'These dogs will do as we say': African nationalism in the era of decolonization in David Caute's At Fever Pitch and Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth

Matthew Whittle*

University of Manchester, UK

*Email: matthew.whittle-2@manchester.ac.uk

This article examines responses to the impact of colonialism on post-independence national unity in Africa from the perspective of the colonizer and the colonized. Written out of experience of decolonization in Ghana, At Fever Pitch, published in 1959 by the British novelist David Caute, depicts western models of economic development and nationhood as derailing the emancipatory possibilities of colonial self-determination. It is a preoccupation that was also central to anti-colonial political thought during the era of decolonization, most notably in Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth (1965), and would become highly contested in the field of postcolonial studies. Rather than viewing the perspectives of the colonizer as fundamentally antithetical to postcolonial politics, this article analyses the way in which Caute and Fanon mount two distinct but not oppositional critical responses to the transfer of power from European imperial elites to a self-interested national middle class. By attending to the form of At Fever Pitch, moreover, this paper will register the extent to which Caute's intervention into debates about the rise of nationalism in the colonies disrupts prevailing interpretations of British "end of Empire" fiction as mourning the end to British colonial dominance.

Keywords: African decolonization, David Caute, Frantz Fanon, nationalism, the end of empire

Early in At Fever Pitch ([1959] 1965), David Caute's novel of decolonization in an African colony, the prospect of post-colonial unity is depicted as being derailed by the lasting influence of western development and colonialist racial hierarchies. Coming from the country's Northern interior, described as "a land of small clustered villages where they spoke the lingo of the North", Sully Azambugu moves to the modernized

South, "where it was said there were many towns and Africans of a different race who used the ways of the white man" (Caute [1959] 1965, 20). The decision to move comes after a British soldier visits Sulley's village and implores the men to join the army, offering good pay and education. Yet, Sulley is recruited as a servant of the British junior officer Michael Glyn and finds himself the figure of racial abuse by his fellow Africans. In a bar he is taunted by an African man who "spoke to him sarcastically in a tongue of the South which he could not understand", and whose proud claim "I have been to England!" (23) implies an English University education. Other men surround him, shouting insults such as "How do you like cars, bush baby?" and "Where's your loin-cloth, muscle man?" before the first man goes on to blame "the bushmen and savages of the North who have no education, no towns, no cars, no cinemas" (23) for the history of imperial oppression they have endured. With independence on the horizon, the man announces that, "Soon we shall be free and these dogs will do as we say. They will dig the sewers for us!" (24).

This scene stages two key aspects of Caute's depiction of decolonization that will allow me in this essay to re-read British literature of the end of Empire as critically aware of the enduring dynamics of colonial power, and not as antagonistic to anti-colonial politics. Firstly, the exchange between Sulley and the men from the South dramatizes the harmful effects of a centralised colonial economy on the future unity of the region. The marked disparity between the landscape of the North and the advanced modernization of the South foregrounds how the forced economic development of more prosperous areas under imperial rule did not benefit the nation as a whole, and in fact deepened cultural and regional differences. Prior to his move, Sulley already regards the men from the South to be of a "different race", who have rejected any cultural link with Africa and instead "use the ways of the white man"

(Caute [1959] 1965, 20). The primary markers of British rule are the establishment of towns, a colonial education, and the arrival of cars and cinemas. These markers point to the geographical and cultural dimensions of colonialism, whereby economic development involves the dramatic transformation of social space alongside the availability of western consumer goods and mass culture. The concentration of wealth and modernity in the South has not only entrenched a sense of regional difference that has marginalized those from the villages of the North; it has also influenced the second significant aspect of decolonization as depicted in At Fever Pitch, namely the adoption by formerly colonized subjects of the imperial dichotomy of civilization and savagery.

Instead of promoting the redistribution of land and wealth, or the dismantling of inequitable colonial systems of governance, the men from the South support the totalitarian nationalist leader Kofi Bandaya, and are concerned only with acquiring the dominance they were previously denied: freedom from imperialism for them means the freedom to take over the role of oppressor. Pointedly, this shift in power is articulated through the colonialist language of racial hierarchies, made evident by the use of such pejorative terms as "bush baby" and "bushmen" and the characterization of those from the Northern villages as "savages" who wear nothing but "loin-cloths". This language was central to the ideology of imperialism, propagating an imaginative distinction between a modern and civilised European colonial power and a "backwards" and atavistic colonial society as a means of justifying conquest and exploitation. By inheriting this discourse, the more prosperous Africans in the South dehumanise Sully, viewing him not as an equal but as a "dog" fit only for the lowest form of manual labour: digging sewers. Sulley's status as a servant of the British Empire will simply be transferred following independence to the country's new elite.

