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The Apocalypse of Hope:

Political Violence in the Writings of Sartre and Fanon

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Every society chooses its dead.
—Alfred Sauvy

"The apocalypse of hope" and other comparable flourishes in the writings of Frantz Fanon and Jean-Paul Sartre on political violence strike an alarming tone. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon advocates the way of revolutionary violence as the inevitable consequence of colonialism and its systematic exploitation of colonized natives. In his role of *agent provocateur*, Sartre's preface to Fanon's influential and controversial work characteristically dramatizes this redemptive promise of violence: "to gun down a European is to kill two birds with one stone . . . there remains a dead man and a free man."[1] This notorious pronouncement constitutes itself as an act of violence—we *must* feel threatened—meant to incite the latent counter-violence behind, in Sartre's diagnosis, the false consciousness of bourgeois toleration and understanding. Could Sartre's bold statement be spoken today without violent condemnation? This statement claims that, against the dehumanization of colonial oppression, only revolutionary violence allows for the colonized natives to constitute a "people" and recreate themselves in the image of a new humanity forged from the experience of liberation. For Fanon in particular, the recreation of humanity is impossible without the birth of a national consciousness and a revolutionary culture. As Fanon writes, "[w]e believe that the conscious, organized struggle undertaken by a colonized people in order to restore

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national sovereignty constitutes the greatest cultural manifestation that exists."[2] This reach toward a new humanism through the praxis of revolutionary violence ("for the colonized, this violence [i.e., revolutionary violence] represents the absolute praxis") points directly to the problem of beginnings. As Arendt observes in *On Revolution*, "[r]evolutions are the only political events which confront us directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning."[3] Anti-colonial violence, for Fanon, inaugurates the beginning of political life; the colonized native reconstitutes himself as a **bios politikos** capable of both speech and praxis. For Sartre, anti-colonial violence reveals the dialectical necessity of world history in its struggle towards genuine universality and the utopia of a "classless" society.

"The apocalypse of hope," "violence as the absolute praxis," "a new humanism"—do these concepts still mean anything for us today? Or do these banner statements signal a shrillness of tone in the absence of content? In a world in which violence has become, as Guy Debord insists, a form of spectacle, are we able to distinguish between the theater of violence, its rhetoric, and the struggle of its concept, its historical substance? Generals speak of combat operations in the idiom of American football; political actors apply terms without conceptual conscience; a search for the term "strike-zone" on the Internet gets you the incongruous array of "Hurricane Rita," "Curt Schilling," and "Tomahawk Missiles." "Deafness to linguistic meanings which would be serious enough," Arendt once warned, but when we conflate fundamental concepts that enable discourse, we also become blind "to the realities they correspond to."[4] She considered this blindness—which easily becomes a cover for unrestricted permissiveness in both word and deed—exemplified in the "glorification of violence" in the writings of Fanon and Sartre. In her confrontation with Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (as well as Sartre's preface) in her essay *On Violence*, it is not difficult to grasp why the stakes could not have been higher—the themes of language, praxis and new beginnings, central to both Fanon and Sartre, are also central to Arendt's political thinking and her envisioned regeneration of political life for Western civilization.

1. Arendt's Challenge

As in other areas of political philosophy, Arendt's critique of Fanon and Sartre offers a compass for continuing debate. Totalitarianism and the Cold War are the primary historical points of reference for Arendt's political thinking, but the Cold War in particular frames her reflections on violence and her unwelcoming reception of Fanon and Sartre, set against the backdrop of late 1960s student activism, the Civil Rights

movement, and the constant threat of nuclear conflagration. In the history of human civilization, the Cold War was an era uniquely defined by the possibility of global destruction. This possibility enveloped the world like an atmosphere; human existence was surrounded by the mass of a possibility that was stubbornly real, yet invisible. This atmosphere of global violence was the direct consequence of an anomaly in the history of military technology. According to Arendt, the perfection of nuclear weapons renders the political rationale of war obsolete by virtue of the efficacy of their destructive force. The "old verities," she writes, "about the relation between war and politics or about violence and power have become inapplicable" since nuclear weapons place in human hands an instrument of destruction for which no political end could be rational.[5] Nuclear weapons are not instruments for the successful waging of war; they are instruments for the deterrence of war. As Stanley Kubrick satirically portrayed in *Dr. Strangelove*, the instrumental irrationality of nuclear armaments becomes apparent with the hyper-rationalization of stockpiling as an end in itself and with the absurdity of projecting Cold War calculations into the post-apocalyptic ruins of human civilization.

Arendt proposes that a direct correlation exists between the collapse of war's political rationality in the arena of international relations and the collapse of political discourse within modern nation-states; as evidence, she points to the growing appeal of political violence in "domestic affairs" and "matters of revolution." Within the public sphere, increased bureaucratization of political institutions has ossified the power of speech and the essential "natality" of human agency, subsuming the latter under the predictability of calculation and control. In light of this alienation, acts of violence become seductive substitutes for the failure of speech and are seized upon as expressions of frustration, signs of life in a petrified life-world. Violence, she claims, emerges from impotence as well as a "vain hope" on the part of those who lack power. In its most extreme manifestation, violence promises a strategy of escape from a situation with no exit. Glorified as an end in itself, however, the attractiveness of violence tacitly confirms the death of political life and its necessary investment in the meaningfulness of speech. Both spaces of human agency—the public sphere within modern nation-states and the zones of international affairs between them—have collapsed under the weight of technological advances, "leading in so many instances straight into disaster."[6]

The substitution of violence for politics in "matters of revolution" is exemplified in the arguments of Fanon and Sartre, both of whom Arendt reads as culminating the trajectory of Western political thought in its secular and Judeo-Christian heritage, which equates power with

command or obedience. The failure to distinguish between power and violence goes hand in hand with the view that violence is the most flagrant manifestation of power. Power and violence are only separated by degrees along an unbroken continuum of agency. In contrast to this modern conception, Arendt identifies another stemming from the Greek experience of the polis and the political thinking of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers. The details as well as the difficulties with Arendt's provocative argument, in its historical and conceptual form, need not detain us here; her basic claim is that the rule of law within the Greek polis rested on the power of the people and the consent of citizenship. The distinction between power and violence, in this idealized version of Greek political life, overlaps with a distinction between persuasion and command. Persuasion is a phenomenon unique to speech, whereas command, although requiring speech, can also express itself through physical force and the use of instruments. Violence is the exertion of physical force, or the threat of physical harm, in the pursuit of obedience. As Arendt argues in *The Human Condition*, the polis is a city-in-speech in which persuasion holds sway and where a select group of citizens, freed from the necessities of labor and work, aspire to the "good life." Individuals outside (foreigners) as well as beneath (slaves or women) the polis are deprived of speech in being "deprived . . . of a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense."[7] In these speechless zones, "violence and force" are "justified" within the "pre-political" spheres of the household and the outside of the polis. The instrumentality of violence removes violence from the realm of speech, and since violence is incapable of speech, violence is "a marginal phenomenon of the political realm."[8]

Arendt's refutation of Fanon and Sartre in *On Violence* turns on rehabilitating a distinction between power and violence. Power she defines as the human ability to act in concert with other human beings through the bond of speech. Because of its collective character, power belongs to the group as such (an individual possesses strength, but not power) and remains in existence as long as the group remains intact. In contrast, she defines violence as entirely instrumental and inseparable from an understanding of power as command. Violence is the act of compelling another's will to act as I command through the use of implements, which (unstated in Arendt's proposed definition) threaten or cause physical harm or destruction. The instrumental character of violence can therefore be understood in two related senses: I make the other an instrument of my will in compelling him to act as I command, and the exercise of my command over his will requires the mediation of instruments. Coercive speech, on this account, would not properly constitute violence unless Arendt was to recognize an act of coercive speech

as an "instrumentalization" of language. Language would thus become a force without the hand of conviction.

Arendt's definition of violence tacitly appropriates Engels' conception of force in *Anti-Dühring*—though she rejects Engel's associated conflation of power and violence. Engels writes, "force is no mere act of the will, but requires very real preliminary conditions before it can come into operation, that is to say, *instruments*, the more perfect of which vanquishes the less perfect." As Engels convincingly argues, the history of force is inseparable from the history of technology (and, by extension, economic means of production). Harnessed to technology, violent force disrupts natural relations of strength (e.g., David vs. Goliath) as well as the rationality of numbers (e.g., a few armed men can defeat a numerically superior but unarmed mob). Referring to *Robinson Crusoe*, Engels wryly remarks that, "one fine morning Friday might appear with a loaded revolver in hand, and then the whole 'force' relationship is inverted. Friday commands, and it is Crusoe who has to drudge."[9]

The legitimacy of power is a function of its investment as an event of language since the legitimacy of power coincides with the foundation of a political constitution bound together by the collectively recognized meaningfulness of speech and individual liberty. As Arendt writes, "[p]ower springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then may follow."[10] The institution of legitimacy is not a particular action of the people but rather the creation of the people, by which we mean the opening of a discursive space in which agents discover themselves and recognize each other through the bond of speech; each speaker must recognize the other as an invested speaker, as a political being, by recognizing the meaningfulness of *another's* speech and her own responsibility of "accountability" (or "answerability") toward the other. Accordingly, Arendt stresses that the creation of legitimacy occurs in the "initial getting together" so as to present the legitimacy of power as an end in itself. The authority of power elicits respect in the name of its own legitimacy, for its own sake. Conversely, the demise of a political space implies the disintegration of power and the investment of speech. Revolution, on Arendt's view, is possible only when power has already become eroded or ossified. Violence released in the process of (successful) revolution requires the presence (or lack) of power "behind it," much as the legitimacy of power is rooted in the initial bonding of speakers prior to action.[11] Due to their exclusion from power, acts of violence can never legitimate the foundation of a political community—violence can be justifiable (self-defense, enforcement of laws, etc.), yet under no circumstance is violence legitimate or the true vehicle for a new beginning.

