

'PLAY UP, PLAY UP, AND PLAY THE GAME': ON GLOBALIZATION, MULTICULTURALISM AND UNIVERSITY *

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Abstract. *Play up, play up and play the game!*, a quotation from Pinter's *Birthday Party*, is used to introduce a discussion of what I consider more or less sophisticated games whose purpose is to mask or blur the economic realities of globalization, particularly those played within the academic institution called Postcolonial studies. As opposed to this compromised, consensual position, there has also been an increasingly stronger and organized oppositional tendency, not only outside but also within university, of which *The Cultures of Globalization*, a 1998 publication of the 1996 conference papers on 'Globalization and Culture', is one of noteworthy examples. In the second part of my paper I draw on, among others, some of the contributors' arguments, because they allow what in our academic environment seems to be unthinkable or unsayable to be finally thought and said.

Key words: *Games, globalization, post-colonialism, ulticulturalism/cosmopolitanism, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Harold Pinter*

1. INTRODUCTION

'Play up, play up and play the game' is a quotation from Pinter's *Birthday Party*. The phrase is uttered by one of the two mysterious, Kafkaesque strangers that break into the secluded life of the protagonist, the pathetic but hitherto intransigent Stanley, whose one virtue has been the spiteful refusal to give up his privacy and assume his preordained role in the game of the oppressors and the oppressed. He is subjected to a cross-examination, at once atrocious and comic, and other grotesque torments until he is reduced to an uncomprehending, speechless, catatonic wreck and then taken to an unspecified institution to be remodeled into what Althusser would call a 'good subject'. The torturer's exhortation to 'play up, and play the game' is not addressed to Stanley, though it includes him,

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but to his partner, apparently not sufficiently purged of conscience to perform the assigned job with unruffled professional coolness.

Pinter's drama abounds in violence, but as *The Birthday Party* and his other plays demonstrate, he is not so much interested in violence itself, as in the excuses people invent to mask or justify it. An effective dramatic transposition of these self-justifying mental strategies at first sight, the phrase 'Play up, and play up and play the game!' gains additional, documentary significance when we recognize that it is not Pinter's invention but a quotation from a once popular English jingoist poem. Its author, Sir Henry Newbolt (1862-1938), at once a poet, novelist, playwright and a respectable lawyer, was above all else a prim Edwardian (at least outwardly), who championed the virtues of chivalry and sportsmanship, in the form they were taught in English public schools, and made them serviceable to the British Empire. In fact, his reputation as a poet was established in 1897 on the basis of the poem whose refrain Pinter reproduced in his play, and I now choose for my title. *Vita Lampada* is about a schoolboy cricketer who grows up to fight in Africa - for what cause is conveniently unspecified. There, in the panic of the battle and facing death, the boy is stirred to heroic action and self-sacrifice by schooldays memories of a critical moment in the cricket playground, when "his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote / 'Play up! Play up! And play the game!'"¹

It is true that after the WWI, at whose outbreak it contributed to the unbridled war propaganda, the verse fell out of favour and Newbolt himself came to dislike it, calling it 'the Frankenstein monster I created 30 years ago' Yet the game the poem champions is still played, its chief rule, which has to do with a way of thinking, unchanged: let them convince us that the western master class's conception of progress is the synonym of whatever is good or civilized, let the belief be so firm and unshakable that in effect it ren-

¹ Here is the whole poem:

THERE'S a breathless hush in the Close to-night -
 Ten to make and the match to win -
 A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
 An hour to play and the last man in.
 And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
 Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
 But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote
 "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red, -
 Red with the wreck of a square that broke; -
 The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
 And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
 The river of death has brimmed his banks,
 And England's far, and Honour a name,
 But the voice of schoolboy rallies the ranks,
 "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year
 While in her place the School is set
 Every one of her sons must hear,
 And none that hears it dare forget.
 This they all with a joyful mind
 Bear through life like a torch in flame,
 And falling fling to the host behind -
 "Play up! play up! and play the game!"

ders invisible the exploitation, violence, and genocides committed worldwide in its name². If anything has changed since Newbolt's time, it is that, as Aimee Cesaire noted, the hypocrisy is all the more odious, as it is less and less likely to deceive.³ At the turn of the last century it was relatively easy for most average stay-at-home British citizens to believe in the high-sounding humanist rhetoric camouflaging the true motives of the colonial war in Africa- one had to be a Conrad and actually go to the Belgian Congo to discover that behind severed heads on poles, and various other heinous sights, (such as piles of severed children's hands, or eyes or ears⁴), were not the natives' irrational customs but rationalized greed of the white civilisers. Nowadays, the pretence of ignorance is more difficult to maintain: with a regular daily coverage of (pre-emptive) attacks upon sovereign nations of the world, and easily accessed non-official interpretations of these criminal acts by independent investigative journalists and dissenting thinkers, the usual worn out rhetoric of official explanations has, or should have, lost all credibility. Yet the Great Game⁵ continues: apparently there must be a willingness on the part of a large and heterogeneous class of citizens to tolerate deception. It is not only a matter of thicker cognitive filters, than simply starting 'the forgetting machine', as Aimee Cesaire described the mental strategy the XIX century bourgeois used against unwelcome knowledge⁶; or of practicing doublespeak and doublethink, the maneuvers deployed in western democracies long before the phrases were coined by Orwell, and interpreted, misleadingly, as referring to exclusively Stalinist methods of avoiding the truth. (In fact doublethink and doublespeak followed naturally once Christian values and/or humanist ideals became the ideological rationale for the colonial oppression and slavery. Let us remember, for instance, that the American Constitution, whose alleged purpose was the legal implementation of the egalitarian humanist ideals proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, managed to uphold the institution of slavery without once using the word slave.⁷). What is alarming nowadays is that truthfulness is no longer considered morally indispensable, or even desirable, so that deception has paradoxically become 'open'. In 'the post-truth era', as Ralph Keys, following Steve Tesic, re-names postmodernity, instead of masking deception, we rationalize it: 'Even though there have always been liars, lies have usually been told with hesitation, a dash of anxiety, a bit of guilt, a little

² See D.G. Kelly, 'A Poetics of Anti-Colonialism', an introduction to Aimee Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2000, 27.

