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Frantz Fanon

Philosophy, Praxis, and the Occult Zone

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In 2011, Achille Mbembe asserted that “the human has consistently taken on the form of waste within the peculiar trajectory race and capitalism espoused in South Africa.”¹ He added that the end of apartheid had shifted rather than undone the lines of exclusion and dispute. Since the massacre on the platinum mines in 2012 it has become widely accepted that the state is resorting to repressive measures to enforce these lines and contain the dispute that they occasion. With notable exceptions academic philosophy, and theory more broadly, has offered remarkably little illumination of the widening distance between the promise of national liberation and democracy and the often bitter realities of contemporary South Africa.

A Third Element

Stathis Kouvelakis offers a compelling account of another moment in space and time in which a young intellectual sought rational hope, a material basis for political hope, against the melancholy of political disappointment.² In 1842 Karl Marx, a young man recently graduated with a PhD in Philosophy, was wrestling with the German failure to redeem the promise of the French Revolution which had heralded the arrival of modern nationalism and democracy in Europe. He quickly realised that making the world more philosophical would require that philosophy be made more worldly, that it take its place in the actual struggles in the world. He saw that the state and capital both tended towards a repression of the political and, looking for what he called 'a third element', a constituent power, he first turned to the press arguing that the “free press is the ubiquitous vigilant eye of a people's soul...the spiritual mirror in which a people can see itself, and self-examination is the first condition of wisdom.”³ Marx hoped that “an association of free human beings who educate one another”⁴ in an expanding public sphere could subordinate the state to rational, public discussion in a process of ongoing democratisation. But when, in the

following year, the newspaper that he edited was banned Marx turned towards “suffering human beings who think”⁵ and to the hope that “making participation in politics, and therefore real struggles, the starting point of our criticism”⁶ could provide new grounds for commitment to democracy as a process of democratisation.

The philosophical dogma of the day, which is often the dogma of our own time, a dogma that takes on a particular virulence in the context of racism, had argued that as a large mass of people sank into poverty they would become a rabble, a threat to society. But Marx insisted that “only one thing is characteristic, namely that lack of property and the estate of direct labour...form not so much an estate of civil society as the ground upon which its circles rest and move.”⁸ Marx, always refusing to hold up abstract ideas of an alternative society to which actually existing struggles should conform, looked to the real movement of the working class - the male working class of parts of Western Europe - for principles to orientate future struggle and the material force to be able to realise them.⁹ True to his turn to a philosophy of immanence he insisted that theory, philosophy, can become a material force when it is formulated from the perspective of the oppressed and becomes part of their constituent movement but for this to happen it must be radical because “To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man, the root is man himself.”¹⁰ Marx would go on, Raya Dunayevskaya argued, to “meet, theoretically, the workers’ resistance inside the factory and outside of it...Marx, the theoretician, created new categories out of the impulses from the workers.”¹¹

Today the basic elements of the problematic worked through by Marx continue to confront any attempt to think through the failure of national liberation or liberal democracy to realise their promise. Is it realistic to aim to transcend the impasse of the present via the pure exercise of reason when both the state and capital tend towards an anti-political tendency to reduce the sphere of public reason? Or must reason be meshed with the material force constituted by those that suffer and think so that the sphere of public reason can be expanded? Of course in South Africa, as in, say, Boliva¹² or Haiti¹³, Marx’s youthful ideas need to be expanded - stretched in Frantz Fanon’s famous formulation - to take full measure of the enduring salience of colonialism and the manner in which the forces of containment also include both imperialism and enduring nodes of white power, or power racialized as closer to white than the population as a whole, within the nation state.

Fracturing Hegemony

In South Africa in 2015 there is a growing sense that neither the promise of national liberation or democracy has been redeemed. The organisational and ideological hegemony of the African National Congress (ANC) is rapidly

fracturing. A decade ago the shack settlement and the urban land occupation started to become sites of acute political intensity across the country. In Durban this led to the emergence of sustained popular organisation outside of the ANC by Abahlali baseMjondolo. More recently the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was largely displaced from the platinum mines, initially via workers' self-organisation, and later via The Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU). The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the largest trade union in the country, has split with the ANC. On the electoral terrain the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), a populist breakaway from the ANC, have made a bold entry into parliament. In recent months, students, beginning at the University of Cape Town (UCT), have, acting outside of the organisational reach of the ANC, taken decisive steps to confront the enduring coloniality of universities.

Ten years after apartheid Grant Farred wrote of

the 'zone of the not-yet political' where the not-yet counterpartisan operates—the only place from which the current *nomos* can be critically undone, the only space from which a new *nomos* of the South African earth can be thought, the only concatenation of historical forces that can produce a new orientation of the political.¹⁴

Today the constituent power of the new counterpartisan is still placed under the sign of the enemy, of white power, domestic or foreign, by power constituted via the state. But the actor for which Farred was waiting is now indisputably present – and subject to assassination in the shanty towns of Durban, lethal police action against street protests around the country and police massacre on the mines in the North West.

In 2010 Pumla Gqola anticipated the possibilities for “politically inflected creative innovation”¹⁵ among the young. In 2015 there is no doubt that this moment has also arrived. There is a youthful ferment, in and out of universities, marked by a rapid break among young intellectuals, broadly conceived, not only with the intellectual and organizational authority of the ANC, as well as other sources of authority, including that of the academy, but also with the nature of the post-apartheid deal. As with previous moments of youthful rupture at various points during the twentieth century there is an international dimension to the current ferment. It has often taken on aspects of the language and some of the concerns of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States. There are some connections, at time fruitful, between university students and other young middle class intellectuals with popular struggles in South Africa but these connections are not generally present in a sustained and serious way. In some cases affirmations of broader solidarity in the abstract are accompanied by a

striking lack of concern with the concrete situations and struggles of impoverished people in South Africa.