Arendt does not, however, entirely dismiss the social or psychological significance of violence, though she staunchly prevents the entry of violence into the realm of political significance. True to her Greek sources of inspiration, rage is an example of violence against injustice that is neither "inhuman" nor "merely emotional." In limited cases, violence may be justifiable on its own terms, but such violence is a "spontaneous" and "immediate" reaction that "loses its *raison d'être* when it tries to develop a strategy of its own with specific goals."[12] Because violence is instrumental, acts of violence need "guidance"—their justification is a function of proportionality in view of a desired end. This combination of spontaneity and lack of strategic value is also emphasized in Arendt's explanation for how violence can generate social solidarity, for example, when individuals come together in mutual self-defense. Arendt proposes a Heideggerian interpretation of what Sartre would call a "fused group": The perception of collective equality before death underpins the phenomenon of "brotherhood" among soldiers, but this sense of collectivity is said to possess only a transitory character.[13] The strength of Arendt's insights into different forms of "anti-political" violence (and Arendt is keen to reject the respective accounts of Freud and Lorenz on human violence) is her rejection of the view that violence is "irrational." But what emerges from her discussion is a stubborn refusal to grant violence, under any circumstance or in any form, the robustness of action and political significance (in the terms defined by Arendt). The devaluation of the "social," which has often been noted in Arendt's thinking, surfaces once more in the exclusion of violence from the political. Violence is a reaction, but not an action capable of interrupting "automatic processes in the realm of human affairs."[14] Violence can promote reform and pursue "short-term goals," yet violence cannot launch a revolution or become a project. Violence can "dramatize grievances" or draw attention to a just cause, but it is unable to articulate a concern. In short, violence is drama, gesture, or the semblance of action.

In *On Violence*, Arendt's critique of Fanon and Sartre draws its argument from her proposed distinction between power and violence, and in light of this seminal distinction, Arendt's essay provides a compass of rejection. With this compass in hand, critiques of Fanon and Sartre can follow different lines of argument: rejecting the "creative" capacity of violence; denying the therapeutic promise of violence; debunking the concepts of "revolutionary peasant-class" or "class-conflict"; and appealing to historical examples, for example, the development of Algeria after independence. Given this range of options, I decided to make things difficult for myself by thinking about how to approach Fanon and Sartre as a set of responses to what I call

"Arendt's Challenge." In so doing, I am interested in the framing of a debate rather than a settling of scores; but most importantly, I want to avoid reacting to what we think Fanon and Sartre mean or what we want them to mean, and, instead, think through the terms of their argument while at the same time meeting the terms of their most strident critic.

Arendt's challenge can be divided into three main lines of argumentation. Does Engels' definition of violence, which Arendt accepts without substantial qualification, offer an adequate framework for understanding the nature of violence? In his preface, Sartre claims that, "aside from Sorel's fascist chatter, you will find that Fanon is the first since Engels to focus again on the midwife of history." Fanon's interest in violence, Sartre continues, does not emerge from "hotheadedness" (*un sang trop vif*—the play on an entrenched racial prejudice is lost in translation) or an "unhappy childhood," but from the analysis of an historical situation: colonialism.[15] Though retaining Engels' insight into the instrumental character of violence, Fanon's (and Sartre's) analysis of violence challenges the traditional conception of violence; this challenge reflects the historical novelty of colonialism itself. Colonialism reveals violence in a new form, not simply in its recognizable form as an instrument—the most visible manifestation of violence—but in terms of what we might call, borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu, "symbolic violence," by which we mean violence exercised through "meaning" and "misrecognition." In addition to tracking the different forms of symbolic violence within the colonial arrangement, both Fanon and Sartre argue that colonial violence is a "historical system" (a form of "totalization," in Sartre's technical vocabulary) that produces alienation of both oppressors and oppressed. In this sense, violence is constitutive of an enveloping form of reciprocity between colonialists and colonized natives. Fanon's metaphor, "this atmospheric violence, this violence rippling under the skin," captures the diffuse yet concrete form of colonial violence.[16] In the case of Fanon, the psycho-pathological diagnosis of colonialism as inflicting trauma, neurosis, and an inferiority complex on colonized populations reinforces descriptively the claim that violence is not merely instrumental but constitutive of subjects.

The argument that violence is not merely instrumental does not amount to demonstrating that violence is power in the sense that is important for Arendt, namely, as the condition of possibility for political action and the investment of its legitimacy. Responding to this line of argumentation—central to Arendt's political thinking in *On Revolution*—would require demonstrating how the initial gathering of a political body is constituted by an act of collective violence, but not under the threat of imminent danger, i.e., not as self-defense. This

political body of violence could not be a professional military organization since Arendt implicitly understands the institution of the military as an instrument of the state. In Fanon, the "revolutionary people's army" represents the constitution of a political body in violence. Specifically, Fanon's "revolutionary peasant movement" reflects elements from Sartre's conception of the "fused group" and a Maoist vision of the peasant revolutionary army.

The conception of violence in both Fanon and Sartre is a complex idea that contains different strands of meaning. A detailed analysis (which goes beyond the scope of this paper) would have to identify each strand, assess its meaning, and relate it to other strands. For Fanon, the political significance of anti-colonial violence gathers its significance and "legitimacy" from both the social and psychological dimensions of colonial violence. Given this "bundle" conception of violence, the underlying vision of violence as "creative" also operates in different registers, but its dominant meaning, for Fanon, resides within its promise for the foundation of a national consciousness. Creative violence means primarily the self-determination of a national people.

A conspicuous feature of Arendt's discussion of Fanon and Sartre is her failure to recognize the problem of colonialism in which their respective claims about the necessity and meaning of violence are formulated. This blindness to the problem of colonialism is coupled with her strategy of demonstrating that this "new shift towards violence in the thinking of the revolutionaries" is inconsistent with the Marxist tradition, with which Fanon and Sartre are commonly identified. Baffled that the "new preachers of violence are unaware of their decisive disagreement with Karl Marx's teachings," she notes that Fanon's theoretical arguments, which have invigorated the "new militants," "contain usually nothing but a hodgepodge of all kinds of Marxist leftovers."[17] Reacting to Sartre's inflammatory statement, cited above in my opening paragraph, Arendt remarks, "[t]his is a sentence Marx could have never written."18 Yet both Fanon and Sartre, and to different degrees, deliberately understand their respective analyses as rethinking the basic concepts of Marxist thinking. As explicitly formulated in his programmatic treatise *Search for a Method* (*Questions de méthode*), the project of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (*Critique de la raison dialectique*) consists in refashioning basic Marxist concepts in light of historical development since Marx. "Marxism has stopped in its track," Sartre writes.[19] As a philosophy of "totalization," Marxism must continually return to history in order to reinvigorate and recalibrate its conceptual framework. Indeed, Marx could not have written "this sentence" much as Marx could not and did not properly understand the unique historical character of colonialism. In *The Wretched of*

the Earth, Fanon adopts a more cautious attitude vis-à-vis Marxist thinking by stating that "[t]he basic issue with which we are faced is not the unequivocal choice between socialism and capitalism such as they have been defined by men from different continents and different periods of time." And yet socialism would allow liberated nations of the "third-world" to progress "faster in greater harmony."[20] Sartre's confidence in basic Marxist insights remains unshaken by the colonial experience; his analysis of colonialism is meant to confirm the dialectical structure of class-struggle and inner contradictions of capitalism. By contrast, Fanon remains ambivalent; colonialism presents a challenge for Marxism insofar as European communist parties failed to rally around the cause of colonial liberation and insofar as colonialism presents a conceptual challenge to Marxist thinking. The problem of colonialism represents a historically "new" form of experience that promises the possibility of a new humanism. The reliance on a Maoist vocabulary reflects the urgency of Fanon's writing and the problem of finding a language for the future of a possibility that has yet to liberate itself from the historical reality of colonialism. Marx's insight that "[t]he social revolution of the nineteenth century can only create its poetry from the future, not from the past" takes an unexpected significance in the struggle of Fanon's particular brand of *négritude*.[21]

2. Black Orpheus

In "Black Orpheus," Sartre's preface to Léopold Sédar Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache*, the literary movement of *négritude* is placed in the context of modern French poetry and the program of its "auto-destruction of language."[22] Sartre's typical characterization of French poetry invokes the revolution in word inaugurated by Mallarmé and the quest for a "pure poetry" that defined his twentieth-century legacy. "You don't make poems with ideas, but with words," Mallarmé once quipped, and guided by this intention of wrestling the medium of poetry from "ideas," the sonorous flesh of words must be liberated from the entrapment of externality in its various forms and guises. As opposed to prose, in which language refers to something other than itself and is subjugated to the grammar of communication and praxis, *le Dire* of the poet evokes a self-referential order of images and sounds, striving towards a purity to which Mallarmé simply, yet enigmatically, gave the name of "nothingness." Mallarmé's practice of breaking syntax and transforming ordinary words into "strange birds delighting in their unknown skies" by retrieving their archaic meanings exemplifies his purification of language through its destruction.[23]