Caute was writing during the era of decolonization from the perspective of the colonizer, and At Fever Pitch draws on his experience of National Service in Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast), which gained independence in 1957 and was the "first black dominion in the Commonwealth of Nations" (Wilson 1994, 146). Yet, we can read At Fever Pitch, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, as offering an early dramatic portrayal of what was to become a key concern of postcolonial writers and intellectuals. The influential Martinique-born psychiatrist and revolutionary Frantz Fanon would vociferously express a preoccupation with the impact of colonialism on class and regional divisions in post-colonial Africa in his posthumously-published work The Wretched of the Earth (1965). In Chapter Three, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (1961), Fanon draws on his experience of fighting on the side of the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) against French colonial forces in Algeria, as well as his attendance at the First Conference of the Union of African Nations that took place in Ghana in 1958. In his essay, Fanon warns that the development of the most prosperous parts of a country under colonialism has allowed for "certain sectors of the colony to become relatively rich" (1965, 128) while other areas remain under-developed. In the move to independence, this disparity will give rise to regionalism and tribalism whereby "[o]ld rivalries which were there before colonialism" will "come to the surface" (128). For Fanon, independence will simply allow for the "transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period" (122) if newly independent African societies do not set about dismantling the political and economic structures of the colonial era.

It is not the intention of this essay to claim a line of influence from At Fever Pitch to Fanon's work, or vice versa. Nor do I wish to flatten the geographical and historical specificities of British colonialism in Ghana and French colonialism in

Algeria. By adopting a comparative methodology and reading At Fever Pitch alongside The Wretched of the Earth, however, we can attend to what Edward Said in Culture and Imperialism termed the "overlapping territories" and "intertwined histories" of the colonizer and the colonized (1993, 72). For Said, a comparative approach is necessary in order to protect against an understanding of the history of imperialism and its cultures as "reductively compartmentalised, separate, distinct" (1993, xxiii). Caute's oeuvre, particularly his novel Decline of the West (1966) and his historical studies Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia (1983) and Marechera and the Colonel: A Zimbabwean Writer and the Claims of the State (2009), reveal a sustained interest throughout his career in African decolonization, and he would offer a critical reading of Fanon's thought in Fanon (1970). In this work, Caute describes the Martinician intellectual as "a revolutionary; an anti-racist who believed in the efficacy and humanist value of violent counter-assertion", and whose writings "added to [the European revolutionary] tradition and enriched it" (1970, 97). At Fever Pitch signals this burgeoning preoccupation in Caute's fictional and historical writing with the lasting manifestations of European imperialism.

Attention to this aspect of Caute's text extends an understanding of the entanglements between white British and late-colonial writers and intellectuals recently posited in Peter J. Kalliney's Commonwealth of Letters (2013). Where Kalliney concentrates on book history and the "concrete forms of exchange and reciprocation" (2013, 118) at mid-century, this essay takes At Fever Pitch as a case study for examining the range of critical perspectives towards British colonialism in Africa in circulation during the period of decolonization. Furthermore, a reading of Caute's novel as illuminating through literature the durability of pernicious forms of imperial power complements Robert Spencer's recent emphasis on the "overbearing

and implacable context of colonialism and neo-colonialism" (2012, 147) in his analysis of dictator novels produced by postcolonial African writers.

This reading also re-historicizes Fanon's thought within the dynamic process of decolonization in a way that allows for a contextualized engagement with contemporary denunciations of nationalist ideology. The emergence of regionalism and state control in formerly-colonized countries since decolonization has led many postcolonial critics to view nationalism, as Laura Chrisman observes, as "inherently dominatory, absolutist, essentialist and destructive" (2004, 183). Within the field of postcolonial studies, Fanon has become predominantly associated with the deconstruction of western notions of race, or with forms of violent, anti-colonial militarism.[1] Homi K. Bhabha has been a particularly influential proponent of the former. As John Hyland maintains, Bhabha's "analytics of hybridity […] proceed from post-structural resignifications of Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic theorizations of the colonial subject as dislocated and betrayed by the act of mimicry" (2013, 5). Neil Lazarus has recently called for "a more strenuously contextualized and politically discriminating engagement with Fanon and his work", which would move away from the construction of Fanon as a "poststructuralist avant la lettre" (2011, 162). A recent documentary by Göran Hugo Olsson, entitled Concerning Violence (2014), moreover, seeks to reassess the widespread view of The Wretched of the Earth as a call to violent action.[2] A reading of Fanon's response to the power struggles within colonized nations calling for self-determination, as well as his assessment of the self-interested position of the national middle class, highlights his commitment to an alternative socialist and internationalist vision of post-colonial national unity.

In the following sections of this essay, I will situate At Fever Pitch and The Wretched of the Earth as distinct but not oppositional responses to the political and

societal upheavals experienced by formerly-colonized nations during the era of decolonization. Through a sustained close reading, it is possible to examine the way in which At Fever Pitch intervenes in contemporaneous accusations of colonial ineptitude, barbarity and corruption through its thematic concern with the modernization of colonized nations and its formal rejection of many of the tropes of popular "tales of adventure". I will then conclude by assessing how such a reading disrupts unilinear conceptions of British literature of decolonization, in which fiction produced by army personnel and colonial servants is broadly regarded as mourning the end of Empire.

"An alien modernity"

The dramatization in At Fever Pitch of the inequalities engendered by uneven economic development, which includes the adoption of a class structure that is informed by notions of colonial savagery, foregrounds a cognizance in post-war British literature of the harmful durability of colonial systems of governance at the moment of decolonization. This awareness provides an alternative genealogy to the widely-held pessimistic view that, throughout post-independence Africa, "the post-colonial nation-state had become [by the 1980s] a shackle on progress" (Davidson 1992, 290) due in large part to "the brutal divorce between rulers and ruled" (293). In At Fever Pitch, it is nationalism-from-above, which is tied up with western economic development, which acts as the biggest barrier to self-determination in the former colonies.

