

Understanding Fanonian Humanism Through National Struggles

Kaiah Eaton

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Under the co-supervision of

Dr. Carolina Cambre and Dr. Pablo Gilabert

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Abstract

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This paper considers the conceptual framework underlying Fanon's claim in *Black Skin, White Masks* that Black Americans and Black Antilleans are living different dramas. A dramaturgical analysis of Fanon's critique of racial and colonial domination in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*, reveals this claim to be motivated by Fanon's unfolding decolonial conception of humanism and how to achieve the ideals of this humanism through specific forms of anti-colonial action, mainly national struggles. As such, this paper finds Fanon's American-Antillean distinction in *Black Skin, White Masks* to be a prefiguration of his later notions concerning national culture and humanist praxis expressed in *The Wretched of the Earth*. This discussion endeavors to shed light on and contribute to decolonial processes—especially within Western philosophy—by briefly reflecting upon the critical necessity of scholarly flexibility and the conceptual limitations presented by subjective experience.

Territorial Acknowledgement¹

This paper was written on the unceded traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Ganien-gé-haa-ga/Mohawk) Nation. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters where this paper was written. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. I respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. It is important to note that “until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism”.² It is thereby imperative to listen to the Indigenous communities that are calling for material reparations, most notably, the return of stolen lands.³

Dedication

To the shoulders I stand on.

For Ashley and the rest of our community.

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A Note on Inclusive Language

While it is important to acknowledge the historical conditions in which language is firmly grounded—given the political nature and power language exercises over our lives, like Fanon, I endeavor not only to understand the world but to also transform it.⁴ In my paper, I have chosen to use gender neutral terms in place of the gendered language that has been translated into English from the original French when I quote and discuss Fanon’s words. This undertaking is an effort to normalize the use of inclusive language, for we will never normalize or even be capable of recognizing, the things that are absent from our language.

Introduction

What is it that survives time and historical change, as well as manages to cross language and cultural boundaries? These are concerns addressed head on by Fanon but concerns that also must be understood through lenses that are sensitive to the historicity essential for a liberated consciousness. As such, the original contribution I offer in this paper is the very reflection on my own process that reveals the fallacy of philosophical analyses that are not grounded in an awareness of the particularity of the historical and objective circumstances that condition one’s own thoughts. The social and cultural milieu of my own time/space and educational development shape the very form of attention as I apply it to a given text. While we all process information in different ways, often the way we combine conceptual skill and understanding is obviously culturally determined. However, it is also temporally determined and the assumption that I today can understand how Fanon’s own context form and inform his thought undermines my own efforts to understand his work. In light of these personal revelations, my paper seeks to explore and explicate a passage from Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* concerning Fanon’s distinction between

the “drama” of Black Americans and Black Antilleans⁵. I will argue the most effective manner to understand the conceptual position driving this distinction is through a dramaturgical analysis. My approach will find Fanon’s distinction to be motivated by his unfolding conception of humanism and how to achieve the ideals of this humanism through that of human action. To do this, I will examine key excerpts from *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* where this position is more clearly elaborated in Fanon’s discussions on national liberation movements. National liberation is central to Fanon’s humanism as the form and content of this humanism is delineated in these struggles.⁶ From this, I will infer that Fanon’s American-Antillean distinction in *Black Skin, White Masks* is a prefiguration of his later views on national culture and decolonial action that come to be articulated in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Context

In Chapter Seven, Section B of *Black Skin, White Masks* (hereafter *BSWM*), Fanon makes a distinction between the realities (or “dramas”) of Black Americans and Black Antilleans post-emancipation. He writes:

The former slave, who has no memory of the struggle for freedom... wants [their] humanity to be challenged; [they are] looking for a fight; ...a brawl. But too late: the black [Antillean] is doomed to hold [their] tongue and bare [their] teeth. We say black [Antillean] because the black Americans are living a different drama. In the United States the black [subject] fights and is fought against. There are laws that gradually disappear from the constitution. There are laws that prohibit certain forms of discrimination. And we are told that none of this is given free. There are struggles, there are defeats, there are truces and there are victories.⁷

This passage follows Fanon's analysis of Hegel's Master-Slave dialectic and his situating it vis-à-vis the problem of recognition. This Fanonian critique of Hegel⁸ is imperative to mark because it exposes the virulent and dehumanizing mechanisms of colonialism⁹; these mechanisms are embodied by the asymmetrical process of Hegelian recognition as such and in Fanon's view perpetuated by Hegel's Eurocentric notions of freedom and world history.¹⁰ This Hegelian understanding asserts colonialism as necessary for the so-called development of free subjects and human progress across all cultures. Since his view of freedom is culturally bound, Hegel believes it is the right and the duty of Europeans to impose his colonial framework on other cultures in order to realize what he terms the spirit of world history—a racially oriented perspective on human development.¹¹ As such, Hegel believes people belonging to non-European cultures are fundamentally and already in a condition of being unfree, because he does not see other cultures practicing freedom in the way he conceptualizes it, they are the limit of “spirit”. Since he does not see non-European peoples conducting themselves in the manner that is considered natural or proper to Europeans, he thinks the only way to help them grasp this notion of “freedom” is to colonize and enslave them.¹² To claim as Hegel does that the slavery of non-European individuals is a necessary prerequisite of their freedom is of course, utterly untenable and absurd. Quickly noting the preposterous quality of the aforementioned Hegelian premises is necessary to the discussion in this paper since Fanon will draw upon Hegel when exposing the pernicious and deviant manner of relating to others that is characteristic of colonial contexts.

Method

Given Fanon's focus on the struggle for recognition in the pages leading up to the passage in question, one could infer that this distinction implies that Americans had attained recognition in

the reciprocal sense whereas Antilleans had not. At first glance, this is puzzling considering how Fanon thoroughly works through the impossibility of attaining reciprocal recognition within colonial contexts throughout this chapter. In an attempt to reconcile this apparent discrepancy, this paper initially endeavored to track the nature of the social relations in which Antillean and American subjects were embedded by using a Foucauldian approach to analyze the question of intersubjective relations in order to track the political realities of each group. Since recognition pertains to the notion of being acknowledged as an independent self-consciousness or subject, achieving recognition amounts to the realization of freedom.¹³ Because my conceptualization of freedom is something largely in line with and drawn from my comprehension of Foucault's ideas, I had already begun reading through Foucauldian lenses before I consciously identified a desire to engage Fanon on those terms. From this I inferred Fanon must have held a similar view to Foucault about the nature of freedom as it is relative to power. Because freedom and its antithesis are linked to Foucault's theories of power and domination, these concepts might be borrowed to analyze and make subsequent claims about the social relationships described by Fanon. As a result, I characterized both the Antillean and American contexts to be indicative of states of domination—whereby, neither had sufficiently been liberated from the oppressive relations inherent to colonialism. Convinced that the Americans and Antilleans must in fact be living the same colonial realities and perplexed by Fanon's statements about struggles, victories, and the gradual disappearance of certain legalized forms of discrimination in the United States, I believed at first that Fanon must have made a theoretical error but being unable to locate such an error, I speculated perhaps Fanon had not followed his own reasoning to its logical end. However, I found that I could not foresee a way to answer my research question through this particular approach. I also learned that to be more generous to Fanon, I had to appreciate his view of freedom as reliant on Hegel's