A writer as astute as Sisonke Msimang¹⁶ has heralded this ferment among young intellectuals in terms that suggest, to play a little with a line from Aimé Césaire, a bright bird in flight through the stagnant air.¹⁷ Others have seen only the evidence of the morbid symptoms that, in Gramsci's famous phrase, are characteristic of the interregnum. This pessimism has extended beyond the sort of leftism, often but not always white, that sees any discourse that extends beyond a narrowly conceived concern with class as ultimately reactionary. If there is a poem of the moment it would, by virtue of how often it has been invoked, be Yeat's *Second Coming*.¹⁸ I have argued elsewhere that the liberal consensus is breaking down¹⁹ and that in order to make adequate sense of this conjuncture reason must unshackle itself from liberalism.²⁰ This is not solely a matter of moving from the affirmation of abstract rights to real entitlements, or extending the domain of public disputation and state or popular power into the domain currently monopolised as a site of private power via the market. Liberalism, still rooted in the idea that "Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians"²¹, has always been organised around a distinction between the sacred and the profane²², sometimes spatialized and always racialized, in which, in the words of John Locke equality, far from being a universal principle, applies only to "creatures of the same species and rank."²³ Liberalism cannot be disentangled from racism – that requires an affirmation of equality as a universal principle.

Summoning Fanon

The militant figure of the contemporary South African moment is clearly Steve Biko and the most significant thinker of the moment is, without a doubt, Frantz Fanon. His books, together with those of Biko and, also, Mbembe, are among the most frequently stolen titles in bookshops.²⁴ His name is appended to all kinds of projects and positions. From the urban land occupation, to the opinion pages of the newspapers, the university and parliament Fanon's name has, as Mabogo More has noted, attained an extraordinary presence in South Africa.²⁵ This phenomenon is overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, constituted via intellectual and political practices which take place outside of the academy.

Fanon's name has become so ubiquitous in the public sphere that it is not unusual for both protagonists in a debate, even when neither of them are taking a recognisably Fanonian position, to buttress their positions with references to Fanon. Even the bellicose former head of the police, Bheki Cele, has cited Fanon²⁶ and his name is increasingly joining those of figures like Marx and Lenin in the statements of politicians.

Fanon's name is frequently mobilised as if it carried the kind of authority, sometimes theological or prophetic rather than philosophical or political, that can be deployed to end rather than to enrich a debate. It is used to authorise all kinds of positions and power. In some instances, the ideas attributed to Fanon cannot be sustained by even a cursory reading of his texts, or a basic familiarity with his biography. But there are also many young people reading Biko and Fanon, and learning about their lives as thinkers committed to action, with real seriousness. There have been extraordinary public intellectual contributions from brilliant young people.

Like the young Marx, Fanon poses the free flow of ideas against the degeneration of democratic promise and insists that the living human being rather than an abstract ideal, be it philosophical or statistical, be the measure of society. But the South African crisis is not solely a matter of the inability of a set of liberal political arrangements to redeem their democratic promise in so far as the working class continues to be exploited. The often very crude forms of Marxism present in South Africa never developed an adequate understanding of the salience of race²⁷ and, today, are not always well equipped to take on board the reality that, as Mbembe notes, "a rising superfluous population is becoming a permanent fixture of the South African social landscape with little possibility of ever being exploited by capital. Only a dwindling number of individuals can now claim to be workers in the traditional sense of the term."²⁸ South Africa is a colonial creation that has not fully escaped the iron cage in which it was born. In 2015 it is simultaneously colony and postcolony and this reality is central to the appeal of Fanon, a thinker who theorised the pathologies of both the colony and the postcolony.

Affirmation & Critique

There is an aspect of the current moment that has a certain resonance with Walter Benjamin's 9th thesis on history. Benjamin, as is well known, offers an image of the angel of history with his face turned to the past. He writes that "Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed." But the storm blowing in from Paradise, the storm of 'progress', propels him into the future "while the pile of debris before him grows skywards."²⁹

In and around the South African academy in 2015 the desire on the part of young intellectuals to anoint and awaken their own dead, is evidently motivated by a commitment to a fuller and freer presence in the here and now. This should not surprise us. After all Fanon was clear that it was, precisely, the inherited weight of racist culture that crushed his desire to

“come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help build it together.”³⁰

The imperative to affirm a body of thought and a history of action that has been silenced and denigrated is not solely present amid the structural racism that characterises the South African academy. It remains the case that in the commanding heights of the global academy “(t)he discourse which witnesses to Africa’s knowledge” often continues to take “geographical or anthropological”³¹ forms; that the process of “speaking rationally about Africa” continues to encounter systematic difficulties and that “the African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a negative interpretation.”³²

However the requirements of an emancipatory engagement with the philosophical dimensions of political thought clearly exceed the necessity to affirm an archive of Black, Southern and African thought against the colonial archive. In the South African universities that are in the process of subordinating themselves to the state and the ruling party, the affirmation of the African archive, is, in some instances, marked by what Paulin Hountondji, in his scathing critique of ethnophilosophy, described as a “crass indifference to the daily tragedies of our increasingly Fascistic countries.”³³ There is also a degree to which state power, often repressive and predatory, seeks to cloak itself in this body of thought with the result that it becomes, to stay with Hountondji, part of the “machine that is mounted against our consciences.”³⁴ “a discourse of power” and “an ideological placebo.”³⁵

The limits to the affirmation of the African archive exceed the risks of its absorption into the ideological machinery of constituted power. The world is in constant motion and the human, is frequently, as Fanon asserts, “motion toward the world”³⁶ and always capable of what he termed, throughout his life as a writer, ‘mutation’. In the domain of the political the urgency of the imperative to think the new, to develop an orientation towards the future - what Mbembe calls “a radical future orientated politics in this world and these times”³⁷ - an orientation in thought and practice that aims to transcend rather than deny or accept the realities of the present is undeniable. As Alain Badiou has insisted:

A political situation is always singular; it is never repeated. Therefore political writings – directives or commands – are justified inasmuch as they inscribe not a repetition but, on the contrary, the unrepeatable. When the content of a political statement is a repetition the statement is rhetorical and empty. It does not form part of thinking. On this basis one can distinguish between true political activists and politicians...True political activists think a singular situation; politicians do not think.³⁸

Although the power of capital over land, labour and society has grown considerably stronger since Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels announced its arrival as a force on the global stage its icy waters have not washed away all modes of domination and exclusion other than “that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade”³⁹. On the contrary capital has continued to operate differently in different spaces and with regard to different people. In South Africa the intersection of race and capitalism continues to generate lines of exclusion, domination, exploitation and dehumanization – as well as compromise and incorporation – that exceed those that are sometimes taken to emerge as generic features of life under capitalism. Here – as in the Congo, or Mexico or India – critiques of contemporary capitalism, and the forms of political containment and contestation associated with it, developed in response to realities in the North Atlantic world are often useful, and sometimes invaluable, but seldom, if ever, definitive. The dependence of many intellectuals in and around the academy on concepts uncritically imported from Western Europe and North America has not been fruitful and is one part of the explanation for the general alienation of academic radicalism from popular struggles, and the ideas developed in these struggles.