Given that At Fever Pitch is written from the vantage point of the colonizer – Caute is an English writer, journalist and historian from an army family and was educated at Wellington College – it is admittedly tempting to read the novel as an

example of the widespread criticism of decolonization from the British Right during the post-war period. Throughout the 1950s, colonial independence was derided by some as being unable to bring about change due to long-standing tribal divisions and the brutality of totalitarian leaders. In his autobiographical account of the 1956 Suez Crisis, for example, Anthony Eden characterized Egypt's President Nasser as having "understood and used the Goebbels pattern of propaganda in all its lying ruthlessness, [...] increas[ing] the threat to others from any aggressive militant dictatorship" in Africa (1960, 431). In fiction, Elspeth's Huxley's dramatization of the so-called "Mau Mau rebellion" in Kenya in A Thing to Love (1954) was described favourably in contemporary review as explaining the "hideous features" of anti-colonial resistance as "a partial reversion to savagery" (Tate 1955, 68).[3] Rather than recirculating this discourse, however, Caute adopts the novel form as a means of mounting a critical response to the role that British colonialism played in entrenching regional allegiances, and derailing the emancipatory impulses of independence movements.

The central plot of At Fever Pitch concerns the twin trajectories of Michael Glyn and the African nationalist leader Kofi Bandaya. The former is beset by doubt about his role as an agent of colonialism; the latter voices anti-colonial, nationalist rhetoric in public, with his cries of "One nation, one government, one liberty!" (Caute [1959] 1965, 35), whilst consolidating power privately through intimidation, propaganda, manipulation and violence. Throughout the text, Glyn expresses disquiet at his inability to fulfil the role of the stereotypical pioneering colonial hero, having come to Africa too late. At the same time, he grapples with traditional justifications for the colonial project, and when discussing Britain's world-role with a Colonel Blimp-like brigadier asserts that, "Colonialism […] is founded on self-interested economics and pride. You take another man's country and tell him you are doing him

a service" (121). Compounding his sense of inadequacy and despondency, he is also struggling to come to terms with his sexuality. He engages in a homosexual relationship with Sulley before rejecting him and visiting a prostitute, where he has trouble getting an erection. Glyn's only experience of "action" during his posting comes in the novel's denouement when he is faced with a rioting mob of political protesters and, in a state of panic, kills twenty-five people, leading to his deportation back to England.

Previous references to and criticism of At Fever Pitch have concentrated on the characterization of Glyn as a means of discussing literary depictions of a waning British imperialism (Seigneurie 2004, 106 n.2) or the portrayal of homosexuality in the Army (Busia 1990, 92-93; Hyam 1991, 18-19; Killingray and Omissi, 1999, 246 n.64).[4] In Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain (1997, 2004), Alan Sinfield offers a concise summary of At Fever Pitch as "register[ing] the shock and shame" of the contradiction between "the ideology of European superiority" and colonialism's "history of violence and oppression" (2004, 157). Sinfield's reference to the novel, however, is brief and neglects any mention of Bandaya, whose narrative arc acts as a counterpoint to that of Glyn, or the damaging legacy of colonial intervention that was emerging during the era of decolonization.

Although Bandaya is based loosely on Ghana's first Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah – the name of Bandaya's People's Progressive Party (PPP) echoes that of Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) – he is a caricatured portrayal of a ruthless nationalist leader, able to employ political rhetoric to establish a cult of personality. Rather than establishing a government that shored up its self-interested position as a puppet for Western enterprise, Nkrumah was highly influential in criticizing the durability of "neo-colonial" European economic influence in post-

colonial Africa.[5] The aspect of the novel that mostly closely resembles Ghanaian independence is the depiction of political turmoil between the PPP and the opposition Federal Rights Party (FRP), made up of tribal chiefs from the West and North of the region. It is through this conflict that the text stages the increased fragmentation of the colony as a result of European ideas about the primacy of the nation-state and capitalist economic progress, imposed from above onto non-European colonial regions.

At the time At Fever Pitch was written, Nkrumah had recently been engaged in an internal political conflict with the federalist National Liberation Movement (NLM), formed largely by tribal leaders of the Ashanti region. As H.S. Wilson notes, "Growing violence from the NLM led the British to force another election on Nkrumah [following his landslide victories in the 1952 and 1954 Legislative Assembly elections] before they would concede independence" (1994, 146). Also threatening the unity of a post-independence Ghanaian nation-state were calls from the Ewe-speaking Volta Region of Ghana for political annexation in order "to join their historical relatives in neighbouring Togo" as part of a separate Ewe state (Amoah 2007, 110). Following a 1956 plebiscite, a narrow majority of 58 per cent of the Volta Region voted in favour of state union with Ghana, engendering an "uneasy relationship between Togo and Ghana" that persists today (111).

