A Historical Transposition: Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby* and Frantz Fanon's Post Enlightenment Phantasms

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Now the scapegoat for white society—which is based on myths of progress, civilization, liberalism, education, enlightenment, refinement—will be precisely the force that opposes the expansion and the triumph of these myths. This brutal opposing force is supplied by the Negro. 

---Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The perversion of that which, out of joint, does not work well, does not walk straight, or goes askew (*de travers,* then, rather than *à l'envers*) can easily be seen to oppose itself as does the oblique, twisted, wrong, and crooked to the good direction of that which goes right, straight, to the spirit of that which orients or founds the law [*le droit*]—and sets off directly, without detour, toward the right address, and so forth.

---Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* [End Page 403]

In his critique of the white mythologies of enlightenment rationality, Frantz Fanon's voice breaks in at least two directions (194). In one direction, he sets the reader's sight on the image of a Negro subject who rejects or resists the desire for enlightenment candidacy, whose oppositional force is made present by the Negro's resistance to the fictions of a white, European dominance. On the way to the supposed end of this well-trodden path, he takes the reader in another direction, on a detour through a labyrinth of colonial desires and phantasmatic spaces where he shows the eye behind the camera directing the image of the Negro as an oppositional force—a scapegoat figure brought into existence by these white mythologies that, in turn, justify such mythic containment as a necessary political truth. Fanon sidetracks us, tells us to give up on the quest for enlightenment, causes our good intentions to go astray, takes us by the hand into the excursive sphere of a post-enlightenment space, where we might free ourselves from an oppressive nightmare of subjective identification and its one-way dream of rationality. Homi Bhabha's foreword to the reprint of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks,* titled "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition," brilliantly elaborates the diffusion in Fanon's textual practice:

The awkward division that breaks [Fanon's] line of thought keeps alive the dramatic and enigmatic sense of the process of change. That familiar alignment of colonial subjects--Black/White, Self/Other--is disturbed with one brief pause and the traditional grounds of racial identity are dispersed, whenever they are found to rest in the narcissistic myths of Negritude or White cultural supremacy. (113)

Bhabha continues, "It is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonized Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the White man's artifice inscribed on the Black man's body" (117).
Fanon's voice goes astray amid the presumed certainties of enlightenment candidacy; that is, the calling into existence of the rightful subject of the enlightenment--the White European Man--that must also, simultaneously, constitute illegitimate or unenlightened Others such as the Corporeal Woman, or the illiterate or uneducated Colonized Man, the Negro. Within this double field of representation a critical tension emerges between literal referentiality--the Black man's body--and the multiplication of phantasms or specters that haunt an enlightenment imaginary--the White man's artifice. This critical tension between the literal and the "literary" is considered here through a critique of the contest for enlightenment candidacy in Toni Morrison's novel Tar Baby. My discussion of this text responds to two discontinuous, although interrelated, questions. First, I ask, who obtains the privileges of enlightenment candidacy? In other words, who rejects, accepts, or resists the very idea of an enlightened rational subject? Second, I wonder, whose dream of rationality dominates the phantasms of commodity cultural production?

Tar Baby challenges the constitution of enlightenment candidacy; the homogeneous groups of people and "cultures" that represent its proper object and the exclusions and oppositions that structure desire for and resistance to its vision of an autonomous, universal subject. It tampers with the grand narratives of the enlightenment ideals of progress, civilization, and development, situating personal and impersonal forces of historical memory in opposition to a body without consciousness. Whereas the enlightened mind makes subjective and historical knowledge of Self and Other for itself, it denies consciousness--memory, desire, dreams--to those it represents as women, colonial subjects, and people of color. In establishing the civilized mind, the uncivilized body is constructed--a body reduced, in Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's terms, to a chromatism (the color of skin) ("Questions" 60), and/or, in Fanon's terms, a genitalism (that is, a biologically sexed-based essentialism [165]).

Unitary notions of enlightenment candidacy are unsettled by the character of Jadine Childs in Tar Baby, a Parisian fashion model with a degree in Art History from the Sorbonne. Jadine's dream of large hats demystifies the artifice of fashion, its deception, its dissimulation, its irrationality; and yet, the artifice of fashion becomes the very possibility for demystifying subjective authenticity. The large hats on the bodies of large, beautiful white women such as Mae West signify a material abundance disguised as sexual extravagance that Jadine rejects because they make her feel ashamed. Juxtaposed to this dream is Jadine's memory of a surreal encounter at a supermarket in Paris with an African woman who materializes, like a vision, in a yellow dress. The materiality of "the woman in yellow who had run her out of Paris" (Morrison 48) is one of black African authenticity: "the skin like tar against the canary yellow dress" (45).

Fashion functions as a signifier of bourgeois white femininity, and the black skin of the African woman signifies an African authenticity--both subject Jadine to social regulation and the policing of identity and disguise. In her encounter with the African woman in the supermarket, racial identity also functions as a form of artifice, its meanings produced and projected onto the body. Jadine's focus is on the yellow dress, thus making the constructedness of racial identity the issue and not a biologically-based essence. Morrison restores the dialectical potential in fashion to unmask the very process of masking while simultaneously deploying fashion's ideological power to create women as middle-class objects-of-desire. Jadine clearly appropriates this system of identification, as does Alma Estée, the indigenous figure of surplus domestic labor who lives on the fictive Caribbean island in which the novel is set and who desires nothing more than an American white woman's wig.

As a post-enlightenment, transnational, female, black, upwardly mobile subject, Jadine makes irreducible the meanings of bodily consciousness--consciousness that must come to terms with how the body is shaped as an object of desire by the imperatives of enlightenment candidacy. This emphasis on bodily consciousness and aspects of bodily culture and fashion represents a response to my first question: who obtains the privileges of enlightenment candidacy, who rejects, accepts, or resists the very ideas of an enlightened subject? My second question takes a turn in another direction: what dream of rationality dominates the phantasms of commodity cultural production? This turn toward the discourses of commodification, including fashion and advertising, shifts the analysis from the problem of representation--the Subject/ Other configuration of enlightenment candidacy--to the exchange-space of difference. This difference is predicated on the methodological potential of the commodity form to disclose the symbolic values of gender, race, and sexuality that maintain the circulation of laboring or nonlaboring bodies for the purposes of an expanding economic imperialism. The discourses of fashion and advertising in Tar Baby are constitutive of a gendered material reality where relations among commodity-objects also include the animate commodities of Woman and Subaltern. Specifically, Morrison's novel re-creates a differential text of consciousness made up of competing threads of race, class, sexuality, coloniality, and gender by reworking the values
of material reality through reified forms of material existence and knowledge—a sartorial épistéme, a black woman's mask. Morrison also reworks the material values of the domestic sphere, the bodily culture of eating, dressing, hygiene, and sexual practices, which is also the bodily culture of imperialism's use values in the civilizing mission.