conceptualization—at least implicitly—and, not only thoroughly understanding it but also as seeking to enhance or expand it using the concept of ‘worth’¹⁴. Frustrated but unwilling to abandon my project I searched for other critical paths that would perhaps be able to answer my question. Through Ato Sekyi-Otu’s insightful reading of Fanon in *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience*, I discovered another way forward. Following this path, I quickly realized my error rested to some extent in trying to speak for Fanon. The answer to my question existed within the text itself: in order to understand Fanon, I first needed to learn how to listen to him. This meant reading Fanon in a more patient manner. I had to stop trying to read and think at the same time. This entailed reading while bracketing my thoughts so as to not anticipate or assume in advance the positions or conclusions Fanon might be meaning to take. In other words, reading in a way that did not put the proverbial cart before the horse as one might say.

In *Fanon’s Dialectic of Experience* and “Form and Metaphor in Fanon’s critique of racial and colonial domination”, Sekyi-Otu proposes that in order to avoid imparting “the utterances in his texts the coercive finality of irrevocable propositions and doctrinal statements”, we ought to understand Fanon’s discourse as “dramaturgical in form”.¹⁵ This entails reading Fanon’s linguistic acts within his texts as dramaturgical tools.¹⁶ Dramaturgy is both the act of dramatizing something (as Fanon does with racial and colonial domination through his writing) and an interpretive method that examines the context in which action occurs rather than the content of the action itself; this method lets us see the different moving parts of a plot, how they fit together, how they relate to actors and the parts they play by contextualizing their roles and actions. This enables us to remain less focused on the specificity of actions and instead concern ourselves with how they fit together to achieve specific social and cultural effects. Identifying different actors aids us in identifying how they relate to the plot and moreover, determine whether or not their roles and actions advance

it. This is precisely what Fanon's analysis of domination in *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* (hereafter "WE") sought to demonstrate.

It is sensible to think of human life and its historicization as a drama; life is essentially an intersubjective production that can be narrated and re-narrated from a multitude of subjective standpoints. This ability to contextualize and re-frame human action from within an array of various individual perspectives by dramatizing it exposes the essential contingency and political quality of human experience. In this way, a dramaturgical approach permits us to frame the "local histories of human being and doing"¹⁷ that Fanon chronicles, as plot devices rather than strict epistemological or meta-ethical positions.¹⁸ Thus, Sekyi-Otu explains a dramaturgical reading of Fanon reveals:

All constituencies of meaning, because they are historical creations bearing the marks of domination and alienation, need to be reexamined.... Everything, on Fanon's account of the social and symbolic conditions of postcolonial existence, requires to be reread and rewritten. Everything is an invitation to 'invention'.¹⁹

This approach produces an account of human activity and relations as "the story of intersubjectivity"²⁰ as opposed to a theory of human development.²¹ Fanon's dramaturgical representation of reality pushes us to see how the core values of humanism—"human universality and agency"—have not been forgotten or suppressed so much as they have been intentionally exiled or annihilated.²² By characterizing human relations in this way Sekyi-Otu describes how Fanon's assessment of the "absurd drama" (of colonial relations) being staged all around him²³, importantly reveals the colonial principle of race as a profound and aberrant divergence from the human plot.²⁴

At stake in this realization is:

a people's consciousness of the possibility, granted by their autonomous relation to a shared community of time, of beginning something all their own, of disturbing the silence of the world with the poetry of their public deeds, or reversing the timeless fatality of things by re-arranging their material and moral circumstances.²⁵

Based off of Sekyi-Otu's descriptions and Fanon's analysis, we can thereby think of the "human plot" as something like the realization of the ideal conditions for the production of subjectivity; the creation of a truly humane world where there is no hierarchy of being. If we accept the claim that subjects are inherently free, moral development is not something that can be said to occur in stages or linearly; thus it would follow that in this alternative and inhuman colonial universe social reform cannot be described as progress. What is actually required is a conscientious shift in social attitudes and restructuring of social relations.

The process of developing the critical social awareness necessary to reorganize a society is transformative rather than progressive because the humanity of all subjects as Fanon points out, have been intentionally ignored throughout human history rather than accidentally overlooked. People's humanity is not something that is debatable because people do not need nor are required to prove their humanity for it to be recognized by others; there are no hierarchies of being. Fighting to be recognized according to the social hierarchies, merits of colonialism and standards of whiteness will never be constitutive of notions of so-called progress. If humans in actuality are inherently ontologically equal, then restoring the humanity of historically marginalized groups is merely a corrective measure. Granting people access to the same opportunities they have been systematically denied is not enough to rectify social inequity if they do not also have access to the same advantages as the dominant group with which to pursue those opportunities. For instance,

we might claim that everyone in the United States has access to healthcare, jobs, or a formal education but that does not guarantee that all subjects *have* those things. Having access to something does not mean that one will have the necessary socio-economic or political resources by which to secure an equitable outcome. A person might be admitted to an academic institution for example, insofar as they meet specific criteria, but if they have to work not just to sustain themselves but also to support their studies, they will have different time and energy constraints than a student who does not have to work to support themselves in addition to their studies. So while policies such as Affirmative Action may appear progressive, the historical disadvantages Black students must navigate on a daily basis to attend the same institutions and secure similar academic outcomes as their white peers are still barriers to equitable social outcomes. This stratification is especially insidious considering that the social mobility white students in the United States enjoy is literally a product of racial and colonial domination.

Given the destructive and deadly consequences brought about under the European colonial model of “freedom”, it cannot be said to promote the expansion of human freedom in actuality.²⁶ Because colonialism amounted to the severe limiting, and all too often the total annihilation of human possibility, we cannot assume historical progression in colonial contexts amounts to human progress. We can now identify with Fanon’s distinction between colonial history and human history.²⁷ This distinction will hence render colonialism and its values “unhealthy” as Fanon does not see them as true reflections of human values.²⁸ Colonialism as described by Fanon marks a “fatal digression from the plot of human history”, an aberrant form²⁹ or pathology of freedom.³⁰ The problem of colonization sits at the intersection of historical and objective conditions in addition to one’s attitude or relation and affirmation or denial of said conditions³¹—Fanon’s

humanism can most accurately be grasped through the existential understanding that our freedom is conditioned in and made possible by the freedom of others.