³ See Aimee Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 31. His remark was made in the fifties, but it is as valid today as it was then, indeed the entire book is.

⁴ Reported, for example, in Charles Monbiot's 'The Holocaust We Will Not See', published in *Guardian*, 11th January 2010, and 'How Britain Denies Its Holocausts', published in *Guardian*, 27th December, 2005, both to be found on www.monbiot.com.

⁵ Called so by John Pilger in 'Breaking the great Australian silence' a speech given on 5 November 2009 in Sidney to mark his award of Sidney Peace Prize (<http://www.johnpilger.com/page.asp?partid=555>)

⁶ *Discourse on Colonialism*, op. cit., p. 52.

⁷ See N. D. Jayaprakash, 'The World's Oldest Democracy: Myth and Reality', *Dissident Voice*, March 15, 2009. (<http://dissidentvoice.org>). A comparable hypocrisy is described by James Heartfield - that of the French politicians and intellectuals in justifying the continued occupation of Algeria: it was, they maintained, the respect for equality, democracy and the Rights of Man that demanded the assimilation of Algeria into France. Thus a former French resistance fighter Jacques Roustelle declared that 'we would be arrant swine to abandon to their own destiny people who count on us to liberate them from their own ancestral and religious dependency.' As in the current wars in the Near East, Heartfield writes, 'the meanings of humanism, universalism and liberation are twisted to mean their opposite. People are to be liberated from themselves' See James Heartfield, 'Algiers and the End of French Humanism', Ch. 6 of *The 'Death of the Subject', Explained*, Sheffield, Hallam University, 2002, (<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/defeat-french-humanism.htm>)

shame...Now, clever people that we are, we have come up with rationales for tempering with truth so we can dissemble guilt-free.⁸

No doubt, this long-lasting campaign against (principally political) truth owes its success to the almost unfailing collaboration of educational institutions in the west. Newbolt's poem was written as a homage to the British school, for spreading

.....the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind -
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

that is, to implant the illusion that their death in a scramble for loot was a noble sacrifice in the cause of enlightenment. By the late fifties, along with Pinter's very oblique attack on educational politics, the English university was quite unequivocally denounced by the angry young men of working class background for training the future political cadre in doublethink, so that, in the words of Osborne's protagonist, the end product of the traditional 'Oxbridge' education was an individual who possessed a deep-seated suspicion of belonging to the class that had been plundering and fooling everybody for generations, yet managed to keep it safely latent because he had also developed such haziness about social and human realities that he actually deserved 'a medal inscribed *For the Vaguerly in*

⁸ Ralph Keyes, *The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life*, St. Martin's Press, 2004, p. 12 (Quoted in an unpublished master thesis by Igor Petrovic, *Between Fact and Fiction: The Uses of Documentary Material in Contemporary Anglo-American Political Drama*, University of Nis, 2010, p. 111) A corollary to this guilt-free lying is another recent phenomenon, a shameless admission of crime and injustice, and a growing indifference of the general public, when an occasional truth thus breaks through the smokescreen of falsehoods and hits one in the face. One such incongruity we could witness as the worldwide conspiracy of lies covering the US foreign policy climaxed in awarding the third American president with the Nobel Prize for Peace, while the naked facts concerning the damage caused to innocent civilians in the latest in a series of seventy odd American or Anglo-American wars staged or waged against the third world countries since the WWII were publicly blurted out with arrogant carelessness by the top American or British officials. To mention but one example, in John Pilger's 2004 documentary *The Stealing of a Nation*: After decades of legal evasions and outright lies, involving the British and American highest political levels, including the royalty, to justify the illegal evacuation of 2000 indigenous population from the island of Diego Garcia in order to build an American military base there, we witness the 1973-75 US Secretary of Defense J. Schlesinger's contemptuous disbelief at Pilger's concern with the injustice and immorality of the whole affair, and his blunt assertion that 2000 displaced people, many of whom died as a result of their displacement, is nothing compared to what both the US and British governments 'have done in the past, particularly in the XX century, not to mention the XIX Century'. While some viewers are conceivably revolted at such demonstrations of callousness, there are certainly more and more of those that tend to adopt a desired cynical attitude (well, are not war and domination a natural condition!), or acquiesce in the implied or stated rationalizations of such crimes to the effect that no atrocity is too great a price in a struggle for 'peace and democracy'. The approval by political scientists of what has recently been called 'Democratic Imperialism', is to be found in an article by Stanley Kurtz, 'Democratic Imperialism: A Blueprint' (2003); a 2004 publication edited by Filip Spagnoli under the title *Democratic Imperialism*; the same phrase appears a year later, in a conference paper entitled *Democratic Imperialism: The Emerging Paradigm of U.S. Foreign Policy* presented by Avery Plow at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. All the three are referred to critically in Ljiljana Bogoeva Sedlar's contribution to the 2009 thematic issue, dedicated to Harold Pinter, of *Nasledje: Casopis za jezik, književnost, umetnost i kulturu (Journal of Language, Literature, Art and Culture)*, Year VI, Vol. 12, 2009, pp. 38-39.

the Field. 'It takes some doing nowadays', Jimmy observes bitterly of brother Nigel's self-protective stupidity, 'But they knew all about character building at Nigel's school, and he'll make it all right...He'll end up in the cabinet one day'⁹. Nowadays, rewards await especially those among contemporary intelligentsia who derive from the ethnic or racial groups most harmed by the colonial past and/or the current neocolonial politics, yet who agree to reproduce its deceptive myths. Among the most sophisticated ways of doing so is by opting for one of the varieties of the mainstream post-colonial theory served on the academic buffet, which seem to speak on the behalf of the Other, (or difference) yet beneath their many ambiguities and deliberate evasions, are reliable allies of the New World Order engineers.¹⁰ Thus, to mention but one example, there is a strong probability that Homi Bhabha's academic superstardom has something to do with the spectacular postmodern 'vaguery' of his discourse, which allows him, and his readers, to overlook the disastrous human consequences of globalization (or 'Democratic Imperialism') and praise it instead as a cosmopolitan dream finally come true.