Poetry is violence, yet the "*auto-da-fé* of language"[24] in *négritude* poetry introduces a form of engagement that departs from the aestheticism of twentieth-century French poetry. This transformation of poetry into a revolution of word *and* deed produces a discontinuity within French literary language that reflects the linguistic condition of French colonialism. As Sartre informs his readers, the poems contained in Senghor's anthology were neither written for the colonialists (*les colons*) nor for us, their silent accomplices. Sartre addresses his French compatriots; he speaks to them in the hope of speaking for them. The poems of *négritude* do not speak to us—they speak to those who are not fully recognized as speakers in the eyes of France. Although written in French, the poems of *négritude* address the "blacks" (*les noirs*). Poetry is illumination, and in the case of *négritude*, poetry is the manifestation of self-consciousness (*prise de conscience*), an awareness of self in which a movement of transcendence begins. Sartre's mode of address and self-appointed role of mediation between the French who fail to recognize the blacks, to whom these poems are not addressed, and the blacks who recognize each other beneath the stone gaze of French colonialism is repeated in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Considered with their respective prefaces by Sartre, both of these significant works of anti-colonial literature mirror a bilingualism internal to French literary and intellectual culture that reflects the problem of colonialism. In the case of *The Wretched of the Earth* in its published form, although Fanon's main text and Sartre's preface are each written in French, these two authors do not *perform* the same act of speaking French. To express this point differently, the presence of *négritude* creates a zone of opacity within the French language by formulating a "counter-language" and a "counter-project" *in French* against the language and destiny of France. This divide between two worlds of speakers within the same language is manifest in the physical division between a preface, written by Sartre, a Frenchman, addressed to other Frenchmen, and the main text, written by Fanon, a colonized native and addressed to other subjects of colonialism.

Two further aspects of Sartre's interpretation of *négritude* as a form of self-consciousness are significant. The objective condition of colonial exploitation in its various socio-economic and cultural consequences is rendered into a theme of reflection in the "songs" (*les chants*) of *négritude*. These poems offer a vivid testament to the plight of blacks in different colonial territories. As a mirror reflecting the world in which they find themselves, *négritude* poetry provides a vehicle for the emergence of a "class consciousness," or more accurately stated, a "race consciousness." In addition to this objective reflection, *négritude* also embodies a "subjective" form of reflection: blacks discover themselves in recognizing the truth of their being-in-the-world. Blacks thereby not

only transcend their alienated condition and define themselves freely, they also begin to explore the question of their identity and "essence." *Négritude* poetry is a movement of "remembrance" that reclaims and refashions a stolen and defaced identity. It is primarily with this "subjective" dimension in mind that Sartre makes the classical comparison in the title of his preface. As Sartre explains, I shall call this poetry 'Orphic' because the black person's untiring descent into himself reminds us of Orpheus' quest to reclaim Eurydice from Pluto."[25] Black Orpheus must call upon the spell of his songs to raise ghosts from the dead and, descending into the underworld of colonialism, lead Eurydice back into the living.

Négritude is a mirror and a beacon, self-reflection and guide to action. Speaking in French, the language of his oppressor, Black Orpheus finds himself in a situation of exile and must struggle against the language of his imprisonment. The struggle of Black Orpheus cannot be simply compared to the struggle of other minor literatures, for example, Irish or Catalan, since in each of these cases, a poet has recourse to a national language and cultural tradition which, although suppressed under the imposition of a foreign national identity, nonetheless lays claim to an identifiable origin. The poets of *négritude* are orphans; they are unable to rely on a single vernacular or common origin. Poets from diverse French colonial possessions must therefore employ by default the language of their oppressors in order to unite disparate peoples. In this regard, Aimé Césaire, for example, turns the French language against itself through a negating purification of its purity, its whiteness, and its "French-ness." Using French to give voice to the experience of colonized Martinique, and with an emphasis on reinvigorating an "oral popular culture" untainted by French cultural impositions, *négritude* (in its Césarian form) adopts a quasi-Mallarmian strategy of violence and purification. Poetry is violence perpetrated against language, but it is also a retrieval of a lost origin (e.g., *Notebooks of a Return to the Native Land* [*Cahiers d'un retour au pays natal*]). As Sartre comments, "he [the black poet] therefore attempts to destroy systematically the European establishment and this spirit of demolition symbolizes the great taking of arms in the future by which the blacks will destroy their chains."[26]

Sartre considers *négritude* as the dialectical moment of negativity in the sublimation of an internal contradiction within colonialism that leads to the true universality of a "classless"—and presumably "raceless"—utopia without specific cultural content other than the particular histories that lead to a common freedom. The argument of his preface reveals how the apparent "racial" poetry of *négritude* is instead a "song of all and for all" *(un chant de tous et pour tous*) that gives "birth" (the

imagery of pregnancy and birth is present throughout Sartre's assessment) to a universalism of the future (*l'universalisme futur*), but not the abstract universalism of liberal humanism that Sartre never tired of rejecting. *Négritude* is the negation of the false universalism of "whiteness" without, however, inaugurating a form of reverse racism. Much as the slave in Hegel's master-slave dialectic transcends his condition by discovering universality, blacks transcend their condition of alienation by discovering in their "blackness" the universality of the future. As Sartre writes, "The black person must therefore die of white culture in order to be reborn in a black soul, much as the Platonic philosopher dies in his body in order to be reborn in truth."[27] Reading this striking Sartrean metaphor closely, the black person must discover the colorless universality of a disembodied truth. Sartre thus dialectically empowers *négritude* to the degree that he disarms *négritude* of its *négritude*. This rebirth in truth precipitates the genuine universalism of the classless society at the center of Sartre's envisioned utopia. Capitalism can only collapse from its own internal contradictions once it has reached its most extreme point of expansion in colonialism; the hope of the "third world" is, for Sartre, the hope of humanity. As Sartre underlines, "black poetry of the French language is today the only great revolutionary poetry." The distance between Mallarmé and the proletariat that defines the impasse of European modernism is transcended with the revolutionary "song of all and for all" of *négritude*. "For once, the most authentic revolutionary project and the most pure poetry emerges from the same source."[28]

As Fanon notes in *Black Skin, White Masks*, "[e]ver since Sartre's decisive essay *What Is Literature?* . . . literature has been committed more and more to its sole really *contemporary* task, which is to persuade the group to progress to reflection and mediation."[29] Fanon's own writings can be seen as an "engaged literature," as a unique and *affective* form of writing that blurs the genres of clinical report, philosophical treatise, political manifesto, and autobiography. The coincidence of revolutionary project and pure poetry in *négritude* is transformed into revolutionary prose that embraces poetry and political action. As Fanon argues, Sartre's vision of *négritude* hinges on the assumption of "a mythic fecundity" (*fécondité mythique*) in its poetical language. Yet, Fanon suggests that Sartre's *Black Orpheus*, despite its attempt to recognize *négritude* as "engagement," "is a date in the intellectualization of the *experience* of being black," which results in destroying "black enthusiasm."[30] On Sartre's reading, *négritude* is a struggle to fashion a language—a native land or *pays natal*—with a magical invocation of the "purity of blackness," armed with the poetical devices of oral rhythms, local dialects, and regional lexical inflections. But Fanon takes issue with this Sartrean reading by referring to Michel Leiris' insight:

> [I]f in the writers of the Antilles there does exist a desire to break away from the literary forms associated with formal education, such a desire, oriented toward a purer future, could not take on an aspect of folklore. Seeking above all, in literature, to formulate the message that is properly theirs, and in the case of some of them at least, to be the spokesmen of an authentic race whose potentials have never been acknowledged, they scorn such devices.[31]

As an example of a spokesman of the future, Fanon looks to Aimé Césaire, whose poem *Et les chiens se taisaient* fulfills the crucial role in both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* of speaking directly for violence. At crucial moments of revelation and in Fanon's prose, we must always *listen* to a poet's word. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon adopts Sartre's "Orphic" description and speaks of Césaire as having "descended" ("Césaire est descendu"); his return, carrying the blacks on his shoulder (if the Césaire is a Black Orpheus, does Eurydice symbolize the black people?), is a movement of ascension, but not towards Sartre's envisioned universal. As Fanon states clearly, "I have nothing to do with searching for the universal." Indeed, Sartre, "has forgotten that the black person suffers in her body differently than the white person" in failing to recognize that the black person is "[n]ot yet white, no longer wholly black, I was damned"—a line that already announces the title of Fanon's final work.[32] In a passage that merits full citation, Fanon reveals in clear terms his objection to Sartre's reading and in the same breath the direction in which he wants to take the problem and project of *négritude*.