The objective of Fanon's analysis of race relations in *BSWM* is to extricate Black subjects from the false reality of the colonial universe since it is constructed and thrives off of their exclusion.³² This reality as so eloquently described soon after the English translation of *BSWM* in the famous 1965 debate between James Baldwin and William F. Buckley Jr. at Cambridge University when Baldwin vividly details the ways in which American prosperity is—and has historically been, “at the expense of the American Negro”.³³ His point being that the accumulation of wealth by white Euro-Americans is fundamentally grounded upon racial disparity and violence. Like Baldwin's revelations, Fanon's endeavor aims to release all of humanity from the confines of colonial logic by opening a space that extends the possibility to participate in the construction of reality to all subjects. This is to say, while we may not be able to choose the meaning that is projected onto us by others, we can choose the way we relate to it. Insofar as people are able to reflect on what they encounter in the world, they can choose to either affirm or deny the truth-value of the things they are confronted with. If our freedom is conditioned upon the freedom of others, we are all unfree so long as there are limits that deny the freedom of some. As noted in *BSWM*:

Some [people] want the whole world to know who they are. One German philosopher described the process as the pathology of freedom. In the case in point, I didn't have to defend black music against white music; rather, I had to help my brother get rid of an unhealthy attitude.³⁴

Fanon is saying the relations promoted by colonialism, and by extension its embodied values, are relating to truth in a way that is not actually natural or proper to humanity; hence, it is a

pathological notion of freedom. Cultivating a proper attitude is a crucial concern for Fanon because it is a direct reflection of the way we relate to truth. This epistemological relationship is why Fanon describes the colonial relation as an “unhealthy attitude”, as it is an abnormal and unhealthy way of relating to others.³⁵ Since any ontology grounded in colonialism is untenable³⁶, desiring formal recognition within this framework is equally irrational and unproductive. Thus, countering “white” values with “Black” values as referenced in the passage above, is not a strategy Fanon thinks of as a viable means of escaping colonial domination. The analogy from the passage above implies that asserting Black music as equally as valuable as, if not superior to, white music is not capable of granting Black culture³⁷ the authentic recognition it may seek since Blackness is being defined in relation to whiteness and is thereby a white construct. What is more is that “whiteness” is a false ontological category; whiteness, understood here as a “technology of race,” rather than a matter of skin color, wherein the concept of “whiteness” is a means to establish particular ends in a structural and systemic manner.³⁸ These ends being mainly the devaluation, exclusion and the periodic extermination of racialized others, in correspondence with the elevation of culture hailing from the European continent. Through this analogy Fanon works to show that if the colonized want to enact their own values and construct their own identities they must endeavor to respond to the system of values imposed on them rather than simply react to them. He demonstrates this clearly in the final passage of “The Blackman and Recognition,” where he writes:

[Human] behavior is not only reactionary.... To induce [one] to be *actional*, by maintaining in [their] circularity the respect of the fundamental values that make the world human, that is the task of utmost urgency for [one] who, after careful reflection, prepares to act.³⁹

When we respond rather than simply react to the things we are confronted with it creates another way of relating to something that displaces the original content or the context surrounding it; this has a subversive function. To be actional is to reclaim or direct one's agency to create new avenues for new kinds of action. An individual's agency literally comes into being at the moment they act, rather than react. For instance, when a subject disengages from the terms of colonialism to enact a new system of meaning this is being actional.

Fanon has the same objective of moving beyond the criteria established by the colonial apparatus in *WE*. In chapter three for example, Fanon demonstrates the principle of actionality in the context of nation building through this useful comparison between a capitalist notion of sport and that which is deemed appropriate for an underdeveloped country:

The stadium is not an urban showpiece but a rural space that is cleared, worked, and offered to the nation. The capitalist notion of sports is fundamentally different from that which should exist in an underdeveloped country. The African politician should not be concerned with producing professional [athletes], but conscious individuals who also practice sports. If sports are not incorporated into the life of the nation, i.e., in the building of the nation, if we produce national [athletes] instead of conscious individuals, then sports will be quickly ruined by professionalism and commercialism. A sport should not be a game or entertainment for the urban bourgeoisie.⁴⁰

To create social relations and infrastructures different from those of Europe, the social body of an underdeveloped country in Africa—in Fanon's view—must endeavor to understand why cultural spaces are utilized the way that they are and the cultural values they represent, and indeed embody and reproduce. Instead of constructing a stadium for example, the field could have been used to

grow food, provide housing, to build a community center or school instead. What social capital (to borrow from Bourdieu *avant la lettre*), the stadium provides is important to Fanon, if for example, the stadium serves to enrich the community surrounding it rather than simply serve the select interests of a few then it is not a reflection of the problematic values of European meritocracy and individualism. Re-appropriating the cultural significance and function of the stadium by removing it from a European or colonial context creates different relations allowing the social body to be actional. The notion of actionality can also be seen in instances when marginalized subjects reclaim oppressive terms; for example, the term “queer”. Queer is no longer considered a slur to those individuals who have chosen to reclaim it by constructing their identity through it. By contrast queer is a term that empowers many people instead of disempowering and stigmatizing their existence. This recapturing of language leads to new ways of relating and being that can exist and sometimes flourish alongside of, if not within, socially oppressive contexts.

By presenting his audience with the conditions that structure their reality and pointing out their contingency, Fanon directs his audience to be actional in both *BSWM* and *WE*. This entails that the reader engage with the claims in the texts and the relations between them in way that allows them to decide whether or not Fanon’s statements are true as opposed to taking textual propositions as absolute truths. As such, the meaning in Fanon’s text is contestable and essentially open; his method helps the reader inhabit other perspectives and means of relating that are not uniquely European. Put simply, Fanon wants to teach us *how* to think rather than tell us what to think. Since subjects are simultaneously creating and produced by reality, Fanon wishes—through critical reflection—to influence his audience’s behavior and not simply just their thought.⁴¹ He compares his philosophical mission with the literary task of inciting “society to reflect and mediate” hopeful that his text will serve as “a mirror with a progressive infrastructure where the

black [subject] can find a path to disalienation.”⁴² This is the critical function of Fanon’s discourse assuming dramaturgical form, and illuminated then through a dramaturgical approach sensitive to cultural and social differences in time and space of analysis vis-à-vis the time of the text. The intent of this technique is to establish a particular relation between the reader and the text. This approach aims to guide an audience to shift their focus from the action or specific content of the claims and instead be more attentive to the context in which the claims are being made and in which the action is unfolding.

Reading Fanon through this dramaturgical lens prompts a shift of perspective that makes the way his critique of Hegel in *BSWM* fit into Fanon’s larger critique of domination visible. From this standpoint we can locate the motivation behind Fanon’s distinction between the drama of the Americans and the drama of the Antilleans; a task I was unable to complete from within my previous framework. The American-Antillean comparison in *BSWM* is not strictly related to the concept of recognition since recognition cannot truly be achieved within colonial contexts. This distinction rather, has to do with the aims and techniques necessary to the realization of Fanon’s new humanism, a process thoroughly laid out in *WE*.

