticolonial activities. While Shariati never penned fictional works, his lectures and writing similar to Ale Ahmad reflect a keen awareness of "the global context of shared suffering and exploitation [of Iranians with the larger Third World]" (Algar, 16). His views invited the respect of his contemporaries even outside of Iran; Sartre famously said "I have no religion, but if I were to choose one, it would be that of Shariati's." Ale Ahmad's and Shariati's contributions to the anticolonial movement of the mid-twentieth century deserves a more thorough and nuanced analysis than I have provided here, but which I have excluded in the present study because of the lack of literary works in Shariati's arsenal. Although Ale Ahmad and Shariati share many tenets in common such as their careful considerations of the intersections of socioeconomics and political disenfranchisement of the Iranian masses, Shariati offers important and progressive ideas in relation to gender and his insights fill in the gaps that the reader finds in Ale Ahmad's works.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* offers the reader poignant questions about the role of the individual in his society. The experiences of the young, African American male protagonist highlight the social, economic, and political inequities of mid-twentieth century United States and his various attempts at melding into the mainstream society of his time exhibit the hopeless and frustrating conditions that prompted the rebellion of the U.S. masses of that era. Ellison depicts the options available to this young man for improving his life's circumstances, which

include traditional pursuits of upward mobility such as secondary education. Also, the novel meticulously interrogates the various ideological systems of resistance such as Black Nationalism, communism, and sectarian organization that stood opposed to the capitalist-imperialist agenda of the mid-twentieth century. The protagonist's involvement and consequent rejection of these possibilities for a new order highlight Ellison's insistence upon the power of individuality. In and of itself as a mode of rebellion, individuality functions on an important level of psychological sense of identity; however, as socioeconomic and political changes require community actions, individuality hinders progress and constricts the possibilities of reform. Ellison's novel and his own personal beliefs came under harsh criticism and attack, but despite his own limitations and the novel's weakness in considering the power of mass movements, *Invisible Man* stands out as ahead of its time as the novel presents the potential of group resistance albeit without strict ideological allegiances.

Sadeq Chubak's novel echoes Ellison's most profound suggestion that rebellion begins in the mind and actions of individuals. After seeking justice through traditional sources of compensation and failing to redeem his losses, Zar Mohammad takes control of his affairs through violent actions. The blatant endorsement of violence as a justifiable means to an end marks Chubak's position as an anticolonial writer. The narrative of the life of this rural Iranian man whose efforts to live peacefully within his society and the oppressive structures which prohibited him from achieving his socioeconomic goals depicts the process through which repressed individuals, and the collective, experience alienation and dejection. Chubak's literary career demonstrates his sensibility towards the social, economic, and political factors which cause oppression and his work depicts the lives of the marginalized segments of Iranian society.

In a future project, I would include reviewing his writing as it was made into film; among other works by Chubak, *Tangsir* as a novel comes alive in its filmic version quite adequately and

with profound narrative power. The field of research into the social impact of films in this era in Iran needs more attention as the viewer literally watches the people, places, and issues of the novels in their actuality as the filmmakers often used non-professional actors and marginalized communities to produce their films. The juxtaposition of the visual representations with the literary depictions of the socioeconomic and political turbulences of mid-twentieth century Iran highlights the process of that nation towards establishing an Islamic republic. In another project, I would focus on the role of religion and the masses' use of faith in their lives with more depth because as history shows us Iran's relationship as a nation and a population with religion significantly affects the current status of the people. In the current study, the Iranian novelists allude to religion but purposely remain superficial in interrogating the impact of religion on the masses partly due to their own reservations about Islam and religion as a whole. Nonetheless, a thorough examination of the anticolonial movement in mid-twentieth century Iran requires a detailed introspection into the role of religion for the Iranian masses.

Simin Daneshvar certainly recognizes this impact in her novel, *Savushun*. The fusion between pre-Islamic Iranian traditions and Islamic religiosity in this narrative suggests her awareness that regardless of politics, Iranians practice religious customs with strong devotion. Similar to her life partner, Jalal Ale Ahmad, Daneshvar not only incorporates the religiosity of the masses in her novel as a characteristic of the Iranians, but also because she believed in the power of tradition and culture as tools of resistance towards neocolonialism. In another study, I will examine Daneshvar's use of religious and spiritual imagery to suggest the fierce level of commitment to tradition and custom on her part as a writer. She simultaneously endorses and critiques religiosity in her novel, but her main suggestion remains an official validation of religion as resistance. This attitude finds its most troubling realization in the years which followed the publication of his novel and culminated in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Her blatant endorsement of heteronormativity and traditional gender roles circumscribe her novel's strength in offering forms of socioeconomic and political rebellion, and establish her as a limited albeit typical progressive thinker of her time. While this novel presents the reader with a feisty, educated, and good-willed female protagonist, Zari remains committed to conservative notions about marriage, parenting, and obliging social expectations, especially as these matters assist men in maintaining problematic masculine identities. She resists foreign domination, but submits to patriarchal authority in the figure of her husband and nation. In this sense, Zari is hardly a "new woman" because she fails to shed the dehumanizing expectations placed upon her as woman, wife, and mother.