> One can understand why Sartre views the adoption of a Marxist position by black poets as the logical conclusion of *négritude*. In effect, what happens is this: as I begin to recognize that the black person is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the black person. But then I recognize that I am black. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention or else I want them to find value in what is bad.[33]

The strategy of "finding value in what is bad" through a Nietzschean act of reversal whereby "bad" becomes "good," "black" becomes "beautiful," and "nigger" becomes a term of endearment—in other words, Sartre's proposition that black poets subvert the values of European culture *in becoming them*—Fanon considers as succumbing to the neurotic condition of colonialism. Whereas Sartre understands a polar opposition between "white" and "black," Fanon recognizes a subtle conflict between "white" and "black skin/white masks." Black people must become liberated from the "arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment" and this requires killing the white within the black by killing the white master. This act of killing the white master *in himself* by killing the white person who is his master,

as evoked in Césaire's *Et les chiens se taisaient*, is the "baptism" of liberation. The "good slave" does not turn away from the master to universality through labor, but turns *against* the master through the praxis of violence. "The last shall be first," Fanon will claim in *The Wretched of the Earth*. The proposed solution consists in rejecting "this absurd drama" and the "two terms that are equally unacceptable, and, through one human being, to reach out for the universal."[34] In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon rejects Sartre's vision of *négritude* by attending to the condition of existing simultaneously on two non-coinciding planes—black skin, white masks.

3. Bilingualism

A particular form of bilingualism is the key to Fanon's thinking and his diagnosis of the colonial condition. Martinique and other French Caribbean territories are linguistically idiosyncratic, for although two languages are spoken (Creole and French), these communities are neither entirely bilingual nor monolingual.[35] The basic lexical structure of Creole is derived from French, yet it does not share French syntax or morphology, nor are the two languages mutually comprehensible. The origin of Creole remains obscure and a politically charged issue; current theories range from claiming that Creole has its roots in a pidgin language that emerged during the seventeenth century between African slaves and French colonialists to claims that Creole derives from eighteenth century French Maritime trade-speak. It also remains a debatable question whether Creole has one or many original sources. The influence of numerous African languages (primarily from the African Western Coast) is apparent in Creole. Creole's syncretism reflects the historical conditions of its origin. It is a language defining a community of disparate peoples brought together without any common reference other than the arbitrariness of violence that created their shared homelessness. Imported slaves in French Caribbean possessions were forbidden to speak their own native language and were separated from tribe and family members for the purpose of stifling organized revolt. In being deprived of their native language, slaves were constituted as "non-speakers" (Creole may also have emerged as a form of "baby-talk" between masters and slaves) and, in this fashion, were deprived of a way of life in which speech made sense. Situated at the margins of the polis, slaves were **aneu logou**—deprived of speech and a political life.

The relationship between Creole and French arguably became more complex with independence and the abolishment of slavery, and this condition is reflected in the socio-linguistic constitution of Fanon's native territory. Martinique is divided into a monolingual majority of

blacks speaking Creole and a bilingual black elite speaking both Creole and French. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon paints a vivid psychological portrait of self-division for these bilingual speakers: the black person becomes whiter in direct proportion to her assimilation of French language and culture, yet increased assimilation heightens a complex of inferiority toward the white masters to whom she aspires. On the other hand, Creole was considered a "baby-talk" given the widespread perception of Creole as a "non-language" among the bilingual middle-class. The black person is caught in a double-bind: speaking as a foreigner in a language to which he aspires and as a "native" in a language without a definable origin, he is stranded in his own native tongue and hostage to a foreign language he considers the only veritable form of speech and recognition.

This form of bilingualism is not based on the mutual recognition that is characteristic of bilingualism in two languages such as Russian and French. A Russian would be excused for her imperfect French; I might even find her slips of accent and grammatical mistakes charming because, as a native French speaker, I acknowledge in her mistakes the speaker of another major language not my own. She is a foreigner who is nonetheless familiar, for I can imagine myself in her position, bravely misspeaking Russian. Her mistakes in French are due to her belonging to another nation of speakers; they are not markers of social class or signs of racial inferiority, but a confirmation that others have homes in linguistic communities other than my own. In the case of the black person, French, perfect or imperfect, is condemnation: we do not recognize the black person as belonging to his own "native" or major language in which we could imagine ourselves as foreigners. The black person is not a foreigner but an alien in or alienated from both the major language of French and the patois of Creole. This asymmetrical bilingualism between a recognized "major" language (French) and an unrecognized "minor" language, as Fanon exposes in the first chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*, is reproduced *within* French, distributed across the two forms of address: the white other as *vous* (major) and the black other as *tu* (diminutive and informal "you").

Fanon opens *Black Skin, White Masks* with a discussion of language in which he introduces the basic argument of his book, that the black person exists in two dimensions. This ambiguous condition of existing on two planes that fail to align is manifest in language, for language, as Fanon reminds us, is the manner in which I exist for another: to speak is to appear to another and become recognized by another as a speaker or "consciousness." Fanon's analysis of language reflects the asymmetrical bilingualism described above. The *bourgeoisie* in the Antilles regard the patois of Creole as an inferior language and strive to assimi-

late themselves to French culture through increased French linguistic competence. This tension between the Creole they wish to escape and the French they wish to embrace plays itself out geographically in the tension between Fort-de-France and the Parisian *métropole*: the newly arrived *débarqué* from a sojourn in France "only responds in French and often no longer understands Creole." But even during his sojourn in France, the native son is not immune from his bilingual condition. When speaking French in France, the black person encounters a form of bilingualism reproduced within French; the relationship of inferiority (the couple of major-minor) that structures the bilingualism of French-Creole is reproduced within the experience of speaking French in France: The black person can never escape the condition of bilingualism; his slights of accent continually betray his condition and aspiration. In a doctor's waiting room in France, twenty Europeans are greeted by the doctor in the formal and respectful manner of address: "Asseyez-vous, monsieur . . . Pourquoi venez-vous? . . . De quoi souffrez-vous?" As soon as a black person enters who speaks fluent French, the doctor fails to grant the same status of recognition, as is revealed by the switch to the informal and, in this context, condescending *tu* form of address: "Assieds-toi, mon brave . . . Qu'est-ce que tu as? . . . Où as-tu mal?"[36] Even when the black person speaks French flawlessly, his skin betrays him: "I beg your pardon, sir, would you mind telling me where the dining-car is located?" "Sure, my little friend, you take that door, you see, and follow that corridor straight—one, two, three cars, and there you are."[37] A white person addresses a black person as if addressing a child, and even if the white person intends no malice, it is precisely this absence of malice and absence of intention, this lack of awareness, that shows that we are in the presence of a collective attitude that withholds the black person any recognition as a speaker of a major language. Language is the repository of the social unconscious and its prejudices; in the collective unconscious of *homo occidentalis*, the black person registers as barely audible and visible.

The attempt to fashion a language with which to extricate himself from the condition of asymmetrical bilingualism is the basic problem of Fanon's thinking, and this problem, as with any problem of fundamental significance, takes on different forms in his writings. Given the linguistic homelessness of blacks and the absence of a single origin that haunts their condition, Fanon reverses Sartre's reading of *négritude*. Rather than attempt to retrieve a forgotten or lost origin in its purity, *négritude* poets "scorn traditional poetical devices" in order "to become a spokesman of an authentic race whose potentials have never been acknowledged."[38] This potential is foremost the creation of a monolingual vernacular—a vernacular of national consciousness—through the

overcoming of bilingualism in this particular colonized form. This commitment to delineating a territory within language for a yet unimagined people—a humanity of the future—also implies a concern for the proper definition of concepts that pervades Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, but also Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Both authors seek to provide a conceptual language that is true to history, and that, in this truth, precipitates its fulfillment. As Sartre announces in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, "[a] French-speaking ex-native bends the language to new requirements, fashions it for his own use, and speaks to the colonized alone."[39] This "bending of language to new requirements" easily serves as an accurate characterization of Sartre's contemporaneous project in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. As Sartre notes, his analyses are meant to demonstrate that, along with other concepts, "we should no longer cheat with such precise and true words as praxis and struggle."[40]

4. The Infernal Machine

Two stories by H.G. Wells, read as allegories of colonialism, can serve to delineate the main accents in Sartre and Fanon's interpretations of colonialism, which, for the sake of our argument, are here woven together into a composite portrait. In *The War of the Worlds*, Martians—for reasons left unspecified—invade England (and the rest of the world) armed with superior technology and set about the indiscriminate destruction of human civilization. It quickly becomes apparent to the heroic narrator of these cataclysmic events that, once their conquest has been accomplished, Martian colonizers will begin "catching us systematic, picking the best and storing us in cages and things." In introducing his story, the narrator gives pause to strike a conciliatory note by cautioning his readers that, "before we judge them too harshly we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanished bison and the dodo, but upon its inferior races. . . . Are we such apostles of mercy as to complain if the Martians warred in the same spirit?"[41] Wells' Martians present the now iconic features of an invading colonizing force: superior technology, lack of any communicative interest with the indigenous population, and ruthless conquest. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the castaway Prendrick finds himself on an island populated by a "beast-folk," the products of ghastly vivisection created by Dr. Moreau and his assistant Montgomery. These "sub-human" creatures, neither human nor animal, live in fear according to a set of laws, given to them by Dr. Moreau, centered on the prohibition of tasting blood. As an allegory of the colonial situation, as Sartre suggests, "[t]he colonial-

ist lives on an 'Island of Dr. Moreau', surrounded by terrifying beasts created in the image of man, but botched, and whose poor adaptation (neither animals nor human creatures) is expressed in hatred and cruelty: these beasts *wish* to destroy their beautiful image, the colonialists, the perfect man."[42] In Wells' story, once the beast-folk have broken the prohibition of tasting blood and conquered their sense of inferiority, the wish to destroy their masters becomes a frenzied reality. Dr. Moreau and his erstwhile assistant Montgomery are slain, and Prendrick abandons the island, living to tell his story.