Although the relation of Homi Bhabha to Frantz Fanon is an issue I will have to say more about later, at this point I want to note how thoroughly Homi Bhabha has mastered the methods of French the bourgeois intellectuals whom Fanon, echoing Osborne's mockery of the British 'vaguery' elite, labeled 'bewilderers'¹¹. Bhabha's work can surely be analyzed in terms of Fanon's view that colonization is not to be understood only in territorial, but also psychoanalytic terms: a colonized people, according to Fanon, is that which has interiorized the colonialists' values and as a result has developed a national inferiority complex¹². One aspect of this process is referred to in *The Wretched of the Earth*, written in 1961, at the time of Algeria's fight for liberation. There are two kinds of Algerian intellectuals, Fanon asserts there.¹³ Both, he explains, stem from the native elite with whom the colonialist bourgeoisie, once it faced the demise of its political domination, sought dialogue concerning values. This was a rearguard action, he notes, planned to carry on the colonialist cultural domination, even after the political and economic control had been lost. This was achieved through the gift of university education, which, offered to the chosen few among the native population, was meant to inculcate in them the sense of the eternity of the essential qualities of the West. But only some of its beneficiaries ul-

⁹ John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, Faber, London, 1960, p. 20.

¹⁰ Postcolonialism has its roots in postmodernism, and postmodernism, to paraphrase Ralph Keyes once again, is not merely a morphological precedent for 'post-truthfulness': through its routine dismissal of objective truth, postmodernism helped shape the post-truth zeitgeist, and provided it with a philosophical alibi. Thanks to postmodernism, being overtly concerned with telling the truth is now considered 'a sign of depleted resources, a psychological disorder, a character defect, a kind of linguistic anorexia. (Keyes, op. cit, 142, quoted in I. Petrovic, op. cit. 113)

¹¹ In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York, 1963, p. 38

The designation refers to moral teachers and counselors within France, and the rest of European capitalist countries, the purpose of whose moralistic pronouncements – which, Fanon writes, is 'to separate the exploited from those in power...to hide the domination' in order to preserve it - is part of European legacy taken over by the native intellectual elite that Fanon denounces.

¹² Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Pluto Press, London, 1986, p. 9 ff.

¹³ See *The Wretched of the Earth*, 45-48. Fanon's analysis is based on his personal experience in the Algerian war of independence but is meant to be representative of the decolonizing processes everywhere. To the cultural colonization through the co-option of the native intellectuals, there is a freshly added policy of cultural destruction, currently practiced in Iraq. The harrowing tale of its various methods, including the assassination of over 400 Iraqi intellectuals and artists, is told in *Cultural Cleansing in Iraq: Why Museums were Looted, Libraries Burned and Academics Murdered*, edited by R. W. Baker, Shareen T. Ishmael, and Tareq Y. Ishmael, with the collaboration of the the Russell Tribunal, (Pluto Press, 2010).

timately responded in a desired manner. For those native intellectuals that later actually lived through a long, armed struggle for freedom had this whole European narcissistic superstructure implanted in their minds smashed in the renewed contact with their people and their collective, communal values, re-enforced by the united effort and the common goal of the combat. It is in the areas that had not been shaken enough by the struggle, and hence missing its non-individualistic, non-calculating, collectivistic atmosphere and vocabulary, that one found those 'know-all, smart, wily intellectuals' with manners and forms of thought picked up during their association with the colonialist bourgeoisie intact in them. 'Spoiled children of yesterday colonialism', 'affranchised slaves' or, as Fanon also called them, 'slaves who are individually free'¹⁴, they were (and still are) guided chiefly by the assimilated European motto 'look out for yourself'- whether that means sheer loot, or some subtler form of self-promotion. Now, if they happen to be academics, as I already noted, they find ample opportunity for the latter within the game called Post-colonial or Multicultural Studies.

I have a special reason though for focusing on Homi Bhabha: this particular postcolonial intellectual was mentioned in the invitation letter to this conference on change, a quotation from one of his texts being used to suggest a possible approach to the topic. In effect, whether intentionally or not, the organizers invited us to play the Multiculturalist/Cosmopolitan game. Instead of which I would, on the contrary, like to draw attention to some of its habitual moves, using a few passages from Homi Bhabha as samples – enough, I believe, for an alert reader, to see how the bewildering effect is produced. To begin with the passage quoted in the announcement letter: globalization is represented there as if it were something as spontaneous and inevitable as natural change and even improvement: a welcome encounter of the old and the new, a multicultural interpenetration setting us free from national narrow-mindedness and bringing the broadening of outlook. A similar view is put forward in Bhabha's seminal book, *The Location of Culture*: There he describes the postmodern condition as an end of ethnocentric prejudice, superseded by the new internationalism resulting from a history of postcolonial migrations. If there is a hint of human misery in these upheavals, as Bhabha's occasionally allows, it is promptly dissolved in the celebratory imagery of a new beyond to which the migrations and/or displacements of peasant and aboriginal communities lead: the crowning metaphor, borrowed from Heidegger, is that of a building of a bridge that 'always differently...escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks...The bridge *gathers* as a passage that crosses'¹⁵

I cannot think of a simpler and more cogent reply to this kind of specious cosmopolitanism than a passage from Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*. He begins by reminding his readers that all such arguments have their distant origin in the practice of Christian pedants, from whose dishonest equations *Christianity = civilization, paganism = savagery*, could not but ensue abominable colonialist and racist consequences, whose victims were to be the Indians, the Yellow peoples and the Negroes. Césaire proceeds:

That being settled, I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other; that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its particular genius may be, a civilization that withdraws into itself

¹⁴ Ibid, 59.