**Masters in Disguise**

*Tar Baby* appeared in print in 1981, before Reaganism dramatically set back the gains of antiracist feminist struggles that emerged in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As a Sorbonne-educated woman and fashion model, Jadine Childs represents middle-class ideals of beauty and education; her character anticipates the rise of a new elitism in the U.S. during Ronald Reagan's presidency that incorporated sexual and racial differences into a discourse of multicultural diversity in order to dissolve their potential unifying values for political and social protest. This new mode of symbolic differentiation used techniques of incorporation and assimilation, without necessarily doing away with conventional mechanisms of exclusion through ideological and physical violence. New classes, divisions, hierarchies, and contentions sprung to life. In the "new" world order that followed, women and blacks could be autonomous "bourgeois" subjects; but, in order to secure bourgeois identity in this rapidly transfigured world, race, gender, sexual, and ethnic differences would function as signs of symbolic power, not collective political power.

Jadine's new class affiliation is, in part, secured through her status as an orphan, with displaced familial relations; she is raised by her uncle Sydney and wife Ondine, who work as domestic servants for the candy manufacturer and capitalizer Valerian Street. Jadine is poised at the beginning of the novel to become a member of the bourgeoisie, in a way that fulfills Fanon's mordant prognosis that "For the black [woman] there is only one destiny. And it is white" (10). Morrison, however, represents Jadine's transnational subjectivity in a complex field of decentered relations: she is a daughter of enlightenment ideals in her class mobility and formal education, and she embodies a gendered and racialized ideal of exotic female symbolic power as a black model in Paris. If Son, another central character in the novel, is her "black skin," Margaret Street, Valerian's bourgeois wife, is one of her "white masks."

Margaret Street wears the white mask of female bourgeois individualism, a historical figure in decline. Etched on the surface of Margaret Street's portrait are marks of female bourgeois infantilization, narcissistic delusions, and sadomasochistic practices toward herself and her son's body. Her outline emerges from a mass of emotional scars, a surface scratched by years of abuse—what she experienced and what she inflicted on her child's body, Michael. Her textual imprint is crafted by the language of dissimulation, artifice, and disguise, the necessity for it and its limitations in shaping her individuality by further distancing her from meaningful relationships. She wants to "erase the consequences of frowning" with "Frownies." Valerian, the man she married at the age of seventeen when her major occupation in life was to be the centerpiece of a float paraded in a small town, asks, "But why don't you just stop frowning? Then you won't need to paste your face with little pieces of tape" (Morrison 22). The contours of Margaret Street's life are marked by forces beyond her control, her face a mask etched by someone else's pen. She tries, unsuccessfully, to erase the consequences of Valerian's imprint, his caustic tongue, his masterful discourse. She disguises herself in order to disguise, without being able to erase, the effects of his bourgeois patriarchal mastery.

In an important scene in the novel, Jadine, Valerian, and Margaret sit at the dinner table while being served by Jadine's uncle, Sydney. The scene is fascinating for many reasons, not least because of the importance attributed to table manners as a determining feature of social distinction. In this scene, class politics are coded by "race" and gender differences—the measures of a late twentieth-century standard of recognizably "new" social distinctions that must be incorporated into the global theater of multicultural diversity.

For Margaret, the dinner table represents a social challenge; during the conversation, or rather argument, between Valerian and Margaret, they use correct eating habits to thinly veil familial violence. The scene is shrouded in a damp mist, a condition of the Caribbean climate, likened by Morrison to "the hair of maiden aunts" (62):

> With a practiced sidelong glance [Sydney] caught Valerian pressing his thumb to the edge of the soup plate, pushing it an inch or so away. Instantly Sydney retraced his felt steps to [End Page 408] clear the plates for the next course. Just before he reached Margaret, who had not yet touched anything, she dipped her spoon into the bisque and began to eat. Sydney
hesitated and then stepped back.

"You're dawdling, Margaret," said Valerian.

"Sorry," she murmured. The maiden aunts stroked her cheek and she wiped away the dampness their fingers left.

"There is a rhythm to a meal. I've always told you that."

"I said sorry. I'm not a fast eater."

"Speed has nothing to do with it. Pace does," Valerian answered.

"So my pace is different from yours."

"It's the soufflé, Margaret," Jadine interrupted. "Valerian knows there's a soufflé tonight."

Margaret put her spoon down. It clicked against the china. Sydney floated to her elbow. (62-63)

Margaret's troubled relationship to a bourgeois civilizing process and its bodily culture stems, in part, from her resistance to it. It is also, however, marked by a deeply disturbing dislocation between objects, their proper names, and their correct use:

She was usually safe with soup, anything soft or liquid that required a spoon, but she was never sure when the confusion would return: when she would scrape her fork tines along the china trying to pick up the painted blossoms at its center, or forget to unwrap the Amaretti cookie at the side of her plate and pop the whole thing into her mouth. [ . . . ] Still she was careful at the table, watching other people handle their food--just to make sure that never again would she pick up the knife instead of the celery stalk or pour water from her glass over the prime ribs instead of the meat's own juices. (63)

Margaret suffers a kind of object-alienation; she forgets "the names and uses of things."

It happened mostly at meals, and once, years ago, with the Princess telephone which she picked up with her car keys and address book and tried to stuff in her purse. They were [End Page 409] rare moments, but dark and windy enough to last. After lunch with friends you could go to the powder room, twist the lipstick out of its tube and wonder suddenly if it was for licking or writing your name. (55) 3

Morrison shifts the voice here from a third-person narration to Margaret's internal dialogue with a generic second-person "you." It is an instance of a textual dislocation of subjectivity in the remembrance of things past, a cannibalized cosmetic epiphany mixed together with the question of a bourgeois white woman's access to writing her self: should she eat the lipstick or write with it? At the end of the novel, when Valerian is reduced to an infantile and crippling state of physical and emotional dependency, Margaret becomes "like a confident curator who knew the names of everything in his museum" (278).

During the dinner table scene, Valerian humiliates Margaret, repeatedly: for her lack of propriety; her mispronunciation of Eurydice--"Eurydi-chee"; her reference to the "von Brandts"--"The 'von' is imaginary"; her speaking in "food measurements"; and her failure to observe the rules of conduct concerning eating utensils (64-65):

"'What the hell is the matter with you?'