It is significant that the anxiety of colonialization reflected in modern science-fiction writing appears in concert with the height of European imperialism toward the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[43] This apocalyptic vision of "alien invasion" can be seen as the expression of anthropological racism, that is, a racism directed against the human species as such, rather than against ethnic groups within the species, as practiced by human beings against each other. A more elaborate interpretation might also argue for a stronger correlation between the guilty anxiety of becoming colonized by another species and Western civilization's aggression against "uncivilized" peoples. To what degree, however, a meaningful connection can be established between the literary genre of "alien invasion" and colonialism remains an open question; let me simply note that Western culture's historically unprecedented anxiety over becoming colonized shadows, even haunts, its historically unprecedented colonization of the planet. Is colonization *the* defining anxiety of the twentieth century? For my immediate purpose, Wells' two stories can be taken as literary shorthand for the two stages that Sartre identifies in the formation of colonialism.

In *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre presents a compact analysis of colonialism in order to provide "[f]or the first time" in his unfinished work "an outline of an initial description of the formal structures of the concrete." This discussion of colonialism marks an important point of transition where Sartre's refashioning of Marxism directly confronts the contemporary world. This turn to contemporary history allows Sartre to prove the sharpness of his dialectical concepts by rendering the structure of colonialism transparent; by providing a dialectical analysis of colonialism, the final stage (in his mind) of capitalism, Sartre's aim is to show "that we should no longer cheat with such precise and true words as *praxis* and *struggle*." The true nature of struggle can only be revealed in the final stage of world history; without this work of conceptual clarification, "action and History lose their sense and words no longer have any meaning."[44] Specifically, Sartre is keen to demonstrate how "class struggle" has true historical significance. The

conflict between colonialists and colonized natives represents the most advanced stage in the project of capitalist exploitation and the dialectical workings of class struggle. I shall bracket Sartre's broader argument regarding class conflict as the plot of "History" and focus instead on the analysis of colonialism, placing particular emphasis on the central claim that colonialism is a system of violence, or, in Sartre's terminology, "an infernal machine."

Sartre identifies two successive stages in the formation of colonialism: conquest and colonialization.[45] According to Sartre, the colonial expansion of European powers "*realized* an original situation of violence for the colonialists as their fundamental relation to the natives," and this fundamental condition of violence reflects the conditions of violence under which colonial territories were first appropriated.[46] From the beginning, violence determined the essence and trajectory of colonialism. Sartre takes the French colonial experience in Algeria (conquered between 1830 and 1844) as his primary historical reference, yet his emphasis on the systematic nature of colonialism unmistakably reflects the "Age of Imperialism" during the last decades of the nineteenth century, as epitomized in the Congress of Berlin (1884-1885) and its ratification of the so-called "African Scramble" among European powers between 1875 and 1905. Colonialism has the organized character of a total project that draws upon the resources of European modernity. Every distinguishing facet of the development of European modernity during the nineteenth century played a crucial role in the colonial project—the rise of nationalism, the idea of progress, industrialization, etc. Yet, curiously, Sartre's reading of European colonialism remains silent on the significance of nationalism and underlines, instead, its economic engine. The structure of oppression within European nations is displaced onto conquered territories, and, in this regard, Sartre follows the broad outlines of Lenin's influential thesis regarding the relationship between imperialism and capitalism (for my purposes, I use the terms "imperialism" and "colonialism" interchangeably). Colonialism must be considered as a three-termed relationship between the *métropole* (France), colonialists (French Algerians), and colonized natives (Algerians). The French proletariat creates a homeland abroad in which they could escape their homeland exploitation by the bourgeois of the *métropole* and exploit the newly created colonized proletariat. With its essential connection to modern capitalism, colonialism is a "totalization," by which Sartre understands both the production of history as well as the unfolding of its dialectical intelligibility. Controversially, non-European nations only enter into "History" and attain dialectical significance *through* colonialization.

Essential to Sartre's argument is the claim that "in *all* practices of colonialization, violence and destruction were an integral part of the

desired objective." Colonial conquest permeates every sphere of indigenous culture. Indigenous populations are "liquidated," either by means of physical violence, through the introduction of diseases, or through hunger, as a consequence of economic destruction. Native institutions—political, social, and cultural—are dissolved; native languages are prohibited and replaced with a forced assimilation of the "major" language of conquest. Land and other economic resources are plundered and become the property of the colonial power. And finally, an economic relation of "systematic super-exploitation" is established between colonized territories and the *métropole*. At the basis of colonialism is not simply economic exploitation, but rather a "social force" that creates a situation in which colonized natives are deprived of their humanity through a variety of devices such as racism and exploitation, and prevented from existing in a social world of their making and traditions. Colonized natives exist in what Sartre calls "a practico-inert hell."[47]

After the initial stage of conquest, colonialization becomes transformed into a permanent condition in which the original praxis of violence congeals into a system of colonialism; praxis is mutated into what Sartre terms "the practico-inert," which designates the manner in which praxis—which Sartre defines as any activity (either of an individual or a group) of organizing material conditions in view of a desired objective—becomes self-perpetuating as a habit or institution that embodies praxis but no longer continues the activity itself. As a passive or inert structure (metaphors of objectification and immobility—petrified, ossified, congealed—are favored by Sartre), the practico-inert designates the form in which praxis becomes a "habit" or **hexis**. Yet the practico-inert can dissolve back into activity or become reconfigured into another form of the practico-inert or praxis. For example, the original expeditionary force sent to conquer Algeria in 1830 was named *l'Armée d'Afrique* and continued its project of pacification until the mid-1840s. This army of conquest subsequently became a permanent establishment of French Algeria (as well as other North African possessions with continued French colonial expansion). Reconstituted as an institution, *l'Armée d'Afrique* was based in Algeria (and not in France), and included foreign colonial regiments, adopted its own distinctive types of uniform and military formations (e.g., Zouaves and Spahis), and developed a distinctive military culture. In Sartre's terminology, the creation of a permanent colonial army stationed in a colonized territory represents the passage from the praxis of conquest to the practico-inert. Violence is institutionalized in the colonial army in order to maintain "law and order." It is the *presence* of this institution that constitutes an inert form of violence, for, as Sartre argues, this standing reserve is itself the threat of violence that keeps the colonized masses in a state of

passivity. Occasional disturbances by the native population are dealt with ruthlessly; in such an instance, the "inertia-violence" of the colonized army is made manifest. Apartheid and other forms of segregation offer another example for the **hexis** of the practico-inert. The segregation of bathrooms in the American South into rooms for "whites" and "negroes" is both an institution, sanctioned by official policy, and a habit or "mentality" embedded in language and daily behavior. If a black person suddenly refuses to use the designated bathroom or sit in a designated place on a bus, that is, were a black person *to act*, the practico-inert structure of segregation would in turn *react* and slip back into a praxis of violence—denunciation, arrest, forced removal.

The practico-inert field of colonialism is the continuation of original violence by other means: violence must sustain itself as a condition. Sartre's characterization of the formation of colonialism (as the practico-inert) from conquest (as the praxis of violence) recognizes in colonialism the reversal of Clausewitz's formula that war is the continuation of politics by other means. Colonization is the continuation of war—the original war of conquest—by the other means of education, language, and the European mission of civilization. As Sartre writes: "For the child of the colonialist, violence was present in the situation itself, and was a social force which produced him. The son of the colonialist and the son of the Muslim are both children of the objective violence which defines the system itself as a practico-inert hell."[48] The basic form of this reciprocal condition of violence is, according to Sartre, expressed in racism. Racism is violence, not only because racism is predicated on hate and the latent desire for the destruction of the other, but also because the colonized native is constituted (Fanon speaks of "mystification") as "other-than-man" *in the specific character* of "enemy of humanity." In Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, we find numerous references to different ways in which "to be black" is given the symbolic significance of "evil," "bestial," and "barbaric." Black is the archetype of all those values that threaten and negate the values of European civilization. Moreover, the black person is reduced to uncivilized "nature" and primal sexuality. Blacks are constituted as "dangerous," as a presence that might infect and corrupt white culture, not only culturally but also biologically and at the level of the body. As Fanon writes, "[t]o suffer from a phobia of black people is to be afraid of the biological. For the black person is only biological. Black people are animals."[49]

In Sartre's framework, the colonized native is constituted as a permanent threat and source of violence against the colonialists. In "discovering" the colonized native as violence incarnate, the *colon* "discovers" himself as justified in his own violence in order to protect himself

against the threat posed by the "other than humanity." In this fashion, the violence of the *colon* gives itself its own justification. The *colon* represents his condition to himself as besieged—the threat of the subjugated native is everywhere and nowhere. The *colon* masks his own violence by recognizing himself as courageous in the face of the native threat. Reciprocally, in recognizing the lack of courage, or cowardliness, on the part of the colonized native, the *colon* confirms his own self-image; the colonized native always resorts to ruse and deception. As Sartre argues, "the *colon* reveals the violence of the native, even in his passivity, as the obvious consequence of his own violence and as its justification."[50] The native is constituted as a permanent enemy; but it is precisely through hate that the other is constituted as enemy. In this regard, racism is self-justifying and self-induced violence: I am violent toward the native because he induces me to violence. My violence is always justified because it is a violence of self-defense. Sartre's etiology of colonial racism as hate shares a circularity that is familiar from his analysis of anti-Semitism: The colonialist chooses himself in the situation of hate in order to create the native as an object of hate, yet determining himself in the situation of hatred creates the native as hated, as the other of humanity. The *colon* exists on two levels, "ferocious to those who frighten him and who he wishes to subjugate *and* . . . lives in this ferocity of the other as necessity."[51] The *colon* and the colonized native form a "couple" and are the products of an antagonistic condition. Violence is a basic form of reciprocity, by which Sartre means that exploitation is not a *result* of struggle but a reciprocal relation. Reciprocity is praxis with a double epicenter, and this violence is a form of reciprocal recognition of freedom. Violence is the struggle of freedom against freedom through the mediation of matter.