Decolonial Humanism⁴³

Fanon’s new humanism operates according to a “critical decolonial ethics of liberation”. This ethical framework is a political response to the social and geopolitical dynamics arising out of the modern paradigms of war and difference.⁴⁴ Decolonial or Fanonian humanism marks:

a third humanist revolution that has existed alongside the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, always pointing to their constitutive exclusions and aiming to

provide a more consistent narrative of the affirmation of the value of the entire human species.⁴⁵

Unlike the prevailing humanist models of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, decolonial humanism does not rest upon problematic notions of humanity that privilege monotheism or human rationality. The humanistic ideals of the Renaissance and Enlightenment are problematic because from the desire to divinize the concept of human and differentiate ourselves from nature arose particular ways of ordering the world that consequently led to the establishment of ontological hierarchies and material disparity. Since the idea of divinity here appeals to a European monotheism and the triumph of human rationality over the natural world also pertains to European modes of living and thinking, subjects existing outside of the cultural framework of Europe are viewed neither as godlike nor as separate from nature; these subjects are instead considered subhuman.⁴⁶ From this logic emerges the colonial relation of master and slave wherein non-European peoples only become human (in a figurative sense as we know marginalized subjects everywhere continue to resist dehumanization) through their subordination and subsequent exploitation.⁴⁷ This rational organization of dehumanization is why Fanon declares “the misfortune and inhumanity of the [white] subject” to be that of “having killed [humanity] somewhere”.⁴⁸ It may be true that the humanism of Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe appealed to a universal concept of what it means to be human and sought to expand the realm of human possibility through rational inquiry, but when these “humanist” ends require the assimilation or extermination of human difference to achieve these ideals they are not only severely misguided but profoundly anti-humanist as well.⁴⁹ Fanon’s decolonial humanism by contrast is a more inclusive position in that it is non-hierarchical and “pluriversal” or global; meaning, it conceptualizes a world in which numerous human worlds and cultures can

simultaneously exist.⁵⁰ Fanon's humanist position is importantly anti-racist and post-racial as it advocates for a deeper, decolonial understanding and appreciation of human difference.⁵¹

The ideals and realization of Fanon's humanism necessitates detaching from the colonial cultural matrix in order to restructure a society to bring about a new human order. Fanon will refer to the form these efforts take in *WE* as "decolonization". According to Walter Mignolo in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, "Decolonization is the horizon of thinking and being that originated in response to the capitalist and communist imperial designs".⁵² Due to the fact certain aspects of colonialism do not necessarily disappear with the end of colonialism however, some decolonization projects can be further characterized as "decolonial". Decoloniality should axiomatically "lead to the 'new humanity' claimed by Frantz Fanon".⁵³ The notion of decolonial employed here refers to engaging in epistemic acts of disobedience by delinking⁵⁴ from prevailing Western epistemological frameworks. As such, the focus of decolonial efforts is reclaiming the space or possibility for epistemological difference rather than a nation state for instance.⁵⁵ This distinction means we can think of decolonization not only as projects that aim to expel colonial powers from a particular territory or geographic region but also as movements towards independent social or cultural landscapes detached from colonial relations or institutions. The colonial problems Fanon discusses in *WE* relate both to geography (decolonization) and epistemology (decoloniality) for different reasons. In these senses, Fanon appears to be primarily focused on decolonial or epistemic disobedience⁵⁶ as the precursor to the arrival of his "new humanity"⁵⁷ especially with respect to American contexts.

The process of decolonization for Fanon is a "historical process" that "can only be understood...find its significance and become self-coherent insofar as we can discern the history making movement which gives it form and substance".⁵⁸ That is to say, that the efficacy of anti-

colonial struggles for liberation cannot be judged in ways that divorce them from the original socio-political contexts from which they arise, and are in response to. Fanon reveals:

Each generation must discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it, in relative opacity.... Preceding generations have simultaneously resisted the insidious agenda of colonialism and paved the way for the emergence of current struggles.... In the heat of combat, we must shed the habit of decrying the efforts of our forefathers or reigning incomprehension at their silence or passiveness. They fought as best they could with the weapons they possessed at the time, and if their struggle did not reverberate throughout the international arena, the reason should be attributed not so much to a lack of heroism but to a fundamentally different international situation.⁵⁹

This also means that we cannot make prescriptive claims to ground present and future actions since the terms of political engagement cannot be anticipated prior to their arrival. This will additionally serve as a guide to understanding and implementing the processes needed to invoke the relations necessary for “the birth of a human world...a world of reciprocal recognitions,”⁶⁰ through a new humanism.

What Fanon ultimately means to show us is that the conditions that establish the production of subjectivity from which an individual’s freedom is based, are necessarily contingent upon human action. Since it is impossible to predict the future, it follows that it is also difficult to guarantee the ways in which individuals will be able to act; the only thing that can be guaranteed is that one can act at all ⁶¹. It is the way in which we take up our existence that is the only thing that will ever carry the possibility of change. If we want to manipulate the future, we must actively pay attention to and make deliberate choices about when and how to act and consider the values

we wish to embody and enact through our agency. Trying, by necessity, is more important than succeeding since the only way to assuredly fail is by never trying at all. The contingency of history and human action however, serve to complicate the ability to predetermine the specificity of the methods by which Fanon's humanist ideals ought to be realized. Fanon outlines this neatly in the following passage where he implicates the struggle for national liberation in seeking to radically transform the social order as the necessary precursor to attaining his new humanism⁶²:

This struggle, which aims at a fundamental redistribution of relations between men, cannot leave intact either the form or substance of the people's culture. After the struggle is over, there is not only the demise of colonialism, but also the demise of the colonized. This new humanity, for itself and for others, inevitably defines a new humanism. This new humanism is written into the objectives and methods of the struggle [for national liberation].⁶³

Thus, I turn to explore what constitutes a national struggle for Fanon, and the kinds of humanist principles bound up in this thought. Discussing these principles will prove fruitful for grasping the conceptual position that defines the American context for Fanon *BSWM*. After this discussion, I will turn back to dramaturgy to show how contextualizing national struggles reveals important cultural differences that must be taken into consideration. These considerations will assist in distinguishing the objectives and methods particular to specific political projects that allow us to locate the difference between the American and Antillean dramas.