In response to this fraught blending of different regions within the modern nation of Ghana, At Fever Pitch questions the efficacy of European political and economic models of nationhood that have been imported into Africa as a means of establishing borders between colonies. During decolonization, nationalist leaders adopted them in order to bind together disparate tribal regions that had their own allegiances, cultures and languages. As Caute explained to me in a recent reflection

on the novel and the process of decolonization in more restive areas of Africa, "Both the colonial powers and the 'nationalist' parties seeking to inherit independence seem to have been equally intent on preserving the arbitrary colonial state boundaries while resisting attempts at regional or ethnic secession". He went on to argue that "Both sides subscribed to the fiction that these were 'nations', which was not only untrue but led subsequently to continuing unrest (Kenya) or outright civil war (Zimbabwe)" (personal communication, April 3 2014).[6] Caute's view refuses to subscribe to the notion that Europe's former colonies are inherently chaotic – a common justification for continued western imperial intervention. Instead, it is nationalism-from-above that reignites and exacerbates existing tribal or regional divisions.

In At Fever Pitch, the divisions that threaten to undermine the unifying ideals of colonial self-determination are depicted as being influenced by the development of specific regions during colonialism. Although, as Basil Davidson notes, Ghana under British rule had been "relatively favoured […] largely because of the early colonial exploitation of its capacity to produce cocoa" (1973, 93), trade and commerce were controlled by European imperial powers and trading companies with little regard for infrastructure: "There were no mechanical industries save for the extraction and export of gold and diamonds, and a few other minerals" (93). Caute presents the wider social impact of this uneven economic development through Glyn's description of the town of Bada in the South of the country, which is viewed as having "no unity". Instead, Bada "sprawled outwards, fashioned and shaped by the whims of capitalist enterprise dominated by an alien modernity. It was the sort of place which causes a surprised visitor to remark hastily: 'Well, I must say they have made progress here'" (Caute [1959] 1965, 115). The text's ironic appropriation of the terminology of colonial "progress" recalls Joseph Conrad's tale of an African trading

post in 'An Outpost of Progress' (1897). In Conrad's short story, the celebratory

rhetoric of imperialism is adopted as a means of emphasizing the gap between the

virtuous façade of colonial trade and its ruthless and degenerate reality. Similarly, in

At Fever Pitch, the economic "progress" of capitalist enterprise in Bada is belied both

by the absence of unity and by the monuments of a failed "alien modernity" in nearby

Fanlanga: the "gleaming steel, glass, and concrete Fanlanga General Hospital, the

largest in the colony, spaciously equipped with everything except doctors. Close by

lay the modern National Bank, equipped, it was rumoured, with everything but

money" ([1959] 1965, 115). Here, "the handsome residences of the Europeans and

wealthier Africans" have not in fact brought modern progress but have simply shifted

"the explosions, stabbings and shootings" to the "valley on the north-east side" (115).

The landscape that Glyn discovers throughout the colony is thus one characterized by

extreme disparities of wealth, where those who have profited most from colonialism

are able to displace violence to areas untouched by western development.

It is the "more prosperous", middle-class Africans from the South who are the

"backbone" of Bandaya's nationalist party and who signify the adoption of new but

ultimately unworkable Western political and economic ideologies. It is this national

middle-class that, Fanon warns, are fundamentally incapable of "think[ing] in terms

of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that

nation" and "will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for

Western enterprise" ([1959] 1965, 123). In At Fever Pitch, they are the "clerks and

shopkeepers" – those with political and economic power – "trimly starched in

European clothes and half-assimilated European ideas", who "ride to work on

bicycles from which the wrapping paper has never been removed, for a new bicycle is

a great thing and a bicycle clothed in brown paper can seem new forever" (8-9). As

with the General Hospital and National Bank in Fanlanga, the bicycle in this description acts as a metaphor for the "half-assimilated European ideas" of nationalism and capitalism. Each of them – the "gleaming" doctor-less hospital, the "modern" money-less bank and the "new" wrapped-up bicycle – is symbolic of an "alien modernity" that remains in stasis and is rendered useless in the context of African decolonization.

Ghana was to play a key role in the development of Fanon's thought, as it did in Caute's response to decolonization. As well as working closely with Amilcar Cabral of the Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) in both Portuguese Guinea and Cape Verde, Fanon acted as the FLN Ambassador to Ghana for the Provisional Algerian Government and in 1958 travelled to Accra to attend the First Conference of the Union of African Nations, organized by Nkrumah. Following the conference, Fanon met with Nkrumah and other political leaders, including Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Patrice Lumumba of the soon-to-be Democratic Republic of Congo. As Alice Cherki (2006) notes, Fanon returned from Ghana "with a whole new world view on which to reflect" (142): although he had liked "Nkrumah's vision of a United States of Africa", the prospect seemed to be threatened by countries such as Cameroon and Congo, where "the national bourgeoisies already were poised to take over where colonial power left off and colonial ties would be maintained" (142). Where Caute's view of the process of decolonization was restricted to his role in the British Army, The Wretched of the Earth was informed by Fanon's contact with a broad range of political leaders on the verge of leading decolonized nation-states.