Philosophy as Praxis

There is an urgent need to think our own situation in space, and in race, as well as in time – along with, of course, the gendered nature of the social relations that are emerging in the current conjuncture. At the end of his first book Fanon declares his willingness to “undertake the possibility of annihilation in order that two or three truths may cast their eternal brilliance over the world.”⁴⁰ It is certainly possible to read this declaration, perhaps in conversation with Badiou,⁴¹ as an eminently philosophical militancy. He concludes his last book by insisting that “we must work out new concepts.”⁴² This statement, perhaps this time in conversation with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,⁴³ can be read in similar terms.

When the necessity for political thought, including in its philosophical dimensions, to take the particularity of specific situations seriously is itself taken seriously it also becomes necessary to think seriously about the ways in which the concept, in some accounts the central feature of philosophical thought, “has a becoming that involves its relationship with concepts situated on the same plane.”⁴⁴ It is well known that there is often a generational aspect to the production of new concepts, and new sets of concepts. But for Fanon while the development of radical reason, which is to say emancipatory reason, which is, in turn, to say universal reason, certainly includes conversation with philosophy as it is defined by Hountondji,⁴⁵ the plane of becoming on which this work constitutes itself is that of struggle – the struggles of the dammed of the earth.

A conception of philosophy that departs from the understanding that, to return to Benjamin, “the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule” and that, “it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency”⁴⁶ requires not just awaking the dead so that they can become totems in the present but, also, bringing their work into a new conversation that, fully cognisant of the accumulation of catastrophe, is willing to confront the approaching storm. In the Fanonian paradigm the most significant location for this work is within the struggles of the oppressed. This is the work of praxis⁴⁷, of what Antonio Gramsci termed the “common work of clarification” and “reciprocal education” or, in more explicitly partisan terms, “communist practice: discussion in common....to arrive together at the truth.”⁴⁸ What Gramsci called the philosophy of praxis is complex terrain but at its heart, ethically and epistemologically, is the idea of reciprocity – pithily summed by Gramsci as follows: “every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher.”⁴⁹ It affirms what we could, following Jacques Rancière, conceivably call a “communism of intelligence.”⁵⁰ It has a certain resonance, as both an ethical axiom and a political strategy, to the idea that, in Badiou’s formulation: “Wherever a human collective is working in the direction of equality, the conditions are met for everyone to be a philosopher.”⁵¹ In this respect it is fundamentally at odds with the reading of Lenin, common to both Stalinist and some currents of Trotskyist thought in South Africa, in which “a Leninist party is in essence a radical intelligentsia that says we have the right to rule.”⁵²

The turn to Fanon in contemporary South Africa has largely been animated by energies outside the academy. But the attempt to think through this moment from within the academy doesn’t require an entirely new return to Fanon’s texts. In 1996 Ato Sekyi-Otu began his brilliant new reading of *The Damned of the Earth* by announcing that “The time has indeed come to remember Fanon.”⁵³ For Sekyi-Otu the urgency of the injunction to remember Fanon included an imperative to address new questions to old texts, questions appropriate to new locations in space and time. He was centrally concerned with what he termed ‘the postcolonial condition’ – a morass of suffering emerging at the intersection of the power of predatory and authoritarian nationalist elites with that of foreign overlords – and, in particular, its meaning for the new democracy in South Africa.

In many respects South Africa is following a well-worn path into the crisis of the postcolony or the postcolonial condition. This lends a certain urgency to Sekyi-Otu’s work as what he calls “a postindependence reader.”⁵⁴ But, like Zimbabwe a decade ago, the crisis is characterised by the simultaneous presence of enduring colonial features and the pathologies of the postcolony. The evident injustices of the former are often cynically misused to legitimate the active exploitation of the latter which, in turn, are, with equal cynicism, mobilised against demands for the state to enforce justice with regard to the former. One result of this situation is that critique

that does not simultaneously address the pathologies of both the colony and the postcolony risks inadvertent complicity with that towards which it sustains silence. In South Africa in 2015 we also have to read Fanon with his interlocutors from societies that, like the United States, retain colonial features.

Twenty years earlier Hountondji, in a book that, like Sekyi-Otu's signal contribution, was grounded in an "insistence on the [philosophical] right to the universal"⁵⁵ had lamented an increasing normalisation of outright repression accompanied by modes of politics and ideology committed to "poisoning genuine thought at its source."⁵⁶ Like Sekyi-Otu Hountondji was centrally concerned with the prospect of reason as an emancipatory force and with disentangling reason from its long enmeshment with racism. But while Hountondji affirmed reason as philosophy in the sense of an engagement with a history of thought rather than a mode of thought Sekyi-Otu, writing in scrupulous fidelity to Fanon's texts, and in conversation with Gramsci's philosophy of praxis,⁵⁷ affirmed radical reason as, in his revised translation of Fanon's words, "knowledge through praxis."⁵⁸ Similar readings are evident in the work of people like Lewis Gordon⁵⁹ and Nigel Gibson.⁶⁰

Reason & the Ontological Split

Racism, as ideology, is organised around the assertion that humanity is riven by an ontological split. In the consciousness of the racist, and in the general intellect of racist social formations, this ontological split is taken as part of what Immanuel Kant called the *a priori*, the categories through which sense is made of experience.⁶¹ This deception of reason, this "racist rationality"⁶² results in racist societies producing forms of knowledge that, while authorised as the most fully formed instances of reason at work, are fundamentally irrational.