National Struggles

In the respective sections "The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness" and "On National Culture" in *WE*, Fanon analyzes the legitimacy of national politics.⁶⁴ Regarding

claims of legitimacy, Fanon considers the establishment and purpose of a nation to rest upon “the concerted action of the people, which embodies the actual aspirations of the people”.⁶⁵ In other words: a nation is formed by the will and struggle of the people and not the imposition of a will or cause external to the social body upon the people.⁶⁶ Fanon’s ideas pertaining to national politics are less concerned with “any primordial essences” regarding particular social or ethnic formations, and much more focused on the attributes and functions of these national structures or identities.⁶⁷ Fanon’s ideas about nationhood, national struggles and their functions are quite different from prevailing forms of historical nationalism (such as claims to nationhood or national struggles that appeal to the past or to ancestry) or state-based nationalism (such as claims to nationhood or national struggles related to geography and particular forms of government). On the subject of nationalism, he cautions:

If nationalism is not explained, enriched, and deepened, if it does not very quickly turn into a social and political consciousness, into humanism, then it leads to a dead end⁶⁸ [...] National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is alone capable of giving us an international dimension.⁶⁹

This international aspect refers to the scope of his decolonial or humanist project which fundamentally seeks to radically redistribute relations between subjects globally.⁷⁰ A dramaturgical approach to understanding Fanon’s discussions on national struggles aids in identifying the methods and objectives of these struggles in a way that reveals their relation to Fanon’s humanism. By using dramaturgy to conceptualize colonialism as a radical divergence from the human plot, we can understand Fanon’s mission to extricate subjects from the colonial universe as an effort to restore humanity to its proper trajectory. That is to say that because colonial contexts do not allow space for human difference and the flourishing of all, human activity in these

contexts does not serve to expand the limits of human possibility or kinship. As such, confronting the problems of colonialism necessarily implies the taking up of an anti-colonial position.

In *WE*, Fanon cautions that anti-colonial struggles are not automatically articulated from a national perspective.⁷¹ To discern what national means for Fanon and discover whether he considers this perspective to be desirable or not involves tracking the successes and failures of the anti-colonial struggles outlined in *WE*. Instead of reading these anti-colonial struggles chronicled by Fanon at face value and treating them as merely idealized historical occurrences, these examples can be read as Fanon's attempts to clarify his own anti-colonial discourse.⁷² It is apparent that the anti-colonial struggles Fanon characterizes as national are desirable formulations because they aim at fundamentally reorganizing a society in accordance with the aims of Fanon's humanism. Genuinely national struggles reflect Fanon's humanistic position because these struggles seek to expand the realms of human possibility. On the topic of national liberation he writes:

The development and internal progression of the actual struggle expand the number of directions in which culture can go and hint at new possibilities. The liberation struggle does not restore to national culture its former values and configurations.⁷³

In this quote Fanon is commenting on the fact that when a nation detaches from the former colonial cultural matrix in pursuit national liberation, this provides space for the cultivation of new ways of thinking, forms of expression, ways of being and relating that do not rely on former colonial values (such as notions of human difference grounded in ethnicity or continentalism as we will see). Since the process of disengaging from the colonial apparatus occurs the moment colonial values are challenged, the establishment of these new values is not only validated by the success of these struggles they also come into being in conjunction with these conflicts.⁷⁴

If we understand Fanon's humanism as seeking to restore subjects to a human world (the restoration of the human plot)—a world in which all subjects are permitted to endlessly create themselves, one that recognizes and holds reverence for human difference and agency—we can use dramaturgy to discern the ways in which human action is in service of these values or else aims to distort them.⁷⁵ This largely happens through contextualization and understanding how the elements of particular stories fit together to form a cohesive narrative. By selecting examples from Fanon and examining the contexts in which action is taking place we can analyze the types of actions possible within a given context and the kinds of ends actions these might be oriented towards. In doing so, we uncover different components of the story of intersubjectivity and how this story must be understood and told collectively if it is to reflect a truly human reality wherein all subjects are ontologically and materially equal.⁷⁶ This means there are no supreme gatekeepers of truth; truth is the responsibility of the community at both the local and global scale.⁷⁷ This is why Fanon believes the independence and truth of a nation rests upon the dignity, sovereignty, and enlightenment of every citizen. For instance, on the activity of nation building in underdeveloped countries he writes:

During the period of nation building every citizen must continue in his daily purpose to embrace the nation as a whole, to embody the constantly dialectical truth of the nation, and to will here and now the triumph of man in his totality. If the building of a bridge does not enrich the consciousness of those working on it, then don't build the bridge, and let the citizens continue to swim across the river or use a ferry. The bridge must not be pitchforked or foisted upon the social landscape by a *deus ex machina* but, on the contrary, must be the product of the citizens' brain and muscles. And there is no doubt architects and engineers, foreigners for the most

part, will probably be needed, but the local party members must see to it that the techniques seep into the desert of the citizen's brain so that the bridge in its entirety and in every detail can be integrated, resigned, and reappropriated. The citizen must appropriate the bridge. Then, and only then, is everything possible.⁷⁸

Through this bridge analogy Fanon demonstrates what a complex and collective process nation building is. This process entails more than just improving the material infrastructure; it must also expand the social consciousness. If the bridge is built for the people without involving the people it does not enhance the unity of the people nor does it contribute to the development their collective knowledge. Both of these components are necessary to uphold the truth and consciousness of a nation. In other words, the building of the bridge must foster the humanity, national unity and expand the realm of possibility for the people. This kind of project also protects their national independence in the sense that they are responsible for the development and functioning of the nation instead of outsourcing their labor. Hence Fanon's insistence that the bridge not be imposed upon the social landscape via *deus ex machina*⁷⁹. Thus, if the bridge is built for the people instead of built or appropriated by the people as Fanon suggests, it does not contribute to the advancement of their national (or human) narrative. The people must possess the meaning present within the social landscape in order possess and create their own narrative; their human story must be told by them rather than for them. By understanding the bridge analogy through this dramaturgical style of analysis, the way national struggles reflect Fanon's humanist position becomes evident.

Within these discussions of national politics in *WE*, Fanon carefully articulates a humanist praxis capable of realizing and embodying the humanist ideals related to human universality and agency. This praxis is established through Fanon's descriptions of the dangers and shortcomings of specific anti-colonial actions.⁸⁰ The fault Fanon cites in the case of each of these failings is a

lack of being national in character and scope. For Fanon, a nation is more of a historical and existential entity rather than what we commonly consider to be a nation state. This means a nation is constituted by the politicization of shared experience rather than geography.⁸¹ The biggest mistake Fanon points out repeatedly regarding anti-colonial struggles is that of continentalism.⁸²

Continentalism in essence, is the assimilation of cultural and human difference on a continental scale into a single, monolithic entity. This entity is used to enact particular social orders and property relations. These relations are predominately used to justify and promote violence and war as a means to protect and advance those relations. Continentalism's original form is grounded in the colonialism and imperialism of Europe.⁸³ It cannot be said to embody humanist values because continentalism in form cuts humanity off from the infinite realms of possibility.⁸⁴ Thus to confront this problem and restore the humanity of all subjects one must confront colonialism. The urgent necessity of this confrontation is why Fanon is an advocate for violence as a legitimate response to colonialism. I have chosen the following select passages to demonstrate the ways in which Fanon affirms the necessity of all anti-colonial struggles. He says, "The peoples of Africa have recently discovered each other and, in the name of the continent, have decided to pressure the colonial regimes in a radical way,"⁸⁵ and that for those "who are determined to break the back of colonialism, our historic mission is to authorize every revolt, every desperate act, and every attack aborted or drowned in blood"⁸⁶. The problem is that not all anti-colonial struggles—specifically those that are not national—are capable of leading to the world of his new humanism. This is illustrated quite effectively in his discussions on national culture. Notably, Fanon writes:

It is clear that the way the cultural problem is posed in certain colonized countries can lead to serious ambiguities. Colonialism's insistence that "[Negroes]" have no culture, and Arabs are by nature barbaric, inevitably leads to a glorification of

cultural phenomena that become continental instead of national, and singularly racialized. In Africa, the reasoning of the intellectual is Black-African or Arab-Islamic. It is not specifically national.⁸⁷

Fanon sees the need to assert African culture as a reaction to European colonialism. This position is demonstrated in the passage above when he describes the “glorification of cultural phenomena” in ways that become “continental instead of national”. To describe someone as “Black-African” is to reduce one’s identity to a particular continent and skin color—both of which are arbitrary to Fanon: Arbitrary in the sense that we cannot determine a person’s humanity on the basis of skin tone and geographic location alone. There is no totalizing “Black” culture just as there is no totalizing “African” culture.

Efforts to create a “Black World” or universal Black culture are problematic for Fanon because they operate in accord to the same, or at least a parallel, totalizing colonial logic used by white colonizers to classify all Black subjects into the same universal category of “Negro”.⁸⁸ This position is again due to the fact that assessing the value of one’s culture against the cultural standards of Europe cannot productively lead to the enactment of new values and new social relations for Fanon. He understands that culture cannot be asserted on a continental scale, nor can culture be reduced on the basis of race. While certain people on the African continent may share the experience of living under colonial domination, the experience of someone living in Algeria for example, will not be exactly the same as someone living under French colonial rule in Morocco or Tunisia. There may be cultural similarities but it cannot be said that there exists a culture particular to the entirety of Europe—like Africa, Europe is a continent, not a culture. The experience of being “Arab” or “African” Fanon points to in the passage above, cannot be said to be national since these categories erase the cultural differences existing between the people in

these regions. The national experience of being Palestinian for instance is not grounded in ethnicity or religion; it is grounded in the national unity experienced by the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israeli occupation since “the existence of a nation is not proved by culture, but in the people’s struggle against forces of occupation”.⁸⁹ National culture described by Fanon is able to encompass the cultural nuances that exist between subjects and how those subtleties influence the form decolonial methods and objectives take on both a local and global scale. These cultural differences are also important to acknowledge because they influence the ways in which anti-colonial struggles are framed. Putting aside mass media influences, if white Western Christians were to recognize the number of Christians residing in Palestine for example, maybe they would be less likely to support ongoing Israeli genocide, occupation of Palestine and displacement of the Palestinian people. Acknowledging these cultural differences is an effective and immediate way to reveal the racist and islamophobic reasoning driving broad categorizations that paint all Middle Eastern people as Muslim. It is an incredibly dangerous and an all too prevalent misconception to associate the color of someone’s skin with a particular region or religion. These kinds of cultural oppositions that place “an Arab or African culture against the universal condemnation of the colonizer”⁹⁰ gain legitimacy from the falsehoods that were first propagated by European colonizers.⁹¹ Such comparisons amount to the limiting of human possibility and do not cultivate the social and political consciousness proper to Fanon’s humanism. Hence, Fanon’s claim that national culture is not rooted in continentalism or ethnicity.

What “national” means for Fanon arguably reveals why Black Americans and Black Antilleans are characterized as living different respective dramas. The distinction lies in the way these dramas are framed and their functions are positioned. Just after his depiction of the American drama in *BSWM* Fanon continues:

For the black [Antillean], the situation is unbearable. Unsure whether the white man considers him as a consciousness in-itself-for-itself, he is constantly preoccupied with detecting resistance, opposition, and contestation. This is what emerges from the book Mournier has written on Africa. The Blacks he met there wanted to keep their alterity—alterity of rupture, of struggle and combat.⁹²

In this critical passage, Fanon appears to be framing the cultural differences existing between Black Americans and Black Antilleans in a way that highlights the national character of the American context. This framing is supported if an examination of cultural differences and different formulations and functions of the struggles outlined in *WE* are taken into account. Writing on the limitations of certain cultural frameworks Fanon explains:

“Negro” or “Negro-African” culture broke up because the [people] who set out to embody it realized that every culture is first and foremost national, and that the problems for which Richard Wright or Langston Hughes had to be on the alert were fundamentally different from those faced by Léopold Senghor or Jomo Kenyatta.⁹³

Fanon is illustrating why emphasizing “an African culture rather than national culture” and attempting to construct a “Black world” led Black intellectuals to an impasse.⁹⁴ By impasse he means that a singularly racialized or continental approach cannot adequately address the problems of colonialism because they are culturally relative. There is no uniform Black culture just as there is no uniform continental culture; each of the individuals mentioned here are actors that belong to particular cultural movements pertaining to anti-colonial struggles around the globe. The anti-colonial struggles of Senghor and Kenyatta were national independence movements related to decolonization. These struggles aimed to expel the colonial power from the territory to liberate the

colonized people and establish an independent nation. The anti-colonial struggles of Wright and Hughes on the other hand were decolonial efforts aimed at liberating and expanding the American national consciousness.

We can think of this American project as a national liberation movement rather than a push for independence since Black subjects are not seeking to expel Euro-American settlers from the region. Fanon addresses this national character and specificity of the American struggle in the following passage from *WE* where he notes:

During the First Congress of the African Society for Culture in Paris in 1956 the black Americans spontaneously considered their problems from the same standpoint as their fellow Africans.... But gradually the black Americans quickly realized that their existential problems differed from those faced by the Africans. The only common denominator between the blacks from Chicago and the Nigerians or Tanganyikans was that they all defined themselves in relation to the whites. But once the initial comparisons had been made and subjective feelings had settled down, the black Americans realized that the objective problems were fundamentally different. The principle and purpose of the freedom rides whereby black and white Americans endeavor to combat racial discrimination have little in common with the heroic struggle of the Angolan people against the iniquity of Portuguese colonialism. Consequently, during the Second Congress of the African Society for Culture the black Americans decided to create the American Society for African Culture.⁹⁵

In this extended citation, he is noting once again the different objectives of particular anti-colonial struggles. The American Freedom Rides were a collective effort to transform the social attitudes

and institutions in the United States. This transformation was visible in the challenging and destabilization of the pre-existing social relations. The American Freedom Rides brought national attention to the problematic non-compliance of federally mandated de-segregation in the American South. This is a national cause because the collective actions of the American Civil Rights Movement resulted in the reorganization of American society by challenging state mandated apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination. It was not a movement that sought to establish an exclusive and separate Black or white society; it was a collective effort to make American society accessible to Black subjects. Through the changing landscape of American social attitudes and relations the reasoning behind what Fanon writes in *BSWM*—that in the American drama there are sometimes victories—becomes visible.