It is this contact that influences Fanon's conflicted position on post-colonial national unity throughout Africa and marks an important divergence between Caute's

depiction of decolonization and Fanon's critique of the "pitfalls of national consciousness". At Fever Pitch, as we have seen, presents nationalism as a colonial construct only able to entrench regional and class conflict. Fanon, on the other hand, does not reject the ideology of nationalism but promotes the participation of the whole of the nation and the decentralisation of government away from the imperial centre that has been modernized by western commercial interests. For Fanon, the process of decentralization would prevent irrevocable damage to the emancipatory potential of national unity within the nation-state. In place of a form of nationalism led by a "rapacious bourgeoisie" (1965, 135), Fanon endorses a Leninist position that calls for "the combined effort of the masses led by a party and of intellectuals who are highly conscious and armed with revolutionary principles" as a means of barring "the way to this useless and harmful middle class" (140). Thus, despite Homi Bhabha's assertion that Fanon does "not allow any national or cultural 'unisonance' in the imagined community of the future" (1991, 102), The Wretched of the Earth invests in the efficacy of nationalism to defend against inequitable class structures that exclude the under-developed regions of the post-colonial nation.

Indeed, the concluding sentiment of Fanon's essay proposes an inclusive, socialist interpretation of nationalism, which is not the preserve of the wealthy and powerful elite but instead acts as an important equalizer able to transcend tribal, regional or class boundaries:

A bourgeoisie that provides nationalism alone as food for the masses fails in its mission and gets caught up in a whole series of mishaps. But if nationalism is not made explicit, if it is not enriched and deepened by a very rapid

transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs, in other

words into humanism, it leads up a blind alley. (Fanon 1965, 165)

Fanon's emphasis on the formation of a national consciousness is punctuated by a

critique of "bourgeois leaders [who] imprison national consciousness in sterile

formalism" (165). The new nationalism of formerly-colonized nations must include

the entirety of the population "on a vast scale in enlightened and fruitful work"; only

then will "the flag and the palace where sits the government cease to be the symbols

of the nation. The nation deserts these brightly lit, empty shells and takes shelter in

the country, where it is given life and dynamic power" (165). Nationalism, then, is

not the end but the means. For Fanon, it is the collective action of the whole of the

people in the struggle for liberation that will allow nationalism to develop into a fair

and humanist national consciousness.

British literature and decolonization: Caute, Burgess, Raven

A reading of Caute's portrayal of the fragmentation of the nation-state as a legacy of

Empire offers an insight into the heterogeneity of literary accounts of decolonization

produced by British colonial servants and army officers. In Jed Esty's A Shrinking

Island: Modernism and National Culture in England (2004), British literature at mid-

century is characterized as eulogising the expansive and internationalist vision offered

by colonialism and turning inwards to articulate an "historical sense of pervasive

national decline" (9). In this view, British literature of the end of Empire offers a

shared preoccupation with imperial retrenchment, a response that Esty maps onto the

renewed empiricism and parochialism of 1950s literature. Although Esty's "shrinking

island" thesis productively situates decolonisation at the centre of debates about the

shifting forms of post-war British literature, it posits a view of the 1950s as a kind of interregnum between modernism and postmodernism and, as Patrick Parrinder comments, offers an "oversimplification" (2011, 41) of the distinction between late-modernist and post-war writers.[7] Supporting Parrider's argument, I will turn in the final section of this essay to an analysis of how Caute's critical portrayal of the emerging legacy of colonialism sets At Fever Pitch apart from contemporaneous literary accounts of nationalist campaigns produced by British colonial servants and army officers, namely those of Anthony Burgess and Simon Raven. This analysis will then be elucidated through an appreciation of the relationship between Caute's critical exposition of decolonization and his experimentation with the novel form.

The narratives of At Fever Pitch, Burgess's Malayan Trilogy (1956-1959) and Raven's Feathers of Death (1959) offer an important insight into the disparate responses in post-war British literature to the rise of nationalism throughout Britain's colonies. The Malayan Trilogy, which is made up of the interconnected novels Time for a Tiger (1956), Enemy in the Blanket (1957) and Beds in the East (1959), is one of the earliest and most well-known depictions of the end of Empire. The three books draw on Burgess's experience of colonial service in Malaysia (formerly Malaya) between 1954 and 1957.[8] Providing the trilogy's central thread is Victor Crabbe, a history teacher from England who encounters a colony seeking to formulate a sense of national unity at a time when when the region was divided by racial prejudices between its Malay, Chinese and Indian populations and was fighting a guerrilla war against Chinese-born Communists. The trilogy offers a sympathetic portrayal of Malaya, and presents the British colonising forces as an insulated and supercilious officer-class who, as a result of their imagined sense of racial superiority, refuse to engage with the Malayan people. Yet, at the same time, Crabbe is placed at the centre

of the cultural turmoil between Malaya's various communities as he attempts to assert his increasingly marginalised position and become a kind of "cultural referee" by holding parties to mediate between the conflicting ethnic groups. His various attempts to act as mediator and "cultivate better inter-racial understanding" (Burgess 2000, 426) continually end in chaos and fighting. Ultimately, Crabbe becomes a lone patriarchal figure made comical and ridiculous as a result of what are presented as the deep-rooted racial allegiances of Malaya's indigenous citizens.