In *The "North African Syndrome"*, an essay first published in 1952, Frantz Fanon wrote that in the French medical establishment:

(T)he attitude of medical personnel is very often an *a priori* attitude. The North African does not come with a substratum common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European. In other words, the North Africa, spontaneously, by the very fact of appearing in the scene, enters into a pre-existing framework.⁶³

In other words medical science in colonial France allowed *a priori* ontological assumptions to prevent it from making rational sense of experience.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, published in the same year, Fanon also offers a critique of philosophy in colonial France. He insists that the lived experience of the black person is not congruent with any (philosophically

orthodox) “ontological explanation” because “The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man.”⁶⁴ Fanon stresses that racism is not only unreasonable but that it structures the *a priori* categories through which experience is mediated in a manner that makes it impossible to recognise reason expressed from black embodiment as reason: “[W]hen I was present, it was not; when it was there, I was no longer.”⁶⁵

The inability to recognise black reason as reason produces an inability to recognise black political agency – a distortion of reality all too evident in both historiography and contemporary attempts to think the political. In his discussion of the evident fact that, in the colonial imagination, the Haitian Revolution “entered history with the peculiar characteristic of being unthinkable as it happened” Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes that:

the contention that enslaved Africans and their descendants could not envision freedom – let alone formulate strategies for gaining and securing such freedom – was based not so much on empirical evidence as on an ontology, an implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants.⁶⁶

He goes on to show that racist ontology continued to structure the historiography of the Haitian Revolution for the next two centuries.

Lewis Gordon, riffing off Fanon as well as W.E.B. du Bois, uses the idea of illicit appearance to theorise the absence “of the right of appearance” beyond the right to appear as reasonable resulting in invisibility and hypervisibility – “the effect of which is the erasure of individuating or contextualizing considerations – that is, human invisibility.”⁶⁷ “When you come down to it” Fanon wrote in *The North African Syndrome*, “the North African is a simulator, a liar, a malingerer, a sluggard, a thief.”⁶⁸

Lewis and Jane Anna Gordon, writing together, argue that across space and time elites generally assume that the system in which they have prospered is ultimately good and that the people that disrupt its smooth functioning must be problem people – even monsters. Gordon and Gordon point out that in anti-black societies, black people are rendered monstrous “when they attempt to live and participate in the wider civil society and engage in processes of governing among whites...Their presence in society generally constitutes crime.”⁶⁹

Fanon begins the pivotal fifth chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks* with the cauterisation of an affirmation of a desire for sociality: ““I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.”⁷⁰ The chapter concludes with the defeat of all attempts to attain recognition in a racist world: “I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep.”⁷¹

His response to the impossibility of a dialectic of recognition⁷² is not to give up on the aspiration for a world of mutuality, of universal humanism (predicated on a universal ontology) – he still aspires to a world that will recognise “the open door of every consciousness”⁷³ – but to accept that he has found himself in a world “in which I am summoned into battle”⁷⁴ and to commit to action: “To educate man to be actional, preserving in all his relations his respect for the basic values that constitute a human world, is the prime task of him who, having taken thought, prepares to act.”⁷⁵ In Gordon’s estimation the Fanonian position is that “Legitimacy doesn’t emerge from the proof of cultural heritage or racial authenticity, it emerges...[Fanon] argues, from active engagement in struggles for social transformation and building institutions and ideas that nourish and liberate the formerly colonized.”⁷⁶

This commitment to praxis is a politics that, in Gordon’s formulation, requires a commitment to “meeting people on the terrain where they live”⁷⁷ with a view to forging what, as noted above, Mbembe calls “a radical future orientated politics in this world and these times.”⁷⁸ Such a politics, it is asserted here, must be grounded in what S’bu Zikode first called a ‘living politics’⁷⁹ and what Lewis Gordon calls ‘living thought’ or ‘thinking as a living activity’.⁸⁰ It requires a decisive break with the idea, all too frequently present in South Africa, that radical politics is fundamentally a matter of rallying ‘the masses’ to the authority of a group of people who, whether situated in a party, a proto-party or an NGO, imagine themselves to be an enlightened vanguard.

This is not the apocalyptic politics that, as is sometimes the case in Aimé Césaire’s work, is more concerned with eschatology than praxis. In the *Notebook of Return to my Native Land* Césaire, in a manner that in some respects anticipates some currents in contemporary Afro-pessimism, affirms that the only thing work starting is “The end of the world!”⁸¹ and anticipates the one glorious moment⁸², the brilliant new dawn in which “the volcanoes will break out and the naked water will sweep away the ripe stains of the sun and nothing will remain but a tepid bubbling pecked at by sea birds – the beach of dreams, and demented awakening”⁸³, a rising of a new sun that would “burst open the life of the shacks like an over-ripe pomegranate.”⁸⁴ In this vision, in which the political is sublimated into the theological, the authentic radical gesture is, ultimately, to disavow the world as it is and to wait for the birth of a new world.

Again unlike Césaire Fanon does not accept the ontological split introduced into the conception of humanity authorised by colonial racism. His evident commitment to the universal⁸⁵, and action to affirm a universal humanism⁸⁶, situates him in a line of black radical thought that runs from Toussaint Louverture⁸⁷ to Biko⁸⁸, Jean-Bertrand Aristide⁸⁹ and, arguably for that matter, the constant insistence on the barricades on South African streets of words to the effect of ‘we are human not animal’.⁹⁰

But like Césaire Fanon's radical vision is not, at all, a commitment to what Césaire, writing in 1956, termed 'abstract equality'. Césaire remarks that:

To prevent the development of all national consciousness in the colonized, the colonizer pushes the colonized to desire an abstract equality. But equality refuses to remain abstract. And what an affair it is when the colonized takes back the word on his own account to demand that it not remain a mere word!⁹¹

From a South African perspective this condemnation of 'abstract equality' sounds almost prophetic but it has always been a colonial response to black insurgency. In 1801 Napoleon wrote, from St Helena, of the French policy, with regard to Haiti, of "disarming the blacks while assuring them of their civil liberty, and restoring property to the [white] colonists."⁹²

For Fanon emancipation has many aspects. These include a spatial aspect,⁹³ a material aspect,⁹⁴ the attainment of equality between women and men,⁹⁵ but, also, and fundamentally, the sovereignty of the human person. Liberation must, he insists, in Sekyi-Otu's revised translation, "give back their dignity to all citizens, fill their minds and feast their eyes with human things and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign persons dwell therein."⁹⁶ In contemporary South Africa this cannot take the form of the sole defence of abstract rights, a politics primarily organised around exploitation via the wage relation or the sort of nationalism that is naïve about the cleavages with the nation. It must to, to return to Mbembe, "take the form of a conscious attempt to retrieve life and 'the human' from a history of waste."⁹⁷

Praxis as Return

Praxis is not, at all, a new idea in South Africa. From the early 1970s until the end of apartheid, ordinary people became central protagonists in the struggles against apartheid. Schools, churches, urban land occupations, mines, factories and other sites of habitation, labour, education, spiritual communion and sociality become sites of intense struggle.