¹⁵ Homi Bhabha, 'The Location of Culture', in J. Rivkin and M. Ryan (eds.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Blackwell, 1998, p. 936.

atrophies; that for civilizations, exchange is oxygen; that the great good fortune of Europe is to have been a crossroads, and that because it was the locus of all ideas, the receptacle of all philosophies, the meeting place of all sentiments, it was the best centre for the redistribution of energy.

But then I ask the following question: has colonization *really placed civilizations in contact*? Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of *establishing contact*, was it the best?

I answer *no*.¹⁶

Cesaire's answer is as valid now as it was in 1955, but needs to be re-stated in historically concrete terms to counteract the tireless obfuscations of fashionable bewildereders. The consent they seek to manufacture about globalization as a mutually beneficial contact of civilizations is at the moment being effectively undermined within the latest, materialist, Marxist-oriented, trend of cultural criticism. Of these authors I will briefly refer to two. In contrast to Homi Bhabha, Phillip Lawrence and even more so by Amrohini Sahay, are uncompromising demystifiers of all varieties of idealistic postisms, maintaining instead that only the objective, materialist and historical, critique can yield a proper explanation of the underlying logic of globalization. Basically an expansion of Cesaire's pithy retort, their texts 'Lost in Space' and 'Transforming Race Matters: Towards a Critique-al Cultural Studies' are worth paraphrasing because the authors engage with, expose and invalidate some of most notorious maneuvers in the kind of postcolonial theory Bhabha's work has come to represent.

Thus Philip Lawrence's critical attention is caught by Homi Bhabha's use of spatial metaphor. Besides the bridge image, quoted above, *The Location of Culture* abounds in other metaphorical references to space, which re-enforce his chief argument in favor of globalization: thus the new postcolonial culture is interstitial, located in-between, transcending or escaping clear cut political or ideological boundaries. But it is precisely these spatial metaphors, according to Lawrence, that account for the vagueness of his arguments. The space they invoke is thoroughly abstract: the in-betweenness constantly referred to is indefinite, a field of endless play. If Bhabha's declared intention has been 'to constitute a postcolonial, critical discourse that contests modernity through the establishment of other historical sites, other forms of enunciation', where, Lawrence Phillips asks, 'does this history manifest itself, where are these other interstitial sites of enunciation?' The indeterminacy of their location, Lawrence concludes, generates an unintentional irony in relation to the book's title, bringing into question the political 'location' of Bhabha's own work.¹⁷

The answer to this last question is spelled out in Amrohini Sahay's text 'Transforming Race Matters....' Among many insights provided by her powerful analysis are those that enable the reader to relate abstractions and evasions in Bhabha's treatment of space to the more crucial omissions in his treatment of difference. These blind spots he shares with the whole mainstream postcolonial theory that has followed postmodern philosophers, such as Derrida and Foucault, away from the coherent, comprehensive analysis of the extra-linguistic reality into the affirmation of endless play of differences within the her-

¹⁶ *Discourse on Colonialism*, 33.

¹⁷ See Lawrence Phillips, 'Lost in Space: Siting/citing the in-between of Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*', *Scrutiny 2: Issues in English Studies in Southern Africa*, Vol. 3 No. 1, 1998, pp. 16-25.

metic inside of discourse. As a result of this 'linguistic turn', any objective and unifying principle which could explain these differences as part of a global structure of exploitation has been conveniently elided.

Thus two major solutions to the problem of ethnic difference proposed within the Postcolonial studies both ignore the crucial social difference, which is economic. Yet, Sahay rightly insists, this persistent 'epistemological segregation' between questions of cultural and class difference renders both these ostensibly democratizing undertakings at best empty and ineffective. Thus the so-called 'appreciative' politics of difference (rooted in experiential theory of race) seeks to correct the traditional Eurocentric 'universalism' by a new valorization of previously excluded cultural or ethnic experiences and practices¹⁸. But because it fails, or refuses to distinguish between the original, pre-colonial cultural specificities and those that developed as a consequence of the centuries of colonial plunder, still less demand a reparation for it, this affirmation of difference ends up as a politics of local cosmetic changes, whose ultimate effect is to re-secure the conditions under which exploitation may continue¹⁹. The second, Bhabha's, version of cosmopolitan politics proceeds from the theory of difference known as ludic. Being culturally and linguistically constituted, or constructed, differences, according to Bhabha, should be deconstructed through a cosmopolitan merging of nations and languages in the new 'transnational' or 'translational' spaces opening up by processes of globalization. The 'hybridity', 'interstitiality', 'in-betweenness', that Bhabha champions, along with the ambiguity, slipperiness of the language in which he does so, are part of a general postmodern project to go beyond all binary thinking, as allegedly the foundation of all oppressive ideologies.

As most postmodern responses to the problem of power and repression, however, Bhabha's is disingenuous. His middle-ground position, his escape or obliteration of clear-cut cultural difference, his whole conciliatory tactic rooted in Derrida's and Foucault's anti-binarism, is, according to Sahay, ultimately a *political* class strategy, meant to blur the lines of opposition between the oppressors and the oppressed: but 'to blur these lines', she claims, 'is to neutralize power [or difference] as a struggle concept through which the powerless are enabled to wage a concerted struggle against the powerful.'²⁰ Thus, 'far from a compassionate act in solidarity with the oppressed' they pretend to be, both these corrections, the affirmation of difference and the erasure of difference, must in the end be seen for what they are: 'an opportunistic narrative on the part of a few privileged intellectuals to legitimate their complicity with the system of exploitation, and to avoid coming into political conflict with the powers that be'. Bhabha's repeated advertisement of his own theory as enabling or endorsing non-consensual thought and conduct is thus another of his hypocrisies: the 'location' of Bhabha's politics, to answer Lawrence's rhetorical question in quite concrete terms, is obviously in what Sahay describes as the "'broad current of 'democracy promotion' campaign of the North-Atlantic ruling class, which is globally deployed to mitigate the increasingly sharp social and political tensions of the so-called new world order and manufacture politico-discursive 'consensus' for Northern capital's world-wide free-market politics'"²¹

¹⁸ Amrohini Sahay, 'Transforming Race Matters: Towards a Critique-al Cultural Studies', *Cultural Logic*, Vol. 1, Number 2, Spring 1998 (<http://clogic.eserver.org/1-2/sahay.html>)

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Cf. Fanon's French bourgeois 'bewilderers' bent on hiding domination!