The method of dramaturgy that has framed my listening to Fanon has clarified that I cannot judge from the standpoint of history whether or not the Freedom Rides or other particular actions related to national politics were truly successful in liberating Black subjects from colonial domination. The historical and international context in which those struggles took place is not available to me in my immediate lived experience. What is available to me, what a dramaturgical approach makes usefully manifest, is that the form of these national struggles voiced by Fanon embody a humanist praxis that reveals and promises to advance the story of intersubjectivity rather than entomb it.⁹⁶ Framing the American and Antillean contexts in *BSWM* dramaturgically reveals important differences in the contexts in which action is occurring. The national politics in the United States cannot be the same as the national politics of the various Antillean islands. The problems related to colonial domination in each context are culturally relative in their respective natures. This culture is not problematically grounded in ethnicity nor is it universal; it is national. This is why the Americans and Antilleans are living different dramas. When the Americans disturb

the social order and cultivate a transformative socio-political consciousness they are pursuing the precise humanist praxis that is clarified by Fanon's discourse in *WE*.

Conclusion

As I hope to have shown in this paper, Fanon's project is subtle and nuanced, despite the explicit positions he takes, it is thereby profoundly pedagogical. A dramaturgical reading of Fanon has made me think not only about problems that need to be solved but also about how to go about solving them and why they come to be problems in the first place. Before I learned how to think about Fanon's discourse dramaturgically I could not recognize the patterns in Fanon's thought in a way that did justice to his work. This was not an indication of a conceptual error on Fanon's part but rather an indication that the text did not fit within my modes of thinking and a revelation of certain epistemological and ontological assumptions I was making as someone inhabiting a specific context and space/time. While my intellectual preferences are necessarily shaped by the things I find important, and value, I am alas intuitively drawn to thinkers whose work resonates with me. These tendencies are also subject to the influence of my philosophical training however, so it is not an entirely subjective matter. My philosophical education cultivates particular ways of thinking about, exploring, and thus being in the world. I am rewarded when I am able to seek out patterns that are both recognizable and valuable to other members of the philosophical community. There is a curious context that perhaps merits further investigation about the state of philosophy when it is believed we must grasp and master the preferences and tendencies of certain thinkers and intellectual traditions in order to assess and explain the world philosophically, but in actuality more conceptual agility is required. While there is certainly value to be found and things to appreciate about the philosophical cannon, for the love of wisdom it is imperative we also

recognize how these things came to be, their situatedness and thus their constraints when it comes to operating concepts. It is only through this contextualization that *other* values, other ideas and other ways of being become visible through their absence. If being a philosopher means confining and conforming to applying and extending the same models of knowledge, the philosophical consciousness may very well be just as cut off from reality as the racially motivated constructs of colonialism, and thereby unfree. This paper could have been quite different from what it has turned out to be in a way that I think fits with Fanon's legacy; however, I was unable to proceed in carrying out my project before I adopted another approach. In this way, my initial pursuit marked a foreclosure of possibility. I could not move forward with the argument without claiming something along the lines of: we have yet to find meaningful ways of challenging particular systems of oppression. This attitude is far from being actional and might actually prevent one from even acting since most efforts would appear futile. Dramaturgical thinking however, lent me a new way of thinking in seeking out patterns that were previously unintelligible to me. Not only did this open up my possibilities as a thinker it has also created space for me to consider other possible actions— *other possible futures*. I would like to echo Mignolo in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, to say that the contribution to knowledge I am making with this paper seeks to contribute to decolonial processes that aim to build “global futures” that promote collective flourishing rather than individual success at the expense of our planet and humanity.⁹⁷ In this contribution can be found the limited originality of the fact that I am writing from a specific time and space and body that carries unique experiences that impact my thinking. If philosophy is the art of conversation, I do not want to participate in the same historical dialogues. Rather, I want to participate in the radical reframing of philosophical discourses. At this point, it is not possible to disregard the achievements and cultural legacies of canonical thinkers in the same manner that

they omitted a multitude of other cultures' achievements, frameworks and worldviews.⁹⁸ Power has played its role and cannot be undone. Yet, to have a chance at diversifying and globalizing the content of our conversations rather than totalizing them, we must work to shift the terms and contexts of our philosophical exchanges. This is precisely the upshot of Fanon's critique of colonial domination and why we cannot say the American's and Antilleans are living the same drama.

Fanon's critique of Hegel in *Black Skin, White Masks* is but a small element of a larger motif structuring Fanon's oeuvre; a feverish critique of racial and colonial domination. The point of this critique is not simply to display the true nature of the colonial relation nor is it primarily concerned with the problem of recognition. Fanon's project is more than an illustration of the ways in which Black subjects are denied agency and personhood within colonial contexts. He is attempting to encourage the reader to reassess their relation to truth, to history the structures of society and in short, reality. Fanon's primary concern in revealing the racial drama and placing it in the foreground is not to draw ontological or metaphysical conclusions, but rather, Fanon's goal is to dialectically help establish a relationship between the reader and the text allowing the reader to grasp the content and its apparent assumptions in an active and critical manner.⁹⁹ The goal is not to seek recognition because recognition is not possible within colonial frameworks; moreover, recognition arguably might even be an undesirable thing to aim for given the social, political and economic values that constrain our subjectivity. One must conform and adhere to these in order to be recognized as a moral agent or "free" subject. For Fanon it is important for meaning to be produced (sometimes through appropriation) by the individual. Colonial logic is incorrect in that it is both irrational and immoral and thus, in order to bring Fanon's humanism into being, subjects must find ways to create or appropriate meaning that do not recreate or perpetuate these toxic

conditions—a challenging expedition since subjects are born into a world in which they had no part in establishing, they must rely on pre-existing human values and archetypes. Understanding the roles that we play in colonial contexts gives us a better chance of understanding how not to participate in or perpetuate the oppressive and discriminatory frameworks we are currently imbedded in. Given that realities are intersubjective and fluid productions, ushering in and realizing the ideal conditions for subjectivity—wherein all subjects are free—necessarily requires the combined efforts of many individuals. So it makes sense that Fanon envisions the arrival of his radical new humanism as a national socio-political effort to collectively restructure the relations of a given society. Fanon very clearly understood that formal emancipation and the pursuit of equal opportunity will never be enough to liberate not only racialized subjects but humankind in general. As he passionately works to develop a praxis capable of subverting the logic of colonialism, Fanon shows it is not sufficient enough to challenge colonialism through its own terms. To subvert the anesthetizing confines of colonial reason, new relations and new ways of creating, relating and thinking must be brought into being.

Endnotes

¹ Shiann Wahéhshon Whitebean, *Territorial Acknowledgement at Concordia University, Tiohtiá:Ke/Montréal*, Karl Hele and Charles O'Connor ed, (Indigenous Leadership Group, Concordia University, 2017).

² Eva Tuck & K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor”, *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol. 1, Issue 1 (2012), 19.