The first moment in the sequence of struggle that began in the 1970s, and is either understood to have been concluded or temporarily interrupted in 1994, is that of the Black Consciousness Movement that attained its first flowering in Durban in the early 1970s. The proper name that has come to be assigned to this current of struggle, which began in the universities, among students, as a project with an explicitly intellectual dimension, is that of Steve Biko, murdered in 1977. The intellectual resources that were central to its founding moment included Aimé Césaire, James Cone, Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre along with various protagonists in the black power movement in the United States.⁹⁸ When it sought to reach out into the wider

community Paulo Freire – who insisted that “When people are already dehumanized, due to the oppression they suffer, the process of their liberation must not employ the methods of dehumanization”⁹⁹ – was taken as a key thinker to guide the work of praxis.¹⁰⁰ The Black Consciousness Movement organised independently of the ANC and, beginning with a rally organised in Durban in 1974 in support of Frelimo and reaching a high point following the high school students revolt that began in Soweto in 1976, displaced much of the hegemony that the ANC had exercised over the struggles against apartheid since the 1950s. But by the late 1980s the politics of the Black Consciousness Movement had ossified,¹⁰¹ it had intersected with a dogmatic form of Trotskyism that often functioned to contain rather than facilitate the exchange of ideas, it was marginal and under attack from the broader movement aligned to the ANC as well as the state.

The trade union struggles, with their immediate roots in the Durban strikes of 1973, emerged in the encounter between radicals in the university, academics and students, and workers. As is always the case both protagonists in this encounter brought ideas and practices into the movement that they built together. Richard Turner, assassinated in 1978, was the leading figure in the university side of the initial stages of this encounter. Turner was fundamentally a Sartrean, but Freire was also an important thinker in this moment and the idea of praxis was taken very seriously. Later on Western Marxism more broadly, including Gramsci, became central¹⁰² although some people also moved towards Trotskyism. The trade union movement sustained independent mass based democratic organisation until its co-option by both the ANC and capital in the 1990s.

The community struggles that came to the fore after the formation of the United Democratic Front in Cape Town in 1983, were also broadly committed to radically democratic practices although this declined as repression wore on in the second half of the 1980s and did not always extend to people organised outside of the ANC. In this case there is no particular intellectual or theory associated with this sequence of struggle but ideas about praxis, sometimes drawn from Freire, were certainly central and ordinary people certainly became political protagonists.

After apartheid, as had happened throughout the colonised world, the people were, to borrow a phrase from Fanon, “sent back to their caves.”¹⁰³ The bulk of the radical intelligentsia entered the party, the state or civil society, which came to be largely constituted by NGOs rather than popular organisations. The radical imagination within the ANC and its allies was largely subordinated to the SACP and its version of Marxist-Leninism. This was a resolutely statist conception of politics that was hostile to any independent organisation and, in the name of the national democratic revolution, frequently demanded obedience to the ruling party in the here and now in the name of a socialist future to come at some indeterminate point in the future. In the NGO milieu a different form of statism came to

dominate as liberal ideas, characterised, at first, by a profound naivety about lobbying the state on policy questions and, later, about recourse to the courts to achieve social justice, became largely hegemonic. The significant dissident current in the NGO milieu was largely Trotskyist. Its attempts to mobilise people behind its conceptions of what politics should be have not met with any significant success in the current cycle of popular protest.

But the limits of the left strung between the academy and the NGO exceed the evident fact of its consistent failure to win support or to organise effectively. In contemporary South Africa the political agency of the urban poor is frequently read in terms of external conspiracy, criminality or some sort of intersection between ignorance and thuggery across a range of sites of elite power. It is an undeniable fact that the left in the academy and in NGOs has often reinscribed this. This phenomenon is not unique to South Africa. Peter Hallward has pointed to a very similar experience in Haiti¹⁰⁴ and Raúl Zibechi has done the same with regard to Latin America.¹⁰⁵

The basic outline of Fanon's thinking about praxis is clear enough. Fanon is, in Rancière's terms, resolutely anti-Platonic. There is never an idea, common to some forms of thought that claim to derive from Lenin, civil society and elite nationalism as well as technocratic modes of authority, that the work of political thought is that of a particular caste of intellectuals. And contrary to much of the Marxist tradition there is no specific subaltern group that is held to have a particular claim to emancipatory reason. Fanon does not turn sociology into ontology and is open to the prospect of the rural peasantry or the urban poor emerging as political actors of weight and consequence. His commitment, as principle and practice, to 'recognize the open door of every consciousness' is a point of departure for praxis as well as an aspiration for a just society.

In the context of his medical work he writes, in *Black Skin, White Masks* that:

Examining this seventy three year old farm woman, whose mind was never strong and who is now far gone in dementia, I am suddenly aware of the collapse of the antennae with which I touch and through which I am touched. The fact that I adopt a language suitable to dementia, to feeble-mindedness; the fact that I 'talk down' to this poor woman of seventy-three; the fact that I condescend to her in my quest for a diagnosis, are the stigmata of a dereliction in my relations with other.¹⁰⁶

The commitment to mutuality is sustained in the political context where he is committed, like Gramsci before him, and Freire after him, to a fundamentally dialogical model of engagement. This is strikingly different to some of the contemporary discourse around 'privilege' which is predicated on a commitment, at times implicit, to an ontological fixity. Fanon does not disavow the weight of history, economy or culture but he

does take the view that no particular type of actor is contained in a “crushing objecthood”¹⁰⁷ that makes ‘mutation’ impossible. This includes not just the subaltern subject whose mode of life and capacity for motion, which is to say change and agency, remain largely hidden from elites.¹⁰⁸ As Gibson explains in Fanon’s view “Nationalists, even those on the left, [frequently but not inevitably] continue to define the rural masses in colonial terms”¹⁰⁹ yet Fanon never reifies this view and consistently affirms the possibility of the dissident intellectual.