Merle Kinbona of *The Chosen Place, Timeless People* also falls short of representing the "new woman" for similar reasons as Zari. Again, Merle's outrage at the socioeconomic and political disenfranchisement of the masses of Bourne Island give the reader hope that this woman stands out as a rebel against the imbalanced power structures of the status quo. Her sense of agency and keen use of her abilities as an upper-class, educated, and worldly individual demonstrate her position as a leader among her people, but the fact that she succumbs to and even embraces the homophobic and conservative expectations of her mainstream society indicate her weakness and failure as a new source of hope and leadership. Her material qualities give her leverage to confront the oppression which faces the masses, but Merle's personal conflict with her sexuality and desire limit her potential as a "new woman." I would reexamine this novel against other female writers' works from the U.S. and the Caribbean in another study to trace the emergence of decolonization's new woman. For instance, Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven* grapples with some of the issues in Marshall's text, namely the role of women in revolutionary movements. Granted, Cliff's novel was written in 1987 which is nearly twenty years after the present work, but the female protagonist in the later narrative embraces her role

and position as a woman in a profoundly more powerful way. The same analysis can be applied to the work of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison as well whose novels often present the leadership possibilities of female agents.

In this project, my goal is to trace the emergence of Fanon's "new man" in the midst of decolonization. His model of hope and determination for the masses who struggle in the space between colonization and emancipation gives us a way to think about and consider the effect of colonization in socioeconomic, political, and gender terms, but this project also seeks to demonstrate the shortcomings of Fanon's model. My own observations about the failure of the independence movements and group responses to the process of decolonization lead me to suggest that progressive intentions and mass rebellions often failed to promote stable, humane, and egalitarian conditions for the newly decolonized masses because of the failure of so-called progressive people to address the imbedded gender and sexuality biases of the mid-twentieth century. Whether these movements occurred in the U.S. or in Iran, the platform for gender concerns remained neglected and often vehemently silenced and very few progressives pursued the intersections of gender and sexuality with class and race.

The novelists in this project implicitly respond to Fanon's model of the "new man" and demonstrate that contrary to Fanon's suggestions that the "new man" emerges in decolonization and takes over his own destiny immediately and with few albeit benign impediments, the "new man" and by extension, the "new woman" suffer from alienation to the extent that they are weak agents in the decolonizing landscape. In *Radical Representations*, Barbara Foley poses a poignant question regarding protest novels: can alienation be converted into rebellion? (329). I attempt to address the foundations of the sense of alienation which these six authors demonstrate in their novels and use Fanon's psychoanalysis to understand the particular connections between race, class, and gender to some extent with mid-twentieth century alienation. It seems to me that

these authors suggest that alienation can become rebellion, but if the agent works through his or her feelings of Sartrean alienation alone, then this rebellion is essentially useless because it is self-destructive. This is to say, alienation which impedes in an individual's ability to bond with others and therefore leaves the agent as a separate being from other beings cannot be converted into productive and effective forms of resistance and hence, cannot work as a way to address the inequities of the mid-twentieth century.

In our world's current status, the collapse of systems and ideologies of collectivity coupled with the continued narratives of individuality as a mark of success are a continuation of the dynamics which our forbearers faced in the mid-twentieth century. The limitations of the prior generations juxtaposed with their unwillingness to push beyond certain problematic notions of class, race, gender and sexuality make the process of decolonization a continuing aspect of our present world. The writers of this study complicate some of these class and race issues, but their own conservative values especially regarding their homophobia and encouragement of traditional roles for women demonstrate the struggle for broader forms of resistance and new paradigms of building unity and collectivity.

This project addresses many relevant issues happening today. If a reader could be ignorant about the publication dates of these novels, the concerns the authors raise seem contemporary. Issues such as class oppression, racial discrimination, political disenfranchisement, gender expectations and homophobic interpretations of sexuality, all continue to plague the decolonization process today. While the tenets of equality and social justice of the Occupy Movement resonate with a large collective of the global population, this mass formation of rebellion lacks a central ideology and remains open to criticism, skepticism, and of course, collapse. People the world over celebrated the end of tyrannical dictatorships and human rights abuses in the Arab world, but the rise of militant and fundamentalist Islamists in

the nations that ousted corrupt leadership seems hardly a sign of progress or hope for those masses and the world population at large.

The hope, that element of human characteristics which propels life, rests in the desire of people everywhere to eradicate injustice and beckon equality. The tactics, ideologies, methods, and rhetoric which people use to gain liberties and recognition remain shaky at best, but as the authors of this study suggest, the important element for change is a desire to make a difference. While the current limitations of the mass movements still relate to the sense of alienation wrought by modernity and are then complicated further by colonization, these newer formations such as the Occupy Movement address the neglected veins of the masses more openly, especially as related to gender and sexuality with their intersections with class, race, and economics. Thus, rebellion must continue and learn to shift as the needs become imminent. As Vijay Prashad says, “It is from these many creative initiatives that a genuine agenda for the future will arise” (281) and it is from these writers and theorists of the mid-twentieth century that we must take our cues.

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