Startled, Margaret looked around. [Valerian] was glaring at her. Jade was looking at her plate while Sydney leaned near her wrist.

"'What?'" she said. "'What?'"--looking down at her plate. It was all right, nothing spilled, nothing broken: lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber all there. Then Sydney set the bowl on the table and
picked up the salad spoon and fork. She had left them on the table. (67).

Valerian's constant criticism of Margaret situates her outside the bourgeois class she married into. Working-class women, such as Margaret, who marry bourgeois men do not simply inherit bourgeois class affiliation. Margaret's status is one of an outsider who has never acquired the appropriate codes of conduct in the practices and technologies of everyday bourgeois life. Her disinheritance from bourgeois class affiliation--the result of marriage and not birth--reproduces a similar and subtle process of racial dissociation between herself and Jadine: [End Page 410]

"Remember her hair when she was hanging from the wires in the streetcar garage?" Margaret continued to address Jadine.

"You mean the hair in her armpits?" Jadine asked. She was uncomfortable with the way Margaret stirred her into blackening up or universaling out, always alluding to or ferreting out what she believed were racial characteristics. She ended by resisting both, but it kept her alert about things she did not wish to be alert about. (64)

If Margaret is Valerian's "other" within the supposed commonality of their class affiliation, Jadine is Margaret's "other" within the supposedly unifying category of gender. In the first case, gender is the phantasm of difference; in the second, race is, thus demonstrating the flexibility and mobility with which differential values can be deployed to establish relations of power: a ground of commonality--an essence--that in reality supports and contains hierarchical differences.

Following the dinnertime scene, Margaret finds Son--an intruder into the sanctity of the bourgeois white American family--in her closet and becomes hysterical. Her internal monologue is fraught with unspoken racist aggression--"literally, literally a nigger in the woodpile" (83). Her thoughts continue, "In her things. Actually in her things. Probably jerking off. Black sperm was sticking in clots to her French jeans or down in the toe of her Anne Klein shoes. Didn't men sometimes jerk off in women's shoes?" (86). In this passage I hear an echo of Fanon's words:

"Dirty nigger!" Or simply, "Look, a Negro!"

I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. (109)

Margaret's sexual fetishism derives from the classic Freudian account in which a particular object, the fetish, is made to stand in for or to substitute for the potentially castrated penis of oedipal design. Son becomes in Margaret's reaction an irreducibly racialized sexual fetish, an object in the midst of her signs, symbols, and objects of material wealth, her commodity fetishes, her Anne Klein shoes. [End Page 411]

The irreducibility of sexuality and race is very precisely elaborated by Fanon in his notion of Negrophobia, the absolute reduction, by white women, of the Negro to the genital: "In relation to the Negro, everything takes place on the genital level" (157). Fanon continues, "All the Negrophobic women I have known had abnormal sex lives. Their husbands had left them; or they were widows and they were afraid to find a substitute for the dead husband; or they were divorced and they had doubts at the thought of a new object investment. All of them endowed the Negro with powers that other men (husbands, transient lovers) did not have" (158). Margaret's sadistic abuse of her son Michael, her "masochism plus narcissism" and "feminine dementia" (Fanon 144), her hysteria and incidences of object-alienation constitute a pathologization of the white bourgeois woman entirely in line, one could argue, with Fanon's chapters "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman." Stuart Hall observes that these two chapters in Black Skin, White Masks, "though containing some important insights into the way projective sexual fantasies become racialised as they become gendered and racialised fantasies become 'genitalised' (rather than simply 'sexualised'), are nevertheless extremely problematic" (30). In these problematic chapters, Fanon explicates the pathological desire of white women to sleep with black men and the neurotic desire of black men to sleep with white women. 4

Another difficulty is posed by Fanon's dismissive position on black women (set against his representation of white women as objects of black male desire). Indeed, Fanon's position is nothing short of scandalous. No
amount of apologies or side-stepping of the issue can exonerate Fanon from the charges of blatant sexism and homophobia.⁵ We are still left wondering how someone whose work is otherwise exemplary on the subject of race in imperialism could be so obstinate about the race dynamics of gender/sex, even within the limited case of the heterosexual oedipal matrix. As always, it would be easy to blame Freud or Mother. Here is the passage that gives the contemporary critic so much trouble:

If we go farther into the labyrinth, we discover that when a [white] woman lives the fantasy of rape by a Negro, it is in some way the fulfillment of a private dream, of an inner wish. [ . . . ] Those who grant our conclusions on the psychosexuality of the white woman may ask what we have to say about the woman of colour. I know nothing about her. (179-80)

It is the last line, "I know nothing about her," that creates the obstacle. Fanon's failure to discuss the different experience of race-sexualizing between black women and black men has become a notorious absence founded on a refusal to engage the question beyond the imaginary investment in the white woman. Such is the power of this obstacle—the absolute claim not to know—that critics such as Bhabha and Hall never get beyond this sentence to the remainder of Fanon's paragraph in which he writes: "What I can offer, at the very least, is that for many women in the Antilles—the type that I shall call the all-but-whites—the aggressor is symbolized by the Senegalese type, or in any event by an inferior (who is so considered)" (180).⁶

If we end with Fanon's claim, "I know nothing about her," we can say that Fanon only attends to an imaginary investment in white women as objects of desire, who internalize their objectification and reproduce it in the black man. Black women are apparently excluded from this narcissistic making and unmaking of subjectivity, whereas the production of white-woman-as-object-of-desire—on the pages of fashion magazines, for example—constitutes a privileged moment that, at the very least, enables a critical and analytical investment in this figure.⁷ But the reference to the Senegalese male Other, a military figure in Fanon's text, marks a phantasmatic scenario for the black woman. Although Fanon does not elaborate the significance of this aggressive Other for black women, contrary to Bhabha's and Hall's analyses, he nevertheless (mis)recognizes that such others exist.⁸

The charge of sexism in the recent critical reception of Black Skin, White Masks is, in part, the effect of the critical tension in this work between literary/literal referentiality and the phantasms of white mythology. It is difficult, in other words, not to fall into a fundamentalist trap of assuming that Fanon's figures of black women—when they are mentioned—can be so easily fixed as identifiable referents, especially considering Fanon's analysis of the profoundly unstable and indeterminate, imaginary and partially negotiated, constitution of subjective identification in black men. [End Page 413]

Bhabha concludes his introductory essay to the recent edition of Black Skin, White Masks with the statement that "the time has come to return to Fanon" (122). I would argue that this return to Fanon must be through the lens of an antiracist, anti-imperialist feminism. To further this project, I have established an intertextual relationship between Black Skin, White Masks and Tar Baby, in part, by tracing the many themes raised by Fanon that may still be challenged, reworked, incorporated, or transformed: his focus on desire and the role of projective fantasy; the formation of a "corporeal schema" in bodily consciousness; the emphasis on the gaze in the process of "othering"; the intersections of racism, imperialism, and colonialism; and the complex weaving of a text of identity. These are also themes that are vital to a critical understanding of Tar Baby. Furthermore, I would suggest that Fanon's textual practice, his dissimulated reading of racism in the colonial world, provides a strategic intervention into the mirror effects of colonial white desire for the black woman as represented in Tar Baby.