What this aspect of the narrative negates is the role of British economic interests in importing labour forces from different countries into Malaya and categorizing the region's population in terms of race. Chinese and Indian labourers were brought in to the country by the British to work in tin mines and on rubber plantations respectively. The economic benefits of Malaya's key industries were unequally distributed and, as V.G. Kiernan comments,

> rested on a balance of races which as in all such conglomerate societies came to feel towards each other the hostility that elsewhere rival classes feel. After 1945 this would lead to the British partnership with the Malay aristocracy against the Chinese" (1972, 88).[9]

Britain's economic concerns in Malaya played a crucial part in fuelling the country's internal racial conflicts; they also helped establish formal notions of racial categorization between Malay, Chinese and Indian communities. As Roxanne Harvey Gudeman (2002) contends:

Individuals found it in their self-interest to define themselves as a member of

one of the communities [Malay, Indian or Chinese] in order to be officially

"recognized" by the colonial overseers. [...] the three communities existed

largely segregated from each other. (140)

The result of this form of racial categorization during the post-1945 move towards

independence was that "[t]he architects of the new nation-state of Malaysia inherited

these categories and recognised them in the Constitution" (Gudeman 2002, 141).

Where Caute's novel traces a line from British colonialism to the inheritance of

nationalism and the fragmentation of African nation-states, The Malayan Trilogy

presents racial divisions as deep-rooted in Malay society. In their commitment to

Malayan national unity, Burgess's three novels espouse an ideology of British

paternalism in Malaya that, it is implied, is able to produce social and cultural

harmony throughout the region.

The depiction of homoeroticism within the setting of African decolonization in

At Fever Pitch invites close comparison with Raven's novel The Feathers of Death.

In Raven's text the fictional African nationalist leader Karioukeya is depicted as

being willing "to use the less respectable elements of resentment, greed, restive

militarism and religious hysteria to further his political ends" (1998, 38). Karioukeya

remains always in the background, however, and Raven marginalizes the issue of a

burgeoning totalitarian nationalism in favour of dramatizing the "ever present though

ever unacknowledged" (175) existence of homosexual relationships within the

colonial forces. At Fever Pitch does not offer an insightful account of the dilemma of

homosexual colonial officers. Instead, the novel admittedly adheres to long-

established tropes of colonial masculinity to signify Glyn's private struggle to uphold

the more traditional, masculine role of the colonizer during Britain's imperial decline.[10] Yet, rather than using the move towards independence as a backdrop to contextualize the British characters' story, as Raven arguably does, Caute seeks to dramatize for a British audience the conflicts surrounding colonial self-determination that cannot be reduced to the broad, homogenous categories of "the colonizer" and "the colonized".

Undermining such simplified categories, At Fever Pitch subverts a number of the tropes of popular Victorian adventure tales, in which a civilised European male confronts a savage colonial society. The imperial adventure novels of 19th- and early-20th-century writers, such as R.M. Ballantyne, G.A. Henty and John Buchan, had been influential in propagating a racial and cultural hierarchy to its British readership which, as Peter Childs maintains, "fuse[d] a Victorian manly ideal with post-Enlightenment scientific claims to discover and cover the world" (2007, 6).[11] Central to such novels is the notion of a superior morality inherent in the British, who are able to transport civilization and modernity throughout the globe as though non-European regions exist as a kind of tabula rasa awaiting British intervention. Fin de siècle and early 20th-century writers, such as Joseph Conrad, H.G. Wells, E.M. Forster and Sylvia Townsend Warner, adopt the novel form to confront the complexities of a colonial system that encompassed missionary work alongside economic and political coercion. These writers question the assumptions that had served to interpret European superiority over supposedly inferior races. By the post-war period of extensive decolonization, writers like Caute, who had direct experience of colonial life during the move towards independence, offer a much more self-consciously reflexive depiction of the colonial encounter.

Throughout At Fever Pitch, Glyn is depicted as grappling with the validity of colonialist assumptions about the moral purpose of colonialism. Far from embodying the characteristics of the self-assured hero, Glyn is presented as uncertain of his role within the Empire and frequently questions his own convictions on issues of politics, history and identity. This self-scrutiny is marked by a shift from the objective voice of the third-person narrative to the first- and second-person voice of Glyn and his subconscious. The first instance of this shift is prompted when Glyn receives a letter from his father that addresses the rise of independence movements throughout the British Empire and states that "right is on our side, whatever they say" ([1959] 1965, 46). After tearing up the letter and returning to the mess in "his familiar mood of despondency" (55), Glyn's internal dialogue proceeds:

All right, Glyn. By what criteria do you decide that right is not on our side?

It never is.

Why?

Because 'us' and 'we' are artificial units. You can only talk of 'us' if you are thinking emotionally.

[…] Are you being honest, Glyn?

No. But besides, what is right and what is wrong? (56-57)

This formal experimentation subverts the clear sense of objective moral purpose and heroism so central to the construction of the British colonising subject in turn-of-the-century "tales of adventure". Here Glyn seeks to reject any ontological categories that pre-determine his connection to a wider body of people through national identity and

patriotism. His father's letter establishes the dichotomy between "us", the British colonizer, and "them", the colonized African subject. Yet Glyn decides that such a dichotomy is directed only by an emotional, and thus imagined, connection that has been used by previous generations to justify theft and exploitation.