In Sartre's analysis of colonialism, the ontological condition of violence—the fabric of social reality—prevents the colonized native from praxis. Colonial racism keeps the "masses" (colonized people) in a state of "molecular aggregation" or "atomization," by which Sartre means, drawing on his general concept of "seriality," that colonized natives are constituted as "other-determined"—determined by the racial prejudices and economic exploitation of the colonial system. Colonized natives exist in molecular exile at the boundary of life and death; they exist at this boundary not only in the economic terms of existing barely at the threshold of life; they are constituted *as* this boundary—they are neither fully alive nor fully dead. They exist as "zombies."

The colonial situation by definition precludes a political solution. As Sartre writes, "the practical operation [the workings of the infernal machine] involves rejection of any *political* solution to the colonial problem."[52] The colonized native is excluded from the polis in so far as the

native is constituted as other than *political man* ("civilized man," etc.). The denial of the other in speech is a denial of the other as a political being. The colonialist longs for impenetrability and places himself beyond the value of words and reason. As Sartre remarks in his study of anti-Semitism, "there are people who are attracted by the durability of a stone," and this flight from freedom into a passion of hatred immune to truth is constituted as a choice to "devalue words and reasons." As Sartre writes: "Since they are afraid of reasoning, they wish to lead the kind of life wherein . . . one seeks only what he has already found, wherein one becomes only what he already was."[53] This hatred of language is apparent in the racist language of colonialism. As Benedict Anderson notes, "[a] word like 'slant,' for example, abbreviated from 'slant-eyed,' does not simply express an ordinary political enmity. It erases nation-ness by reducing the adversary to his biological physiognomy. It denies, by substituting for, 'Vietnamese'; just as *raton* denies, by substituting for, 'Algerian.'"[54]

5. The Apocalypse of Hope

In the opening scene of Gillo Pontecorvo's film *The Battle for Algiers*, the camera pans across the city of Algiers, moving from the Parisian-like European quarters of boulevards and cafés to the huddled houses of the Algerian Casbah. This scene vividly depicts the compartmentalized colonial world described by Sartre, which Fanon also places at the center of his analysis in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon describes the colonized world in Sartrean terms as a world divided into two spheres which owes its reality to violence. The division between the European quarter and the Casbah is physically sustained through the presence of the colonial police and army. Colonialism is a complete "depersonalization" of the colonized people at the psychological and socio-cultural level of existence; the indigenous society has been depersonalized on a collective level, thus reducing the colonized peoples to a molecular or serial existence—a form of existence determined by the alterity of the colonizers. For these reasons, any challenge to the colonial world cannot be a "rational confrontation of viewpoints."[55]

In what are surely the most fascinating passages in Fanon's diagnosis of the "de-personalization" of the colonized natives, Fanon describes the ecstasy of dance and possession as a mechanism of flight from the reality of colonized violence for the colonized native. This discussion of dance expresses the bodily manifestation of the colonial violence; the "being" or "existence" of the colonized native is affected by the violence to which he is subject; the condition of the colonized native is always a bodily condition. The life of the colonized native draws on myths of

"underdeveloped" societies and these myths become inhibitors for his aggressions. Through this self-induced terror, colonized natives are incorporated into the traditions and history of their land and groups, yet these only exist as ghosts, because those traditions have been destroyed by the colonial system. This magical identification is like a description of being possessed, and Fanon tacitly draws on the rituals of Vodou from his native Caribbean.[56] The presence of rituals and other forms of "stifled aggression" reveal the destruction of "personality." Rather than direct aggressive energies against the *colon*, violence is played out on the plane of imagination. Fanon recognizes these regulating mechanisms as preventing the colonized natives from praxis against the colonial system; these rituals ensure the stability of the colonized world. During the struggle for liberation, Fanon claims, "there is a singular loss of interest in these rituals." The colonized native discovers reality in discovering the possibility of acting against reality and its transformation through violence. The violence played out on the scene of the imagination must be "seized" and "realigned." It must change directions and take on new forms: it must become revolutionary praxis.[57]

In the thinking of both Sartre and Fanon, the transition from the alienated and inert condition of the colonized natives to revolutionary praxis is modeled on the transition from a serialized collective to what Sartre terms "the fused group." Sartre explicitly models this formation of revolutionary violence on the storming of the Bastille in the French Revolution, whereas Fanon looks to Mao's vision of a peasant revolutionary army. Although the details of both of these views cannot be presented in detail here, I propose instead to sketch the outlines of each, as well as their historical connection.

In Sartre's analysis of the movement from serial collective to fused group in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, the storming of the Bastille is taken as the model for its dialectical structure. Sartre's interest is here to understand the transition from serial collective, in which each individual is determined by the other (e.g., his famous analysis of "waiting for the bus") and by a structure of the practico-inert (for example, black people having to sit in designated spaces on public transportation), to a gathering of individuals in which each individual is reciprocally determined by other members of the group. Individuals discover themselves and each other by establishing "lived bonds of solidarity."[58] As Sartre argues, "[t]he upheaval which destroys the collective by the flash of a common *praxis* obviously originates in a synthetic, and therefore material, transformation, which occurs in the context of scarcity and of existing structures. . . . [T]he driving-force is either danger, at every level of materiality (whether it be hunger, or the bankruptcy *whose meaning* is

hunger, etc.), or transformations of instrumentality."[59] Sartre is not interested in providing an *a priori* criteria for the "flash point" at which a serial collective can become transformed into a fused group. It is significant, however, that Sartre recognizes two different conditions, either an increased sense of danger or a technological transformation. Scarcity and technological development drive the formation of revolutionary violence. The catalyst for open struggle, however, is ultimately connected to the perceived impossibility of a condition, and under such circumstances, hope is identical with an "apocalypse." As Sartre writes, "[t]he transformation therefore occurs when impossibility itself becomes impossible, or when the synthetic event reveals that the impossibility of change is an impossibility of life. The direct result of this is to make *the impossibility of change* the very object which has to be transcended if life is to continue."[60]

There is a famous anecdote regarding the storming of the Bastille that expresses perfectly its mythic status in the historiography of the French Revolution as well as its significance for Sartre's analysis of the formation of a revolutionary group from the alienation of serial existence. On July 14, 1789, when Louis XVI was told of the fall of the Bastille by the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, the king, it is reported, exclaimed: "C'est une révolte!"—to which the Duc retorted: "Non, c'est une révolution."[61] The storming of the Bastille by an armed group of *sans-culottes* has since been seen. controversially, as the defining event of the French Revolution. Burke considered the revolutionary crowd "a band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with blood," who were entirely destructive, and intimated the frenzied terror of self-consuming violence of the French Revolution. By contrast, Carlyle celebrated the revolutionary crowd as "Victorious Anarchy" and "the Death-Bird of a World."[62]

The details and difficulties with Sartre's historical interpretation need not detain us here. Due to a steep rise in the price of bread, coupled with the ineffective performance of the Paris Assembly, members of the Parisian working-class (the concept is, in fact, historically inaccurate) spontaneously formed themselves into an armed mob and stormed the Bastille prison. Sartre is especially attracted to this episode of the French Revolution because of the spontaneous and unorganized gathering of the "people" into a collective body of violence. Moreover, Sartre suggests that this formation of the people represents the first stage in the development of "class-consciousness." In his analysis, Sartre places great weight on the individual act of arming oneself. A double meaning of freedom emerges from this act of taking arms. Each individual wants to defend himself against a threat from the Paris militia. The use of force by the militia provokes "counter-violence" on the part of the "mob"

and thus establishes a relation of reciprocity, of violent struggle, between "the people of Paris" and "the King." The need for defense at the level of the individual becomes identified with a need to defend the group and, in this sense, individuals are "fused" or unified through the performance of a concerted action. The violent confrontation between militia and mob results in an "interiorization" of violence, that is, in the production of an internal unity within the people as the negation, or struggle against, the external group of the militia. It is the materiality of weapons, as instruments of violence, that suggests "the possibility of concerted resistance" and "opens" a field of praxis. In a striking phrase, Sartre remarks that a weapon presents itself as destiny.[63] The collective derives its possibility of self-determination from its antagonistic relations with an already constituted group. "In this flash of transition from collective seriality to group," that is, this dissolution of the series into the fused group, we have "something which is neither group nor series, but what Malraux . . . called the Apocalypse."[64]

It is important that the act of arming does not guarantee that the group becomes permanent, which, for Sartre, occurs when the fused group is transformed into what he calls "a pledge group." Whereas the unification of a fused group is negative, that is, defined in opposition to another group, a pledge group establishes a "positive" and internal form of self-determination. In pledging allegiance to each other, and thus to the group as such, members define themselves through an investment in a group existence forged in the bond of speech. The act of pledging is an act of speech. The movement from fused group to pledge group represents for Sartre the movement from the bond of violence to the bond of speech, yet it is the act of arming oneself within the fused group that produces the initial investment and recognition of a group as capable of praxis.