Intertextuality, as defined by Julia Kristeva, denotes a "transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another" (59-60). This transposition between sign systems—such as the novel Tar Baby and an existential humanist polemic Black Skin, White Masks, or, on another discursive register, between racial and sexual difference—also carries with it a historical transformation between Fanon's earlier articulation of the psychoanalysis of racism and imperialism and its effects on black men (to the exclusion of black women) and Morrison's re-articulation of that signifying practice with a feminist antiracist and anti-imperialist stance in her novel. Kristeva emphasizes the term "transposition" because intertextuality is often wrongly used to trace a lineage in literary sources. Similarly, I am not arguing that Fanon is a literary influence in Morrison's text, although that may be the case. Rather, Fanon's dialogic style that simultaneously speaks and counters racist
remarks, inter-dependently of the "I" of the text, echoes in Morrison's novel in such a way that a historical transposition--in Fanon's words "a historico-racial schema"--takes place from an irreducible configuration of sexuality in racism to a re-articulation of sexuality, race, and gender (Fanon 111). This intertextual play of transpositions does not seek to find similarities and stop there. Rather, they are found only to realize their intense irregularities, their disintegrating connections, transient proximities, and unmarked identities. 9 Morrison effectively decents [End Page 414] Fanon, overwrites his text with new characters, new configurations of race-gender difference that when returned to his text utterly transform the possibilities, as well as contextualize and complicate the either/or opposition of a "black [female] skin" and "white [female] masks."

Demons of Authenticity

The bourgeois/white/feminine/first-world configuration of Margaret Street's subjectivity is largely a passing historical trope in Tar Baby. In relation to this declining historical figure emerges the transnational/black/female/bourgeois in the figure of Jadine Childs. The novel asks, is Jadine Childs simply a "tar baby"? A tar baby is a decoy, something the white farmer made to capture the rabbit that was eating his cabbages. 10 Is Jadine a white man's decoy, a decorative lure to trap black men? In short, is she another woman in disguise, a female Uncle Tom, an identity that can only be scripted in terms of a "whitening" (that is, becoming bourgeois) and not, ironically, a blackening? She is a model in France, educated at the Sorbonne in art history, but also a seemingly failed artist, unable to recreate and invent her own life. Is she the new body who will give shape to a black consciousness of "authenticity" in Fanon's (or Sartre's) existential sense of the word? Or is she only a shell of a body like the boat named Queen of France--the superficial incorporeal fantasy, sign of French aristocratic symbolic power--that Son--the legitimate black male of imperialist resistance and republican revolution--flees from in the opening pages of the novel?

John N. Duvall argues that Jadine Childs thematizes an "identity-in-crisis," a subjectivity split between "a desire to assimilate to the values of the white middle class and the voices that urge them to acknowledge a black racial identity" (325). Duvall's configuration of split subjectivity assumes ontological coherence and closure, a subject once whole and then, unfortunately, split down the middle and forced to choose between two new totalities: the dominant or the oppressed. Note that for Duvall, a white middle class is placed in opposition to a "black racial identity." His stereotypical assumption here is that a black racial identity is intractably linked to poverty. In other words, you cannot be black and middle class. As Fanon says, "One is white as one is [End Page 415] rich, as one is beautiful, as one is intelligent" (51-52). The subject who experiences a crisis in identity, then, desires incorporation into the symbolic circuits of power. On the other hand, an agent of social transformation may desire integration but is against an assimilation that would level or obliterate her or his political difference, precisely what middle-class enlightenment candidacy will not allow. Thus, I read Jadine Childs, Margaret Street, and Son as subjects fashioned through historical forces, their singularity arising in the specificity of their relationship to those forces, the decisions they confront and the acts they perform in order to "free" themselves from various masters in disguise, including their own phantasms of authenticity. Jadine, in particular, is a character who comes up against the limits of her identity. She must confront and challenge the inadequacy of existing forms of symbolic and political representation while addressing the ways that cultural institutions fix her identity regardless of her educational and economic status. Finally, since Jadine is not represented as a victim of a monolithic racist, patriarchal capitalism, I would suggest that she is not a subject of the identity-in-crisis mold, but a subject in transition, dialectically engaging the positive aspects of modern history's forces for change in relation to the negativity of its historical effects--the struggle for imperial power and domination. She encounters the political and cultural milieu of the post-1960s period, a period superseded by the increasing expansion of U. S. power in the form of political and economic globalization and a shift from the political activism of the 1960s and 1970s to the symbolic powers of multiculturalism and identity politics in the 1980s.

Jadine, who has had the benefit of a formal education paid for by Valerian, reads or decodes better than Margaret the proprieties of bourgeois conduct and behaviour. She knows and strategically enacts the proprieties of the bodily culture of the masters of courtly society she no doubt studied in art history. When Margaret leaves the table after the dinnertime scene, Jadine stays, out of politeness and "decency," to listen to Valerian (Morrison 68, 72). She stifles a yawn and self-consciously wears a mask of conversational interest: "I ought to be asking questions and making comments instead of smiling and nodding like a puppet. Hoping there was a residue of interest in her eyes, she held her chin toward him and continued to smile--but only a little--in case what he was remembering was poignant but not happy" (77). [End Page 416] The
conversation revolves around Valerian's son, Michael, and his difference from Jadine. Michael abandoned his bourgeois background for the socialist consciousness of his times. Jadine recounts that he berated her once for "studying art history at that snotty school instead of--I don't know what. Organizing or something. He said I was abandoning my history. My people. [. . . H]e wanted me to string cowrie beads or sell Afro combs. The system was all fucked up he said and only a return to handicraft and barter could change it. That welfare mothers could do crafts, pottery, clothing in their homes, like the lace-makers of Belgium and voilà! dignity and no more welfare" (72-73). Michael's progressive position demonstrates a fascination for his own counter-ideology, but one that works, oddly enough, to mask the very voices and bodies it is ostensibly designed to address. Interestingly, Valerian's response, couched as it is in terms of the developmental logic of capitalism—the benefits of a shift in mode of production from primitive accumulation, barter, and trade-in-goods to the modern age of mass production—is more compelling than Michael's romanticism, exoticism, and primitivism, of which Valerian is rightly critical: "[Michael's] idea of racial progress is All Voodoo to the People" (72). He continues, "He wanted a race of exotics skipping around being picturesque for him" (73).