Caute returns to the narrative strategy of the internal dialogue between Glyn and his subconscious throughout the novel as a means of depicting Glyn's growing sense of restlessness and dejection, whereby his internal persona becomes increasingly critical and chastises him for being 'inherently weak' (Caute [1959] 1965, 104). By the novel's denouement, Glyn's conflicted state of mind, which is caught between a wish to disavow the notion of the masculine colonising hero and a desire for "action", be it military or sexual, leads to his final destructive act in the text. Following the instatement of Bandaya as Prime Minister, Glyn fires his gun into a crowd of protesters "not in bravery, but in terrified fury" (177). Prior to this episode, Glyn acknowledges that the "black-faced refugees" forced to huddle together amid the chaos of political riots between the nationalist supporters of Bandaya and the protesting federalist supporters were "being undermined [and] were surely ruined" (173). This juxtaposition, of the detrimental manifestations of both nationalism and Glyn's fatal act of colonial dominance, emphasizes the novel's depiction of the suffering caused by the dangerous transfer of power from one self-interested group to another. The political refugees who have been deprived of their agency by the dominant authoritarian powers are the true victims of the tale.

In the novel's conclusion, Glyn is depicted returning to England on a plane that passes over the "over-ripe" and "lush vegetation" of the South that "yields gradually to the flat parched plains of the North [that was] brown with tiny villages clustered like models of plasticine" (Caute [1959] 1965, 188). It is a narrative trope

that seems to anticipate the criticism expressed in Michael Ondaatje's novel *Anil's Ghost* (2000), that:

> [all] English books [end when t]he Englishman gets on a plane and leaves. […]   He looks out of the window at Mombasa or Vietnam or Jakarta, someplace now he can look at through the clouds. The tired hero. […] He's going home. So the war, to all purposes, is over. That's enough reality for the West. It's probably the history of the last two hundred years of Western political writing.' (2011, 282-283).

Yet, Glyn's perspective allows for a view of the region in miniature that recalls the conflict of the bar scene staged towards the beginning of the text. From his birds-eye view, the disparity between the landscapes of the North and South is emphasised: the latter is "lush" with life and vitality while the former, which has been made remote through the enforced modernization of the South, is left to decay as nothing more than "parched" and "brown" plains. The final image of the text, moreover, is not of the Englishman leaving but of the country's new leader: "Glyn fell asleep. His hand relaxed and a coin slipped to the floor, revealing the smiling face of Kofi Bandaya..." (Caute [1959] 1965, 188). It is a portentous conclusion: Bandaya's mock-benevolent smile masks what we the reader know of his ruthlessness and self-interested ambition. The ellipsis that punctuates the end of the novel, moreover, signals that the Englishman may be going home but the struggle for post-colonial unity in the region is far from over.

Notes on contributor

Matthew Whittle teaches on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and postcolonial theory at the Universities of Manchester and Salford. He has published on post-war British and Caribbean literature in Critical Comparative Studies, has contributed to the collection Writing Difference: Nationalism, Identity and Literature (Atlantic Books) and has an article forthcoming in the Journal of Commonwealth Literature on the artwork of Walton Ford. He is currently working on his first monograph on responses to the end of Empire in post-war British fiction.

References

Agruss, David. 2013. "Boys Gone Wild: Island Stranding, Cross-Racial Identification and Metropolitan Masculinity in R.M. Ballantyne's The Coral Island." The Victorian 1 (1): 1-19.

Alessandrini, Anthony C., ed. 1999. Frantz Fanon: Critical Perspectives. London: Routledge.

Amoah, Michael. 2007. Reconstructing the Nation in Africa: The Politics of Nationalism in Ghana. London: Taurus.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1989. "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition." In Remaking History, edited by Barbara Kruger and Phil Mariani, pp.131-51 .Seattle: Bay Press.

Bristow, Joseph. 1991. *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World*. London: Harper Collins.

Burgess, Anthony. 2000. The Malayan Trilogy. London: Vintage.

Burgess, Anthony. 2002a. Little Wilson and Big God: Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess. London: Vintage.

Burgess, Anthony. 2002b. *You've Had Your Time: Being the Second Part of the* Confessions of Anthony Burgess. London: Vintage.

Busia, Abena P.A. 1990. "Silencing Sycorax: On African Colonial Discourse and the Unvoiced Female." Cultural Critique 14 (2): 81-104. doi: 0882-4371.

Caute, David. [1959] 1965. At Fever Pitch. London: Cox and Wyman.

Caute, David. 1966. Decline of the West. London: Cox and Wyman.

Caute, David. 1970. Fanon. London: Fontana.

Caute, David. 1983. Under the Skin: The Death of White Rhodesia. London: Penguin.

Caute, David. 2009. Marechera and the Colonel: A Zimbabwean Writer and the Claims of the State. Bristol: Totterdown Books.

Cherki, Alice. 2006. Frantz Fanon: A Portrait. Translated by Nadia Benabid. New York: Cornell University Press.

Childs, Peter. 2007. Modernism and the Post-colonial. London: Continuum.

Chrisman, Laura. 2004. "Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies." In The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies, edited by Neil Lazarus, pp.183-198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Conrad, Joseph. 1999. The Secret Sharer and Other Stories, edited by John Lawton. London: Phoenix.