One of the most direct consequences of the storming of the Bastille was that it introduced a new possibility that was effectively and rapidly institutionalized in the French Revolution and Napoleon's First Empire. In 1793, Lazare Carnot called for the first *levée en masse*, signaling the idea of a universal experience as an experience of the nation. Individuals who have nothing in common are united horizontally rather than vertically—that is, the universal pledge replaces a vertical pledge to hierarchy (King) with a horizontal pledge to the "nation" and to each citizen-soldier. There is a complex development of the idea of a "citizen" or "people's army" that leads from the storming of the Bastille, the unleashing of a revolutionary army during the French Revolution and its subsequent transformation into a "national army" in the nineteenth century, to the "revolutionary peasant's movement" that we find in Fanon's call for violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Clausewitz first articulated the military significance of "arming of the people" (*Volksbewaffnung*) in his masterpiece *On War*.[65] But Clausewitz retained a conservative attitude toward the "people's army" that reflected a common view among the reform-minded Prussian military thinkers (Gneisenau and Scharnhorst) who instituted mass mobilization for mainly defensive purposes during the "Wars of Liberation" against Napoleon (1813-1814). Clausewitz argues for the mobilization of the people either as a source of manpower for the established military formations (*Landwehr*) or as auxiliary militias meant to assist the military in defense of the homeland (*Landsturm*). But Clausewitz did argue for the arming of the people in the effective guerilla campaign of Spanish "irregulars" against the established formations of Napoleon's Peninsular Army.[66] Even in this context, Clausewitz still did not recognize the possibility of a "people's war" in isolation from operations with a professional military. The arming of the people was a means for national defense.

We must look to Mao Tse-tung's military writings and the ideology of the Chinese Communist "people's army" in order to discover the possibility of an autonomous people's army that is both an instrument of attack (rather than merely defensive) and connected to a doctrine of guerilla warfare—the template for Fanon's vision of the peasant revolutionary movement in *The Wretched of the Earth*.[67] Mao continues Lenin's appropriation of Clausewitz's formula "war is the continuation of politics by other means." In *Socialism and War*, Lenin defined the classic Marxist interpretation of Clausewitz's formula by transforming Clausewitz's insight into the formula that war *continues* or *expresses* politics.[68] Mao continues further in this radicalization of Clausewitz and collapses entirely the distinction between politics and war.[69] Since the transformation of society is the essence of the revolutionary project, the revolutionary army must also undertake a program of social transformation while performing military operations. Political officers within the military structure must educate both soldiers and peasants. For Mao, the destruction of the opposing military force (the Koumintang) is identified with the ascension of sovereignty by the people's army. Curiously, colonial wars of imperialism and revolutionary wars are mirror images of each other since both equate the destruction of the opposite military force with both a *de facto* and *de jure* creation of political sovereignty. Whereas Clausewitz, in his restricted and cautious appraisal of the "people's army," understood its effectiveness in purely military terms, for Mao, revolution makes soldiers of all individuals *before* and as a condition *for* citizenship.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, the example of "the great victory of the Vietnamese people" at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 sets the tone and direc-

tion for Fanon's vision of revolution. As he boldly writes, "Dien Bien Phu was within reach of every colonized subject." The colonized masses intuitively believe that their liberation must be achieved through violence, and on the basis of this claim, Fanon notes, that "mass mobilization is the decisive weapon." Against the backdrop of my brief comments on Mao, I want to suggest that Fanon's conception of the revolutionary potential of the peasants is entirely Maoist. Fanon echoes Mao's claim that only the peasantry is truly revolutionary, and establishes a contrast between the political parties of national liberation based in urban areas, who are "strong on principle and weak on marching orders," and rural peasant populations, who are an infinite and impatient reserve of violence. This distinction corresponds to the distinction between Koumintang and the Chinese communist party. Moreover, Fanon clearly associates the nationalist political parties with bourgeoisie individualism and a "serial" form of existence. This class of individually liberated natives neither represents nor advances the emancipation of a genuine class of the peasants. Whereas the aggression of the colonized elite becomes self-serving and channeled for self-advancement, the violent praxis of the peasant class is totalizing since each individual represents a "link in the great chain."[70] Thus, the mobilization of the masses introduces the possibilities of a national destiny and a collective history into every consciousness. Violence is totalizing and national.

Peasant masses have a critical role in struggles for national liberation. Urban political unrest remains "powerless" to change the colonial regime and, in this light, Fanon argues that "the younger cadre of nationalist parties" who yearn for violent action break with nationalist parties, centered in urban centers, and take flight to rural areas. As Fanon fancifully states, "the peasant cloak wraps him in a mantle of unimagined tenderness and vitality." It is within the rural community that "the leaders who fled the futile atmosphere of urban politics *rediscover politics*," by which Fanon means, that the alienated leaders of nationalist movements rediscover a world in which speech makes sense.[71] The rural peasant communities preserve a world or space in which individuals recognize each other as speakers and in which decisions are "communal." Moreover, according to Fanon's idealized vision of the peasant class, different regional tribes "pledge their help and support," thus widening the "national circle" and movement of resistance. As Fanon announces, "everyone must be involved in the struggle for the sake of the common salvation. We are all in the process of dirtying our hands in the quagmire of our soil and the terrifying void of our minds."[72]

6. Conclusion

In Creole, the statement "he speaks French" does not have the same meaning as its apparently French equivalent "il parle Francais." "Il parle Francais" means "he speaks French." In Creole, however, it can mean "he or she is a hypocrite," and it is often—I am told—impossible to discern its literal from its figurative meaning without appealing to a knowing smile or a betraying look of the eye. The term "hypocrisy" is both strong and weak. It is strong in so far as hypocrisy subverts the human bond of speech. It is weak because we normally use this term when speaking of the falsehoods of individuals, and more rarely, and, at least to my ears, with less weight, when we want to speak of a "culture" or "basic condition." To speak of the hypocrisy of colonialism does not entirely capture the violence of colonialism that both Fanon and Sartre placed at the center of their respective calls for revolutionary violence. But the term is nonetheless appropriate as an expression of the impenetrability of speech that constitutes the essence of colonial racism for both authors; the *colon* renders the falsity of his truth immune to evidence and speech, and it is this violence against the meaningfulness and open character of speech that defines the totalizing condition of violence.

Significantly, Arendt grants that rage in the face of hypocrisy is a "rational and justifiable" cause of violence. "Since men live in a world of appearances and depend on manifestation, hypocrisy's conceits—as distinguished from expedient ruses, followed by disclosure in due time—cannot be met by so-called reasonable behaviour. Words can only be relied on if one is sure that their function is to reveal and not to conceal."[73] This semblance of reality incites "justifiable rage" and "violence" against semblance, yet Arendt limits this violence in the same manner in which she limits how violence creates group solidarity. The experience of a "brotherhood of violence," a form of group coherence, is transient because it is only realized under the threat of imminent danger. In the case of colonialism, which Arendt regrettably fails to consider in her discussion of Fanon and Sartre, colonized natives exist in a permanent stage of siege or "war," but as pursued through an arsenal of what Foucault understood as "bio-technologies" or "bio-power."

Moreover, the armed mobilization of the peasants, despite the mythic proportion that it takes in its Maoist form in Fanon, sets into motion a connection between "violence" and the self-realization of a people as a nation. Revolutionary violence does not establish the nation; instead, it opens a space in which national consciousness can be imagined and pursued as a possibility. For Fanon, the political existence *of a people* in speech is inseparable from a people's self-determination as a

nation. A new beginning must therefore take the form of a nation's beginning. Is a conception of political life possible without a national consciousness?

National consciousness is based on a universal experience rather than an origin; in other words, a universal experience, which Fanon identified as the struggle for a nation, constitutes both its historical origin as well as the myth of its own origin. Violence is a praxis that brings together those deprived of speech into a space of possibility in which their own speech becomes a possibility (this is the movement from the fused group to pledge group); and this possibility of speech is the vernacular of a national consciousness.

Yet Fanon never successfully articulated a language with which to extricate himself from the non-coincidence of his bilingualism. Indeed, faced with this difficulty, I think that he increasingly had to dream this monolingual language as the myth of national consciousness and pan-Africanism. In pursuing the formation of a national consciousness to its extreme, Fanon identifies colonization as the destruction of tradition and past cultural life. Fanon's suspicion of traditions and tribal structures and his creation of national culture is a process of modernization; it is a final destruction of indigenous cultures and tribalism. In a paradoxical manner, revolutionary violence (Fanon's Maoism of a permanent cultural revolution) brings to completion what colonialism set into motion. The promise of revolutionary violence for Fanon is two-fold: destruction of the colonial order and exorcism of the ghosts of the past—traditional forms of religion and culture; it is as if violence was to purge the condition of bilingualism itself—from the ghosts of the past in the form of Vodou and Creole and from the colonial order of "white masks." But although violence may destroy inert structures and liquidate habits, violence cannot exorcise ghosts, by which I mean, the presence, yet homelessness, of the past in the present. The grandeur and weakness of Fanon is that he imagined a nation and a community of nations for a people who never collectively imagined for themselves the impending destiny that Fanon believed they were about to realize, and never did.