For Valerian, Michael's failure lies in his rejection of "liberalism," his failure to embrace entrepreneurial ideals, bourgeois values, and the right of the individual to succeed under capitalism. For Jadine, however, upward mobility is not only a release from poverty but from racial stereotypes: "It wasn't like what he thought: all grits and natural grace. But he did make me want to apologize for what I was doing, what I felt. For liking 'Ave Maria' better than gospel music, I suppose" (74).

During the dinnertime ritual, Sydney figures as a shadow, an invisible man, quietly serving Valerian: "One hardly knew if he left the room or stood in some shadowy corner of it" (Morrison 74). The class tensions between Valerian and Margaret reach a limit in the roles assigned Jadine and Sydney. It is not enough that Jadine, a dinner guest, be incorporated into the new world, the bourgeois order (whose very constitution depends upon the exclusion of African American women and men as producers of social meaning); she must occupy a state of "between-ness"—neither like Sydney, a silent other, nor a subject who would contest the limits of an identity politics projected onto her. She is a guest of the bourgeoisie, an "internal other" who must conform to [End Page 417] the rituals of comportment and preserve the necessary silences that maintain its hierarchical order. Effectively, she is a sign in the multicultural theater, a bearer of symbolic rights, signified by her elite education and her career as a model in which she represents the bourgeois woman of fashion who signifies material wealth. She achieves symbolic power in her representative position as a sign of commodity wealth, yet she lacks political power. Unlike Michael, she is not a political activist—which he points out. But Michael's politics are just as symbolic as Jadine's because his romantic and exotic representations of African people do not lead to real social change. From what we learn about Margaret's physical abuse of Michael when he was a child, his progressive politics, and his desire to help others amount to a displaced need to resolve an originary trauma within the bourgeois family. In Valerian's words, Michael is a "cultural orphan who sought other cultures he could love without risk or pain" (145).

Jadine's symbolic rights, as opposed to political or legal ones, are acceptable as merely symbolic so long as the capitalist and the bourgeois are still being served, in this case by Sydney and Ondine—"The white man is a master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table" (Fanon 219)—and, so long as cheap labor, supplied by the island workers who are given generic names such as Yardman and Mary, is readily available, replaceable, and interchangeable. This is the point at which enlightenment candidacy intersects with class interests, the point at which supplementary symbolic powers reveal the extent to which social differences can be made to function as ideological markers of an undifferentiated mass, a multicultural theatre of inclusiveness that, in the name of diversity, effectively obliterates its political expression in order to preserve class hierarchies. To obtain enlightenment, then, is also to obtain middle-class status and its space of "sameness." In the gender dynamics of enlightenment candidacy, women figure significantly in this space of sameness as mediators of the tensions produced by sexual difference. Where Margaret fails to function as a site of mediation and must, therefore, be expelled from the dinner table, Jadine mediates the tension between Valerian and Margaret. She preserves the essential oedipal bonds between men, the fraternity between Valerian and his real/imaginary son, Michael, a forepresence with whom Valerian imagines a reconciliation when the character named Son appears at his dinner table. [End Page 418]

If sexual difference acquires a purchase in mediating the fraternal love of oedipal bonding, the mask of patriarchal power, an ideology of cultural difference suffices to mediate the justification for poverty. Michael functions as a phantasm, a specter who decorporealizes the Repeatable benevolent colonial gesture of charity, only in the guise of welfare socialism. Valerian criticizes "the falseness and fraudulence of the anthropological position" that Michael plays into—an ideology of cultural difference that makes him a "purveyor of exotics" (Morrison 145). But Valerian's anti-ethnocentric ethnocentrism is far from aligning itself
with Fanon’s critique of a nostalgic return to the mythic origins of a "Negro civilization." Fanon would be "very happy to know that a correspondence had flourished between some Negro philosopher and Plato," but, he continues, "I can absolutely not see how this fact would change anything in the lives of the eight-year-old children who labour in the cane fields of Martinique or Guadeloupe" (Fanon 230). Often what parades as "cultural difference" is more truly a sign of poverty or exploitation. Ethnocentrism presupposes that all peoples and cultures are progressing toward "Enlightenment," albeit some more quickly than others. Constitutive of enlightenment thought is a metaphysical opposition between tradition and modernity, authenticity and artifice, a play of difference ideologically deployed to explain and justify imperialism. While for Michael, a benevolent social welfare policy would celebrate and revalidate so-called traditional aspects of indigenous life, Valerian sees only the teleological necessity of an absolute modernity, freely and voluntarily chosen: "The Indian problem, he told Michael, was between Indians, their conscience and their own derring-do" (Morrison 145). In conversation with Son, Valerian notes the extraordinary poverty in which the Indians live on the reservation, and then, ironically adds: "Michael encourages [the Indians] to keep their own heritage intact. You'd really like Michael. Everybody does" (199). Valerian's interests lie with the perception of a separate and homogeneous mass that can be easily identified, marked by their poverty and dispossession, and the cheap labor for sugar extraction for his candy manufacturing company. He deploys the rhetoric of "universal humanism" rather than cultural difference in order to justify economic imperialism and the impoverishment of the indigenous population on his island. When Sydney and Ondine object to Valerian’s hospitable treatment toward Son after Margaret finds [End Page 419] him in her closet, he reflects on what he perceives to be their "smugness":

their manner struck him as what Michael meant when he said "bourgeois" in that tone that Valerian always thought meant unexciting, but now he thought meant false, but last night he thought meant Uncle Tom-ish. [. . .] Disappointment nudging contempt for the outrage Jadine and Sydney and Ondine exhibited in defending property and personnel that did not belong to them from a black man who was one of their own. (144-45)

Valerian’s bourgeois smugness is, of course, rendered transparent. What finally punctures Valerian’s seemingly impenetrable and transparent screen, his white mask, is the knowledge that Margaret tortured Michael as an infant, stuck pins in his body and burned him with cigarettes (208). Upon learning this, his facade destroyed, Valerian becomes a shadow of his former self, mumbling incoherently to himself.