Davidson, Basil. 1973. Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah. Plymouth: Allen Lane.

Davidson, Basil. 1992. *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-* State. London: James Currey.

Davidson, Basil. 1994. The Search for Africa: History, Culture, Politics. New York: Random House.

Eden, Anthony. 1960. The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden: Full Circle. London: Cassell.

Esty, Jed. 2004. A Shrinking Island. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Fanon, Frantz. 1965. The Wretched of the Earth. Translated by Constance Farrington. Middlesex: Penguin.

Gudeman, Roxanne Harvey. 2002. "Multiculturalism in Malaysia: Individual Harmony, Group Tension." Macalester International 12 (16): 138-160.

Harper, T.N. 1999. The End of Empire and the Making of Malaysia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huxley, Elspeth. 1954. A Thing to Love. London: Chatto & Windus.

Hyam, Ronald, 1991. Sexuality and Empire. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Kiernan, V.G. 1972. The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to the Outside World in the Imperial Age. 2nd ed. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Killingray, David and David Omissi. 1999. Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c.1700-1964. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lane, Christopher. 1995. The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lassner, Phyllis. 2004. Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire. London: Rutgers University Press.

Lazarus, Neil. 2011. The Postcolonial Unconscious. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lowe, Lisa and David Lloyd. 1997. The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

MacPhee, Graham. 2011. Postwar British Literature and Postcolonial Studies. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Maughan-Brown, David. 1982. "Myths on the March: The Kenyan and Zimbabwean Liberation Struggles in Colonial Fiction." Journal of Southern African Studies 9 (1): 93-117. doi: 130.88.84.130.

Morton, Stephen. 2007. "Poststructuralist Formulations." In The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies, edited by John McLeod, pp.161-172. Abingdon: Routledge.

Nkrumah, Kwame. 1965. Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Ondaatje, Michael. [2000] 2011. *Anil's Ghost*. London: Vintage.

Parrinder, Patrick. 2011. "The Road to Airstrip One: Anglo-American Attitudes in the English Fiction of Midcentury." In End of Empire and the Novel Since 1945, edited by Rachel Gilmour and Bill Schwarz, pp.38-52. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Raven, Simon. [1959] 1998. The Feathers of Death. Swaffham: The Gay Men's Press.

Said, Edward W. 1993. Culture and Imperialism. London: Chatto & Windus.

Seigneurie, Ken. 2004. "Decolonizing the British: Deflections of Desire in The Alexandria Quartet." South Atlantic Review 69 (1): 85-108.

Shringarpure, Bhakti. "Fanon Documentary Confronts Fallacies About Anti-Colonial Philosopher." The Guardian, July 21, 2014. Accessed August 4, 2014. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/21/-sp-frantz-fanon-documentary-concerning-violence?CMP=twt_gu.

Sinfield, Alan. 2004. Literature, Politics and Culture in Post-War Britain. 2ⁿᵈ ed.

London: Continuum.

Spencer, Robert. 2012. "Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and the African Dictator Novel." Journal

of Commonwealth Literature 47 (2): 145-158. doi: 10.1177/0021989412447490.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1999. A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a

History of the Vanishing Present. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Street, Brian, 1985. "Reading the Novels of Empire: Race and Ideology in the Classic

'Tale of Adventure'." In The Black Presence in English Literature, edited by

David Dabydeen, pp.95-111. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Tate. H.R. 1955. "Review of A Thing to Love." African Affairs 54: 67-9. doi:

95.144.89.162.

Tredell, Nicolas. 1994. Caute's Confrontations: A Study of the Novels of David Caute.

Nottingham: Pauper's Press.

Wilson, H.S. 1994. African Decolonization. London: Edward Arnold.

Notes

[1] See, for example, Bhabha (1989), Alessandrini (1999), and Morton (2007).

[2] For a discussion of Concerning Violence see Shringarpure (2014).

[3] For an alternative reading of Huxley's novel as challenging "the integrity and the agency of the Mau Mau" and "lay[ing] waste to that of the colonial project" see Lassner (2004, 152-159).

[4] Tredell (1994) offers an insightful but brief comparative discussion of the themes of At Fever Pitch alongside Caute's later fiction.

[5] See Nkrumah (1965).

[6] On literary accounts of decolonization in Kenya and Zimbabwe see Maughan-Brown (1982).

[7] For a study of 1950s British literature that undermines Esty's "shrinking island" thesis see Bentley (2007) and MacPhee (2011).

[8] See Burgess (2002a, 2002b).

[9] On May 13 1969 Malaysia saw violent race riots erupt in Kuala Lumpur, the result, according to T.N. Harper (1999), of a post-independence bargain "which had seemed to leave the field of politics and administration to the Malays and the world of commerce to the Chinese, whilst guaranteeing political rights to the Chinese and economic assistance to the Malays [but which] no longer reflected, if indeed it ever had, the aspirations of key groups in society" (367).

[10] For a detailed study of male homosexual desire in British colonial fiction see Lane (1995).

[11] For more on the implications regarding gender roles and the ideology of imperialism in "tales of adventure" see Street (1985), Bristow (1991), and Agruss (2013).