NOTES

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface," to Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), p. lv. The French title is "Préface," to *Les damnés de la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991), p. 52 Hereafter referenced as Sartre, "Preface," followed by English/French

page numbers. All translations from French are subject to modification without notice and will be cited, where possible, by their English title and with English/French page numbers.

2. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 294/178.
3. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), p. 21.
4. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (London: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1969), p. 43.
5. Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 9.
6. Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 16.
7. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 27.
8. Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 19. Arendt claims: "Because of this speechlessness [of violence] political theory has little to say about the phenomenon of violence and must leave its discussion to the technicians" (19). This comment explains why she regrettably omits any discussion of war in her study of revolution.
9. Fredrick Engels, *Anti-Dühring: Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*, trans. Emile Burns (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 184.
10. Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 52.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 66.
13. Ibid., pp. 67-8.
14. Ibid., p. 30.
15. Sartre, "Preface," p. xlix/44.
16. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 31/102.
17. Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 20.
18. Ibid., p. 13.
19. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Search for a Method*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 21. The French title is *Questions de méthode*, in *Théorie des Ensembles Practiques*, vol. 1 of *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 31: "Le marxisme s'est arrêté." The French will hereafter be referenced as Sartre, *Critique de la raison dalectique*.
20. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 55-6/132-3.
21. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Surveys from Exile:*, trans. Ben Fowkes, vol. 2 of *Political Writings,* ed. David Fernbach (London: Penguin, 1992), p. 149.

22. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*, trans. S.W. Allen (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1976), p. 25. The Fench title is "Orphée Noir," in *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache*, ed. Leopold Sédar Senghor (Paris: PUF, 1948), p. xx: "[A]uto-destruction du langage." It is impossible to capture the French *négritude*—"negro-ness"—in English.

23. Stephane Mallarmé, "Sea Breeze," in *Stephane Mallarmé in English Verse*, trans. Arthur Ellis (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1977), p. 102, lines 2-3. The French title is "Brise Marine," in *Poésies* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion), p. 60, lines 2-3: "Je sens que des oiseaux sont ivres / D'être parmi l'écume inconnue et les yeux!"

24. Sartre, *Black Oprheus*, p. 30/xxiii.

25. Ibid., p. 21/xvii: "[J]e nommerai 'orphique' cette poésie parce que cette inlassable descente du nègre en soi-même me fait songer à Orphée allant réclamer Eurydice à Pluton."

26. Ibid.: "[I]l entreprend alors de ruiner systématiquement l'acquis européen et cette démolition en esprit symbolise la grande prise d'armes future par quoi les noirs détruiront leurs chaînes."

27. Ibid., p. 31/xxiii. "Il s'agit donc pour le noire de mourir à la culture blanche pour renaître à l'âme noire, comme le philosophe platonicien meurt à son corps pour renaître à la vérité." Sartre's expression "mourir à la culture blanche" is especially difficult to render precisely in English.

28. Ibid., p. 11/xii: "[L]a poésie noire de la langue française est, de nos jours, la seule grande poésie révolutionnaire"; and p. 65/xliv: "Pour une fois au moins, le plus authentique projet révolutionnaire et la poésie la plus pure sortent de la même source."

29. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 183-4. The French title is *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1995), p. 148.

30. Ibid., p. 135/109: "[L]'enthousiasme noir."

31. Ibid., p. 40/pp. 31-2.

32. Ibid., p. 135/109: "Je n'ai pas à rechercher l'universel"; and p. 138/112: "Pas encore blanc, plus tout à faire noir, j'étais un damné. Sartre a oublié que le négre souffre dans son corps autrement que le Blanc."

33. Ibid., p. 197/159.

34. Ibid., p. 197/160.

35. Given the diverse meanings of the term "Creole," I use the term narrowly, following Fanon, to mean French Creole in the Caribbean (and without any differentiation between Haitian and Martinique Creole, for example).

36. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 32/25. The crucial distinction between *vous* and *tu* in this anecdote is entirely lost in the English translation: "Twenty European patients, one after the other, come in: 'Please sit down . . . Why do you [*vous*] wish to consult me? . . . What are your symptoms?

[*De quoi souffrez-vous?*]' Then comes the black person or Arab: 'Sit there, boy . . . What do you [*tu*] have?"

37. Ibid., p. 36/28. The English translation of "mon z'ami" into "fella," aside from its antiquated 1950s expression, fails to capture the inferiority of "mon z'ami." Any stranger on the street can be, could once have been, called a "fella."

38. Ibid., p. 40/31.

39. Sartre, "Preface," p. xlv/40.

40. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Theory of Practical Ensembles*, vol. 1 of *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith, ed. Jonathan Rée (London: Verso, 2004), p. 733. Translated from *Critique de la raison dialectique*, p. 813. Hereafter referenced as Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.

41. H.G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1960), p. 219.

42. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 720/801.

43. Of course, much of the "invasion" genre of literature in England between 1871 and 1914 reflects a growing anxiety over the aspirations of Imperial Germany and the intensity of competitive European nationalism. The threat of communism in America accounts for the "alien invasion" phenomena in film and other expressions of popular culture during the 1950s.

44. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 734/813.

45. This distinction between conquest and colonialism is reflected in the French term used by both Sartre and Fanon when speaking of the colonizers. The French *colon*, an abbreviation of *colonialiste*, specifically designates the colonial population who entered into the colonial service after the consolidation of territory, and who considered colonized territory their "native land." Albert Camus, for example, is a *colon*.

46. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 714/795.

47. Ibid., p. 718/798.

48. Ibid.

49. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, p. 165/134.

50. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 720/800.

51. Ibid, p. 748/827.

52. Ibid., p. 721/801.

53. Jea-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker, (New York; Schocken Books, 1948), p. 19. The French title is *Réflexions sur la question de la juive* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), p. 24.

54. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), p. 148. In contrast to Sartre, for whom the issue of nationalism remains off-stage,

Anderson argues that colonial racism is inseparable from European nationalism.

55. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 6/71.

56. There is much debate on the proper orthography for the word "Vodou." I am following the recommendation made by Henrietta Cosentino, "The Sacred Arts of What? A Note on Orthography," in *Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou*, ed. Donald J. Cosentino (Los Angeles: University of California Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1995), pp. xiii-xiv.

57. Fanon's discussion of the flight into the imaginary in *The Wretched of Earth* (pp. 17-21/84-9) is anticipated in *Black Skin, White Masks*, pp. 145-6/118-9: "In every society, in every collectivity, exists—must exist—a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released. This is the purpose of games in children's institutions, of psychodramas in group therapy, and, in a more general way, of illustrated magazines for children—each type of society, of course, requiring its own specific kind of catharsis."

58. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 346/450.

59. Ibid., p. 349/453.

60. Ibid., p. 350/454.

61. As reported in Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 47. A more detailed confrontation between Sartre and Arendt must contrast their different assessments of the French Revolution. Of course, Sartre's interest in the French Revolution is driven by its primarily social character, whereas Arendt, in her discussions of the French and American Revolution, prefers the American model of a political revolution and adopts Burke's conservatism with regard to the French experiment. In her brief remarks about the storming of the Bastille, Arendt notes that "[t]he king, when he declared the storming of the Bastille was a revolt, asserted his power and the various means at his disposal to deal with conspiracy and defiance of authority; Liancourt replied that what had happened there was irrevocable and beyond the power of the king" (48). The surge of the "multitude of the poor and downtrodden" into the public realm, reserved "to those who *were* free, namely carefree of all the worries that are connected with life's necessities" (48), represents, for Arendt, the destruction of the political by the social. The life of need has replaced the life of privilege.

62. Quoted in George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 4.

63. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, p. 360/462.

64. Ibid., p. 357/461.

65. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton, 1976). See especially Book VI, section 26, "The People in Arms," pp. 479-83.

66. Cf. Fanon's illuminating reference to "authentic colonial war" during the Peninsular War in *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 26/95.

67. It remains unclear whether Fanon read any of Mao's military writings. The earliest French translation that I have been able to locate dates from 1964: *Écrits militares de Mao Tse-Toung* (Pekin: Éditions en Langues Étrangers, 1964). Yet it is entirely possible that Fanon "absorbed" the general outlines of Mao's idea of a "revolutionary peasant army." David Macey's authoritative biography, *Frantz Fanon* (New York: Picador, 2000), does not provide any information regarding Fanon's familiarity with Mao's writings.

68. Cf. Raymond Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), pp. 103-115.

69. Cf. Arendt's remark in *On Violence*, p. 11: "The strong Marxist rhetoric of the New Left coincides with the steady growth of the entirely non-Marxian conviction, proclaimed by Mao Tse-tung, that 'Power grows out of the barrel of a gun.'" Cf. Fanon's statements in *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 83/170: "The art of politics is quite simply transformed into the art of war. The miltant becomes the fighter. To wage war and to engage in politics are one and the same thing."

70. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 50/126.

71. Ibid., p. 86/173; emphasis added.

72. Ibid., p. 140/242.

73. Arendt, *On Violence*, p. 66.