For Fanon the transcendence of the ontological split introduced by colonialism is something to be worked out, in practice, which requires, as a starting point, the acknowledgment of alienation. He writes in Sekyi-Otu’s revised translation, that the native intellectual has an historic “inaptitude to engage in dialogue; for he does not know how to make himself inessential in the face of the object or an idea”¹¹⁰ and must overcome the inability to “carry on a two-sided discussion”¹¹¹. Fanon warns against any attempts “erect a framework around the people that follows an *a priori* schedule”¹¹² and intellectuals deciding to “come down into the common paths of real life” with formulas that are “sterile in the extreme.”¹¹³ His position in this regard has clear resonances with Gramsci’s assertion that “the philosopher not only grasps the contradictions, but posits himself (sic) as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore action.”¹¹⁴

But, as Sekyi-Otu writes, Fanon identifies a second danger, a second barrier to the possibility of mutuality, that confronts the intellectual in the occult zone:

Embarrassed by his erstwhile posture of subjective certainty, the native intellectual turned *maquisard* is now ready to disavow his claim to rational knowledge altogether: ‘The danger that will haunt him continually is that of embracing populism; he becomes a sort of yes-man who nods assent at every word coming from the people, which he interprets as considered judgments’. Fanon does not endorse this romance of the people and, with it, the guilt-ridden renunciation of reason.¹¹⁵

Praxis is an affirmation of the universal capacity for reason, and not a denial of reason in favour of the assertion of a Manicheism to counter that of colonialism. It is not a simple matter of, in a single moment of Damascene clarity, taking the side of the oppressed. The process that enables what Sekyi-Otu refers to as the “reprieve of prodigal reason”¹¹⁶ is a world apart from the hope of a moment of apocalyptic redemption, arriving like a thief in the night, evident in Césaire. On the contrary for Fanon “the idyllic and unreal clarity of the beginning is followed by a semi-darkness that bewilders consciousness”:¹¹⁷

In their weary road toward rational knowledge the people must also give up their too-simple conception of their overlords. The species is breaking up under their very eyes. As they look around them, they notice that certain settlers do not join in the general guilty hysteria; there are differences in the same species. . . The scandal explodes when the prototypes of this division of the species go over to the enemy, become blacks or Arabs, and accept suffering, torture, and death.¹¹⁸

For Fanon the possibilities of mutually transformative dialogue and collaboration on the terrain of equality can only be realised on an enabling terrain. He takes the view that the militant intellectual must commit to presence in the real movements that abolish the present state of things—to be present in the “zone of occult instability where the people dwell”¹¹⁹, in the “seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge”¹²⁰ and, there, to “collaborate on the physical plane.”¹²¹ Working “inside the structure of the people”¹²² and “living inside history”¹²³ is not possible in the absence of organization and struggle. The “inclusion of the intellectual in the upward surge of the masses”¹²⁴ is only possible in the presence of an upward surge. So while political possibility is not ontologically determined it is historically constrained.

But despite these cautions Fanon still heralds the possibility of “a mutual current of enlightenment and enrichment”¹²⁵ that enables political education, which he frames in terms of an enlightening of consciousness, “as a new relationship between intellectual and the people”¹²⁶ encouraging and equipping people to think for themselves. For Fanon this is a crucial step towards new modes of politics. In Sekyi-Otu’s reading: “To the radical intelligentsia, dissident members of the national bourgeoisie, Fanon assigns a crucial role in this work of fashioning what Césaire called a ‘common sense’ out of differing languages of existence.”¹²⁷

Fanon’s conception of praxis is directly opposed to what Jacques Rancière describes as the ‘stultification’ that is consequence to any situation where “one intelligence is subordinated to another.”¹²⁸ It is, therefore, opposed to the sort of domination that Paulo Freire describes as “Manipulation, sloganizing, ‘depositing’, regimentation, and prescription”¹²⁹ and which is common in NGO based civil society, party politics and small sectarian groups in contemporary South Africa.¹³⁰ Now that Fanon has arrived as the philosopher of the moment, a moment in which there has been open defiance in shack settlements, on mines, and in universities, it may well be worth reading him as a thinker who does not just remain timely as a result of a failure to attain social progress but who could also be a philosopher of movement. This would require that Fanon be recognised as a thinker who prescribed a mode of praxis grounded in a commitment to the emancipation of reason from the strictures of colonial ontologies rather than,

as he is often read, solely as a thinker who offered a compelling diagnosis of the pathologies of both the colony and the postcolony.

Conclusion

It could be argued that the centering of Fanon in this moment speaks to a major limit of African philosophy and political theory more broadly – a failure to generate a compelling emancipatory vision in the fifty years after Fanon, and the sequence of struggle from within which he thought – that of national liberation. But Fanon did not think in isolation from popular struggle and it could well be that our inability to transcend Fanon is a consequence of the political failures of the last fifty years and, in particular, the failure to transcend the sequence of national liberation struggles which, in South Africa, is both unfinished and therefore still urgently legitimate and simultaneously, as in, say, Algeria or Zimbabwe, a nightmare weighing heavily on the brains of the living.

In South Africa in 2015 intellectual life in the academy and the elite public sphere is overwhelmingly alienated from escalating popular struggles. Attempts to capture these struggles, whether framed in largely nationalist or socialist terms, are largely attempts to subordinate them to would-be vanguards rather than attempts to engage them on the basis of equality. Our inability to transcend Fanon is, this contribution suggests, largely due to our failure to take Fanon seriously. If we wish to go beyond Fanon we need to begin by taking him seriously and shifting the ground of reason from the university, the NGO, the sectarian groupuscule or network or the rapid chatter of social media to the occult zone inhabited by “suffering human beings who think.”

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¹ Achille Mbembe ‘Democracy as Community Life’ *Johannesburg Workshop in Theory & Criticism*, 2011 http://jwtc.org.za/volume_4/achille_mbembe.htm

² Stathis Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution* Verso, London, 2003

³ Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.262.

⁴ Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.265.

⁵ Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.285.

⁶ Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.287.