³ Alana, Lentin, “The Place of Race in Developing Epistemologies and Methodologies.” *Alana Lentin.net*, Wordpress, 27 Aug. 2018.

⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, Richard Philcox trans (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2008), 1.

⁵ Fanon clarifies in the introduction to *Black Skins, White Masks* that as an Antillean his claims are only valid for French Antilleans. As such, I have chosen to use “Antillean” in place of “French” or “Frenchman” as they appear in the English translation.

⁶ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Richard Philcox trans (New York, NY: Grove Press, 2004), 178.

⁷ Fanon, 194-96.

⁸ As a large body of literature on Hegel’s colonialism already exists [for excellent examples please see Alison Stone, “Hegel and Colonialism,” *Hegel Bulletin* (2017), Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (2008), and George Ciccariello-Maher, *Decolonizing Dialectics* (2017)]. Thus, I only wish to touch upon Hegel briefly in order to frame how the American and Antillean dramas came to be problematic, the influence this had on the direction of my research, and to serve as short introduction to the logic of colonialism that Fanon is critical of and—as we will see—that must be subverted or destroyed in order to restore the truth of our intersubjective story.

⁹ The system of European political dominance resulting racialized and gendered socioeconomic stratification in accordance with the cultural standards of Europe (Mignolo 2011: 122-123 & Stone 2018: 1)

¹⁰ Alison Stone, “Hegel and Colonialism,” Keynote address at the Warwick Continental Philosophy Conference, “Identity & Community: Metaphysics, Politics, Aesthetics,” Coventry, England, June 2018.

¹¹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, T.M. Knox trans, Stephan Houlgate ed (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), §358.

¹² Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, A.V. Miller trans (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977), §194-196.

¹³ Fanon, *BSWM*, 194.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 193.

¹⁵ Ato Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic of Experience*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁷ Sekyi-Otu, "Form and Metaphor in Fanon's critique of racial and colonial domination", in *Domination*, Alkis Kontos ed (Toronto: Ontario, 1975), 135.

¹⁸ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon's Dialectic*, 35-36.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 39-40.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 56.

²¹ Sekyi-Otu, "Form and Metaphor", 134.

²² *Ibid*, 135.

²³ Fanon, *BSWM*, 174.

²⁴ Sekyi-Otu, "Form and Metaphor," 135, 149.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 146.

²⁶ Fanon, *WE*, 235.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 14-15.

²⁸ Fanon, *BSWM*, 200.

²⁹ Sekyi-Otu, "Form and Metaphor", 149.

³⁰ Fanon, *BSWM*, 200.

³¹ *Ibid*, 65.

³² *Ibid*, xii, xiii.

³³ Rima Regas, “Transcript: James Baldwin Debates William F. Buckley (1965).” *Blog #42*, Wordpress, 8 June 2015

³⁴ *Ibid*, 200-201.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 201.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 89.

³⁷ I am not negating or dismissing the value or importance of Black culture as an organized social and political response to white supremacy. I am following Fanon who notes the political necessity of identity politics especially in his discussions in *WE*. What Fanon does not want to see and cautions against is universal Black culture and Black identity employed in a monolithic manner that mirrors the continentalism of European “whiteness”. Instead, Fanon calls for new creative endeavors that celebrate human ingenuity, to bring into being a new humanity: “If we want humanity to take a step forward, if we want to take it to another level than the one where Europe has placed it, then we must innovate, we must be pioneers,” (*WE*, 239).

³⁸ Falguni A. Sheth, “The Technology of Race and the Logics of Exclusion: The Unruly, Naturalization, and Violence”, *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 22.

³⁹ Fanon, *BSWM*, 197.

⁴⁰ Fanon, *WE*, 137.

⁴¹ Fanon, *BSWM*, xv, 188.

⁴² *Ibid*, 161.

⁴³ S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “The Decolonial Mandela: Embodiment of Peace, Justice, and Humanism”, *Journal of Developing Societies*. Volume: 31 issue: 3, (2015) 305-332.

⁴⁴ Ibid; Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*. (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008), ix, xi-xii.

⁴⁵ Maldonado-Torres, “Lewis Gordon: Philosopher of the human,” *CLR James Journal*, 14(1), (2008) 115, quoted in S.J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “The Decolonial Mandela: Embodiment of Peace, Justice, and Humanism”, *Journal of Developing Societies*. Volume: 31 issue: 3, (2015) 306.

⁴⁶ *WE*, lviii-lix.

⁴⁷ *Against War*, 112-114.

⁴⁸ *BSWM*, 205.

⁴⁹ *WE*, xliv.

⁵⁰ “The Decolonial Mandela,” 314.

⁵¹ Ibid, 327.

⁵² Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*, (Durham: NC, 2011), xiii.

⁵³ Ibid, 51.

⁵⁴ “Delinking” refers to the extrication of knowledge (or ways of thinking) from colonial frameworks. Epistemic disobedience is a necessary prerequisite to civil disobedience since notions of civil disobedience circulating within modern Western epistemic frameworks are only capable of reform rather than social transformation (Mignolo 2011: 54, 139).

⁵⁵ Mignolo, 54.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 143.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 51.

⁵⁸ *WE*, 2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 145-146.

⁶⁰ Fanon, *BSWM*, 193.

⁶¹ The ability to act is not always indicative of autonomy. Please see Michel Foucault, “The Subject of Power” *Power*, James D. Faubion ed, Robert Hurley trans (New York: The New Press, 2000), 337. See also Foucault, “The Ethics of Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom”, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, Paul Rainbow ed, Robert Hurley and others trans (New York: The New Press, 1997), 292.

⁶² Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon’s Dialectic*, 21.

⁶³ Fanon, *WE*, 178.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 146.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 179.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 139.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 38.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 144.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 179.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 178.

⁷¹ Fanon, *WE*, 97.

⁷² *Ibid*, 134.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 178.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

⁷⁵ *BSWM*, 193; 204.

⁷⁶ *BSWM*, xv; *WE*, 143.

⁷⁷ *WE*, 139; 140-141.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 140-141.

⁷⁹ “Deus ex machina” is a plot device wherein a seemingly insurmountable problem is resolved in an unanticipated and contrived manner. “Deus Ex Machina,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc, 2017); “Deus Ex Machina,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, (Merriam-Webster Inc, 2018).

⁸⁰ *WE*, 97.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 140.

⁸² *Ibid*, 235-239.

⁸³ Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, 2-3.

⁸⁴ Fanon, *WE*, 239.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 110.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 146.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 154-155.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 153.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 159.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 152.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 153.

⁹² *BSWM*, 197.

⁹³ *WE*, 154.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 152.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 153-154.

⁹⁶ Sekyi-Otu, “Form and Metaphor,” 134; 135.

⁹⁷ Mignolo, “Darker Side,” 122.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 207.

⁹⁹ Sekyi-Otu, *Fanon’s Dialectic*, 31.

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