²¹ Ibid.

If I on my part were to single out the most glaring demonstration of Bhabha's consensual politics, I would point to the passage in the *Location of Culture* where he obligingly parrots the politically correct condemnation of the role of the Serbs in the 1990's civil war in former Yugoslavia: "'The hideous extremity of Serbian nationalism proves that the very idea of a pure, 'ethnically cleansed' national identity can only be achieved through the death, literal and figurative, of the complex interweaving of history, and the culturally contingent borderlines of modern nationhood'"....²² He then proceeds to point beyond the [Serbian] 'psychosis of patriotic fervor', to 'an evidence of a more transnational and translational sense of the hybridity of imagined communities' in the works of contemporary artists, who represent their own particular national plight through allegorical reference to political crisis elsewhere in the world. The fact that he never specifies the exact nature and cause of the crises he offers for comparison²³ is just another indication of his actual lack, or willing suspense, of any 'transnational' and 'translational,' historical sense, whose minimal exercise would have precluded the abject reproduction of the assigned version about hideous Serbs in his interpretation of the conflicts in the Balkans, and lead him instead to see it as one among radically nonconsensual responses to the transnational capital's expansion and the new wave of violent 'thirdworldization' it entails – as those who refuse to 'play up, and play the game', spoilsports such as Harold Pinter, Diana Johnston, Edward Hermann, Michael Parenti, John Pilger, or Michael Chossudovsky, have done, and as Frantz Fanon would certainly have done²⁴.

Yet it is none other but Franz Fanon that Bhabha chooses to enlist in support of his argument: a cynical maneuver which, like Barak Obama's grotesque posturing as Martin Luther King's spiritual heir, is calculated to lend a moral and intellectual credibility, even a revolutionary glow, to his politically correct 'enunciations.' Thus at those 'interstitial' (to use still another of his terms) points in Bhabha's discourse, when the usual flow of thick postmodern verbiage is interrupted by an unexpected mention of tangible and concrete *economic* aspects of globalization – such as capitalism, or suffering or poverty - the new perspective such words might open is immediately closed or distorted by what I would call aesthetization, while the dishonesty of this move is covered by a false analogy with Fanon. Take, for example, this passage:

The Transnational capital and the impoverishment of the Third World certainly create the chain of circumstance that incarcerate the Salvadorean or the Filipino. In their cultural passage, hither and thither, as migrant workers...they embody the Benjaminian 'present': that moment blasted out of the continuum of history. Such conditions of cultural displacement and social discrimination – where the political

²² 'The Location of Culture', op. cit., p. 936.

²³ Not to mention his glaring historical ignorance of the genuinely multiethnic and multicultural conception of the former Yugoslavia! For a proper insight into the long-proven *divide et impera* policy as used by the U.S. and NATO countries in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, see, for instance, M. Parenti, *To Kill A Nation: Attack on Yugoslavia*, Verso, 2000, and Alice Walker, *Overcoming Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Palestine/Israel*, Open Media, 2010.

²⁴ Especially if we have in mind that Fanon's uncompromising view that decolonization (and by extension any radical struggle to overthrow the system of exploitation) is a necessarily violent process, non-violence in this context being a bourgeois doctrine, preached both by the colonial bourgeois and the native elite, the former bent on preserving the privilege (itself gained and maintained through excessive violence) and the latter in hoping for their own personal share in it. See *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 59-61.

survivors become the best historical witnesses – are the grounds on which Frantz Fanon...locates an agency of empowerment.²⁵

In support of which he then produces a utopian passage from Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*:

As soon as I desire, I am asking to be considered. I am not merely here-and-now, sealed into thingness. I am somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity in so far as I pursue something other than life; in so far as I do battle for the creation of a human world – that is a world of reciprocal recognitions.

I should constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists in introducing invention into existence.

In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself...²⁶

Decontextualized, these two passages may seem superficially similar, but seen in context, not only of the books they were taken from but the whole of Bhabha's and Fanon's work, they mean profoundly different things. What, 'negating activity', 'invention', or 'empowerment' mean for Bhabha is the opposite of what they mean for Fanon. For Bhabha, the negating activity implies a negation of the native history, with its memory of potential alternative worlds that the colonial oppression has prevented from unfolding, and an acceptance of the compromise with new forms of domination. The mask this underlying position he applies grotesque mental acrobatics to make Fanon's conception of negating capacity resonate with his own. He relates the phrase to Fanon's being 'too aware of the dangers of the fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures to recommend that 'roots' be struck in the celebratory romance of the past...' and then proceeds to equate it with his own celebration of the 'negating activity' as 'indeed, the intervention of the beyond that establishes a boundary: a bridge, where 'presencing' begins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world - of the unhomeliness that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations...'²⁷

The equation is, beneath its slipperiness, quite illegitimate. It is true that Fanon did not share the nostalgic belief in the repetition of the pre-colonial past, which indeed is impossible: but he never recommended any 'cross-cultural initiations', any reconciliation or compromise with European traditions either – except implicitly with those revolutionary trends and utopian dreams that Europe itself has stifled. For the rest, his warning to his countrymen was never, in their own interest and that of Europeans, to repeat Europe, for that would be merely an 'obscene caricature'. Compare, for instance, the clarity and passion of his plea, in the Conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*, to the slick deviousness of the Bhabha passage above:

Come then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe,

²⁵ 'The Location of Culture', 939.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 939.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 940

so long as we are not obsessed with the desire to catch up with Europe... Europe now lives at such a mad, reckless pace that she has shaken off all guidance and all reason, and she is running headlong into the abyss; we should do well to avoid it with all possible speed... When I search for Man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders... Let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth.