- ⁷ Kouvelakis, *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.287
- ⁸ Kouvelakis *Philosophy & Revolution*, p.312.
- ⁹ Later on in his life his vision broadened considerably. Kevin Anderson *Marx at the Margins* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2010
- ¹⁰ Karl Marx 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', *Marxists' Internet Archive*, 1843 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>
- ¹¹ Raya Dunayevskaya *Marxism & Freedom* Humanity Books, Amherst NY, 2000, p. 91.
- ¹² Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar *Rhythms of the Pachakuti* Duke University Press, Durham NC, 2014
- ¹³ Peter Hallward *Damming the Flood*, Verso, London, 2007
- ¹⁴ Grant Farred 'The Not-Yet Counterpartisan:A New Politics of Oppositionality', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103:4, 2004, pp. 604 – 605.
- ¹⁵ Pumla Dineo Gqola *What is Slavery to Me?* Wits University Press, 2010, p. 211
- ¹⁶ Sisonke Msimang 'The old is dying and the young ones have just been born', *Africa is a Country*, 15 May 2015 <http://africasacountry.com/the-old-is-dying-and-the-young-ones-have-just-been-born/>
- ¹⁷ The original line describes "the stagnant air undisturbed by the bright flight of a bird." Aimé Césaire *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, Bloodaxe, Tarsset, 1995, p. 83.
- ¹⁸ Richard Pithouse 'After the End of Our Innocence', *The Con*, 29 September 2014, <http://www.theconmag.co.za/2014/09/29/after-the-end-of-sas-innocence/>
- ¹⁹ Richard Pithouse 'South Africa in the Twilight of Liberalism', *Kafila*, 19 April 2015 <http://kafila.org/2015/04/19/south-africa-in-the-twilight-of-liberalism-richard-pithouse/>
- ²⁰ Richard Pithouse 'Reason After Liberalism' *South African Civil Society Information Service*, 19 April 2005 <http://www.sacsis.org.za/site/article/2352>
- ²¹ John Stuart Mill *Utilitarianism.. On Liberty & Considerations on Representative Government* J.M. Dent & Sons, London, 1976, p.73.
- ²² Domenico Losurdo *Liberalism: A Counter-History* Vero, London, 2011.
- ²³ John Locke *Two Treatises of Government* J.M. Dent & Sons, London, 1986, p. 118.
- ²⁴ Isabel Hofmeyr What discerning book thieves tell us about a country's reading culture *The Conversation*, 29 June 2015 <https://theconversation.com/what-discerning-book-thieves-tell-us-about-a-countrys-reading-culture-43799>
- ²⁵ Mabogo More 'Locating Fanon in Post-Apartheid South Africa', *Journal of Asian & African Studies*, 2014, pp. 1 – 15.
- ²⁶ Bheki Cele, 'Forward', *South African Police Services Annual Report*, 2010
http://www.saps.gov.za/about/stratframework/annual_report/2009_2010/1_content_foreword_etc.pdf
- ²⁷ For a recent analysis see Steven Friedman *Race, Class and Power: Harold Wolpe & the Radical Critique of Apartheid*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2015
- ²⁸ Mbembe, *Democracy as Community Life*, 2011
- ²⁹ Walter Benjamin *Illuminations*, Pimlico, London, 1999, p. 249

- ³⁰ Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks* Grove Press, New York, 1967, p.112-113
- ³¹ V.Y. Mudimbe *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, Indiana University Press, 1988, p. 175.
- ³² Achille Mbembe *On the Postcolony* University of California Press, 2001, p.1
- ³³ Paulin Hountondji *African Philosophy: Myth & Reality* Indiana University Press, 1996, p. 170.
- ³⁴ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p. 170.
- ³⁵ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p. 171. To add, at random, just one recent example to reference made, above, to the citation of Fanon by the former head of the police, the new and acutely xenophobic visa regulations in South Africa have been justified with reference to Fanon. 'Mayihlome Tshwete Travel regulations well considered', *The Star*, 30 July 2015, <http://www.iol.co.za/the-star/travel-regulations-well-considered-1.1893221#.Vbxu2Pmqkko>
- ³⁶ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 41.
- ³⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 43.
- ³⁸ Alain Badiou *Ethics* Verso, London, 2003, p. 82.
- ³⁹ Karl Marx & Friederich Engels *The Communist Manifesto* Penguin, London, 1985, p.82.
- ⁴⁰ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 228.
- ⁴¹ In particular *Logic of Worlds* Continuum, London, p. 2009.
- ⁴² Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth* Penguin, London, 1976, p.255.
- ⁴³ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari *What is Philosophy?* Verso, London, 1994
- ⁴⁴ Deleuze & Guattari *What is Philosophy?*, p.18.
- ⁴⁵ "[P]hilosophy is not a system but a history." Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, p.71. Peter Thomas writes that in Gramsci's philosophy of praxis "The word 'philosophy' remained, but the form of philosophy had undergone a sea-change." *The Gramscian Moment* Brill, Leiden, 2009, p.17.
- ⁴⁶ Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 248
- ⁴⁷ A word that has unfortunately been elided in the English translations of Fanon's work.
- ⁴⁸ Antonio Gramsci 'Workers' Democracy', *L'Ordine Nuovo*, 21 June 1919
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/gramsci/1919/06/workers-democracy.htm>
- ⁴⁹ Antonio Gramsci *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* Laurence & Wishart: London, 1971, p.350.
- ⁵⁰ Jacques Ranciere 'Communists Without Communism', *The Idea of Communism*, Eds. Costas Douzinas & Žižek, Verso, London, 2010, pp. 167-178.
- ⁵¹ Alain Badiou, *Philosophy for Militants*, 2012, Verso, London, p.37 Gramsci argues, in a manner that has some resonance with the idea of 'living politics' developed in Abahlali basemjondolo that a philosophy of praxis must begin from common sense, "in order to demonstrate that 'everyone' is a philosopher" with the aim of "renovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity." Cited in Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment*, p.377 cf. 'To Resist All Degradations and Divisions: S'bu Zikode in interview with Richard Pithouse *Interface* 2(2), 2009, p.22-45.