The Woman Wants to Be Black, Transnational, and Upwardly Mobile

Sexuality occupies a central place in the imperialist civilizing mission. Bodily techniques were needed to constrain animal drives and instincts so that reason would prevail. Pushing the geopolitical boundaries of Foucault’s History of Sexuality, Ann Laura Stoler argues that Foucault’s text

is not a history of western desire but rather a history of how sexual desire came to be the test of how we distinguish the interior Other and know our true selves. In this perspective, the protracted colonial discourses that linked sexual passion to political subversion and managed sexuality to patriotic priorities make sense. These were discourses that secured the distinction of individual white bodies and the privileges of a white body politic at the same time. (190)

In Jadine and Son’s relationship, a heterosexist racism emerges from the use of a language of impropriety, an uncivilized discourse on animals, sex, smell, "dirty" words, and homophobia. For Son, this [End Page 420] uncivil discourse is a direct challenge to Jadine’s upper-class affiliation and her so-called civilized behavior, which contradictorily exhibits aspects of shame, constraint, and decadence:

"How much?" he asked her. "Was it a lot?" [. . .]

"What are you talking about? How much what?"

"Dick. That you had to suck, I mean to get all that gold and be in the movies. Or was it pussy? I guess for models it’s more pussy than cock." He wanted to go on and ask her was it true what the black whores always said, but she was hitting him on the face [. . .] calling him an ignorant motherfucker with the accent on the syllable ig. (Morrison 120)

Jadine tells him he smells, calls him an ape, and accuses him of wanting to rape her. Son retaliates: "Rape?
Why you little white girls always think somebody's trying to rape you?" (121). Jadine protests Son's whitening of her identity and objects to him telling her "what a black woman is or ought to be [. . .]" (121). When he persists, she replies:

"You can't, you ugly barefoot baboon! Just because you're black you think you can come in here and give me orders? Sydney was right. He should have shot you on the spot. But no. A white man thought you were a human being and should be treated like one. He's civilized and made the mistake of thinking you might be too. That's because he didn't smell you. But I did and I know you're an animal because I smell you." (121)

Jadine's racist attack on Son as an uncivilized animal unmasks a theory of alienation with nature produced by the artifice of civilization. In this theoretical nexus, to become like an animal is to take up a dissimulated enlightenment stance in the guise of an anticivilizing gesture. Jadine's seal-skin coat, a gift from her European male lover, signals the freedom she has been given to be released from the naturalizing of her black identity as an animal. Instead, she masters the animal by wearing it on her back; she wears the metaphor of nature-conquest to signify that she does not labor like an animal. She is free to wear her seal-skin coat and to be, in Fanon's words, "sealed into thingness [. . .] she is for somewhere else and for something else" (218); she is not free to constitute her identity through her own work. [End Page 421]

In a theory of alienation from nature (nature here being the body), the artifice of civilization plays out a never-ending series of oppositions: master/slave, human/animal, man/woman, subject/other. Nature, the body, functions as a ground of truth, a metaphorical earth transposed into a conceptual schema of certainty and solidity. The identity politics of the 1980s, a politics of representation, searched for a ground of truth in an original identity. The removal of every mask would ultimately reveal this original identity. Fanon and Morrison dissimulate the desire for identity in a labyrinthine play of difference and repetition. Thus Fanon writes, "my unreason was countered with reason, my reason with 'real reason'" (132). And Son remarks: "He had tried a little television that first day, but the black people in whiteface playing black people in blackface unnerved him" (Morrison 216). Television and film, advertising and fashion magazines, figure importantly as technologies of dissimulation that disrupt the search for an original identity.

In Jadine's fashion spread she is dubbed the "copper Venus" (Morrison 115). The indeterminacy of her identity, flickering across the page, appears to Son, ironically, stable and fixed. Jadine's phantasmatic image in the magazine engages not only his sight but also his touch. He "trac[es] her blouse with his forefinger" on the page, and again, "[h]e was tracing [. . .]. circling Catherine [the Great]'s earrings with his forefinger. Jadine felt her earlobes prickle as she watched him" (116-17). Jadine experiences what Bhabha calls "a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once" (117). When Jadine asks Son why he prefers to gaze at her image than look at her, he replies, "The pictures are easier. They don't move" (Morrison 119). Although the image may stay still, the meanings attributed to it are no more stable than a fantasy of identity scripted onto the body. "Nothing in [woman]," writes Foucault, "--not even [her] body--is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other [women]" (153).

The always singular mask conceals nothing. The incongruous seal-skin coat covers a nonexistent nudity. In Fanon's words, an "epidermalization" takes place, a signifying event in which phantasms of the body are ceaselessly produced in stories, in history, in images. 11 Epidermalization, Hall notes, literally means "the inscription of race on the skin" (16). When Jadine wears the fur coat, she is inscribed by a taxonomy of values linked to the animal corporeality of black bodies. She wears the inscription of race on her skin that is itself an animal skin: "As he stood looking at the coat she could not tell whether he or it was the blacker or the shinier, but she knew she did not want him to touch it" (Morrison 114). The gap between the surface of her body and the seal-skin coat becomes stuffed with a surplus of meaning. She enters a chain of signifiers, a "taxidermy," in Hall words, "of radicalized difference" (20) where the line between the human and animal, sexual repression and enlightenment, completely blurs:

The skin of the baby seals sucked up the dampness of her own. Jadine closed her eyes and imagined the blackness she was sinking into. She lay spread-eagled on the fur, resting herself into it. It made her tremble. She opened her lips and licked the fur. It made her tremble more. Ondine was right; there was something a little fearful about the coat. No, not fearful, seductive. After a few more moments of nestling she got up and made preparations to take another shower and to get dressed. (Morrison 112)
She returns to the world of the civilized, to bathe, to dress, to forget the onanistic and seductive foreplay
with the fur coat.