This is the true meaning of 'doing battle' for 'something other than life... for the creation of a human world,' in the passage Bhabha quotes and misinterprets. This creative battle, in which life is at stake, has nothing in common with the 'struggle for survival' of the refugees living at the frontiers of cultures and its reflection in the kind of refugee literature Bhabha now believes should replace what Goethe meant by world literature. As opposed to Fanon's creative battling, negating the thingness to which the conditions of uninterrupted exploitation reduce him, and his 'somewhere else', which is a joyous vision of a freshly invented, free and just world, Bhabha jubilates in the struggle for survival which is a disguised acquiescence in the status quo, his transcendence of history a matter of 'hybrid aesthetic' which 'delights in texture and sensuous surfaces', leaving the underlying economic and political injustice intact. Thus the 'spectacular imagination' of Pepon Osorio, a Nuyorican writer Bhabha singles out for praise as the 'great celebrant of the migrant act of survival', is not captured so much with 'the high drama of birth and death', 'the statistics of infant mortality, of the silent spread of AIDS in the Hispanic communities'. In Bhabha's interpretation, he finds his beyond in the "'interstices of a range of practices: the 'space' of installation, the *spectacle* of social statistics, the transitive time of the body in performance"²⁸ – all of which, of course, sound as familiar postmodern compensatory idealizations, providing the subject trapped in the material impasse and forced into a thing-like political passivity with the illusion of agency, movement, transcendence.

No, Homi Bhabha does not belong to the tradition of Frantz Fanon, and instead of wasting precious time on him, I might have more profitably focused on those who do. The dissenting trends committed to active struggle for greater justice are numerous and heterogeneous worldwide, from the leftist governments in South America, through the expanding liberation theology movement in both Americas, to individual independent journalists and cultural critics of the kind I have just mentioned. But I want to draw attention to another trend, emerging within the university itself, that could be justly associated with Frantz Fanon's political and moral principles. Unlike Marxist theorists I have quoted, whose exposure of the hidden agenda of the declaratively leftist postmodern cultural theories is a wholesome exercise but necessarily reproductive of the jargon it seeks to dismantle and thus confined to the sophisticated intellectual circle, there are academic events whose significance reaches beyond the academic theorization towards a general public and practical action. Such was the 1996 international conference on Globalization

²⁸ Ibid., 939. (Italics added) It would be in fact amusing to subject these pronouncements to further analysis, which would reveal, for instance, how, in addition to Fanon's ideas, Bhabha misuses the early R. Barthes' notion of transitivity, i.e., of 'transitive' mode of speech, which 'speaks the objects' and is the political, transformative language of action, as opposed to 'intransitive' mode, which speaks 'about the object, and is depoliticized, static and celebratory. (See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Paladin, 1987, pp. 145-6) Bhabha's use of the adjective 'transitive' is deceptive, counting on its Barthesian revolutionary connotations, while, in fact, denoting the opposite.

and Culture, sponsored by Duke University and the University of California, whose participants, besides Noam Chomsky and F. Jameson, were mostly less well known third world academics²⁹. They not only refused to play the Postcolonial Game, but also (with very few exceptions) to spend their effort on any polemical discussion with it, except to note in passing its ideological collusion in the current globalizing processes. Instead they confronted the material effects of these processes in the idiom as lucid, straightforward and concrete as that of the liberation movement fighters of the fifties and the sixties. They were practically unanimous in condemning globalization as deleterious on all levels³⁰ and, again like their predecessors, pointed to the necessity of active resistance. They specifically agreed upon the following items:

1. Postcoloniality is a dubious term, since there has been no 'post' to the colonial practice; as part of the intended global deception, it should be rejected and replaced by the correct view that globalization is the last phase of the uninterrupted, 500-year-old system of colonial domination. As stated by one of the contributors,

'post' in post-colonial is therefore a false term, since colonialism continues through TNC, just as plunder, once associated with the armada, the East Indian Company, the slave trade etc, now continues under other names: aid, free trade, loans, speculation, and even development.³¹

Change, if any, has been for the worse. Thus, in a quotation from Ernst Utrecht, provided by Subramani, the participant from Fiji, it is stated that 'even reports by conservative international organizations and institutes engaged in social research ...have shown that the exploitation of the indigenous population by TNCs is more rigorous, often more disastrous, than it was in the colonial period.'³²

Illustrated in the same text by a Fijian poem called 'Multinational Corporation', the claim is solidly supported throughout the whole volume by unambiguous figures – both the poem's simple metaphors ('You are a banyan/ That lives on other trees/ You twist your giant roots around me/ And squeeze me by the neck/ Until I have no breath/ You cut my flesh to the bones/ You suck my blood to the last pint...') and the staggering statistics disclosing the horrible reality (of Nike sweatshops, among other things³³) one would never suspect was there from Bhabha's happy account of 'bodies in performance'.

²⁹ The papers appeared in a 1998 publication, co-edited by Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, and entitled *Cultures of Globalisation*, published by Duke University Press, Durham and London.

³⁰ Even F. Jameson, usually stopping short of unequivocal criticism of political postmodernity and its supportive cultural theory, declares in the Preface that, seen 'from a somewhat different angle', 'everything changes', i.e., 'it is no longer the bureaucratic state apparatus [of the former 'totalitarian regimes'] that restricts the burgeoning of local cultures and local political freedoms, but rather the transnational system itself that menaces national autonomy, and that on all levels: socially..., culturally..., politically..., economically...'. (Preface, *Cultures of Globalization*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1998, pp. xiv-xv)

³¹ Sherif Hetata, 'Dollarization, Fragmentation and God', *Cultures of Globalization*, p. 275.

³² Subramani, 'The End of Free States', *Cultures of Globalization*, p. 158.