- ⁵² Kristin Ross *May '68 & its Afterlives*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2002, p.75. In South Africa this logic can intersect with that of imperial and racial modes of domination.
- ⁵³ Ato Sekyi-Otu *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience* Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA, 1996, p. 10.
- ⁵⁴ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p. 11.
- ⁵⁵ Hountondji *African Philosophy*, p viii.
- ⁵⁶ Hountondji, *African Philosophy*, 1996, p. 170.
- ⁵⁷ Sekyi-Otu declares that he is "I am tempted to call Gramsci a precocious Fanonist." *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p. 118
- ⁵⁸ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p. 116.
- ⁵⁹ Lewis Gordon *What Fanon Said* Fordham University Press, New York, 2015
- ⁶⁰ Nigel Gibson *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* Polity, Oxford, 2003
- ⁶¹ Immanuel Kant *Critique of Pure Reason*, Dent, London, 1969.
- ⁶² Gordon *What Fanon Said*, p. 86.
- ⁶³ Frantz Fanon *Towards the African Revolution* Monthly Review Press, New York, 1967, p. 6.
- ⁶⁴ Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.110.
- ⁶⁵ Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.119 – 120.
- ⁶⁶ Michel-Rolph Trouillot *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* Beacon Press, Boston, 1995, p. 73.
- ⁶⁷ Fanon, *Towards the African Revolution*, p.7.
- ⁶⁸ Fanon, *The North African Syndrome*, p. 7.
- ⁶⁹ Lewis Gordon & Jane Anna Gordon *Of Divine Warning: Reading Disaster in the Modern Age*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder, 2009, p. 49.
- ⁷⁰ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 109.
- ⁷¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 140.
- ⁷² See Gordon, *What Fanon Said*
- ⁷³ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 223.
- ⁷⁴ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 228.
- ⁷⁵ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 222.
- ⁷⁶ Gordon *What Fanon Said*, p. 126.
- ⁷⁷ Gordon, *What Fanon Said*, p. 7.
- ⁷⁸ Mbembe, *Democracy as Community Life*
- ⁷⁹ See Zikode, *To Resist All Divisions & Degradations*
- ⁸⁰ Lewis Gordon *Disciplinary Decadence*, Paradigm Press, Boulder, 2009.

- ⁸¹ Césaire, *Notebook of Return*, p. 99.
- ⁸² At times framed in strikingly masculinist terms.
- ⁸³ Césaire, *Notebook of Return*, p. 73.
- ⁸⁴ Césaire, *Notebook of Return*, p. 79.
- ⁸⁵ Richard Pithouse “‘That the tool never possess the man’: taking Fanon’s humanism seriously,” *Politikon*, 30(1), 2003, p. 107-131. In view of the recent publication of malicious fraud, articulated to a long campaign of racist slander, in *Politikon* and the editor’s denial of a full and fair right to reply I cite this journal under protest.
- ⁸⁶ Richard Pithouse “The Open Door of Every Consciousness” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 112(1), 2013, pp. 91-98.
- ⁸⁷ It was in the name of the “eyes of humanity” that Louverture, writing with two others, excoriated the slave owners in 1792. *Jean-Bertrand Aristide presents Toussaint Louverture: The Haitian Revolution Verso*, London, 2008, p. 7.
- ⁸⁸ Steve Biko *I Write What I Like* Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1996
- ⁸⁹ “Everything comes back, in the end, to the simple principle that *tout moun se moun* – every person is indeed a person, every person is capable of thinking things through for themselves. Those who don’t accept this, when they look at the *nègres* of Haiti – and consciously or unconsciously, that’s what they see – they see people who are too poor, too crude, too uneducated, to think for themselves. They see people who need others to make their decisions for them. It’s a colonial mentality, in fact, and still very widespread among our political class. It’s also a projection: they project onto the people a sense of their own inadequacy, their own inequality in the eyes of the master.” Peter Hallward ‘An Interview with Jean-Bertrand Aristide’, *London Review of Books*, 29(4), 2007 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n04/peter-hallward/an-interview-with-jean-bertrand-aristide>
- ⁹⁰ This has constantly, and in all languages, been a feature of popular politics after apartheid. Similar ideas have been central to the ideas that have emerged in Abahlali baseMjondolo, the only successful attempt to organise on a sustained basis amidst the sequence of popular mobilisation usually traced back to 2004.
- ⁹¹ Cited in Nick Nesbitt *Caribbean Critique: Antillean Critical Theory from Toussaint to Glissant* Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 2013, p. 86.
- ⁹² Aristide, *Toussaint L’Ouverture*, p. 74.
- ⁹³ “[T]he ordering of the colonial world, its geographic lay-out, must be examined in order to “reveal the lines of force it implies [which] will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be reorganized” *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.29
- ⁹⁴ “For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity” *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.34.
- ⁹⁵ He looked forward to overcoming “the feudal tradition which holds sacred the superiority of the masculine element over the feminine.” *The Wretched of the Earth*, p.163.
- ⁹⁶ Ato Sekyi-Otu *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience*, p. 46.
- ⁹⁷ Mbembe, *Democracy as Community Life*

- ⁹⁸ Mabogo More 'The Intellectual Foundations of the Black Consciousness Movement', *Intellectual Traditions in South Africa*, (Ed. P. Vale, L. Hamilton & E. Prinsloo) University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014, 'pp. 173-196.
- ⁹⁹ Paulo Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Continuum, New York, 2005, p. 67
- ¹⁰⁰ This is not always noted in the literature but Aubrey Mokoape, a participant in these experiments, has often noted the centrality of Freire.
- ¹⁰¹ Nigel Gibson *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2012
- ¹⁰² Andrew Nash 'The Moment of Western Marxism in South Africa' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 1999, Vol. XIX No. 1, pp. 66-81.
- ¹⁰³ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 146.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hallward, *Damming the Flood*
- ¹⁰⁵ Raúl Zibechi *Territories in Resistance* AK Press, Oakland, 2013
- ¹⁰⁶ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 56.
- ¹⁰⁷ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p.109.
- ¹⁰⁸ Gibson, *Fanon: The Post-Colonial Imagination*, p. 171
- ¹⁰⁹ Gibson, *Fanon: The Post-Colonial Imagination*, p. 167. Similar arguments have often been made in India and Fanon's point often remains true in contemporary South Africa with regard to the urban poor.
- ¹¹⁰ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p. 179.
- ¹¹¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 38.
- ¹¹² Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 89.
- ¹¹³ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 117-178.
- ¹¹⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p.405.
- ¹¹⁵ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p.179
- ¹¹⁶ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p 172
- ¹¹⁷ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p 26
- ¹¹⁸ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p 114-115.
- ¹¹⁹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 183.
- ¹²⁰ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 181.
- ¹²¹ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 187.
- ¹²² Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, p. 164.
- ¹²³ Gibson *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, p. 165.
- ¹²⁴ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 38.
- ¹²⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 143.
- ¹²⁶ Gibson *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*, p.164.

¹²⁷ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, p.177.

¹²⁸ Jacques Rancière *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1991 p. 13.

¹²⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, p. 126.

¹³⁰ A mode of operation that, on the civil society terrain, often takes the form of a set of practices in which, to borrow a phrase from Steve Biko, there is the sort of “stratification that makes whites perpetual teachers and blacks perpetual pupils.” *I Write What I Like*, p.65.