This inscription of race, of sex, on the body decenters identity politics. It turns racial and sexual stereotypes
into phantasms that, in Foucault's words, "topologize the materiality of the body." Foucault continues:
"[Phantasms] should consequently be freed from the restrictions we impose upon them, freed from the
dilemmas of truth and falsehood and of being and non-being (the essential difference between simulacrum
and copy carried to its logical conclusion); they must be allowed to conduct their dance, to act out their
mime, as 'extra-beings'" (169-70). Phantasms must be free to float to the surface of consciousness; like
extraterrestrial beings, they must be freed from the gravitational forces of the earth, its pull to the ground, to
foundational discourses of desire and power, to original identities, absolute values, and regimes of truth. The
point is not to abandon these phantasms but to gather them together, to give primacy to none but to work
with them as they surge up in a moment of danger; to grasp them in all their contradictions and incoherence
and not to rally the cry of the death of representation, but rather to work through the dance of difference and
[End Page 423] repetition so as to reinvent political representation by attending to its symbolic mode of
representation—thereby reinventing the meaning of "representation" in the multicultural theater of cultural
politics.

Jadine, her voice "gooey with repetition," argues with Son over his loyalty to the past history of slavery and
European domination as a justification for his clinging to a future projection of, in Fanon's words, a Negro
civilization. Fanon viewed the creation of an alternative Negro civilization as the very definition of becoming
European, although a poorer member of its ranks. The point is not, he argued, "to live the part of a poor
relative, of an adopted son, of a bastard child [. . .] seek[ing] to discover a Negro civilization"; rather, what is
desirable, according to Fanon, is "introducing invention into existence" (229-30):

She thought she was rescuing him from the night women who wanted him for themselves,
wanted him feeling superior in a cradle, deferring to him; wanted her to settle for wifely
competence when she could be almighty, to settle for fertility rather than originality, nurturing
instead of building. He thought he was rescuing her from Valerian, meaning them, the aliens,
the people who in a mere three hundred years had killed a world millions of years old. [. . .]
And even when some of them built something nice and human, they grew vicious protecting it
from their own predatory children, let alone an outsider. Each was pulling the other away from
the maw of hell--its very ridge top. Each knew the world as it was meant or ought to be. One
had a past, the other a future and each one bore the culture to save the race in his hands.
Mama-spoiled black man, will you mature with me? Culture-bearing black woman, whose
culture are you bearing? (Morrison 269)

At the conclusion to Tar Baby, Jadine succeeds, partially, in grasping Fanon's call to introduce "invention into
existence." Son, however, fails and must retake a hazardous journey across the island, back through the
labyrinth of enlightenment consciousness to once again do battle with its contestatory subject-positionings.
Jadine's success in dislodging herself from the roots of identity, from poverty, from multicultural ideologies of
authenticity, nevertheless leaves traces of an unresolved dimension in her first-world experience as a black
woman, in particular, [End Page 424] her relationship to the indigenous women on the island. When
confronted by the poor and the dispossessed, Jadine's first-world transnational privilege leads to mockery
and derision toward the subaltern woman:

She still had plenty of time to take two Dramamines, comb her hair, check her make-up, but
his ladies' lounge was not designed for lingering. She was doing her eyes when a girl came out
of the stall next to the one she had used. She had a short mop and a plastic pail of various
cleansers in her hands. She wore a green uniform which looked even greener beneath her
russet wig. [. . .] Black pearls of hair were visible at the wig's edge. The girl's eyes were wide,
still, the curiosity in them was the only thing that kept them from looking like an animal's. A
deer, thought Jadine. She has the eyes of a curious deer. She wished once more that she had
had real talent--she'd like to draw her--deer eyes, wig and all. Suddenly she reached into the
side pocket of her traveling bag. A few francs were shoved in there and she dropped the
whole lot into the plastic pail. "Bye, Mary, I have to go. Good luck." Jadine pushed open the
door and was gone. "Alma," whispered the girl. "Alma Estée." (288-90)
Morrison anticipates at least two important feminist debates in the 1980s, the question of so-called first-world feminism in relation to Third World feminism and the analysis of women's work in the global economy amid gendered divisions of labor.

Perhaps one of the most important and, I would say, controversial essays to be written in response to first-worldings of the female subaltern is Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" The title of Spivak's essay caused some problems. It was difficult, for example, not to interpret her question to mean "can the subaltern talk?" In an interview recorded in 1993, Spivak clarifies the issue by turning to the metaphor of the speech-act. She states that the speech-act involves a "transaction between the speaker and the listener ("Subaltern" 289). She continues, "So, 'the subaltern cannot speak' means that even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act. That's what it had meant, and anguish marked the spot" (292).

In this exemplary space of civilization, the airport washroom, Jadine fails to complete the speech-act with Alma Estée. Civilization's hygiene use-value splits the clean body from the body that cleans the spaces it occupies. Talking with Alma for Jadine is a tedious exercise: "Jadine closed her smile and turned back to the mirror. There was nothing like an islander; they never had any chat—or manners for that matter. Conversation with them was always an interrogation and she was not about to explain anything to this child" (Morrison 289). In the narcissistic gaze of her sovereign subject-constitution, Jadine does not speak to Alma, but to herself, in the mirror. She carries on a conversation with herself about another's uncivilized and infantile behavior. She cannot hear the metaphorical texture of Alma's language:

"You kill him?"[ . . ]

"Thérèse said you kill him," the girl insisted.

"Tell Thérèse she killed him."

"No," said the girl, perplexed. "Thérèse has magic breasts. They still give milk."

"I bet they do," said Jadine. "But there is nobody to nurse them." (289)

Jadine hears the voice of an oppressive tradition, the culture-bearing black woman nurturing the mama-spoiled black man. What she does not hear is the metaphoricity of Alma's language. Instead, she notices the artifice of Alma's wig. In failing to confront the slippage between the literal and the literary in this instance, Jadine is unable to recognize the metaphorical powers that shaped her own desires to go beyond identity and embrace the phantasms of difference. In her narcissistic gaze, she draws lines on her own body in an effort to fix its indeterminacies and instabilities.