³³ In Masao Miyoshi's 'Globalization, Culture and University', p. 257. Besides spectacular profits big multinationals have gained through outsourcing, Miyoshi also reports those resulting from downsizing. Thus in a direct proportion to the number of jobs extinguished and workers laid-off since the 1980s, the CEOs' pays have soared by 50 percent within years, so that, for example as a result of the union surrender, the Caterpillar's president's salary zoomed to 4.07 million dollars, up 53 %, in the following year. If in 1990 the gap in wages between the line workers and corporate CEOs was 60 to 1, in 1993 it was 140 to 1. Which means that now for the first time in the US the poor are becoming poorer in absolute terms, while the rich are getting disproportion-

2. Viewed also from a philosophical perspective as a world-system, capitalism (or modernity) was therefore declared to have reached its terminal crisis. Having constituted nature as an infinitely exploitable object, and human subject as the instrument of surplus value, it is now, in Enrique Dussel's words, confronting its absolute limits: 'the ecological destruction of the planet, and the extinguishing, in misery and hunger, of the great majority of humankind'³⁴

3. The solution though, if there is any, is certainly not to be expected from those philosophical projects, "'naïve, ridiculous, irresponsible, irrelevant, ...even complicitous (certainly in the center but even worse in the periphery, in Latin America, Africa, and Asia), that are closeted in their 'ivory towers' of sterile Eurocentric academicism"³⁵. It emerges, paradoxically, 'from within the third limit of capitalism, its ultimate incapacity to subsume the economies, populations, nations and cultures that it has been attacking since its origin Excluded from its horizon and cornered into poverty', but possessing an in-domitabile will to survive, these Others are now 'a locus of resistance from whose affirmation the process of the negation of negation of liberation begins.'³⁶

4. Moving in the direction of true internationalist idea, this resistance of 'the wretched of the earth' finds support in nationalist movements too. Far from a reactionary or undemocratic option as Bhabha would have it, nationalism, a contributor from Korea argues, can be a positive force in combating the TNCs and the flow of transnational culture. Nor are national literatures, which satisfy 'the need to preserve or revivify ethnic regional heritage' really opposed to the concept of world literature, destabilized as it is by the post-modern theory, with its deconstructive critique of Great Literature, its dismantling of the Canon, with its 'death of the author' proclamations, etc. Hence, 'if a dignified life by any definition appears impossible without creative continuation of what is best in our past, much of it available only in literature and letters' (and many Koreans feel that this is so) then - runs his conclusion, very different from Homi Bhabha's promotion into World Literature of the kind of dehistoricized and depoliticized frontier aesthetics - the espousal of the concept of national literature in the Third world countries should converge with 'the needs of those very model nations whose own finest traditions are being swept away by globalizing tide'³⁷.

ately richer. Thus, with the undisguised approval from the highest representatives of the 'the oldest democracy in the world' (President Clinton's public affirmation that 'the most fundamental responsibility for any business is to make a profit' is one example), 'the American society is divided in a way that it has never been before. (255-6) Absolutely essential among these capitalist profit-oriented policies and strategies, Miyoshi is careful to point, is war. Another, silent, partner is Multiculturalism and other emergent cross-border studies. (264)

³⁴ Enrique Dussel, 'Beyond Eurocentrism', *Cultures of Globalization*, 19-21

³⁵ Cf., a passage from Fanon's Conclusion to *The Wretched of the Earth*:

All European thought has unfolded in places which were increasingly more deserted and more encircled by precipices; and thus it was that the custom grew up in those places of very seldom meeting man. A permanent dialogue with oneself and an increasingly obscene narcissism never ceased to prepare the way for a half delirious state, where intellectual work became suffering and the reality was not at all that of a living man, working and creating himself, but rather words, different combinations of words, and the tensions springing from the meanings contained in words.

³⁶ Dussel, op. cit., 21.

³⁷ Paik nak-Chung, 'Nations and Literatures in the Age of Globalization', p. 220 The author also adds another special threat to World Literature: it is what Tariq Ali described as 'market realism', which in the age of global consumerism has reduced literature to a branch of entertainment industry. If market realism has replaced socialist realism, it is largely due to postmodern literary theory, whose assumption is that discrimination between the superior and inferior works is sheer elitism. Thus with the 'de-centering' of Shakespeare and Tolstoy, the

5. Finally all the contributors concerned with the role of the university in the era of globalization, agreed that, despite the persistent ideological siege throughout its history, the university nevertheless has a revolutionary potential. Nowadays its foremost responsibility is to refuse the degrading role of the globalisation's service station. This requires, on the one hand, a holding out against the external pressure of administrators and social and economic managers to quantify education³⁸ and, on the other, a reinvention of revolutionary pedagogies that would wrench cultural and literary studies out of the grip of the mainstream 'hybridity, accommodation, and pragmatism'³⁹ approach and ally them with those Others who are now 'the locus of resistance'. 'When do we begin to fight? And how do we – the workers in Dayton, Ohio, and those of us in university - form an alliance?' With this question Masao Miyoshi ends his presentation. It is not a skeptical question but as urgent and hopeful as the Fijian participant's conclusion to his distressing account of the effects of multinational companies on their latest victims, the Pacific Islands: 'Let us hope' Subramani writes, 'that this celebration at the university inaugurates a new era in which we seek a suitable pedagogy for resisting the rapidly diminishing free zone in our lives in the region and the world at large'.

The reason I dwell on this conference should be obvious: held more than ten years ago, it became a focus of the responsible, original and authentically engaged exchange about the topic that has since only gained in urgency but that here, in Serbian universities, has most of the time been treated according to the rules of the Great Game: dissenting opinion on globalization, if not stifled, is either passed over in silence or isolated and neutralized as an irrelevant eccentricity⁴⁰. Now I do not think it quixotic on my part

emancipatory engagements with reality valued equally by Goethe and Marx have given way to a demand for self-contained and self-referential fetishized upmarket literary commodities, an art that ends up fawning before the media magnates. (225)

³⁸ See Miyoshi, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-2. Various institutional decisions are made without any reference to substantial pedagogic or intellectual matters, but based solely on quantified assessment (for instance, courses are offered depending on the number of students enrolled, the ratio student-professor, the job-market prospects, and not on the course's intrinsic merit). The 'relevance', which once referred to 'presumed integrity of the university as an interpretative agency of the general public', now implies the 'the partnership of universities with industry as the key to successful economies of the twentieth century'. The result is that professors, who 'once...presumably professed...are now merely professionals, entrepreneurs, careerists, and opportunists, as in the corporate world'. (267)

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 267.

⁴⁰ I recall that at the closing session of the 2007 conference on globalization organized by the English Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Nis, the final question posed innocently enough by one of the participants – should we not perhaps sum up the prevailing opinion, define the conference's position on globalization? - the response was an amused refusal, like that of a parent faced with a childish nonsense, forgivable but nonetheless ludicrous. It is also indicative of the state of the university in Serbia that any criticism of the official slavish haste to satisfy the political and economic demands of the NATO countries, or of the abject acquiescence in their own fabricated versions of the dismantling of Yugoslavia, is, as rule, met with the same supercilious indifference. The suppression of (dissenting, or progressive) politics from scholarly discourse is not a local or new phenomenon. On the contrary, it has a transnational, more than half-a-century long history, originating in CIA's cultural campaigns launched immediately after the WWII as part of the Cold War. In his excellent review of F. S. Saunders' 1999 book *Who Paid the Piper: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*, James Petras writes:

The CIA's cultural campaigns created the prototype for today's seemingly apolitical intellectuals, academics and artists who are divorced from popular struggles and whose worth rises with their distance from the working classes and their proximity to prestigious foundations. The CIA role model of the successful professional is the ideological gatekeeper, excluding critical intellectuals who write about class struggle, class exploitation and U. S. imperialism, 'ideological' not 'objective' categories, or so they are told.

(...) The issue is not that today's intellectuals or artists may or may not take a progressive position on this or that issue. The problem is the pervasive belief among writers and artists that anti-imperialist social and political expressions should not appear in their music, paintings, and serious writing if they want their

(though it must sound so to some of my colleagues) to wish to point out that if 'postmodernism is mimicry' (to modify slightly Subramani's comment⁴¹), the academic community in the west still offers more than one model for emulation.

In my conclusion I would like to return briefly to Pinter. As always with Pinter characters, the identity of the two intruders in *The Birthday Party* remained unspecified to the end of the play and was an enigma to some of the first viewers, for whose sake Pinter provided the following comment : 'Goldberg and McCann? Dying, rotting, scabrous, decayed spiders, the flower of our society. They know their way around. Our mentors. Our ancestry. Them. Fuck 'em.'⁴² Which is to say, as I interpret it, that the two bullies are not important in themselves: their role, when they break in upon Stanley, is to be catalysts, unintentional agents of a potentially genuine spiritual birth, because they provide (as any large-scale attack on national integrity does), the testing circumstances for the protagonist's power of resistance. It is Stanley's defeat at their hands, and the reasons for it, which, as Pinter hinted in the same letter, lie in his evasion of self-knowledge, his infantile self-delusion, that are at the heart of the *Birthday Party's* significance. It is for the sake of this urgently needed self-examination – where do we stand in relation to what Pinter also dubbed 'shit-stained...tradition', embodied in Goldberg and McCann? - that in his subsequent, particularly his last, plays, he made its avatars more recognizable politically. In the unambiguously named play *The New World Order*, *The Birthday Party* pair are reincarnated as Des and Lionel, two torturers savoring the gruesome job they are preparing to perform on a mute, hooded victim, until, at the play's climax, one of them bursts into obscene tears at the purity of his mission, which is 'to keep the world clean for democracy'. Behind these thugs, invisible in the play itself, there hovers the world of their employers, the shamelessly rich, frivolous and cruel ruling elite, visualized in *Party Time*. As their stylish party is in progress, they do not allow the signals of something very alarming and sinister taking place outside, for which they are responsible, to interfere with their vacuously happy chatting. The one person who dares to inquire about what's going on outside is soon bullied into silence, and after a brief moment of discomfort, the chatting and laughter are resumed. In the already quoted Sidney speech 'Breaking the Great Australian Silence', John Pilger singled out *Party Time* as his favorite Pinter play. He concluded his brief comment about it with a question that most Pinter plays are meant to elicit, and to which at the moment I have nothing to add: 'How many of us live in that apartment?'

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work to be considered of substantial artistic merit. The enduring political victory of the CIA was to convince intellectuals that serious and sustained political engagement on the left is incompatible with serious art and scholarship. Today at the opera, theater, and art galleries, as well as in the professional meetings of academics, the Cold War values of the CIA are visible and pervasive: who dares to undress the emperor? (*Monthly Review*, November 1999. (<http://www.monthlyreview.org/1199petr.htm>))

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'IGRAJ IGRU DO KRAJA': O GLOBALIZACIJI, POSTKOLONIJALNIM STUDIJAMA I UNIVERZITETU

Lena Petrović

"Igraj igru do kraja!" fraza je preuzeta iz Pinterove drame Rodjendanska proslava, a u radu se koristi kao uvod u raspravu o manje ili više sofisticiranim izgovorima ili teorijama kojima se pribegava da bi se maskirala ekonomska stvarnost globalizacije. Nasuprot ovim igrama kompromisa, u koje spadaju i institucionalizovane 'mainstram' postkolonijalne studije, takodje se sve više oseća, i ne samo u vanakademskom kontekstu, uticaj opozicionih tendencija. Jedan paznje vredan primer je svakako konferencija 'Globalizacija i kultura' održana 1996 pod pokroviteljstvom Kalifornijskog univerziteta. Neki od argumenata iz priloga objavljenih u zborniku konferencije tema su drugog dela ovog rada, kao podsticaj da se promisli i iskaže ono što se do sada u našoj akademskoj teoriji i praksi smatralo nezamislivim i neizrecivim.

Ključne reči: igre, globalizacija, post-kolonijaliza, multikulturalizam/kosmopolitanizam, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Harold Pinter