Excursus

To engage an "antagonistic" feminist critique of Fanon, would be, in the words of bell hooks, to "destroy the possibility of progressive political solidarity between black women and men" (79). To achieve solidarity between black women and men through a rereading of Fanon, hooks argues, "[O]ne must first critique the reduction of female identity to the world of the corporeal. Fanon never engages in this critique. Not only is the female body, black or white, always a sexualized body, always not the body that 'thinks,' but it also appears to be a body that never longs for freedom" (84). While Fanon carefully analyzes the complex and ironic process of identification for the black man who wants to be white, he never broaches the question of the black woman who (supposedly) wants to be white. In Tar Baby, Morrison's representation of Jadine alters the pathways in this labyrinth of desire, redirecting us from this limit case of white-woman-as-object-of-desire. It is as if she is asking, what does the black woman want? And in the process, she situates the problematic of a critical solidarity among black women, between, for example, Jadine and the African women in the grocery store in Paris, and Jadine and the domestic women laborers on the fictive Caribbean island who do the wealthy American capitalist's laundry and clean toilets in the airport washroom. The black, female body that both thinks and desires freedom--Jadine, for example--is hardly, however, an innocent figure.
Morrison rewrites the historical text of the European bourgeois woman and the black male subject of resistance in her depiction of Jadine, a black bourgeois woman. She constructs Jadine as an agent of transformation with particular attention to the way class hierarchies and the desire for "white" or European status produce the necessary conditions for her transformation. The indigenous women on the island, represented by the figures of female domestic labor, stand in opposition to Jadine and mark the limits, the (im)possibility of her subjective unlearning. In other words, Jadine's freedom and enlightenment candidacy, Morrison suggests, come at the expense of these colonized domestic laborers.

In the 1950s Fanon asked, "What does the colonized black man want?" Around 1981, Morrison asked, "What does the black American woman want?" The difference between their questions lies in the geopolitical space of North African decolonization and the American Civil Rights and women's movements. In re-opening Fanon's text through a rereading of Morrison's *Tar Baby*, the political field of first-world literary representation converges with Fanon's anti-imperialist polemic, his decolonization of the mind. Jadine figures as a limit case in identity politics; her white, black, and copper masks are not simply facades that, once disclosed, will reveal an original identity. There is no hidden essence underneath the make-up of her subjectivity. She is a transnational first-world black woman. She has the freedom to think and desire. Thérèse and Alma Estée, the generic "Marys" of the novel, the "Third World Women," are also free to dream of wigs and concoct Harlequin romances. These women who do the laundry and clean toilets make up the domestic labor that supports Valerian's capitalist enterprise. "What does the 'female subaltern' want?" Through Morrison we return to Fanon, but in a new historical context where American economic globalization dominates as does identity politics--the symbolic, post-enlightenment politics of late-capitalism.

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**Notes**

1. For further analysis of the production of symbolic values in the commodity form, see my introduction to *The Cultural Politics of Fur*, 4-6.


3. Margaret's experience of object-alienation is not unlike that depicted by Sartre in *Nausea* when he writes: "Objects should not touch because they are not alive. You use them, put them back in place, you live among them: they are useful, nothing more. But they touch me, it is unbearable. I am afraid of being in contact with them as though they were living beasts" (10).

4. The most troubling aspect of Fanon's pathologizing of white women occurs later in the text when he writes, "Just as there are faces that ask to be slapped, can one not speak of women who ask to be raped? In *If He Hollers Let Him Go*, Chester Himes describes this type very well. The big blonde trembles whenever the Negro goes near her. Yet she has nothing to fear, since the factory is full of white men. In the end, she and the Negro go to bed together" (156). Fanon's psychoanalytical exposition of the white woman who desires to be raped by the black man conflates literary representation with a political representation of the subject of desire and power. The literary reference to Himes's *If He Hollers Let Him Go* betrays Fanon's psychoanalytical imaginary because the blonde-woman-who-desires-to-be-raped is not the agent of a psychoanalytic case study. She is a literary trope, a mythic equivalent to the black-male-rapist. By conflating the truth-claims of the psychoanalytical imaginary with the literary, Sigmund Freud with Chester Himes, Fanon's subject of desire and power, the black man, slips from the political staging of social transformation.

5. On Fanon's homophobia, see Kobena Mercer, "Decolonization and Disappointment: Reading Fanon's Sexual Politics," and Lola Young, "Missing persons: Fantasizing Black Women in *Black Skin, White Masks*,"
6. Homi Bhabha, for example, concludes his essay "Remembering Fanon" with an additional "Note" tacked on. In his afterthought Bhabha justifies his lack of discussion of Fanon's sexism, determining that this "crucial issue requires an order of psychoanalytic argument that goes well beyond the scope of my foreword" (123). Unable to articulate the intersection of racism and sexism, Bhabha's refusal to engage the problem has the inevitable result that, as Anne McClintock observes, "Women are thus effectively deferred to a no-where land, beyond time and place, outside theory" (363). Stuart Hall, in his introduction to The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation, writes that "The way Fanon deals with the black woman when she unexpectedly surfaces in his text registers as shocking, but not surprising: 'Those who grant our conclusions on the psychosexuality of the white woman may ask what we have to say about the woman of colour. I know nothing about her'" (30). Hall ends his discussion there.


8. Fanon continues this (mis)recognition in his representation of Algerian women in his subsequent essay "Unveiling Algeria" (see Woodhull).

9. Consider, for example, such references as "a Negro who has passed his baccalaureate and has gone to the Sorbonne to study to become a teacher of philosophy" (Fanon 145), or more obviously:

   The educated mulatto woman, especially if she is a student, engages in doubly equivocal behavior. She says, "I do not like the Negro because he is savage. Not savage in a cannibal way, but lacking refinement." An abstract point of view. And when one points out to her that in this respect some black people may be her superiors, she falls back on their "ugliness." A factitious point of view. Faced with proofs of a genuine black esthetic, she professes to be unable to understand it; one tries then to explain its canon to her; the wings of her nose flare, there is a sharp intake of breath, "she is free to choose her own husband." (58-59)

10. Fanon's discussion of the tales of Br'er Rabbit can also be considered relevant from an intertextual perspective:

   Br'er Rabbit gets into conflicts with almost all the other animals in creation, and naturally he is always the winner. These stories belong to the oral tradition of the plantation Negroes. Therefore it is relatively easy to recognize the Negro in his remarkably ironic and wary disguise as a rabbit. In order to protect themselves against their own unconscious masochism, which impels them to rapturous admiration of the (black) rabbit's prowess, the whites have tried to drain these stories of their aggressive potential. (174)

11. Fanon shifts from depth to surface metaphors, "internalization" to "epidermalization," in mid-sentence: "If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process:--primarily, economic;--subsequently, the internalization--or, better, the epidermalization--of this inferiority" (11).

12. Many thanks to Darlene Shatford for drawing my attention to the importance of the speech-act in Spivak's rethinking of her original essay.

13. In her book Around 1981, Jane Gallop writes that at this time, "American feminist literary criticism entered the heart of a contradiction. It became secure and prospered in the academy while feminism as a social movement was encountering major setbacks in a climate of new conservatism. The Reagan-Bush years began; the ERA was defeated. In the American academy feminism gets more and more respect while in the larger society women cannot call themselves feminist" (10).

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